JYU DISSERTATIONS 86

Jelena Salmi

# Differentiated Citizenship, Displacement, and Materiality in State–Citizen Relations in Ahmedabad

UNIVERSITY OF JYVÄSKYLÄ
FACULTY OF HUMANITIES AND
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# ABSTRACT

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This study examines urban restructuring, citizenship, and the state from the perspective of displaced slum-dwellers in Ahmedabad, India. First, it explores how the state seeks to reconstruct itself and to determine the borders of the nation and good citizenship through world-class infrastructural development. Second, it traces displaced and resettled people's perceptions about the nature of the state and their relations to it. Third, it analyzes how empirically differentiated citizenship is formed through the entanglement of documents, infrastructure, state and non-state actors, and displaced people.

The theoretical framework of the study is based on anthropological analyses of differentiated citizenship and processual, performative, and disaggregated understandings of the state. Methodologically, the study is based on ten months of ethnographic fieldwork in the slum resettlement site of Sadbhavna Nagar, involving participant observation and 58 semi-structured interviews with displaced people/residents of the site. These are combined with analysis of newspaper articles, websites, resettlement-related documents, apartment plans, government brochures, and court proceedings.

The findings of the study suggest that good citizenship has been defined in terms of civility, cleanliness, economic prosperity, property ownership, and non-Muslim identity. The everyday reality of citizenship for displaced people was conditioned by their literacy, economic and political clout, religious and caste identity, personal persistence, embeddedness in informal networks, and possession of documents and resettlement apartments. It was also shaped by state officials' compassion, corruption, mistakes, indifference, and biased attitudes.

The main anthropological contribution of the study is its call for citizenship to be viewed as a dynamic, differential everyday reality formed through the entanglement of human and non-human forces via formal and informal relations. Citizenship cannot be analyzed apart from the social, cultural, and material contexts within which it is constructed and on which its various forms depend. The approach takes into account the agency of displaced people as well as state and non-state actors, afforded and constrained by paper documents and concrete housing.

**Keywords:** bureaucracy, citizenship, documents, imagineering, India, infrastructure, materiality, state, urban development, worlding

# TIIVISTELMÄ

Salmi, Jelena
Erilaistunut kansalaisuus, pakkosiirrot ja materiaalisuus valtion ja kansalaisten välisissä suhteissa Ahmedabadissa
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Tarkastelen väitöskirjassani valtion ja kansalaisten välisiä suhteita laajamittaisen kaupunkiuudistuksen kontekstissa Ahmedabadissa, Intiassa. Analysoin, kuinka puhtauden ja kansallisen kehityksen nimissä pakkosiirretyt ja uudelleenasutetut entiset slummiasukkaat kokevat valtion, ja kuinka he neuvottelevat oikeuksiaan ja kuulumistaan poliittiseen yhteisöön slummivapaaksi ”maailmanluokan kaupungiksi” pyrkivässä Ahmedabadissa. Toiseksi tutkin, kuinka valtio pyrkii määrittelemään kansakunnan rajat, hyvän kansalaisuuden ideaalin ja oman legitimiteettinsä vallankäyttäjänä suurten infrastruktuurihankkeiden kautta. Kolmanneksi olen kiinnostunut dokumenttien ja infrastruktuurin rooleista pakkosiirrettyjen ihmisten ja valtion välisessä vuorovaikutuksessa.

Tutkimuksen teoreettinen viitekehys muodostuu kansalaisuuden, byrokratian ja valtion antropologiasta, joka korostaa poliittisen vallan ja kansalaisuuden prosessuaalista ja performatiivista luonnetta sekä valtion sisäistä jakautuneisuutta. Tutkimukseni perustuu kymmenen kuukauden mittaiseen etnografiseen kenttätyöhön Sadbhavna Nagar -nimisellä uudelleenasutusalueella vuosina 2015–2016. Tutkimusmetodeina käytän osallistuvaa havainnointia ja pakkosiirrettyjen ihmisten puolistrukturoituja haastatteluita (58 kpl). Lisäksi hyödynnän aineistona esitteitä, verkkosivuja, sanomalehtiartikkeleita, oikeusasiakirjoja ja uudelleenasutusasuntojen pohjapiirroksia.

Tutkimuksen päätulos on lukutaidon, kastin, uskonnon, henkilökohtaisen sinnikkyyden, sosiaalisten verkostojen, taloudellisen ja poliittisen vaikutusvallan sekä dokumenttien ja uudelleenasutusasuntojen hallinnan yhteys kansalaisuuden toteutumiseen jokapäiväisessä elämässä. Myös valtion virkailijoiden korruptio, inhimilliset virheet sekä henkilökohtaiset solidaarisuudet, asenteet ja ennakkoluulot muovasivat pakkosiirrettyjen ihmisten mahdollisuuksia päästä käsiksi laillisen kansalaisen statukseen ja harjoittaa kansalaisoikeuksiaan käytännössä.

Tutkimus osoittaa, että kansalaisuus on sosiaalisesti ja materiaalisesti tuotettua. Näin ollen kansalaisuutta ei tulisi ymmärtää pelkästään lain ja byrokratian kentällä neuvoteltavana yksilön statuksena, vaan analyysissä on otettava huomioon erilaisten artefaktien ja sosiaalisten suhteiden roolit ihmisten toiminnan ja poliittisen subjektiviteetin muokkaajina ja mahdollistajina. Tutkimus haastaa jaon viralliseen valtion politiikkaan ja epäviralliseen arkielämään sekä osoittaa, että paitsi kansalaisuus myös valtion legitimiteetti vallan käyttäjänä rakentuu ja uusintuu virallisten ja epävirallisten käytäntöjen kietoutumisen kautta.

**Asiasanat:** byrokratia, dokumentit, infrastruktuuri, Intia, kansalaisuus, kaupunkikehitys, maailmanluokan kaupunki, valtio

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# PREFACE AND ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

In spring 2010, major plumbing replacement was due in the small rental apartment that my partner and I called home. Our landlady had let us know that we had to relocate elsewhere for four months during which time we would also be spared of paying rent. A perfect occasion for traveling, we gathered, drained from the cold, dreary winter in Jyväskylä. I wanted to travel to Indonesia to marvel orangutangs and Javanese *wayang kulit*, a form of shadow puppet theater art. My partner Niklas, however, suggested going to India, which had been his dream travel destination ever since he had befriended an Indian Sindhi boy, Rakesh, in Warsaw where he had spent his childhood. Niklas told me about his after-school visits to Rakesh's house, which was furnished with flamboyant textiles and a home *mandir* that featured idols of Virgin Mary and Sai Baba of Shirdi, side by side. He recalled the smell of freshly baked Indian bread, the melody of loud but always affectionate family conversations in words that escaped his understanding, and the colorful Bollywood films starring the loose-hipped Shahrukh Khan, who danced frivolously atop a moving train. With those memories, he won me over.

To familiarize myself with Indian society, economy, politics, and cultural traditions before the four-month trip, I went to the library and borrowed the book *Muuttuva Intia* ("Changing India") written by anthropologists Sirpa Tenhunen and Minna Säävälä (2007). That book was my initial guide to India, a foundation on which all the future readings and experiences would start piling up, and also my first contact with Sirpa Tenhunen, who later became my PhD supervisor. Back then, however, I had no clue that the journey we were about to embark on would be one of the defining periods for my personal and professional development. The seeds of this book were sown during that stay in India. But whom should I thank for the journey—British Airways and Indian Railways? Niklas and Shahrukh Khan? The cook working for Rakesh's family in 1990s Warsaw? Sindhi language? Or, perhaps, our former landlady and the worn-out pipes in the Jyväskylä apartment?

Looking for words to express my gratitude and indebtedness to all fellow-beings that helped to constitute this book, I find myself thinking about Karen Barad's (2007) preface and acknowledgments in *Meeting the Universe Halfway*. Barad calls into question the nature of agency and its presumed localization within self-contained individuals. Existence is entangled, she argues, and agency springs from our connections and responsibilities to one another. Therefore, I find it just to use this occasion to think back and reflect on some of the entanglements that enabled the becoming of this PhD thesis and myself as its author.

First of all, I want to thank the residents of Sadbhavna Nagar, Ganeshnagar, Vasant Ganjendra Gadkar Nagar, Kushabhau Thakre Nagar, Ambika Tube ni Chali, and Aslam Chali for letting a stranger enter their lives. Thank you for your openness, kindness, hospitality, and humor throughout my stay in Vatva.

Thank you for sharing your stories, experiences, and analytical insights. This book is dedicated to you.

I am indebted to late Naresh Gidwani, my research assistant and dear friend. Thank you for teaching and guiding me. I warmly recall and deeply appreciate the time we spent together. Thank you also to Naresh's family members for all their care during our stay.

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Laura Stark's role in finalizing the book became vital. Her critical yet constructive comments were essential. Throughout the process, she always found the time to advise me on various matters related to being a researcher, whether teaching, drafting funding applications, planning conference presentations, or preparing for the thesis defense procedure. Thank you for pushing me to do my very best, Laura. Your positive energy, enthusiasm, and dedication inspires me.

I am grateful to the Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences at the University of Jyväskylä for providing me with the privilege to conduct full-time research work for four years. I wish to express my gratitude to all my colleagues and students at the Department of History and Ethnology, especially the participants of the monthly Ethnology research seminar during 2016–2017: Maryam Abbasi, Diana Diaz Delgado Raitala, Konsta Kajander, Thendo Mafame, Liia Raippalinna, Mowshimkka Renganathan, and Meri Tuovinen. Your feedback and support were significant in the analysis process. I thank Matti Roitto for smooth teacher collaboration and Jukka Jouhki for his valuable and thorough comments on my papers and presentations and for providing opportunities to present my visual works. Thank you also to Piia Einonen, Heli Valtonen, and Jari Ojala.

I thank the Faculty of Planning at CEPT University in Ahmedabad for providing me with the status of a visiting researcher during my fieldwork. In particular, I am indebted to Darshini Mahadevia, Renu Desai, Meghal Arya, Tejal Patel, Sejal Patel, and Princy Jacob. For transcribing and interpreting my interviews, I am grateful to Jinal Mistry and Setu Jani. For translating Gujarati documents and speeches, I thank Prashant Hedpara and Hardik Prajapati. For providing me with elevation drawings and apartment layouts of BSUP housing, I thank the city planning department of the Ahmedabad Municipal Corporation. I also thank the Center for Urban Equity (CUE) for including a photo essay by myself and Niklas Salmi in an exhibition held at Satya Art Gallery.

A sincere thank you to our neighbors in Vatva for sharing everyday life and to the Mishra family for their hospitality. Thank you to our housing society

security guard Bajpai for his care and kindness. Special thanks to all the rickshaw drivers, the urban experts, who helped us navigate in the city.

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I am indebted to my mother Pirjo Havia for instilling in me the love of reading and the traits of determination and endless curiosity. Thank you for always believing in me and for letting me find my own way. I thank my late father Taisto Kärki for nurturing my creativity and artistic intelligence in my early childhood. I am also grateful to my family: Elina, Petteri, Kaisa, Aada, and Unto Kärki, Timo Havia, Pirjo and Seppo Salmi, Andreas, Salla, and Niilo Juurakko, and Oliver Syrjänen. Thank you to all my friends and relatives for being in my life in ups and downs. Helmeri and Lilli, thank you for your mysterious ways and comforting purrs. Special thanks to Lilli for making sure that I go to bed early.

Most of all, I want to thank my partner Niklas Salmi who has contributed to the constitution of this book in many roles. Thank you for your love, friendship, and emotional support that keep me feeling safe and secure. Thank you for your openness to new things as well as your playfulness and sense of wonder that water my spirit. Thank you for your ethnographic sensibility and practical assistance that were essential in the course of our stay in Ahmedabad.

Thank you for your critical comments and meticulous language editing in the final stages of this work. All in all, I feel extremely privileged to have become entangled with you.

On May Day Eve 2019, Helsinki
Jelena Salmi

## GLOSSARY

| | |
|---|---|
| AMC | Ahmedabad Municipal Corporation |
| AMTS | Ahmedabad Municipal Transport Service |
| Bajrang Dal | militant Hindu organization, the youth wing of the VHP |
| *bastī* | slum, neighborhood |
| BJP | Bharatiya Janata Party ("Indian People's Party"), a Hindu nationalist party and one of the two major parties in India along with the INC |
| BRTS | Bus Rapid Transit System, a bus-based public transportation network |
| BSUP | Basic Services to the Urban Poor, a central government program designed to address urban poverty |
| communalism | commonly used concept in India referring to sectarianism that promotes religious or ethnic violence |
| FIR | First Information Report, a written document prepared by the police |
| Ganeshnagar | temporary resettlement site located in the neighborhood of Piplaj |
| GIDC | Gujarat Industrial Development Corporation |
| *Hindutva* | Hindu nationalist ideology that defines Indian culture strictly in terms of Hindu values |
| INC | Indian National Congress (also known as "the Congress"), a centrist political party and one of the two major parties in India along with the BJP |
| Janmarg | the Ahmedabad BRTS |
| Jhūlelāl | Sindhi community god (also known as Dariyalal) |
| JnNURM | Jawaharlal Nehru National Urban Renewal Mission, a city modernization scheme launched by the central government in 2005 |
| Juhapura | the largest Muslim slum in Ahmedabad |
| *kaccā* | provisional, unfinished; often used in the context of housing; see *pakkā* |
| KHAM | Kshatriya–Harijan–Adivasi–Muslim voting bloc created by the Congress-led State government of Gujarat in the 1980s |
| Khanpur | neighborhood in the Old City of Ahmedabad |
| KLDP | Kankaria Lakefront Development Project |
| Lok Sabha | the lower house of India's bicameral Parliament |
| *mandir* | temple |
| Maninagar | upper-middle-class neighborhood next to Kankaria Lake |
| *masjid* | mosque |

| | |
|---|---|
| Navratri | nine nights long Hindu festival celebrating the divine feminine |
| NEP | New Economic Policy adopted by the central government in 1991; marks the economic liberalization of India |
| *non-veg* | diet including meat, a person consuming meat products; see *veg* |
| OBC | Other Backward Class, a term used by the government of India to classify socially and educationally disadvantaged people |
| *Pakistan* | derogatory term referring to Muslim neighborhoods |
| *pakkā* | proper, permanent; see *kaccā* |
| *prachārak* | organizational worker of the RSS |
| R&R Policy | Resettlement & Rehabilitation Policy |
| *rath yatrā* | public procession involving a chariot |
| RSS | Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh ("National Volunteer Organization"), a Hindu nationalist, paramilitary organization |
| *śākhā* | branch of the RSS |
| Sangh Parivar | family of Hindu nationalist organizations |
| SC | Scheduled Caste; see OBC |
| SNAM | Sabarmati Nagrik Adhikar Manch ("Sabarmati Civil Rights Forum"), an association formed by Sabarmati Riverfront dwellers during the demolitions |
| SNP | Slum Networking Program |
| SRFDCL | Sabarmati Riverfront Development Corporation Limited, a public body supervising the SRFDP |
| SRFDP | Sabarmati Riverfront Development Project |
| ST | Scheduled Tribe; see OBC |
| Stay Order | suspending a judicial proceeding either fully or temporarily through the order of a court |
| *Swachh Bharat Abhiyan* | Clean India Mission, a nation-wide campaign run by the central government |
| TPS | Town Planning Scheme, a micro-planning mechanism |
| *veg* | diet consisting of plants and dairy, a vegetarian; see *non-veg* |
| VGG Nagar | Vasant Gajendra Gadkar Nagar, a Muslim-dominated resettlement site in Vatva |
| VHP | Vishva Hindu Parishad ("World Hindu Council"), a Hindu nationalist organization |

## CONTENTS

Parts of Chapter 6 have been previously published in German: Salmi, J. 2019. Wohnen im Umsiedlungsprojekt: Über das ›richtige Zuhause‹, materielle Politik und Zugehörigkeit in Ahmedabad. In Hans Erik Hahn & Friedemann Neumann (Eds.), *Das Neue Zuhause: Haushalt und Alltag nach der Migration* (pp. 243–261). Frankfurt: Campus Verlag.

This study uses the International Alphabet of Sanskrit Transliteration (IAST) system for the transliteration of Hindi and Gujarati languages. Proper names of people, neighborhoods, cities, states, organizations, and government initiatives appear in their usual English form.


FIGURE 1.1. Map of Ahmedabad. All figures are by the author unless otherwise credited.

# 1 INTRODUCTION

On India's 66th Independence Day in 2012, Narendra Modi, then Chief Minister of the state of Gujarat, gave a speech at the Sabarmati Riverfront in the center of the Ahmedabad city. In his speech, Modi dedicated the newly built riverfront promenade to the residents of Ahmedabad. Modi began his speech by expressing his gratitude to the residents of the city for maintaining cleanliness on the Kankaria Lakefront, transformed into a recreational area and opened to the public five years earlier. "Not even a trace of litter can be found in Kankaria," Modi proclaimed amidst enthusiastic applause, then urging the audience to keep the Sabarmati Riverfront equally clean—even cleaner than their own homes. He compared the state of the riverfront before and after the Sabarmati Riverfront Development Project, an initiative which had officially displaced more than 14,000 people living in informal settlements. "Once there were thousands of slums on the banks of this river. The place had become the center of several types of illegal activities. In order to construct the riverfront, they had to be resettled elsewhere," stated Modi. He went on to emphasize that, although the riverfront is physically located in Ahmedabad, it is, in fact, a place of importance for the whole of "Hindustan." The speech was met with a round of vigorous applause from the audience and, finally, the crowd shouted in unison: *Bhārat mātā kī jay! Vande mātaram! Vande mātaram! Vande mātaram! Vande mātaram!* (Victory to Mother India! I praise thee, Mother!) (Modi 2012a). Less than two years later, Narendra Modi, a leader of the Hindu nationalist Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) ("Indian People's Party"), was elected Prime Minister of India.

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This study seeks to understand the character of relations between the state and displaced urban poor in the context of large-scale urban redevelopment in Ahmedabad, the most populous city of the Gujarat State. With a focus on everyday life, it examines the aftermath of the displacement and resettlement of slum-dwellers in one of the most populous resettlement sites in the city. The study engages with recent anthropological discussions on citizenship, bureaucracy,

and the state, and seeks to contribute to the understanding of citizenship as a dynamic, incremental, and differential reality of engagements between citizens, state and non-state actors, documents, and infrastructure. My approach emphasizes the need to examine the contextual specificities of state–citizen relations beyond legalistic understandings of citizenship and clear-cut divisions between formal and informal or state politics and everyday life.

I adopt the experiential lens of the people displaced under three urban restructuring projects associated with the figure of Prime Minister Modi: the Sabarmati Riverfront Development Project (SRFDP); the Kankaria Lakefront Development Project (KLDP); and the Bus Rapid Transit System (BRTS) project. The projects aimed at making Ahmedabad a "world-class city" characterized by a modern skyline, a steady flow of foreign investments, state-of-the-art infrastructure, and the absence of "illegal-looking" settlements and other visible signs of poverty. All the projects, implemented between 2003 and 2012, included the demolition of informal settlements and displacement of their residents from central city space to resettlement sites located mostly on the eastern margins (see Figure 1.1).

I am interested in the dovetailing of neoliberal development with the *Hindutva*-infused nationalism that characterizes the current political atmosphere in India.[1] As it is a stronghold of the Hindu nationalist BJP, and a model of urban development for the Indian nation-state (N. Mathur 2012), world-class city making in Ahmedabad provides a particularly fruitful context for studying how these two processes intersect and commingle. I examine how Hindu nationalism, combined with the aesthetic values of the world-class city, reconstructs good citizenship, the state, and the nation. I analyze this process using the notion of *imagineering* (see also Desai 2012a; Löfgren 2007; Salazar 2010), a combination of engineering and imagining. I also explore how people displaced in the name of development negotiate the changing terms of good citizenship, and how they perceive what the state is, what it does, and what it should do. Finally, paying attention to the entanglements of multiple human and non-human actors, I examine how *differentiated citizenship* materializes in the context of world-class city making. In my usage, the notion of differentiated citizenship refers to the differential treatment of people on the basis of caste, religion, occupation, property ownership, and other social statuses and identities that are not the basis of formal membership (Holston 2008, 197).

The study addresses three interrelated research questions concerned with different aspects of citizenship, nation-building, and state formation. First, how are the good citizen, the state, and the nation imagineered in the context of worlding Ahmedabad? Second, how do displaced people perceive what the state is, what it does, and what it should do according to their discourses and ways of claim-making? Third, what are the roles of documents and infrastructure in forming displaced people's citizenship?

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[1] *Hindutva* ("Hinduness") is the ideology behind the Hindu nationalist Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) and its affiliates. It seeks to create a shared "Hindu" identity and defines Indian culture in terms of Hindu religious values (see section 1.2).

The study is based on ten months of ethnographic fieldwork in 2015–2016 in the resettlement of Sadbhavna Nagar ("Goodwill City," "Harmony City") and two subsequent visits to Ahmedabad in November 2016 and December 2017. During my fieldwork, four to six years had passed since the resettlement, and people had started building their lives anew after the initial shock. My interaction with residents of Sadbhavna Nagar varied from casual afternoon chai breaks to all-night *garbā* dance parties, visits to people's workplaces and, most importantly, detailed interviews. I conducted 58 interviews with both Hindus and Muslims displaced from the city center and/or living in the resettlement site of Sadbhavna Nagar. Out of the interviews, 57 were conducted in Hindi language and one in English.

The introduction is structured as follows. In sections 1.1 and 1.2, I illustrate socio-spatial divisions of the Ahmedabad city and present a brief background of Hindu nationalism in India, tracing factors that have contributed to its modern form. The rise of Hindu nationalism as a significant political force that materialized in Modi's regime must be considered against this background. In 1.3, I move on to describe my field area, the resettlement site of Sadbhavna Nagar, located in the southern fringes of the city. After that, in 1.4, I discuss relevant scholarly debates on development-induced displacement and resettlement, followed by an introduction to the notion of worlding in section 1.5. This section situates the study in the context of the academic discussion on global development and neoliberal urban restructuring. Finally, I elaborate and sum up my research questions in 1.6, and present the structure of the study in 1.7.

## 1.1 Divided city: Background

Ahmedabad was founded in 1411 by Sultan Ahmed Shah, a ruler of the Muzaffarid dynasty. According to a legend, Ahmed Shah was hunting on the banks of the River Sabarmati when he witnessed the peculiar site of a hare chasing a hound. The Sultan, astonished by the tiny hare's courage, interpreted the incident as an auspicious omen. He became convinced that the land on the banks of the river nurtured unusual characteristics of courage. Sultan Ahmed, who had been searching for a place to build a new capital, thus decided to found his city on that very spot by the River Sabarmati (Yagnik & Sheth 2011, 10).

Although founded by a Muslim sultan, today's Ahmedabad is known for being a stronghold of the Bharatiya Janata Party, a staunch advocate of the *Hindutva* ideology. The BJP came into power in the Ahmedabad Municipal Corporation in 1987 and made efforts to endow a Hindu past for Ahmedabad by renaming the city "Karnavati" after King Karnadev of the medieval Hindu Chaulukya dynasty. The central government rejected the proposal, but that did not stop BJP councilors and party members—as well as Hindu nationalist organizations such as the Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (RSS) and the Bajrang Dal—from using that term in their publicity materials (Shah 2015, 31; *The Trib-*

*une* 2001). In contemporary Ahmedabad, Karnavati lives in numerous bumper stickers and business name boards jutting from the walls: one can dine in a Karnavati Restaurant, fix a flat tire in a Karnavati Auto Repair Shop, and sip a tangy masala soda in a Karnavati Soda Shop. On the western periphery, the prestigious Karnavati Club offers recreational activities for its affluent members.

Recently, the municipal corporation has also engaged in the politics of renaming. In August 2010, the AMC began calling itself the "Amdavad Municipal Corporation." The move can be seen as an attempt to conceal the city's Islamic roots and the fact that the city was founded by a Muslim sultan (Shah 2015, 31–32), but one could also argue that the new name merely adheres to the Gujarati vernacular. The spelling change seemed to be a sensitive matter in Ahmedabad. I experienced this in August 2015 when I attended a literary event at which writer and social theorist Amrita Shah talked about her newly published book *Ahmedabad: A City in the World*. The author was interviewed in English by a professor from CEPT University (where I was affiliated during my stay in Ahmedabad). The event was held on the campus of the Ahmedabad Management Association (AMA), and the audience seemed largely to comprise local intelligentsia. After the interview, participants were given a chance to ask questions of Shah and, predictably, the naming issue sparked a heated conversation. "The decision to change the name had nothing to do with politics," posited someone from the audience. "Well, if that is indeed so, then why isn't Delhi renamed *Dilli* following the vernacular pronunciation?," asked another participant. Claims and counterclaims flew back and forth until, finally, the moderator asked the obvious question: "How do you even start communicating about things in this atmosphere of polarization?"

The atmosphere of polarization is tangible not only on the discursive level but also in spatial terms; 21st–century Ahmedabad is polarized into regions of Hindus and Muslims (Mahadevia 2007, 341; Spodek 2010, 398). The Hindu right-wing coalition Sangh Parivar has managed to create a modern, urbanizing Hindu-dominated area within the city (Mahadevia 2007).[2] Muslims, the biggest minority group in Gujarat, accounting for 9.7% of the population, have their own regions that are both physically and mentally segregated. Muslims can move freely only in their restricted areas (Tenhunen & Säävälä 2012, 78), often located either outside the borders of Ahmedabad or on the outskirts of the city borders. The largest Muslim slum is Juhapura in southwestern Ahmedabad (Mahadevia, Desai & Vyas 2014, 15). Many Muslims have moved out of the Hindu-dominated areas following waves of communal violence—the city has a long history of Hindu–Muslim tensions, and each incident of inter-community violence has led to an increased level of intra-city migration (Mahadevia 2007,

[2] The central Hindu nationalist organization of today is the paramilitary Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (RSS). See section 1.2.

363).[3] Women and the poor have been the worst victims of communal riots (D'Costa 2002).

In 2002, a year after Gujarat had been hit by a major earthquake (see Simpson 2013), Hindu–Muslim violence reached an unprecedented scale and intensity. During the riots of February–May 2002, two thousand Muslims were killed, and 200,000 had to flee from their homes in the aftermath of the Sabarmati Express train-burning incident in Godhra (Mahadevia 2007, 358; Varadarajan 2002, 9). The train was carrying 1,700 *kar sevaks* (Hindu activists) returning from a pilgrimage to Ayodhya, an ancient city where Hindu fundamentalists had demolished a 16th-century Babri mosque in 1992. Allegedly, the train was attacked and set alight by Muslims after the *kar sevaks* had gotten into a quarrel with Muslim passers-by at the Godhra railway station. It remains unclear whether the train was set on fire by an angry mob that surrounded the train or if the fire started from inside, but the arson resulted in the death of fifty-nine passengers (Bobbio 2015, 1).

Soon after the train burning, rioting mobs instigated by Hindu fundamentalist associations started looting Muslims shops, destroying their property and raping, killing, and torturing people. In some locations, police assisted Hindu mobs in finding Muslims or just stood by, letting the violence take place (Varadarajan 2002, 9). The highest number of killings took place at the fringes of eastern Ahmedabad—Meghaninagar, Naroda, Odhav, Amraiwad, Bapunagar, and Gomtipur—where many residents are Muslim, immigrants from outside the state, and from lower-caste and lower-class backgrounds (Ghassem-Fachandi 2012a, 94). Afterward, the government of Gujarat, especially Narendra Modi and the BJP, was accused of being unable to control the violent outbursts following the train burning. On an even greater scale, the National Human Rights Commission, as well as Amnesty International, have posited that the state government approved of and even directly participated in the targeted, selective violence against the Muslim minority (Mahadevia 2007, 358–359; see also Brass 2003, 388). As Spodek (2010, 356) states, "[a]t the highest levels, the government chose not to intervene, and, on the contrary, inflamed the situation."

The events of 2002 have led to the categorization of the Gujarat State as a "Hindutva laboratory" (Human Rights Watch 2002, 41; see also Dayal 2002). Nevertheless, some upper-middle-class Hindus whom I met during my stay claimed that accounts of violence were highly exaggerated and that Modi had actually tried to ease the situation, being a "man of progress and peace." One of the people to whom I talked, a middle-aged man residing in the Paldi area, characterized the 2002 violence against Muslims as a "natural reaction" to the train burning incident, echoing the discourse of Modi and the Sangh Parivar in the aftermath of violence (see *The Times of India* 2002). I. Chatterjee (2009) and Ghassem-Fachandi (2010; 2012a) have reported similar attitudes among Hindu

[3] Traditionally, Ahmedabad has not been a riot-prone city. There was no communal violence during Partition, for instance. Things started changing gradually in the 1960s–1970s. After the 2002 violence, however, Ahmedabad became the Indian city with the highest number of casualties due to communal riots (Jaffrelot & Thomas 2012, 44–45).

residents of Ahmedabad. "Inhabiting the language and logic of the Sangh Parivar, many Gujaratis were resigned to *karvu j pade*, which roughly means, 'It had to be done'" (Ghassem-Fachandi 2012a, 63).

Ahmedabad may have a reputation as a violent city, but throughout its history, it has also been a well-known commercial, financial and industrial center. The River Sabarmati divides the city into two geographically distinct parts: eastern and western Ahmedabad. The traditional cotton textile mills and the old walled city are located in eastern Ahmedabad, which thrives on traditional manufacturing and trade activities—the "old economy" (Unni & Rani 2007, 220). Because of its textile mills, Ahmedabad used to be called the "Manchester of India" (Breman 2005). However, the opening of the Indian economy to neoliberal policies in the late 1980s and early 1990s led to the collapse of the textile industry and a massive loss of earnings and employment among the laboring classes (Breman 2005; I. Chatterjee 2012). The closing of the textile mills has contributed to the process of informalizing employment, which intensified in the 1990s with as much as 75% of the labor force working in the informal sector by the end of the century (Unni & Rani 2007, 234). The decline of the textile industry and the absence of strong labor unions have also resulted in the disappearance of social interaction between the Hindu and Muslim working classes (I. Chatterjee 2012, 137), making the informalized poor increasingly dependent on caste and neighborhood-based networks (Berenschot 2015, 41). This has enabled Hindu nationalist organizations to gain popularity among lower-caste Hindu groups (Berenschot 2011a; 2015).

Today, the walled city of Ahmedabad, located on the eastern side of the Sabarmati, houses people mainly involved in trade and commerce whereas the far eastern part of the city is inhabited by the poor laboring classes, including former mill workers (Unni & Rani 2007, 220; I. Chatterjee 2014a, 160). Nearly all the government housing is located on the eastern side (Mahadevia et al. 2014, 16). The west, on the other hand, is a relatively clean and spacious area, home to upper-income groups and thriving on the "new economy": finance, banking, and the IT industry (Unni & Rani 2007, 221). In the west, Gujarat's economic growth—achieved by handing over the control of the economy of key sectors (e.g., ports, roads, rail, and power) to corporate capital and private investors (Hensman 2014)—is tangible in the form of glossy shopping malls, luxurious hotels, four-lane flyovers, and well-maintained parks. The west is regarded as the epitome of the so-called "Gujarat Model" that favors industry-led development. It is also predominantly Hindu: according to I. Chatterjee (2009, 1009), "[u]pper middle-class Muslim businessmen, who have the means to buy property in the west, have been denied, under various pretexts, the right to buy and register properties there." The far eastern part, in which every nook and corner of available space is filled, provides a stark visual contrast to the western landscape.[4] In between stands the old walled city, with its historical attractions, small-scale businesses, narrow lanes, and traditional *pol* housing clusters.[5]

[4] Ahmedabad has been conventionally divided into the affluent (Hindu) west and the poor (Muslim) east. As Jasani (2010) argues, the association of the east with poverty and pollu-

In the early 2000s, the Sabarmati riverbed area was inhabited by thousands of slum-dwellers who had come to Ahmedabad in search of a better future. Behind the informal *kaccā* ("provisional," "temporary") huts of the poor city residents rose luxury hotels such as the Atrium and the Cama Hotel. When I interviewed Muslims displaced from the slums of Khanpur, they often mentioned how they used to live "just behind the Cama Hotel," and I was sure I could hear a hint of pride in their voices. The municipal authority, however, did not consider this coexistence to be a matter of pride. In 1997, the AMC initiated the Sabarmati Riverfront Development Project (SRFDP) with the aim to "transform Ahmedabad's historic yet neglected river into a vibrant and vital focus for the city" (Sabarmati Riverfront, About 2013). By calling the river a "neglected" area, this discourse ignored the fact the riverfront hosted a popular market and a thriving cloth dyeing industry, which was brought to an end by the project.

The widely acclaimed project initiative included the displacement of approximately 14,000 households between 2005 and 2012. By 2013, roughly 11,000 families had been resettled in state-subsidized concrete apartment blocks built under the central government's Basic Services for the Urban Poor (BSUP) scheme (Desai 2014). According to the official discourse, the residents were allotted apartments with secured tenure—a significant advancement on the unsafe state of life in informal settlements, and a manifestation of the government's pro-poor stance (see Modi 2012a; Sabarmati Riverfront, Rehabilitation & Resettlement 2018). Providing resettlement housing was framed as a generous gift from the state rather than meeting people's fundamental human rights to adequate housing.[6] The displaced residents were represented as "'happy poor,' eager to move to their new 'dream' homes" (I. Chatterjee 2014a, 92).

The demolitions sparked opposition, as no attempt was made to engage the riverfront-dwellers in the planning of the project (Desai 2014). In mid-2003, riverfront-dwellers formed an association, the Sabarmati Nagrik Adhikar Manch (SNAM, "Sabarmati Civil Rights Forum"), to fight for their rights. In April 2005, human rights lawyer Girish Patel filed a Public Interest Litigation (PIL) on their behalf in the Gujarat High Court on the issue of slum displacement. The court ruling gave a Stay Order requiring the authorities to explicate their plans for resettlement and rehabilitation (R&R) and not to evict riverfront

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tion is created by those in the west and ignores significant social divisions in the east. Indeed, eastern Ahmedabad comprises affluent neighborhoods like Maninagar, "world-class" spaces like the Kankaria Lakefront and the Raipur shopping complex, as well as areas occupied by Hindu migrants, Christians, and the offspring of Sindhi refugees. The Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel International Airport is also located in the east.

[5] The old city accommodated the majority of Ahmedabad's population until the early 1950s when upper-caste residents gradually began to move to the western side of the river and started to differentiate themselves from those of their peers who remained in the old city. Consequently, caste incrementally gained more salience as a social identity (Shani 2011, 302).

[6] Although the right to adequate housing is internationally recognized as a fundamental human right, the Indian Constitution does not explicitly mention it. Nevertheless, in various cases the Supreme Court has interpreted the Right to Life under Article 21 of the Constitution to include within its ambit the right to adequate housing, shelter, and livelihood (Singh 2017).

residents until further orders by the court (Desai 2014, 7–8). The R&R Policy was finally prepared in mid-2008 and after that, in 2009–2010, three different phases of displacement and resettlement took place with the court's permission. Many SNAM leaders functioned as intermediaries between the authorities and the displaced residents in the resettlement process (Desai 2014, 8).

FIGURE 1.2. Demolition of a riverfront neighborhood, May 2011. © Suvi Sillanpää

Congress leader Deepak Babaria was also involved in the mobilization of urban poor against the riverfront project, while the Congress party itself had secured a majority in the AMC in the municipal election of 2000.[7] SNAM leaders felt that the Congress was playing a double game since it was implementing the Sabarmati Riverfront Development Project and mobilizing riverfront residents against it at the same time (Desai 2014, 12). The 2005 municipal election was approaching, and the riverfront project had become a political battlefield for the two major parties: the BJP and the Congress. Both tried to appeal to different constituencies that had conflicting interests regarding urban development—the middle and upper classes wanted to develop the riverfront whereas slum-dwellers were largely opposed to it.

By 2012, informal settlements on the riverfront's public land had been razed to the ground, and the BJP was back in power in the AMC. On India's Independence Day in August 2012, Narendra Modi gave his speech at the Sabarmati Riverfront. In his speech, he dedicated the newly built riverfront

[7] The Indian National Congress (INC), known as "the Congress," is one of the two major political parties in India together with the BJP. The Congress lost much of its support in the general elections of 2014 but gained 16 seats in the Gujarat Legislative Assembly election of 2017.

promenade to the residents of Ahmedabad and justified the development-induced displacement of slum-dwellers by invoking the greater good. He also used the opportunity to defame the Congress party and the slum-dwellers opposing the project:

> Once there were thousands of slums on the banks of this river. The place had become the center of several types of illegal activities. In order to construct the riverfront, they had to be resettled elsewhere. A survey was conducted quietly, all the details were collected. But our friends in the Congress did not miss a single opportunity in creating obstacles. Not only through the media, they also used the help of the court to stop such an excellent project. Friends, they left no stone unturned! To stop the construction of the riverfront, they went to the court dozens of times to get a Stay Order. [...] Thousands of houses were built, but they [the resettled people] messed them up. In the court, they filed an application that these houses are in such a condition that no one can live in them. We decided to give flats to the people living in the slums. Flats were built, but they still went to the court (Modi 2012a).

In his speech, Modi made it clear that the clean and green world-class spaces that benefit middle- and upper-class people could not have been achieved without the relocation of urban poor. Moreover, Modi portrayed himself as a mistreated benefactor by describing how his generous act of looking after the slum-dwellers was met with irrational opposition—after all, why would the "slum-dwellers" not want to live in a *pakkā* ("proper," "permanent") house with secured tenure? Why complain, when the project has promoted everyone's best interests, especially those of the unprivileged urban poor?

FIGURE 1.3. The newly built Sabarmati Riverfront, March 2015.

## 1.2 Creating the Hindu nation

According to Benedict Anderson's (1991, 6) famous definition, a nation is an "imagined political community—and imagined as both inherently limited and sovereign." Anderson suggests that, like all communities larger than those sustained by face-to-face contact, a nation is imagined by people that see themselves as part of a community despite never personally meeting most of their compatriots. A nation is limited in that all imagined communities have boundaries, and sovereign in that the concept was born when Enlightenment eroded the idea of divinely ordained legitimacy.

Nationalism, Anderson argues, is the process of imagining and creating community in the minds of the citizens of the modern nation-state: "[R]egardless of the actual inequality and exploitation that may prevail in each, the nation is always conceived as a deep, horizontal comradeship" (Anderson 1991, 7). Anderson underlines that national identity is socially constructed, challenging earlier primordial views of the nation that traced nationalism back to early human history. Explaining how the nation is imagined and tangibly manifested, he introduces the term "print capitalism." Vernacular print helped people with different linguistic backgrounds to understand themselves as part of a community (ibid., 36). As Anderson states, "the convergence of capitalism and print technology on the fatal diversity of human language created the possibility of a new form of imagined community, which in its basic morphology set the stage for the modern nation" (ibid., 46). In sum, Anderson viewed nationalism as a product of modernity created for political and economic ends.

While Anderson recognized the importance of printed vernacular texts and education in the creation of national sentiment, his theory could not account for why people were prepared to sacrifice themselves for an abstract community (Herzfeld 2005). Anderson's thesis assumes people to be mere followers of nationalism, ignoring how their intimate affective ties of family, kinship, and friendship interact with the official discourses of nation, state, and citizenship (Herzfeld 2005, 7). Challenging what he calls top-down views of nationalism, Herzfeld (2005, 3) uses the notion of "cultural intimacy" to illustrate how the common ground of everyday life forms the emotional basis for the imagination of the nation. Cultural intimacy consists of self-stereotypes, often of an embarrassing and self-deprecating variety (such as Finnish collective stereotypes of alcoholism and depression), that can subvert conventional morality but construct a feeling of uniformity among people. The bottom line is that the nation-state is grounded in intimate everyday solidarities. The uneasy bonds between the two levels are essential for the actualization of the national identity.

Another important critique of Anderson comes from van der Veer (1996) who posits that Anderson creates a dichotomy between capitalist, "modern" societies and "traditional" societies characterized by their religiosity. Anderson's theory rests on the universalization of European historical development.

From this perspective, religious nationalism appears to be erroneous, or a transitional phase on the way from "traditional" to "modern." Van der Veer suggests deconstructing the link between modernity, secularism, and nationalism. As he argues, in many societies "the 'modern' is not the result of a historical transition; rather, the 'modern' invades the 'traditional'" (van der Veer 1996, 17).

In the section that follows, I show that *Hindutva* ideology is not an aberration in a hitherto secular postcolonial state. Instead, the secular state has been a significant culprit in the shaping of Hindu nationalism, as was British colonial power. Hindu nationalism must be seen as a modern phenomenon implicated in the creation of the secular state. The seeds of modern Hindu nationalism were sown long before the *Rām janmabhūmī* ("Ram's birthplace") movement that led to the demolition of the Babri mosque in 1992, the 2002 pogrom in Gujarat, or the rise of Narendra Modi to Prime Minister.

**Colonialism and orientalism**

First, one has to recognize the contribution of colonialism and orientalism to the development of Indian religious nationalism. Dividing India into religious categories was a common practice from the start of the colonialist period—a political strategy known as "divide and rule." Even though the division cannot be attributed solely to colonialism, the creation of the "Hindu majority" and "Muslim minority" as social and political categories was a product of the British government (van der Veer 1996, 19–20), as was the hardening of identities around caste categories used to govern and reproduce colonial subjects (Corbridge, Harriss & Jeffrey 2013, 5).

The first all-India Census, started in 1872, dissolved "fuzzy" communities and classified people into homogenous and mutually exclusive Hindu, Muslim, Christian, Buddhist, Jain, Sikh, Parsi, Jewish, and Animist communities (Bhagat 2013). The census established "Hindus" as the majority community. The British also instigated separate electorates for "majority" and "minority" communities and codified Hindu and Muslim personal laws that were to provide the basis for governing issues pertaining to the private sphere of the family (Kabeer 2006, 93–94). An important feature of the codification, however, was that it relied on the interpretations of certain religious elites and ignored the more syncretic practices of the majority of the Indian population (Bose & Jalal 1998, 74). Through these measures, the British sought to solidify religious divisions and preclude the growth of horizontal solidarity among the colonized that could lead to resistance to the colonial power. Differentiated identities thus became the basis of political claims and their recognition (Kabeer 2006, 94).

Colonial scholarship that described India as inherently religious and Hinduism as a unified religion was also significant for the hardening of religious identities. Orientalists saw India as an ancient Hindu civilization in which Brahmins held the highest authority. On the one hand, they stressed the common Indo-European roots of Western and Hindu civilization, and on the other, the decline of Hindu civilization under Muslim rule, seeing themselves as pro-

tectors of Hindus (van der Veer 1996, 20). However, it would be oversimplifying to claim that orientalists worked in symbiosis with Western imperialism—in fact, orientalism has sometimes challenged colonizing interests (Clarke 1997, 205).

To produce a "Hindu majority," Hinduism had to be reconceptualized as a uniform religion and Hindu culture as a distinct cultural area. Orientalists, missionaries and colonial officers contributed to the division of Hinduism into "great traditions" and "little traditions"—traditional Hinduism and sects. Thus, modern Hinduism was born into an "empty place." It was a signifier of a singular, perfect culture and claimed to be what made India essentially Indian. However, no religious form could claim total ownership over this "core-Hinduism," which was only a social construction (Hansen 1999, 66–67).

The pursuit of "real" Hinduism became a central part of the agenda of the nationalist movement (Hansen 1999, 67). Orientalism played a key role in this: nationalist resistance to the colonial rule mobilized the production of orientalist texts such as Western translations of the *Bhagavad Gita* and writings of the Theosophical Society in order to evoke national identity among Indians (Clarke 1997, 207). To this day, outdated orientalist categories continue to shape the way native Indians and well as outsiders view Indianness (Jouhki 2006a, 7–8). The imported British educational system, the prestige that British ideas have enjoyed among educated Indians, and the need to construct a unifying history to function as a basis of Indian nationhood together explain the persistence of imagery influenced by orientalism. Romanticist orientalism, in particular, has contributed to the ideas of the Vedic golden age, spiritual holism, caste-centricity, and Hinduism as a unified religion (Jouhki 2006b, 75).

**Hindutva and Sangh Parivar**

*Hindutva* is a core concept of Hindu nationalism. It was introduced in the 1920s by Vinayak Damodar Savarkar who described Hindus as a group whose holy lands are located on the Indian soil. He explored the concept in the text *Hindutva: Who is a Hindu?*, observing that "[a] Hindu means a person who regards this land of Bharat Varsha, from the Indus to the Seas, as his Father-Land as well as his Holy Land that is the cradle of his religion" (van der Veer 1996, 1). Consequently, "Hindu" meant a person whose religion "had grown in the Indian soil" including Buddhists, Jains, Sikhs, and Hindu sects. Aryan/Vedic Hinduism was instilled at the core of the imagined Hindu nation. According to this definition, Christians and Muslims were outsiders because their "holy lands" were outside India (Hansen 1999, 78–79).

Influenced by Savarkar's writings, former Congress activist, Keshav Baliram Hedgewar, founded the militant Hindu nationalist organization, the Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (RSS) in 1925 (Jaffrelot 2007, 16). The organization aimed to instill Hindu moral values in the population and to free the country from colonial domination. The RSS insisted on the creation of a Hindu *rāṣṭra* ("nation") and sought to produce disciplined, patriotic male youth for the national cause: every morning and evening, the youth would come together in

RSS *śākhās,* branches of the organization, to exercise and pray. The saffron flag, *bhagvā dhvaj*, was adopted as the RSS emblem (Sud 2012, 130). In Gujarat, the first RSS *śākhā* began operating in 1938 (Andersen & Damle 1987, 38).

Hindu nationalism is modeled on European nationalism—national paraphernalia such as anthems, flags, and dressing are accentuated (Eriksen 2002, 157). Roots, motherland, and a yearning for the purity of Hindu race and culture figure prominently in the RSS rhetoric. Some *Hindutva* ideologists, such as Madhav Sadashiv Golwalkar, the *sarsangchālak* ("head") of the RSS after Hedgewar, openly admired Adolf Hitler. Indeed, in the manner of Hitler, Golwalkar considered race to be the basic principle of a nation, and applied Hitler's racial ideology to the Muslim minority which, in his view, posed a threat because of its backing by Islamic states and, more importantly, because it was a "foreign body" inside a Hindu nation (Jaffrelot 2007, 98).

In the RSS's view, the cultural and religious heritage of Hinduism should form the backbone of the Indian nation, whereas Mahatma Gandhi's vision of India was based on equality and harmonious religious pluralism, meanwhile promoting a syncretic and spiritual branch of Hinduism. Even though Gandhi's universalist understanding was challenged by the leaders of Indian minorities, partly because of his Hindu style articulation, he still kept insisting that he spoke on behalf of all communities and that the Congress represented them all.

While Gandhi acknowledged religious identities in the public sphere, Motilal and Jawaharlal Nehru advocated a nation-building process based on secular, individual identities, thereby representing a variant of the Gandhian universalist standpoint. Hindu nationalism, together with Muslim separatism, rejected both versions of the universalist view of nationalism. Congressmen, in turn, characterized Hindu nationalism and Muslim separatism with the derogatory term "communalism" (Jaffrelot 2007, 4–6). In contemporary India, communalism has become a commonly used concept when referring to sectarianism that promotes religious or ethnic violence.

The RSS continues to be the central Hindu nationalist force in India. In 2017, the organization had 57,233 *śākhās* across the country, according to its annual report (RSS 2017). Organizations created by the RSS or inspired by its ideology are commonly spoken of as members of the Sangh Parivar ("Family of Communities"). One of them is the Vishva Hindu Parishad (VHP, "World Hindu Council"), founded in 1964 to promote the spiritual values of Hinduism and to create connections to expatriate Hindus. The VHP is known for anti-Muslim campaigns—it had a central role in the Ayodhya dispute and the demolition of the Babri mosque.

The Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP), the origins of which lie in the Bharatiya Jana Sangh party, was formed in April of 1980 under the leadership of Atal Bihari Vajpayee. The BJP has gradually increased its hold on the country—in 1996 it became the largest party in the Lok Sabha, the lower house of the Indian Parliament. The BJP remains closely affiliated with the RSS. Modi himself started his political career in 1968 as an RSS *prachārak*, an organizational worker, and became the organization secretary of the Gujarat BJP in 1986 (Spodek 2010, 362).

In 1995, the BJP gained an impressive victory in the Gujarat State Assembly, taking control of the state government. The Gujarat State has remained in the BJP's hands ever since—Modi himself was Gujarat's longest serving Chief Minister, holding office from 2001 to 2014.

**The role of the Congress**

Even though the activities of the Sangh Parivar have played a central role in the rise and appeal of Hindu majoritarianism, they should not be exaggerated. As Bose (1997) reminds his readers, it is essential to acknowledge the role of the Congress regime, the roots of which lie in the independence struggle; according to Bose, the failure of the Congress to respond to new societal challenges paved the way for the rise of Hindu nationalism. The Constitution maintains the normative secularity of the state, but state officials—who have been and still are Hindus to a great extent—have not acted in line with the ideas of secularism and pluralism. This is evident in Indira Gandhi's and Rajiv Gandhi's flirtation with Hindu communal sentiments.

In the 1980s, Rajiv Gandhi ordered the locks of the disputed Babri mosque in Ayodhya, an ancient city believed to be the birthplace of god Rama, to be opened. The site had long been a subject of intense socio-religious debate—some Hindus claimed that Mughal rulers had demolished a Hindu temple in order to build a mosque on the site. As a result of the dispute, which had also involved the placing of Hindu idols inside the mosque, police had locked the gates, preventing the entry of both Hindus and Muslims. Rajiv Gandhi's decision to open the locks of the mosque angered Muslim voters and worsened riots; it also provided an opportunity for the BJP to appeal to Hindu communal sentiments. In the general election of 1989, these events, combined with the Bofors corruption scandal and the involvement of India in the Sri Lankan Civil War, resulted in the defeat of the Congress party.

In 1990, the BJP, the VHP, and their affiliates, under the leadership of L. K. Advani, organized a Ram Rath Yatra political rally to support the effort to erect a Rama temple on the site of the Babri mosque.[8] As Guha (2007, 635) notes, "[t]he march's imagery was 'religious, allusive, militant, masculine, and anti-Muslim,'" further reinforced by Advani's fiery speeches that accused the government of "appeasing" Muslims. Modi was involved as one of the organizers of the rally. In 1992, Hindu nationalist forces managed to demolish the Babri mosque, triggering a wave of communal violence in the country. A makeshift Rama temple was erected on the site, only to be destroyed by five members of the Islamic terrorist organization Lashkar-e-Taiba in 2005. At the time of writing, the dispute over the title to land in the small town of Ayodhya is being considered in the Supreme Court. The 2002 Gujarat pogrom (see section 1.1) is linked to the dispute in that it began when a train carrying Hindu activists returning from Ayodhya was allegedly set on fire by Muslims.

[8] *Rath yatrā* refers to a public procession involving a chariot.

Competition for political and economic resources has also contributed to the spread of Hindu majoritarianism and the rise of the BJP at the expense of the Congress. One of the most important factors was the institution of quotas for socially and economically backward castes. In the 1950s, the Congress government introduced the term "Other Backward Classes" (OBC). In the 1980s, the Mandal commission set up by the government recommended a practice whereby members of lower castes were given exclusive access to 27% of jobs in the public sector and of slots in public universities (Hansen 1999, 42). This led to an upper-caste revolt.

In Gujarat, the mid-1980s marks a shift from anti-reservation caste riots to communalism (Shani 2011, 301). In the 1980s, the Congress state government led by Madhavsinh Solanki created a voting bloc called KHAM (Kshatriya–Harijan–Adivasi–Muslim), covering over 70% of the state's population. The strategy worked for the Congress's benefit in the Gujarat Assembly election of 1980 (Sud 2012, 27); however, the KHAM formula and the OBC reservations also alienated upper castes—most notably Patidars—from the Congress and resulted in various agitations. In the 1985 anti-reservation agitations, in which the BJP was also involved, violence was increasingly targeted at Muslims. In July 1985, Chief Minister Solanki resigned from his office to put an end to the agitation (ibid., 29).

At the time of writing, about half of India's population are classified as Dalits, tribal peoples, low-caste peoples, or OBCs, and in theory, 49.5% of government jobs should be reserved for these groups. Consequently, many members of upper castes feel threatened (Eriksen 2002, 158). Indeed, Corbridge and Harris (2000) suggest that Hindu nationalism and economic liberalization in India must be seen as part of an elite revolt against the claims of subaltern movements in India through the 1970s and 1980s.[9] As Shani (2011, 299) states, "[b]ecause they appeared to offer the lower castes opportunities for social mobility that were denied the upper castes, reservations and other policy measures for the uplift of the lower and backward castes complicated and antagonized caste relations." The so-called forward castes had been the main beneficiaries of the postcolonial political economy, but with the rise of subaltern groups and the introduction of a caste-based quota system, their privileged position was weakening. Gradually, this led to a decline in the support for the Congress among upper-caste elites. *Hindutva* is largely a movement representing the interests of upper-caste Hindus in a situation where their traditional power and privileges are deteriorating. It may seem to promote greater equality among those defined as "Hindus," but in reality, its traditional Hinduism reinforces the caste system, which serves the interests of the upper castes (Eriksen 2002, 158).

[9] The rise of subaltern movements that represent the so-called lower and backward castes has also entailed the deepening of democracy in India. For instance, in 1995, Kumari Mayawati became the first female Scheduled Caste Chief Minister in India when the Bahujan Samaj Party (BSP) ("People in Majority") won the State Assembly election in Uttar Pradesh.

**Indian secularism**

The 42nd Amendment of the Constitution of India enacted in 1976 made the country a "sovereign, socialist secular democratic republic." In India, secularism means the recognition and equal treatment of all religions by the state. It embraces religious pluralism and can be characterized as a sort of "multi-religiousness." Hence, Indian secularism is not synonymous with secularism in the West, French *laicité*, for example, that entails the separation of religion and the state.

The multi-religious character of Indian secularism manifests itself in many ways. First, schools set up by religious communities are entitled to state subsidies. Second, the state spends money on organizing Kumbh Melas[10] and other religious festivals and subsidizes Muslim Haj pilgrims. Third, the Income-tax Act of 1961 exempts charitable and religious organizations from paying taxes. Fourth, and most importantly, India does not have a uniform civil code: religious, personal laws continue to govern family relations such as marriage, divorce, maintenance, and guardianship. These personal laws, especially the Muslim Personal Law, are often a subject of heated debates.

The Shah Bano case of 1985 initially set off the battle over Muslim personal law. It began when a Muslim woman called Shah Bano Begum went to court demanding alimony from her husband who had divorced her. In the Supreme Court, she finally won the right to alimony under section 125 of the Criminal Procedure Code. The decision sparked protests among conservative Muslims. Fearing electoral defeat, the Congress government reversed the Supreme Court ruling; Rajiv Gandhi pushed through an Act of Parliament, which restricted the right of Muslim women to alimony. This decision had disastrous results for the Congress party; adherents of the *Hindutva* ideology interpreted the Shah Bano case as evidence of the Congress party's "pseudo-secularism" and minority appeasement (Bose 1997, 129). It enabled the BJP to pose as a defender of women's rights and to frame Muslims as anti-nationals for protesting against the Supreme Court order.

Today, Hindu nationalists continue to argue that Indian Muslims' refusal to have a common civil code prevents them from integrating into Indian society (Kinvall & Svensson 2010, 283). In 2017, the Lok Sabha passed a bill criminalizing the triple talaq practice that allows a Muslim man to divorce his wife by stating the word *talāq* (divorce) three times. Triple talaq is practiced by some Muslims in India, especially by the Sunni Hanafi School of jurisprudence. With the Muslim Women (Protection of Rights on Marriage) Bill, instant divorce in any form was made illegal and declared void.

[10] Kumbh Mela is a huge Hindu pilgrimage during which participants bathe or take a dip in the River Ganga.

**Fusing of Hindutva and modernization**

With Modi's ascension to the office of Prime Minister, the Union Council of Ministers has become populated by RSS *prachāraks* and supporters (Sen 2016, 183). However, Modi's election did not necessarily signal a growing popularity of the RSS ideology across the subcontinent; rather, as the longest serving Chief Minister of Gujarat, Narendra Modi combined Hindu nationalist politics with forward-looking economic modernization to appeal to a broad segment of the population. In the wake of the 2007 Gujarat Assembly election, he branded himself as the *vikās puruṣ* ("development man"), eschewing references to the 2002 communal violence (Jaffrelot 2011, 397). To demonstrate the focus on development and economic growth, in 2005–2006 the Gujarat government sanctioned 150 Special Economic Zone (SEZ) projects to boost manufacturing in the state (Spodek 2010, 396).

With his appointment as the Prime Minister, Modi has increasingly focused on a rhetoric of economic dynamism that seems to resonate with the aspirations of the consumer-oriented middle classes. Order, discipline, and cleanliness—in both parliamentary government and urban space—have also been at the forefront in government policies and rhetoric, appealing primarily to the urban middle classes. As Jaffrelot (2011, 222) states:

> The urban middle class obviously aspires to a more orderly day-to-day life and a kind of discipline that is regarded as a precondition for economic progress. This is one of the reasons for the attraction the BJP holds for this group, since it is known for its RSS background. The urban middle class also approves of the BJP's crusade against corruption, a theme that it has cashed in on despite allegations that some of its leaders had been involved in corruption. The common assumption is that parliamentary democracy not only needs to be disciplined; it also needs to be purified.

In November 2016, the BJP's vigorous campaign against corruption and terrorism culminated in the so-called demonetization drive involving the overnight nullification of all 500 and 1,000 rupee notes. According to Modi, counterfeit currency was used to finance terrorist activities. In a live television broadcast, Modi compared the demonetization to the Vedic purification ritual of *mahāyajña*, fusing "ancient Hinduism" and nationalism (see section 3.2). Through demonetization, India was to be purified from (Islamic) terrorism, black money, and rampant corruption. Modi's clever strategy, then, was to merge Hinduism with nationalism and the creation of a New India marked by development, discipline, and order. *Hindutva* is present, but only as an undercurrent.

The rhetoric of purification and order also figures prominently in the government's quest for modern, clean and green spaces. The quest has taken the form of urban development projects, the Smart Cities initiative, and the *Swachh Bharat Abhiyan* ("Clean India Mission"), among others.[11] Launched on October 2,

[11] The Smart Cities initiative seeks to transform India by developing one hundred Indian cities into smart cities through urban redevelopment and retrofitting. Ahmedabad has been selected as one of the planned Smart Cities.

2014, the birthday of Mahatma Gandhi, one of the biggest objectives of the *Swachh Bharat* mission is to clean the streets and to end open defecation by constructing toilets and monitoring people's toilet use. In the initiative's inauguration speech, Modi referred to Gandhi's dreams of "Quit India"[12] and "Clean India," urging people finally to fulfill the second dream by Gandhi's 150th birthday in 2019 (Modi 2014). Modi himself showed an example by wielding a broom on the streets of Delhi. Focusing on cleanliness, Modi has been able to harness the support of famous Bollywood actors and sports icons for the initiative, while the urban middle classes have also embraced the cleanliness mission (Sen 2016, 103).

Under Modi's rule, the accusation of "anti-nationalism" has become a common rhetorical weapon of *Hindutva* forces, used against students, journalists, intellectuals, artists, and other people critical of government practices or expressing worry about the growth of intolerance in the country. The term came to the forefront of national discussion when the Student Union President at the Jawaharlal Nehru University (JNU), a central public university located in New Delhi, was arrested. The arrested student, Kanhaiya Kumar, had allegedly raised "anti-India" slogans in a public demonstration held on the anniversary of Afzal Guru's execution (*The Hindu* 2016). Afzal Guru had been hanged three years earlier, having been convicted for attacking the Indian Parliament in 2001. The events caused a national outcry both in support of and against the students. Commenting on the case, the BJP National Secretary, Shrikant Sharma, said that the BJP would "expose anti-national forces who are intolerant of the Modi government" (*The Indian Express* 2016a). Forensic examination of voice samples recorded at the demonstration eventually proved that Kanhaiya Kumar had not been guilty of alleged sloganeering (*India Today* 2016), but the heated discussion on anti-nationalism has continued ever since.

Another term brought into Indian politics in recent years has been "pink revolution," used by Modi in his 2014 election campaign. As part of his campaign, Modi accused the Congress of supporting cow slaughter and meat export in order to promote what he called a "pink revolution," an expansion of the meat industry. With his statements, Modi has contributed to the zeal of so-called *gau rakṣāks*, cow vigilantes, in the country (Kamdar 2018, 186). Over the past few years, self-proclaimed cow protectors have attacked and even killed Dalits and Muslims accused of eating beef or killing cows.[13] Modi himself has not taken a firm stance against the atrocities committed by cow vigilantes, although he has asked state governments to keep dossiers on the vigilantes, and tweeted that "[t]he sacred practice of cow worship & the compassion of Gau Seva can't be misused by some miscreants posing as Gau Rakshaks" (Gandhi & Bardhan 2016). Since becoming Prime Minister, Modi has preferred to com-

[12] The Quit India Movement *(Bharat Chhodo Andolan)* was lauched in August 1942 in the Bombay session of the All India Congress Committee (AICC). Demanding an end to British rule in India, the movement encouraged non-violent civil disobedience.
[13] Between 2009 and 2019, there have been 281 incidents of hate crimes motivated by religious hatred. Cow protection has been a major factor in 77 of the incidents, with 74 of them occurring after Modi came to power in the central government (HateCrimeWatch 2019).

municate through Twitter, limiting his interactions with the media (Sen 2016, 106).

Narendra Modi is a forerunner among Indian politicians in his adoption of social media. In the 2014 election, social media played a significant role for the first time in the history of Indian democracy (Sen 2016). Modi's extensive use of Twitter and other popular social media has played an essential role in engaging the urban young population in politics and spreading the message of the BJP. During the 2014 election campaign, the BJP touted the India272+ online volunteer platform, where supporters could connect with BJP leaders, organize events at the local level, and compete in convincing others to pledge support for Modi (Chadha & Guha 2016, 4396). When Modi took the office of the Prime Minister, he was the sixth most followed world leader on Twitter and had 16 million likes on Facebook.

Modi has also launched the NaMo mobile application, owned by himself, which enables people to get instant updates on the government's work. In March 2017, during the Hindu Holi festival that celebrates the triumph of good over evil, Modi announced the #IAmNewIndia nation-building campaign in the NaMo app. Presented as "a pledge to build a new India," the campaign encourages people to commit to one of nine goals, including working toward a corruption-free India and *Swachh Bharat*, being a "job creator, not job seeker," encouraging women-led development, and undertaking more cashless transactions (Modi 2017). #IAmNewIndia effectively spreads Modi's political message across India. It also strengthens his image as a techno-savvy "development man," familiar with selfies but always prepared to raise a trident (Pal 2015, 386).

In sum, Hindu nationalism is a product of modernity, rather than a manifestation of primordial attachments or a result of the decay of the traditional society (van der Veer 1996). Communalism must not be seen in binary opposition to secularism—the two are implicated in one another (Bose 1997). Colonialists, orientalists, Hindu nationalist organizations, Muslim separatists, and the Congress regime have all played roles in the development of Hindu nationalism, which is also a reaction against a growing egalitarianism in India and is thus an ideology appealing to the middle classes and the upper castes. There is also a clear connection between the ascendance of the BJP, the economic reforms in India, the rise of a consumerist-oriented, new middle class, and the rapid spread of mass media (Eriksen 2002, 157). Under Modi's rule, the ideology of *Hindutva* has increasingly been fused with the discourses of development, cleanliness, and order, and spread effectively through social media. Finally, *Hindutva* is the assertion of Hindu identity as opposed to Muslim identity (Eriksen 2002, 158), and is only able to thrive by projecting Muslims as the Other.

## 1.3 Four stories: Introducing Sadbhavna Nagar

Hindu nationalism is a product of modernity shaped by various actors. In Sadbhavna Nagar, Ahmedabad, the grass-root entanglements of Hindu nationalism and development can be examined in the traditional stronghold of Modi and Hindu nationalism.

*Cārmaliyā* ("four stories") is a frequently used Gujarati vernacular term for government housing built under the Basic Services for the Urban Poor (BSUP) program. The BSUP is a component of the Indian central government's city modernization scheme, the Jawaharlal Nehru National Urban Renewal Mission (JnNURM), launched in 2005. Between 2005 and 2012, residents of informal settlements displaced by development projects were resettled in BSUP apartments in different relocation sites. The total cost of each dwelling unit, including the land, was 425,000 rupees (approx. 5,400 euros at the time of writing). Out of this sum, 50% was borne by the central government, 20% by the Gujarat government and 30% jointly by the municipal corporation and the individual household (Desai 2014, 23).

Apartments in the city's numerous resettlement sites were primarily allotted through a random, computerized drawing of lots leading to the breaking up of established social networks (Desai 2014). Consequently, people previously unknown to each other became neighbors in the BSUP sites. In 2016, the neighborhoods of Vatva and Odhav in eastern Ahmedabad had the largest concentrations of relocation sites in the city. Vatva contained seven resettlement sites altogether, out of which two were still empty and one half-empty at the time of my fieldwork.

Sadbhavna Nagar, the field site of this study, is the most populous of Vatva's seven resettlement sites. It consists of 77 buildings, each of which holds 32 apartments for a total of 2,464 apartments. Sadbhavna Nagar is the only resettlement site in Ahmedabad in which Hindus and Muslims live together. Hindu residents of Sadbhavna Nagar belong to various regional, ethnic, and caste groups including Bhois, Thakors, Rabaris, Gawarias, Chaudhris, Devipujaks, Marathis, Marwaris, Bhaiyajis, Sindhis, and Vaghris.[14] Sindhis considered themselves to be the highest ranking Hindu group in the area. Economically, too, the Sindhis were relatively well-off, many men having regular jobs in the textile industry or as auto-rickshaw drivers, while some of the younger Sindhis were college-educated and performed middle-class work. Vaghris and Devipujaks were regarded as the lowest-ranking Hindu groups in Sadbhavna Nagar, with Vaghris the most numerous. Marathis, Marwaris, and Bhaiyajis were distinguished from other groups based on their origin in Maharashtra, Rajasthan, and Uttar Pradesh, respectively. Thakors, Rabaris, Bhois, Chaudhris, Devipujaks, and Gawarias were relatively few in number.

[14] This classification is based on my interviewees' self-identification as a member of a certain *jāti*. The word *jāti* refers not only to caste in the sense of hereditary occupational groups but to various kinds of generic categories (Marriott & Inden 1977).

Muslims were Sunnis who belonged to Sayyid, Shaikh, Siddi, Malek, Pathan, and Rangrezi communities or clans, but they rarely brought up the subject of social stratification in interviews, referring to themselves primarily as *muselmān* ("Muslim"). In distinction to Hindus, Muslims usually emphasized the equality of all except for Siddis—an ethnic group descended from the Bantu people who were endogamous and few in number—whose dark skin and curly hair sometime provoked racist comment.

FIGURE 1.4. View of Sadbhavna Nagar, November 2015.

There was also a small community of third-gender people, known locally as *kinnar* or *masibā* living in Sadbhavna Nagar,[15] led by a guru, herself a senior *kinnar*, as is customary. Two third-gender people also lived on their own, one of whom said she was born a Muslim, but now worshipped "several gods," transgressing the Hindu–Muslim division. All the *kinnars* living in Sadbhavna Nagar had adopted female names, and apart from one, earned their livelihoods through ritual begging at weddings and other social functions. The *kinnars* were both revered and ridiculed of by other residents of the site. Children, for instance, threw insults at *kinnars* on one occasion but asked for their blessing on another.

Apart from seasonal migrant workers, poor people who could not afford to live anywhere else in the city, and immigrants coming from Bangladesh, residents all had been displaced from the Sabarmati Riverfront (affected by the Sabarmati Riverfront Development Project), the Kankaria Lakefront (affected by the Kankaria Lakefront Development Project), and the neighborhood of Dani

[15] The Khariwadi slum on the eastern side of the River Sabarmati had been inhabited by *kinnars* and Vaghris (D'Costa & Das 2002, 204).

Limda (affected by the Bus Rapid Transit System project). Due to its diversity, residents, as well as outsiders, called the site a "mixed" neighborhood, although the notion primarily referred to the Hindu–Muslim copresence.

Religious divisions were cemented into the spatial structure of the site: Hindus mainly inhabited the southeastern part whereas the northern section was predominantly Muslim. The all-Muslim resettlement site of Vasant Gajendra Gadkar Nagar (VGG Nagar) bordered Sadbhavna Nagar in the north. Between the two resettlement sites ran the busy Narol–Vatva Road that led to the chemical industrial park of GIDC Vatva. A small police station had been erected beside the road to curb communal violence and illegal activities including money extortion, robbery, bootlegging, drug trade, prostitution, and rapes in the resettlement sites.

During my fieldwork in 2015–2016, male residents of Sadbhavna Nagar commonly worked as rickshaw drivers, street traders, security guards, artisans, shopkeepers, sales clerks, and waste pickers. The monthly income of a security guard was 6,000 rupees (approx. 78 euros) a month, whereas a sales clerk could earn around 9,000 rupees (approx. 117 euros).[16] Many men, however, earned much less. They worked as day laborers fixing tires, painting houses, collecting plastic and carrying heavy loads with no guarantee of regular employment. In order to secure their *rojī rotī*, daily bread, they had to travel daily to the city center to search for work. If they did manage to find work for the day, the starting level of their wages was 100 to 300 rupees (approx. 1,3–4 euros).

As Sadbhavna Nagar is located 12 kilometers from the Old City where most of the men worked, travel expenses accounted for a significant portion of their wages—a round trip in a shared auto-rickshaw cost 30 rupees (approx. 40 cents). Shared auto-rickshaws were locally known as *shuttle autos*, and they operated on fixed routes loading and unloading passengers at both ends of the ride. It was not only an affordable mode of transportation but also quick and easy in comparison to the local bus.

Many lower-caste women had been employed as domestic workers in middle- and upper-class bungalows in the affluent parts of the city—only Sindhi women had been housewives before the resettlement. In Vatva, domestic employment was not readily available, but some women had still managed to find such work there or in nearby areas. One could earn around 3,000 rupees (approx. 39 euros) per month by cleaning floors and washing laundry in various households. In addition to domestic work, both Hindu and Muslim women were involved in seasonal work: working at weddings (washing dishes, playing music), as kite makers, as bakers, or as flower sellers. Vending vegetables, fish, and tobacco products, as well as seamstress work, were income-generating activities that could be practiced year-round. Nevertheless, nearly all my informants complained about the lack of work and the high travel expenses. Accord-

[16] In 2015–2016, the Gujarat per capita income was 140,273 rupees (approx. 1,760 euros) (Economic and Statistical Organisation 2017). The state-specific poverty line, established by the Planning Commission in 2011–2012, is a monthly income of 1,152 rupees (approx. 14.5 euros) in the urban areas and 932 rupees (approx. 12 euros) in the rural areas (Government of India 2013).

ing to them, resettlement had resulted in increased impoverishment. Many women had dropped out of income-earning activities entirely due to the distance and travel costs.

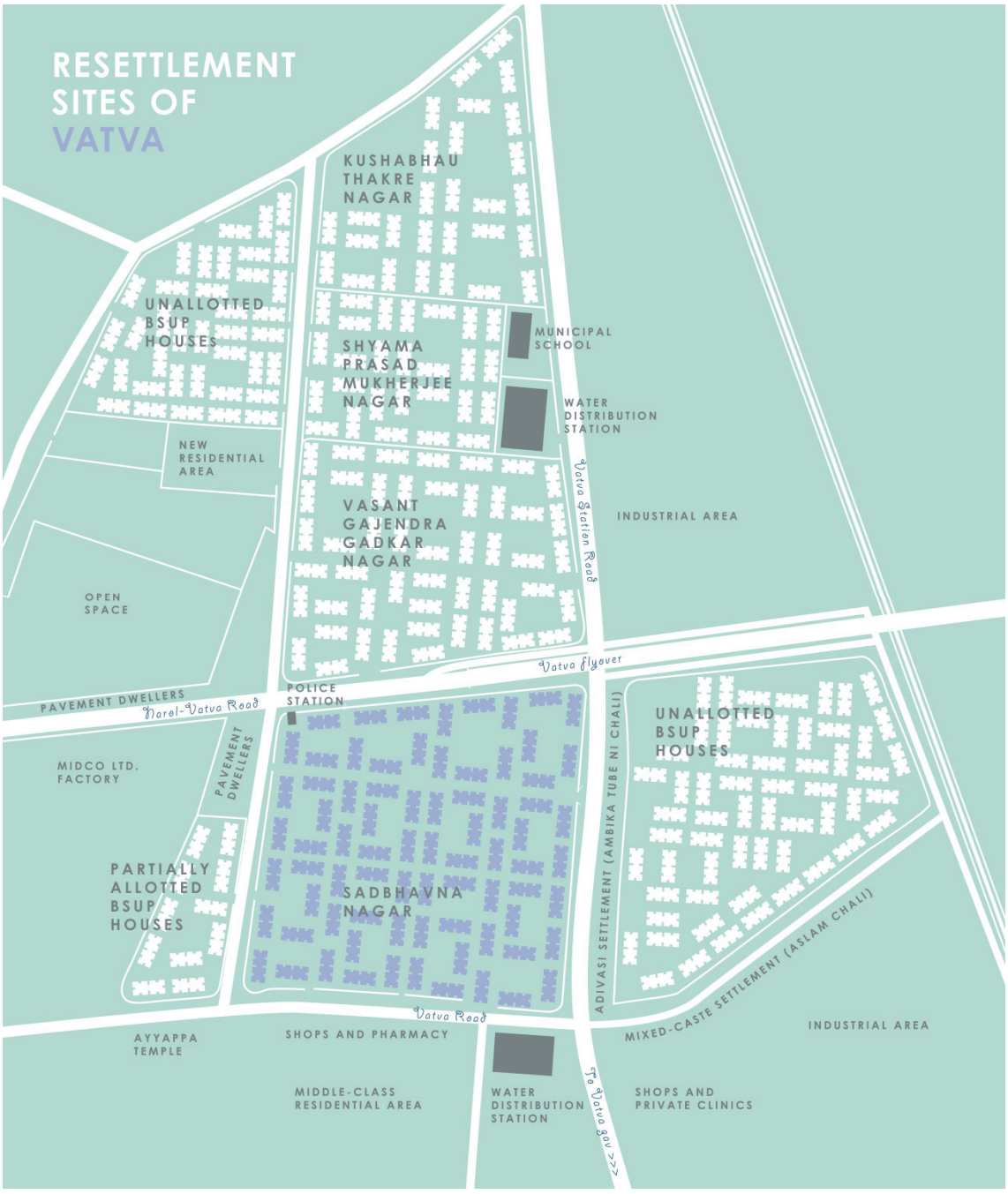


FIGURE 1.5. Map of Vatva resettlement sites (situation in January 2016).

## 1.4 Development-induced displacement and resettlement (DIDR)

The resettlement experience I have described above is usually termed DIDR, which means the movement of people from one place to another to acquire or divert public land for business purposes and development projects (IDMC 2016, 10). DIDR differs from the dislocation experienced by war refugees, victims of natural and technological disasters, and participants in voluntary relocation schemes in that the displaced do not have the choice to remain or to return to their homes (Oliver-Smith 2009, 4)—their uprooting is forced and permanent. According to an estimate by the World Bank's Environment Department, the number of people physically displaced due to dam construction, urban development, and transportation and infrastructure projects is ten million per year globally (Stanley 2004). In India, the number of people displaced by development is estimated to be among the highest in the world (IDMC 2016). Based on various studies, W. Fernandes (2004; 2007) estimates the number of displaced persons (DPs) or project-affected persons (PAPs)[17] to have been 60 million between 1947 and 2000. Of all the DPs/PAPs, 40% were members of tribal communities (Scheduled Tribes), whereas 20% were Dalits (Scheduled Castes), and another 20% belonged to the so-called Backward Classes.[18] Globally, too, people displaced by development have often belonged to low-income groups (e.g., Harms 2013; Kolling 2016; Nuijten, Koster & de Vries 2012), and to indigenous communities or ethnic minorities (e.g., Baird & Shoemaker 2007; Scudder 1993).

In India and elsewhere, "development" has often left the resettled communities worse off than they were before (de Wet 1991; Martin & Mathema 2010). The negative consequences of resettlement reach beyond the loss of land. Displacement specialists have defined the "resettlement effect" as the "loss of physical and non-physical assets, including homes, communities, productive land, income-earning assets and sources, subsistence resources, cultural sites, social structures, networks and ties, cultural identity and mutual help mechanisms" (Downing 2002, 3). Baviskar (2009), for example, has shown how the project of making Delhi a "clean and green" national capital entailed the loss of shelter and income for the urban poor who were resettled in faraway, marginal areas. U. Rao (2010) has similarly demonstrated that resettled people struggle for survival under harsh conditions in Delhi's peripheral resettlement sites.

Anthropologists have collaborated with civil society actors and international organizations to articulate internationally recognized standards for involuntary resettlement. Nevertheless, national laws that rarely recognize social issues provide significant challenges to these efforts (Price 2009, 278). Indeed, India only adopted legislation to protect displaced people in September 2013. The Right to Fair Compensation and Transparency in Land Acquisition, Reset-

17 A project-affected person (PAP) is not necessarily physically displaced. The PAP category includes people that lose their access to livelihoods due to development projects.
18 Scheduled Caste (SC), Scheduled Tribe (ST), and Other Backward Class (OBC) are collective terms used to classify socially and educationally disadvantaged people who are entitled to quotas in education and government employment in India.

tlement and Rehabilitation Act (LARR) replaced the British-era Land Acquisition Act of 1894, which was silent on the issues of resettlement, rehabilitation and compensation for the displaced (Cernea 2013). Before the national law guiding resettlement and rehabilitation, some states in India had formulated their own policies and laws, or, alternately, managed relocation in an ad hoc, project-specific manner (H. M. Mathur 2009; 2013). The latter was the case with Ahmedabad's three major development projects of the 2000s—no citywide resettlement policy existed (Mahadevia et al. 2014). In the case of the Sabarmati Riverfront Development Project, the resettlement and rehabilitation (R&R) policy was ultimately drafted as a result of grassroots resistance and court rulings (Desai 2014).[19]

The term "development-induced displacement and resettlement" first started to appear in scientific publications in the mid-1980s with the appearance of a volume edited by Michael M. Cernea (1985) and published by the World Bank. Since then, a strand of literature has applied Cernea's (1997; 2000) Impoverishment Risks and Reconstruction (IRR) model to massive forced displacement and resettlement (e.g., Bartolomé 1993; Mahapatra 1999; Patel & Mandhyan 2014; Patel, Sliuzas & Mathur 2015). The IRR model identifies eight inherent risks of impoverishment (i.e., landlessness, joblessness, homelessness, marginalization, increased morbidity, food insecurity, loss of access to common property resources, community disarticulation), and devises strategies to counteract these risks. The methodological novelty of the IRR model derives from the integration of impoverishment risk analysis with recovery analysis, which also enables its use as a "tool for action" (Mahapatra 1999, 194).

The IRR model's term, "community disarticulation," refers to the disruption of kinship networks and other social ties. Indeed, the social and cultural complexities of resettlement have received considerable interest from anthropologists since the 1950s (Price 2009). A pioneering work was Thayer Scudder and Elizabeth Colson's long-term research among the Tonga ethnic group in the Gwembe Valley, Zambia. Their study focused on displacement and resettlement due to the construction of a hydroelectric dam across the Zambezi River. Based on their ethnographic research, Scudder and Colson (1982) formulated a diachronic conceptual model for the study of physiological, psychological, and socio-cultural stress that arises as people go through the process of displacement and resettlement. The Scudder–Colson model identifies four stages common to different types of displacement: recruitment, transition, potential development, and incorporation/handing over. However, the fourth stage of the model, handing over to the next generation, often remains unattained. The Gwembe Tonga, for instance, have been trapped in a limbo of transition due to inadequate policy and implementation of the resettlement process (Scudder 2009). Consequently, Cernea (2000, 15) points out that the diachronic Scudder–Colson model is not intended to apply to resettlement operations that fail.

[19] Urban development projects and the associated resettlement policies specific to Ahmedabad are examined in more detail in Chapter 4.

More recently, Downing and Garcia-Downing (2009) have called for a better understanding of the psychological, social, and cultural risks of displacement. Involuntary displacement necessarily destabilizes the safety and predictability of "routine culture," creating chaos and tension. Downing and Garcia-Downing stress the importance of establishing new, meaningful cultural routines that stabilize community life in cases where involuntary resettlement cannot be avoided. Their work suggests very concrete ways of mitigating risks such as covering the costs of private school tuition in cases where displacement and resettlement make it difficult or impossible for children to enroll in government schools (Downing & Garcia-Downing 2009, 247). However, people displaced by development are often in a vulnerable position to begin with, belonging to ethnic minorities and lower-class communities. Consequently, their lives could not have been characterized as "safe" and "predictable" even prior to displacement.

A critical dimension often left unaccounted for in resettlement policy and practice is gender. Bisht (2009) has analyzed the impact of displacement on women in the context of the Tehri hydro-electric project in the Indian state of Uttarakhand and argues that current Indian resettlement policies are largely gender-biased. Bisht emphasizes that disempowerment and marginalization resulting from displacement must be examined "through the experiential lens of the women affected" since women experience displacement in a qualitatively different way from men (Bisht 2009, 314). Colson (2004) similarly argues that people's different circumstances and gender-based needs tend to be overlooked when their land is wanted for economic reasons—the uprooted become the "ungendered uprooted" (see also Indra 2004; L. Mehta 2009).

In Ahmedabad, displacement has led to the socio-spatial marginalization of the urban poor in the form of lost livelihoods, social disarticulation, increased travel expenses, and children dropping out of school (I. Chatterjee 2014a; Desai 2014; R. Joshi 2014; Patel et al. 2015; see also Mahadevia et al. 2014).[20] Desai's (2014) study offers a comprehensive biography of the Sabarmati Riverfront Development Project, focusing on municipal politics, court rulings, and riverfront-dwellers' struggles in the process of planning and implementing the project between 2004 and 2012. I. Chatterjee (2014a, 144) uses the case of the SRFDP to develop the term "plebeianization," which characterizes the global process whereby "the common people (class, racial, and ethnic poor) move into resettlement sites and are containerized in these spaces of resettlement." Patel, Sliuzas, and Mathur (2015), for their part, apply Cernea's IRR model to examine how the eight interlinked risks of impoverishment have materialized in the context of urban renewal and displacement of the urban poor. Their primary data, gathered in 2011, consists of a household survey of altogether 396 households in different resettlement sites (including Vatva), in the interim site of Ganeshna-

[20] Other researchers have made similar observations in other locations, e.g. Hammar (2017) in Bulawayo, Zimbabwe; Patel and Madhyan (2014) in Indore, India; Koster and Nuijten (2012) in Recife, Brazil; and Gebre (2008) and Hassen & Soressa (2018) in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia.

gar, and in households that continue to reside in the demolished site. While Desai (2014) argues that the SRFDP was exclusionary in its planning, implementation, and management, Patel et al. (2015) demonstrate that displacement has led to increasing impoverishment for the displaced, relocation distance being the most significant cause.

More recently, Mahadevia et al. (2016a; 2016b; 2016c; 2016d; 2016e) and Desai (2018) have examined how governance and planning of resettlement sites affect conflict and violence in various locations in Ahmedabad. The policy briefs by Mahadevia et al. focus on Vatva resettlement sites, in particular, coining the notion of "infrastructural conflicts" to capture the idea that material infrastructure can shape and redirect social life, and can even play an active part in triggering social conflicts (2016b, 4). Desai develops the notion further in her article on the politics of water supply and violence in Vatva resettlement sites, including Sadbhavna Nagar. She suggests that infrastructural violence does not result from the lack of physical water infrastructure, but is produced by undermining residents' capacities to operate and maintain the infrastructure through the socially disruptive allotment procedure (Desai 2018, 102–103).

My study adds to the existing body of literature empirically describing the effects of development-induced displacement and resettlement in Ahmedabad. The study is based on long-term personal relationships between researcher and research participants in one particular resettlement site, that of Sadbhavna Nagar in Vatva. The importance of this research lies in its in-depth, holistic, and long-term examination of the everyday practices and perceptions of people a few years after resettlement. It differs from earlier research on resettlement sites in Ahmedabad (Desai 2018; Mahadevia et al. 2016a–e; Patel et al. 2015) in analyzing how displacement and resettlement are experienced, and how these experiences shape people's perceptions of the state and their relations to it. In the manner of Ramakrishnan (2014), who has studied the aftermath of resettlement in the Bawana resettlement site in Delhi, my aim is to examine how resettled people discursively make sense of their displacement and how they renegotiate their relationship to the state. My analysis identifies challenges in local state–citizen relations in a vulnerable situation. The results can be used by state institutions, development agencies, and civil society organizations to foster a sense of inclusion and belonging in a political community in the aftermath of resettlement.

## 1.5 Worlding: Interventions and imaginaries

Ahmedabad's three major urban development projects of the 2000s, all involving displacement of the urban poor, were employed as tools of world-class city making. This section presents the framework of worlding and situates the study in relation to recent scholarship on world-class city making in India and beyond.

The emergence of the notion of "world-class" as a rallying point for Indian city residents and administrators can be traced back to the early 1990s when India was on the verge of defaulting on its financial obligations due to the international debt burden. To qualify for a loan backed by the International Monetary Fund, India had to replace the Nehru–Mahalanobis strategy of state-led development with a set of neoliberal policies. The New Economic Policy (NEP) adopted by the central government in 1991 included opening up the economy to foreign competition, relaxing restrictions on economic activities, and increasing the participation of private actors in all sectors of the economy. As governmental regulation was eased, the role of the Indian state in the development process gradually shifted from planner to manager, and policies of welfare provision were displaced in favor of a competitive market logic (Kurien 1994, 94). At the same time, the liberalizing economy enabled new kinds of lifestyles and consumption practices that were unavailable at the time of state-controlled markets (L. Fernandes 2004). As Kaur and Hansen (2016, 268) state, "[a]n entirely new world that so far only seemed possible in the realm of the imagination now appeared to be within India's reach."

The catchword "world-class" has become an effective political tool for city elites, state agencies, and corporate actors in their efforts to secure an endorsement for refashioning urban landscapes (Baviskar 2014, 138). Indian municipalities, state governments, and the central government have sought to produce the world-class city primarily by means of slum evictions, the creation of Special Economic Zones (SEZs), and the construction of new peri-urban townships that provide world-class lifestyles for the booming middle classes (A. Roy 2011a, 261). Another central force has been the formulation of the Jawaharlal Nehru National Urban Renewal Mission (JnNURM). Launched in 2005 by the central government, the JnNURM was the most significant urban planning scheme in independent India. The scheme allocated funds to civic bodies and state governments, provided that they were willing to embrace governance reforms including refinements in property tax collection and rent control laws, and the repeal of the Urban Land Ceiling and Regulation Act (ULCRA). The 1976 act had imposed a ceiling on ownership and possession of vacant land in urban areas, and entitled the state to acquire land over the ceiling limit. With the repeal of the ULCRA, the land market was to be opened up for competitive forces.

The reforms under the JnNURM were designed to improve the service delivery, the infrastructure, and the efficiency of governance while advocating privatization and public–private partnerships. As A. Roy (2011a, 261) points out, this rationale framed urban development in the "dominant language of 'private-sector efficiencies.'" The JnNURM was intended "not only to improve urban infrastructure, but also to overcome legal and institutional barriers to development and to incentivize local political actors to pursue large urban development projects" (Shatkin & Vidyarthi 2014, 11). The inclusion of the Basic Services for the Urban Poor (BSUP) component in the JnNURM enabled municipal governments, including the AMC, to bring in significant private sector actors to build public housing, something not possible under the AMC's former ap-

proach to shelter for the poor, which involved in situ development of slum neighborhoods (Mahadevia et al. 2014, 24).[21] The incorporation of the BSUP component can be seen as an effort to deal with the challenge of making cities appealing for transnational investment meanwhile ensuring that large segments of the population do not feel left behind (see Segbers 2005). As Segbers (2005, 5) notes, the challenge of balancing global competitiveness and internal viability affects administrations in most major cities in the southern hemisphere. The JnNURM succeeded in making Indian cities attractive for transnational investment without completely neglecting the needs of the disadvantaged sectors of society.

Since the launching of the JnNURM, cities all over India from Delhi to Chennai, from Kolkata to Mumbai, and from Ahmedabad to Bangalore, have stated their intentions to become world-class. The year 2005 can be identified as an important landmark for Ahmedabad's world-class city aspirations, as in that year the Government of India declared Ahmedabad to be a "mega city." The mega city tag elevated Ahmedabad to the company of New Delhi, Kolkata, Mumbai, Chennai, Bangalore, and Hyderabad and entitled the city to get financial assistance for aesthetic improvement under the JnNURM initiative (Desai 2012a; Shatkin 2014). The declaration also provided an opportunity for the elites and the middle classes to realize their goals regarding the future of Ahmedabad (Desai 2012a; M. Mehta 2016). An initiative arose to advocate an image of Ahmedabad as a global city of business and tourism, and to abolish "outsider perceptions" of it as a violent city—an understanding spurred, in particular, by the 2002 Hindu–Muslim violence in Gujarat (Desai 2012a). Government officials, business elites, and middle-class citizens all aspired to transform Ahmedabad into a world-class city, a mission that Mahadevia (2011) calls "Branding Ahmedabad."

Economic hubs such as Dubai, London, New York, Shanghai, Singapore, and Tokyo provide both inspiration and a yardstick for cities' endeavors to "beautify," "sanitize," and "revitalize" their urban spaces. The construction of luxury malls, multiplex movie theaters, rapid transit systems, sports stadiums, and flyover bridges redefines the respective images of the cities as dynamic and globally competitive. However, it also entails displacement for the urban poor in the form of the eviction of hawkers, the commercialization of public space, and forced displacement and resettlement (e.g., Banerjee-Guha 2009; Batra 2008; Baviskar 2009; Bhan 2016; Boano, Lamarca & Hunter 2011; I. Chatterjee 2014b; Ghertner 2015; R. Joshi 2014; Kundu & Mahadevia 2002; U. Rao 2010; Weinstein 2014). Meanwhile, the success of restructuring initiatives has varied from city to city. Whereas Delhi, Chennai, and Ahmedabad, among others, have been able to carry out large-scale resettlement projects, many of the intended projects have come to a standstill in Kolkata due to intense protest (A. Roy 2011a).

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[21] Slum Networking Program (SNP) aimed at in-situ improvement of living conditions in slum neighborhoods by bringing together the AMC, the private sector, NGOs, slum-based CBOs (community-based organizations), and international funding agencies (Baruah 2010). The SNP, also known as Parivartan, was implemented in 1996–2009 (Mahadevia et al. 2014, 25).

The mythic "phantasmagoria" of the world-class city (A. Roy 2011a, 260) has immense appeal not only in India but in megalopolises across the world, from Accra (Watson 2014) to Santiago (Ureta 2015), from Kinshasa (De Boeck 2012) to Jakarta (Murray 2017), and from Nairobi (Myers 2015) to Seattle (T. Gibson 2004). The terms "world-class city" and "world city" have gained currency among policy-makers and the media, but also in academic literature. However, McDonald (2008, 4–6) argues that much world city research has been silent on the impacts of neoliberal policy-making on inequality, either characterizing globalization and capitalist development in overtly positive terms or seeing world-cityness as an unavoidable but manageable process. McDonald regards this discourse as part of the "world city syndrome" since it fails to take into account alternative urban visions. Focusing on the linkages of market-oriented growth and inequality in Cape Town, he suggests that the South African metropolis has become an "ideal" world-class city not because of its magnetic ability to attract foreign capital but due to its division into a transnational elite core and a low-income periphery (McDonald 2008). The world-class city, then, is an unequal, neoliberal city.

The creation of world-class cities modeled after economic hubs should not be seen straightforwardly as indicating homogenization. Although economic liberalization (dictated by the International Monetary Fund) appears to have become a global condition, neoliberalism unfolds in diverse ways in different cities—neoliberal ideas interact with local institutions leading to different kinds of hybrid combinations (Baeten 2012; Ong 2011). Instead of approaching neoliberalism as a homogenizing West-led hegemonic project, then, we should examine the "actually existing neoliberalism" (Brenner & Theodore 2002, 349) or "homegrown neoliberalism" (A. Roy 2011a, 260–264), paying attention to the local groundings of the neoliberal logic; the JnNURM, for instance, is an example of how neoliberal logic was taken up and articulated into a state-led, urban reform initiative in India. Nevertheless, neoliberal urban development initiatives are translocal in their attempts "to participate in a common visual and conceptual paradigm of what it means to be modern" (Larkin 2013, 333) through place-marketing strategies, public–private partnerships, and modern infrastructure projects. Ong (2011) calls this process of centering value, whether through development projects or other initiatives, the "worlding" of cities.

In the words of McCann, Roy, and Ward (2013, 586), worlding "emphasizes the practices of intervention and imagination through which cities come to be positioned in cartographies of reason." Worlding includes practices seeking to center, generate, and harness global regimes of value (A. Roy 2011b, 312), for example, by modeling "exemplary" practices from elsewhere (Hoffman 2011), by branding (Haines 2011) and inter-referencing cities (Ong 2011), and by the speculative urbanism of real estate and urban restructuring (Goldman 2011). According to Ong (2011, 12), worlding practices consist of "situated everyday practices that imagine and shape alternative social visions and configurations than what already exists in a given context."

Emphasizing *practice* over form, the worlding approach avoids the hierarchical categorization of the world's cities into centers and peripheries—a tendency for which Friedmann's (1986) "world city" and Sassen's (1991) "global city" theory have been criticized (J. Robinson 2002). As Ong (2011) notes, the privileging of global capitalism over other processes that shape cities subsumes the particularity of urban development everywhere in the world under the rubric of neoliberal globalization. Worlding, on the other hand, unsettles the core–periphery geography and enables an orientation to the postcolonial world-class city that does not attribute its formation to a single metanarrative, whether neoliberalism or subaltern agency (see Ong 2011). World-class cities are formed "through specific combinations of the past and the future, the postcolonial and the metropolitan, the global and the situated" (Ong 2011, 10).

An example of this formation is the fact that urban restructuring initiatives are not only related to cities' competition over global capital. Mega infrastructure projects, which feature importantly in capital cities of the so-called Global South, are often justified by the development of the nation. Writing in the context of Jakarta, Kusno (2004, 2377) calls this "nationalist urbanism." Indeed, having a national capital city with impressive "world-class" architecture testifies to the whole nation's ascendancy. The materiality of infrastructure and architecture figure importantly in manifesting that a city has, indeed, joined the league of world-class cities and transcended its past to move into a new, global era. In India, too, the world-class city is closely linked to national pride (Rao et al. 2010) and the making of a New India, "a signifier of a new world of affluence, enterprise, techno-mobility, consumption and fresh market opportunities that an economically stagnant Western world is in search of" (Kaur & Hansen 2016, 266). Worlding, hence, is also a project of *national imagineering and branding* that produces India as a country of influence on the global stage.

In the current political atmosphere of Hindu nationalism, the national imagineering is based on a rather narrow, exclusionary view of India as an ancient Hindu civilization. As Kaur and Hansen (2016, 267) note, "'[n]ew' India is premised on a muscular nationalism espousing a (Hindu) civilisational narrative of the nation and celebrating the achievements and cultural predilections of a largely upper caste Hindu elite and middle class." In contemporary India, we see an alliance between neoliberal development and aggressive religious nationalism spearheaded by the BJP.

Worlding is not only a set of concrete policies, but also involves the production and circulation of truthclaims (A. Roy 2011b, 314), and the "cultivation of desirable citizen-subjects" (Hoffman 2011, 56). The rationality of what Ghertner (2011; 2015) calls the "world-class aesthetic" shapes the contours of belonging and citizenship, encouraging the emergence of citizens whose appearance, conduct, and dwellings fit the landscape of the world-class city. Spatial rights, including the right to stay put and build a future where one lives, are increasingly evaluated based on appearance. Besides the conventional procedures of mapping and surveying, aesthetic norms play an important part in defining the

living spaces of the poor as out of place and, consequently, in justifying their removal (Ghertner 2015; see also Bhan 2009).

The rationality of the world-class aesthetic is disseminated in the form of discursive practices such as bourgeois nuisance talk—depictions of slums as "zones of incivility that violate normalized codes of urban conduct and appearance" (Ghertner 2012, 1162)—in representations of slum-dwellers as "pickpockets" and "encroachers" on public space (Bhan 2016; see also Truelove & Mawdsley 2011), and in middle-class activists' definitions of citizens as being distinct from hawkers and other marginal groups (Anjaria 2009). It is also manifested materially in the form of demolitions of settlements that are deemed illegal based on certain visual markers (Ghertner 2011; 2015). As a particular way of seeing, the world-class aesthetic contributes to the stigmatization of the urban poor and their living places as "illegal," "immoral," and "unhygienic."

However, the attainment of a world-class city is not only the desire of the elite and the middle classes or the result of top-down implementation of policy (U. Rao 2016). Drawing from fieldwork in a Delhi resettlement colony, urban anthropologist Ursula Rao (2016, 78) contends that the poor, too, aspire to greener, cleaner cities. Ghertner (2011, 281) similarly argues that various agents can find common ground within the world-class city project because of its focus on the dissemination of a compelling vision of the future. My study builds on the work of Ghertner (2011; 2015), A. Roy (2011b), and Rao (2016) in examining how marginalized urban dwellers in India relate to the world-class city vision. As Roy (2011b, 313) argues, worlding is not only about harnessing global regimes of value, but includes the anticipatory politics of various groups. As I show, displaced and resettled people are active agents, rather than passive recipients, in the worlding of Ahmedabad.

## 1.6 Research questions

I examine state representations, state–citizen relations, and nation-building in the context of worlding Ahmedabad through three questions. First, I ask: *How are the good citizen, the state, and the nation imagineered in the context of worlding Ahmedabad?* The world-class city is not only a local project of city engineering but a part of a broader nation-building initiative: a future-oriented effort to imagine and construct a New India. I analyze world-class city making using the notion of *imagineering*, a hybrid of creative imagination and engineering. World-class city making is also used by the state to imagineer itself, in other words, to reconstruct its stateness through architecture, infrastructure, and public spectacle, and to inculcate a particular kind of political subjectivity in the minds and bodies of the city–dwellers.

Second, I ask: *How do displaced people perceive what the state is, what it does, and what it should do according to their discourses and ways of claim-making?* I define these perceptions about the state as *state imaginaries*. They are formed and shaped as a result of state representations and actual workings of the state in

people's everyday lives. My examination points to challenges in local state–citizen relations and provides information about the legitimacy of the Modi-led state in the eyes of poor urban dwellers. By "legitimacy," I refer to citizens' acceptance of state authority, determined by their "broad sense of a stake in the nation; their ability to consent and dissent; and the state's response to social contestations and grievances" (Shani 2010, 148).

Third, I ask: *What are the roles of documents and infrastructure in forming displaced people's citizenship?* Approaching citizenship through material artifacts, I demonstrate how objects, and practices concerned with obtaining them, entangle the state in both the formal and the informal spheres and give rise to new dependencies beyond the purview of the state. Answering this question allows a more nuanced and less dichotomous understanding of formal and informal relations, on the one hand, and human and non-human agency, on the other, showing how they are intertwined in displaced people's everyday reality of citizenship.

## 1.7 Structure of the study

In Chapter 2, I present my data and the methods of my research. I also discuss ethical issues and my positioning as a researcher. Chapter 3 presents the theoretical framework and the conceptual tools of the study, drawing on the anthropology of the state, bureaucracy, and citizenship. Chapter 4 explores the reconstruction of good citizenship, the state, and the nation in the context of the Sabarmati Riverfront Development Project, the Kankaria Lakefront Development Project, and the Bus Rapid Transit System project. Chapter 5 analyzes resettled people's state imaginaries, tracing their understanding and ideas about what the state is, what it does, and what it should do. Chapters 6 and 7 examine how differentiated citizenship materializes through entanglements of state and non-state actors, displaced people, concrete resettlement housing, and paper documents. Chapter 8 continues fleshing out differentiated citizenship by exploring the material and metaphorical spaces available to the Muslim minority. Finally, Chapter 9 summarizes my key findings and discusses the contribution made by the study to anthropology, policy, and design.

# 2 METHODS AND MATERIALS

"Here it is, Vatva railway station," the rickshaw driver said. It was March 25, 2015, and I had been in Ahmedabad for four days. I was staying as a paying guest in a family home in western Ahmedabad while searching for an apartment in Vatva. My partner had not yet arrived in India. I had taken a rickshaw from the Paldi area located close to the western riverfront of the Sabarmati and asked the driver to drop me off by the Vatva railway station, an 11-kilometer ride. From Google Maps, I had learned that Vatva's resettlement houses were located next to the railway station. After about a 40-minute drive, including a visit to Maninagar railway station (the driver had a hard time understanding that I actually wanted to go to Vatva, not Maninagar), we arrived in Vatva.

As I got out of the rickshaw, I saw newly built gray blocks of flats next to the station. They seemed to be uninhabited, but the windows were already broken. A line of huts stood next to the houses, and between the huts I saw a couple of small kiosks selling tobacco products, sweets, and tea. People stared at me in silence, looking suspicious. I thought that the atmosphere was somewhat eerie. The street was dusty, uncovered. Concrete apartment blocks were lined up one after the other. I crossed Vatva Station Road. On the other side, there were more buildings, identical to those next to the station, although I was happy to see that these were inhabited.

A peach-colored Hindu temple amidst the buildings caught my attention—a few weeks later I came to learn that it was the Jhulelāl temple constructed by the Sindhi community. On the street corner close to the temple, there was a kiosk run by a young man, and two old women sitting in front of it. I crouched to ask if the women spoke Hindi. They answered affirmatively. I asked if the blocks of flats were government houses constructed for the people that used to live by the Sabarmati. Again an affirmative answer. I enquired how long the women had been living in Vatva. By then, my presence had caught the attention of a group of boys who were around 10 years old. They answered on behalf of the women: "Since 2011." The boys then told me to wait, as they wanted me to meet someone. I did what I was told and crouched with the women wondering what would happen next.

A moment later, a skinny man in his 30s, wearing a red shirt and checked shorts, was brought to meet me. His name was Nareshbhai.[22] He spoke reasonably good English and asked what I was doing there, alone and without male protection. He seemed slightly hostile. I told him about my intentions to do field research and to rent an apartment for 11 months together with my partner who would arrive in two weeks' time. "You should not come here alone," he said in a strict tone, "bad people live here!" I did not dare to ask what he meant by "bad people," but remained silent. I felt embarrassed by my inflated self-esteem and individualism—how could I have imagined that I could carry out everything on my own?

Nareshbhai's voice softened and he suggested that he could help us find an apartment; however, it would not be possible before my husband arrived. He took me to meet the security guard of a middle-class housing area located opposite the resettlement flats, just 20 meters from where we were standing. The guard took a quick glance at me and said firmly that there were currently no apartments available. Nareshbhai and I returned to the street. "We could live there as well," I said to him, pointing at the resettlement houses. He did not agree with me, "Only poor people live there." Nareshbhai lived in the resettlement area himself, and according to him, there was no chance whatsoever of our moving in. He said that "bad things" were happening in the resettlement flats. In the middle-class housing estate, however, we would face no problems. During the daytime, I could also move around in the resettlement area with my husband, but not alone. "Who's gonna be responsible if something happens?" Nareshbhai asked rhetorically.

Finally, we agreed that I would come back after two weeks with my husband and ask for Nareshbhai in the small kiosk. Meanwhile, he would make some "arrangements." He thought that at this point, it would be best for me to return to the city center. He put me in a rickshaw and settled the price with the driver who had no meter in his vehicle. Before I left, I asked Nareshbhai if he thought it would be possible for me to interview people living in the resettlement site. "No problem," he said, "but never alone."

## 2.1 Never alone

My first two weeks in Ahmedabad were spent trying to find an apartment. As I was in India on a research visa, I had to register myself at the police headquarters of Ahmedabad within 14 days of my arrival in the country. By that time, I was also required to have found a place to live, as I had to provide an official rent agreement at the police station when registering. Therefore, I could not wait for the arrival of my partner—I had no choice but to arrange an apartment right away.

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[22] In Gujarat, it is customary to add the suffix *bhaī* ("brother") or *ben* ("sister") at the end of people's names as a token of respect, e.g., Jelenaben.

Finding an apartment in western Ahmedabad would not have been a problem, but it proved to be a far trickier task on the eastern periphery, for two reasons: my gender and the fact that the area in which I wanted to live was predominantly Muslim and, therefore, in the opinion of my real estate agent, "dangerous," especially for women. Nevertheless, I managed to find an apartment in the middle-class housing estate pointed out to me by Nareshbhai. It turned out that the security guard I met in Vatva had known about an available apartment all along, but had chosen not to talk about it because I was alone—the apartment was only available for couples and families. In the end, I managed to get the rental agreement signed and stamped on time, and I registered the address at the police headquarters. I could not, however, move in before my husband arrived. I never found out if my landlord or the housing estate was opposed to it, or if it was merely the real estate agent's opinion.

I did not conduct fieldwork alone; my husband Niklas' presence shaped it significantly. Aside from affirming my status as a respectable, married woman and taking care of my safety, Niklas was also a central agent in the generation of data and the production of knowledge. During the process of analysis and writing, I often presented my interpretations to him, as he was present in many of the situations that I observed in the course of the fieldwork. He also conducted fieldwork without my presence. For example, ideologies of gendered space restricted my access to sites marked as male (cf. Donner 2012). These included mosques. Niklas, therefore, worked as a research assistant, observing areas of social life out of bounds for a female ethnographer. Moreover, trained in elementary education and literature, and having taught English in a village school in Rajasthan in 2012, he often played with the children, which helped to generate positive attitudes toward us. My interviewees frequently mentioned that their children had been playing cricket or badminton with Niklas—it was easier to get the conversation flowing as people had heard positive things about us through their offspring.

I interacted with people in many different roles, and these roles significantly shaped people's attitudes toward me. I was not always confined to my professional position as an ethnographer: people became familiar with me as a wife, as a daughter, as a daughter-in-law, and, very often, as a friend (cf. Korpela, Hirvi & Tawah 2016). My mother and my in-laws visited us while we were living in Ahmedabad. I later realized that these visits positively affected my image as a decent, family-oriented woman in the eyes of my neighbors and my research participants, facilitating my research work and my day-to-day life. Before the visits, some people suspected that my husband and I had escaped our families because of an illicit "love marriage."[23] Through the performance of

[23] In India, parents or family elders are usually responsible for finding a spouse for the children since it is assumed that they "know better" (Chaudhary 2008, 21). Marriage affects the status of the entire family, which is why it is important to choose the best possible match (Harlan & Courtright 1995, 5). It does not mean that the consent of the girl and the boy is not asked even if this is sometimes the case. In contrast to the "arranged marriage," the so-called "love marriage" is matrimony based on the couple's own decision. While love marriage is increasing in popularity, especially among educated urban dwellers, it is often

familial bonds, I became accepted and acknowledged as a proper person, my individuality willingly subsumed by the collective of the family. "How's your mother doing?" people would ask me months after my mother's visit. When I visited Sadbhavna Nagar alone in December 2016, nine months after the fieldwork had finished, many people wondered why I had not come with my husband.

Another individual who significantly shaped my fieldwork was Nareshbhai, my research assistant and, eventually, my close friend. During the first four months of my stay, from March to July 2015, he accompanied me in my work for five or six days each week. In return for his assistance, I paid him the equivalent of what he would have obtained through working in a clothing shop, 8,000 rupees a month. At the beginning of my fieldwork, Nareshbhai's caste status (he was Sindhi) affected our choice of interviewees: I ended up spending a lot of time with Sindhi people, but I also met Nareshbhai's friends and acquaintances from other communities. At the very beginning of my stay, Nareshbhai also introduced me to people controlling the sale of locally produced hooch.[24] According to him, it was essential to get their acceptance of my work for safety reasons. However, it remained unclear to me if the liquor vendors were supposed to protect me from a potential threat or if the sellers themselves constituted the threat—probably a bit of both.

Nareshbhai knew many people in the resettlement site and was respected for his multilingual cosmopolitanism. He had lived and worked in Gulf countries as a salesman and therefore spoke English and Arabic as well as his native Gujarati, Sindhi, and Hindi. Through his large social networks, I was able to get to know people from various backgrounds. In his conversations with men—and some women, too—Nareshbhai used quite coarse language, swearing and telling offensive jokes. His disregard of conventionality (although he sometimes apologized for saying *mādarchod*, "motherfucker" too often in my presence) enabled me to get a glimpse of the slang used, especially that between men.

Yet Nareshbhai's company also restricted me, as he was reluctant to let me interview people living "in the backside" of the area. I soon learned that the term "backside" referred to the Muslim-dominated area next to Narol–Vatva Road. It was only after I made persistent demands that he agreed to take me to the "dangerous" Muslim-dominated part of the resettlement site. That being said, it must be mentioned that Nareshbhai was also friends with some Muslim residents, especially one man who lived in the adjacent site of VGG Nagar.

Nareshbhai and I became close friends during my fieldwork. We frequently spent time in his apartment drinking chai prepared by his mother. If the weather permitted, we sat on the roof of the block where his family lived discussing current events and the gossip of Sadbhavna Nagar, but also matters from our own personal lives. Nareshbhai proudly called himself a "BBC tower"

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seen as "immoral" and "dangerous," especially when the spouses belong to different castes or religious groups.

[24] Gujarat is a dry state, but bootlegging and alcohol consumption were commonly practiced in Vatva.

since he claimed to know everything that went on in the area, from husbands cheating on their wives to sword fights between drug users. We were usually seen together and formed a team in the eyes of the other residents of the site. Many people knew me as "the foreigner who roams around with the Sindhi," and he became known through me as "the Sindhi who roams around with the foreigner." This had advantages and disadvantages for both of us. For example, once Nareshbhai was called to the local police station for questioning, during which he had to hand over his contact details to the officer. The police let Nareshbhai know that should something happen to me, he would be held responsible. This caused him a lot of stress, and he begged—or, perhaps more appropriately, commanded—me not to venture alone into "dangerous areas" (meaning Muslim areas) as it would cause him "tension." I only followed his advice intermittently because I did not find the Muslim areas any more dangerous than those that were Hindu-dominated.

Due to my stubbornness and disobedience, which irritated Nareshbhai, we frequently argued. He had a hard time accepting orders from a woman five years his junior. According to him, I had a "dangerous mind." He said that if he had a more muscular body, I would not dare to be so "dangerous," which I understood as a reference to my way of defying gender norms when it came to the relationship between us. He threatened to resign from his job. The next day, however, we always patched up our differences, usually with his father acting as a mediator, and were happy to be reunited again, laughing and joking around. Thinking back, our relationship was like that of a brother and a sister fighting over who gets to decide the rules of the game. It hardly resembled the professional relationship between an employee and an employer. At one point, Nareshbhai even suggested that it might be best if he quit his job as research assistant and we could continue merely as friends. This did not happen because he badly needed the money.

In July 2015, Nareshbhai fell ill. After a few weeks, he could no longer work with me. Over the subsequent months, Niklas and I helped his parents to provide him with medical care, but despite everyone's efforts, Nareshbhai passed away on Diwali, his favorite day of the year. His parents were devastated, having lost their firstborn child and their only son. Niklas and I attended his funeral pyre and bid farewell to the insightful man who had become a dear friend to us both. I was the only woman present at his cremation. I felt, and still feel, that I should have done more to help him. It is difficult to write about him—I do not wish to reduce the life of a friend to research data—yet Nareshbhai played such a big part in our life in Ahmedabad that I am compelled to reflect on it in writing. My research would have taken a very different turn without his life and death.

## 2.2 Ethnographic fieldwork

My ethnographic approach pays attention to the struggles, difficulties and insecurities of resettled people, as well as their dreams, aspirations, and achievements in the course of everyday life. The main methods employed were semi-structured interviews and participant observation of everyday life, recorded in the form of field notes, drawings, photos, and videos. I combine this data with analysis of newspaper articles, websites, resettlement-related documents, apartment plans, government brochures, and court proceedings. Discussions with residents of Ahmedabad belonging to various socio-economic backgrounds also constitute a part of my data. By "field," then, I do not refer to a spatially bounded container of (a) culture—in this case, the resettlement site—but, rather, to "the interlocking of multiple social-political sites and locations" (Gupta & Ferguson 1997, 37). A resettlement site is a political creation, an assemblage of heterogeneous actors, processes, global and local ideologies, policies, construction technologies, and material structures. Therefore, my use of the term "fieldwork" does not refer exclusively to the spatiotemporal phase of my "being there," but includes an analysis of spatialities and temporalities that unfolded through my ethnographic focus on a specific location. In other words, I do not identify the resettlement site with the group that inhabits it (Appadurai 1988, 16), but use the site as a lens to examine wider socio-political dynamics. This is in line with Massey's (1994, 121) understanding of places as "open and porous networks of social relations," the identities of which are constructed through their interaction with "the outside." The Sadbhavna Nagar resettlement site is entangled in local and global networks that make up the "field."

In the course of my stay in Vatva, I traveled with people to a village wedding, to relatives' houses, to workplaces, to AMC offices, and to religious sites. I was not confined within the walls of Sadbhavna Nagar but followed the flow of life even though most of my time was spent in the resettlement site. Since many men living in Sadbhavna Nagar worked as rickshaw drivers, I often had good conversations while riding their rickshaws to the city center. The surrounding sensory environment provided many topics for discussion, and I found it very easy to start a conversation by asking for the driver's opinion on something that I saw, heard, or smelled while riding. These rides provided me with valuable knowledge of the city as a socio-material environment: for example, the division of the city into areas of Hindus and Muslims and the routes that the drivers used to navigate in the city (e.g., they very rarely used the new riverfront roads).

I conducted 51 semi-structured interviews with residents of Sadbhavna Nagar. Out of these, 33 were with Hindus, 17 with Muslims, and one with both Hindu and Muslim residents. In addition, I interviewed five people living in other resettlement sites (VGG Nagar, Behrampura, and an as yet unnamed site on the eastern side of Sadbhavna Nagar). I also conducted one recorded group discussion in the temporary resettlement site of Ganeshnagar and another that

involved people living in Sadbhavna Nagar and VGG Nagar. This was in order to form an understanding of the process of displacement and resettlement and the general atmosphere of Vatva, and the interviewees' relationships with residents of Sadbhavna Nagar. In total, then, I conducted 58 interviews with displaced people/people living in resettlement sites. Out of all the interviews, 28 were conducted exclusively with women, 15 with men, and one with a person identifying as third-gender (*kinnar)*. The remaining fourteen interviews involved both men and women. I refer to the interviews using codes consisting of pseudonyms and the date of the interview, for example, "Aarushiben 151023."

I conducted most of the interviews in people's homes. Home was a calm, relaxing setting for interviews in comparison to public spaces where one-on-one encounters soon turned into disorderly group discussions or even heated debates, not to mention the traffic noise that made it difficult to transcribe the speech afterward. More important than practical factors, however, was the opportunity to enter people's homes and to learn about their private lives. House interiors provided a lot of material for discussion: as I show in section 6.4, most people had carefully decorated their apartments. I usually asked questions about the process of making homes: What kinds of changes had people made? Had they purchased some new furniture after resettlement? What was the meaning of the posters and photographs they had on their walls? Before the actual interview, I was often served chai and snacks and was able to observe how people behaved in relation to the materiality of the house. Sometimes interviewees' family members were also present, and I could observe familial interaction within the home: Who stayed in which room? How did family members behave toward each other? How were different people materially present in the house? In some apartments, I took photographs or filmed with the permission of the residents. Usually, however, I felt that asking for a photo or a permission to film would have been intrusive—people had already permitted me to enter their private sphere, and I did not want to offend them by pushing even further. Therefore, the photos and videos that I took depict the homes of people I met more than just once in the course of the fieldwork. In public spaces, I photographed and filmed without permission unless I was focusing on specific events or people.

I took part in various kinds of social get-togethers centered on religious buildings. I mostly attended events that took place next to the Sindhi community's Jhūlelāl temple due to my close relationships with the Sindhis and the location of the temple around 50 meters from my home. The festivities were multisensory events in that they often featured flashing lights, intricate decorations, colorful dresses, aromatic incense, loud music, dance, and delicacies. By participating in, rather than just watching the repetitive *garbā* dance, I believe I got a glimpse of what it may feel like to be part of a tight community like the Sindhis. In addition to events centered on the Jhūlelāl temple, my husband and I also participated in the nightly Navratri celebrations around Mātājī temples and visited a children's Arabic class in a *madrasā* (lit. "place of study") in one of the mosques. Once, my husband attended a prayer in the site's other mosque, while

I recorded the prayer call emanating from a loudspeaker installed on the roof of one of the Muslim-dominated blocks.

Numerous informal discussions with residents of Ganeshnagar and those of other housing societies in Vatva constitute a part of my data. I talked to my neighbors, people I met in the vegetable bazaar, and people who lived in the informal settlements next to the resettlement area. Throughout my stay, I also collected newspaper articles from *The Times of India* about urban development, Hindu–Muslim relations, and other issues that were of interest from the perspective of my research focus. During my frequent visits to supermarkets, movie theaters, parks, and other places of recreation, I had conversations with many middle- and upper-class residents of Ahmedabad, and non-resident Gujaratis visiting the city, to hear their views on urban development issues and current events. I also photographed and filmed material structures and day-to-day practices on the Sabarmati Riverfront and the Kankaria Lakefront to understand the role of these spaces in the creation of the New India (see section 4.4).

Interviews combined with observation and note-taking worked well together, as I continually refined my interview questions based on what I had heard, sensed, and learned in the course of participant observation. Correspondingly, interviews provided information and insights that directed me to notice and examine previously unexplored and taken-for-granted things. Following artist Kiki Smith (2015), this approach can be characterized as "thinking through life" rather than "thinking through mind" since it was open and receptive to surprises, intuitive feelings, and sensory experiences. Ingold (2013) has similarly stressed the importance of allowing anthropological knowledge to grow from engagement with the world—an orientation that he calls an "art of inquiry," which "moves forward in real time, along with the lives of those who are touched by it, and with the world to which they both belong" (Ingold 2013, 7).

The interviews typically started with small talk and ended abruptly on the interviewee's initiative. I had generally had some sort of initial contact with the person before interviewing them. I often found my interviewees by walking around in the resettlement site and waiting for someone to talk to me, as I did not want to seem obtrusive. This was rather easy—both men and women were eager to speak to a female foreigner.[25] During the first three months, however, my research assistant Nareshbhai arranged most of the interviews. Between April and June, I mostly interviewed friends and acquaintances of Nareshbhai. After his death, I started spending more and more time with Muslims in Sadbhavna Nagar.

Some of the interviews were one-on-one encounters, while most took the form of group discussions with at least three people. In the course of the meetings, some people left while others joined in the conversation. Although I kept track of the number and gender of persons involved, it is impossible to give the exact number of male, female and third-gender interviewees. Apart from one English interview, all the interviews were conducted in Hindi, which was either

[25] For a male researcher, establishing contact with women might have been more difficult.

the mother tongue or the second language of my informants. At the beginning of my fieldwork in March 2015, I had studied Hindi for five years—first independently and then at the University of Helsinki—but did not speak much Gujarati. Some interviewees combined Hindi with Gujarati words or phrases that often escaped my understanding. Around half of the interviews were conducted in the presence of Nareshbhai who sometimes acted as a translator. Some interviewees, however, felt uncomfortable in his presence. For instance, a young Muslim woman did not want Nareshbhai to enter her house, fearing that neighbors would inform her husband. In such cases, I conducted interviews alone, while Nareshbhai waited for me outside.

After Nareshbhai fell sick in July 2015, I did all the interviews independently. In cases when I was interviewing men, my husband was with me, but he could not take part in the Hindi-language discussion. His role in interview situations was to guarantee my safety and to observe things going on around us. His presence was also an indicator that I was doing my work with his approval, not "roaming around" as I pleased. Apart from one instance involving a young man on drugs, we did not face any threats to our safety while doing fieldwork.

Depending on the interview context, the informant's interests, and my own willingness to dig into specific topics, the interviews dealt with different subjects. Some of them ended up being nostalgic discussions about life before displacement, whereas others were more focused on politics, experiences of everyday life, the violence of the demolitions, the social composition of the resettlement site, or, quite often, infrastructural issues. Even though I had a preformulated question pattern, the trajectory of each interview was ultimately shaped in the dynamic interaction between interviewer, interviewee, and the context. My own position as a researcher was different each time, as some of the interviewees had become my friends while others were complete strangers to me. Sometimes I felt like an obtrusive journalist, other times an inquisitive student, often an attentive friend, at times even a therapist. Sometimes one of these roles dominated; at other times my roles changed throughout the interview. In some interviews, I had to rely a lot on my question pattern in order to dig out bits and pieces of information from a reserved informant, whereas in others the very first question sparked a flood of emotional narratives or enraged critique, making the rest of my questions redundant. Sometimes people felt more at ease after I had turned off the recorder and we continued talking and drinking tea more informally. Moments during which an interview fused into participant observation often provided the best information. Due to this fusing, it is difficult to define the exact duration of each interview; the recorded parts, however, lasted from 15 minutes to one hour.

Out of 58 interviews, 56 were recorded while two of them were summarized in the form of notes taken in the interview situation. Gujarati- and Hindi-speaking assistants whom I employed through CEPT University translated the recordings to English. The recording of interviews took place with the permission of the interviewees after explaining how it worked and why I wanted to

record in the first place. I carefully checked and, if needed, corrected all the translations, as there was a lot of context-specific information of which the translators were not aware. The procedure was costly and time-consuming, but provided a deeper understanding of the data as it was translated twice: once by a native speaker not present in the interview context and subsequently by me. Assistants were especially useful in translating Gujarati and Hindi idiomatic expressions, metaphors, and local knowledge.

## 2.3 Research ethics: Interviewing persons with minimal education

A major problem I came across in the process of arranging interviews was that most of my interviewees did not understand what the word "research" meant. They were familiar with universities as places of higher education, but they did not know about the research function of universities. The word research, both in Hindi (*anusandhān* or *khoj*) and in English, was an empty signifier. People were, however, familiar with the English word "survey," but that word carried a connotation of surveillance or imposed control—people's houses had been surveyed before they were demolished. Surveys were also seen as providing an opportunity to access government welfare schemes. If I used the word survey without further explanations, many people thought that their participation in my research would somehow directly affect them, negatively or positively.[26]

Because many of my interviewees were illiterate or semi-literate, I did not find it ethical to use a consent form. Moreover, my informants associated all kinds of forms with state surveys and surveillance—a subject that I address in Chapter 7. For these reasons, I always obtained consent orally. I started by explaining that I was a university student studying to get a degree and that I was doing a survey for a personal book project. I wanted to retain the word survey because through it people realized that I wanted to ask questions and that I wanted them to answer my questions. In other words, they knew what social interaction in a "survey situation" was like. However, I had to make it very clear that even though I was doing a survey, I was not a government official. I explained that I was interested in knowledge (*jānkārī*) and that I would write a book on the basis of the interviews. I underlined that the Indian government was not paying me to do it, nor was the Finnish government—or Obama, for that matter.[27] I clearly explained that I received my income from a university in my home country, Finland. I also told my interviewees in Sadbhavna Nagar that my book would provide information about the situation in the resettlement

[26] I look into the ethical implications of survey forms and other "ethnographic documents" in section 7.5.
[27] I was often mistaken for an American. A couple of young men even suspected that I was a spy sent by Obama to provide information on Narendra Modi's undertakings. I tried to correct this misunderstanding, but the men were not convinced.

site, but it would not bring any direct benefits to them. I added that my book would be available for anyone, including government officials, to read.

People had often assumed that I would be able to procure them a house in another part of the city or arrange large sums of money from abroad. I constantly had to remind them of my own powerlessness. Emphasizing the fact that I was just a student helped to some extent, and in the end, no one refused to give an interview on the grounds that it would not directly benefit them. My interviewees also understood that I would personally benefit from the interviews by getting a degree. They realized that they were helping me more than I was helping them. This put us on a more equal level, and I felt it relaxed the atmosphere.

Informed consent is one of the cornerstones of research ethics in anthropology. According to Hammersley and Atkinson (2007), informed consent means that research participants should be given enough information about research goals and funding sources, as well as possible outcomes and impacts for them to know what their participation involves. However, as the writers point out, "ethnographers rarely tell *all* the people they are studying *everything* about the research" (Hammersley & Atkinson 2007, 210, original emphasis). One reason for this is that in the beginning, the research focus is often not very clear. This was the case with this study; I could not tell my interviewees exactly what the research was about because I did not even know it myself. The amount and the depth of the information given varied from person to person, with those interviewed last being "more informed" than the first interviewees. There were also differences in people's interest in my research. Some people were not very interested, and I did not want to burden them with details about my research focus; others showed more interest and I naturally addressed all their questions and concerns. In fact, Jiteshbhai, one of my most eloquent informants, wanted to interview me after I had first interviewed him.

The interviewees could stop the interview at any time. They often ended abruptly as people had work to do, places to go, and children to look after. Lengthy periods of sitting still were not common in their rhythm of everyday life. An hour was about the maximum that people could isolate themselves from the activities around them. I felt that demanding more would have been unethical on my part, especially since my interviewees received no financial compensation for the time they dedicated to my study.

Anthropologists often study people who are less powerful than themselves. This has resulted in discussions about "giving something back," whether services or money, or a form of "empowerment" that is somehow seen to follow from participation (Hammersley & Atkinson 2007, 217). While I understand the mindset behind these practices of giving—participating in an interview may take up a significant portion of a person's working day—I agree with Pink (2002) that giving does not eliminate the exploitation. Rather, it can reinforce unequal power relations. As Pink (2002, 112) puts it, "[i]n an ironic scenario, the anthropologist may feel ethically virtuous whilst the informants are left wondering why they have been given whatever it was they 'got back', and what precisely they got it in return for."

I felt that offering money could have been considered insulting. Instead of money, I gave some of my research participants photographs of themselves. This was something they themselves requested. I usually had a camera with me, and many people wanted to be photographed.[28] Sometimes I also took photos of the living conditions in Sadbhavna Nagar and gave the photos to people who were active in submitting complaints about municipal services.

When we left Ahmedabad, my husband and I gave our household items, such as an air-cooler, a spring mattress, an electric water boiler, kitchen utensils, curtains, and so on, to my key informants. While some people were very happy to receive the stuff, others did not want to accept such expensive gifts. For example, a woman called Radhwa, to whom I gave the mattress, said that she would only be looking after it until I come back to India: "If you ever come back, you can come and collect it. I will use it but it is not mine." In my interpretation, Radhwa refused to take on the role of someone in need of assistance, meanwhile expressing a wish for our relationship to continue—as equals. In my view, then, being treated as an equal can also be considered as "getting something back." The feeling of being respected and being heard can be more important than receiving money or gifts.

Another reason for not paying my informants for interviews was that I knew that if I gave money, many people would start following me, asking me to interview them. Indeed, at the beginning of my stay, I made the mistake of giving a couple of small euro coins to children. The same evening, a hoard of people came to our doorstep asking for coins. A powerful local *dādā* ("goon"), who, according to his own words, had "killed two people but would never kill a dog," also started demanding a coin for making a necklace. Reluctantly, I gave up my coins. Weeks after, people would still ask me if I had any foreign coins left. In sum, had I offered money for interviews, people would have insisted that I interview them. Explaining that I wanted to have a "representative sample" of interviewees in terms of class, caste, religion, and gender would have made little sense and could have possibly caused friction among the residents.

My research adheres to the responsible conduct of research outlined by the European Code of Conduct for Research Integrity (ALLEA 2017) and the Finnish Advisory Board of Research Integrity (TENK 2012). I have replaced the names of my interviewees and other informants with pseudonyms to protect their identity, with the exception of my research assistant Nareshbhai. I have also anonymized the research data, which is stored in a private, password-protected, external hard drive. At the beginning of my fieldwork, I used survey forms to collect information on people's age, caste, income level, education, and

[28] Some of my interviewees reminisced about "foreigners" coming to the riverfront to take photos of them. Zoyaben, for instance, showed me a photo taken by a foreign tourist: "I was washing clothes, and then some people who were speaking English approached me. I didn't understand [what they were saying]. They said they'd take a photo, to which I said, 'Fair enough, take a photo.' Then they said they'd send it to me after returning home. They took my name and address and sent the photo to me" (Zoyaben & Hassabhai 150526). The fact that riverfront-dwellers' interaction with "foreigners" had consisted of being photographed by them may have contributed to my informants' eagerness to be photographed by me.

so on (see section 7.5). At the end of each day, the information in these forms was digitized. After the completion of research, all the data containing identity information were destroyed. The anonymized data are in my private possession. I have decided to retain the name of Sadbhavna Nagar as my informants hoped to get publicity and visibility for their problems and I feel that I would be letting them down by anonymizing the neighborhood. Moreover, as the only resettlement site where Hindus and Muslims lived together, Sadbhavna Nagar is already recognizable to anyone familiar with Ahmedabad, anonymized or not.

## 2.4 Christian but *veg*: On positionality

During the fieldwork, Niklas and I lived in a middle-class housing estate right across from Sadbhavna Nagar. Our community was inhabited by upper-caste Hindus (e.g., Brahmans and Patels) and Christians. We were ascribed the identity of the latter, which was fine with us. In fact, it increased our sense of belonging to be categorized and accepted as Christians by our neighbors—there was a role assigned for us, and we could take up the role and perform it as best we could. Our actual religious identities remained a private matter, as "Christian" was merely an identification label and a position from which we participated in collective activities. Our Christian neighbors often invited us to children's birthday parties and other celebrations. Sometimes our neighbors asked us to accompany them to Sunday church—an invitation that we were glad to accept even though we do not regularly go to church in Finland. In our interpretation, the invitation meant that our Christian neighbors regarded us as one of them. Similarly, we were happy when our Hindu neighbors greeted us with a "Merry Christmas." It affirmed our position—and our belonging—in the order of things. We were accepted as different. And in practice, we were, indeed, Christian regardless of our personal affiliations. After all, we did celebrate Christian holidays.

In Sadbhavna Nagar, too, we were always considered Christian. Being Christian meant eating meat, and it caused puzzlement when we said we eat fish and eggs but not chicken and mutton. Our friends and acquaintances thought that our lacto-ovo-pesco-vegetarian diet was utterly irrational, and I can certainly understand why. As Nareshbhai cried gleefully, referring to our egg consumption, "You don't eat the mother, but you eat the baby, that's too funny!" In my informants' order of classification, people had either a *veg* diet, meaning a diet of plants and dairy, or a *non-veg* diet. Christians were known to be of the *non-veg* variety. Hence, I learned to explain the sort of person I was by saying that I was *īsāī* (Christian) with a *veg* diet.

People were interested in discovering my *jāti* ("caste") and my diet, and they were subsequently surprised to hear about my eating habits. With upper-

caste *pure veg* Hindus, I emphasized my vegetarian identity.[29] With Muslims and lower-caste *non-veg* Hindus, I mentioned the fact that I do occasionally eat fish and eggs. Due to my dietary preferences and my ascribed identity as a Christian, I was able to find common ground with both Hindu and Muslim residents and yet remain detached from local caste hierarchies and the Hindu–Muslim opposition. Hovering on both sides of the line that separates meat-eaters from vegetarians and Muslims from Hindus was instrumental for the success of my fieldwork in Sadbhavna Nagar, where tensions between religious groups abounded.

Food played an essential part in my research also in another, more concrete way. It was a central part of social interaction, and I was always offered something to eat and drink when I went to conduct interviews or otherwise visited people's houses. Food and eating habits were easy conversation openers. Interviews usually started or ended with a cup of chai and some snacks. Some people wanted me to taste and comment on their cooking. "I am a good cook, am I not?" women asked, smiling widely, having fed me with some *roṭī, dāl*, boiled rice, *pāpaṛ*, *khīr* or *khichṛī* – sometimes all of them. For them, it was a matter of honor to offer good food to a guest, and I never had to go hungry. The hospitality was overwhelming, but to be honest, I sometimes would have preferred not to eat or drink anything—imagine drinking ten cups of sugary chai in a day! However, I felt that it was my ethical responsibility to eat and drink everything that my informants offered me. Declining food and drink could have been considered insulting; accepting it meant becoming relational, building relationships.

I once made the mistake of offering money to a woman who had cooked a lavish meal of fish, spinach, and rice for Niklas and me. I knew that the fish was expensive and I also knew that the woman, a Bangladeshi immigrant whose husband had left her, was struggling financially. Nevertheless, she refused to accept my money, saying, "Would you ask money from me if I came to dinner at your house?" With that experience, I learned to shut my Christian mouth and chew my way through the fieldwork. In the end, I went home having put on a few extra kilos and taking with me many memories of tastescapes that I never knew existed.

## 2.5 Data analysis and writing

As already noted above, apart from newspaper clippings that remained in physical form, I stored all the data, including interviews, field notes, photos, videos, and documents, in a password-protected external hard drive. Data analysis began with the organization of these data. First, interview transcripts and the original audio files were divided into folders with each interviewee as-

[29] Although some Hindu communities emphasized their vegetarian identity, many people did occasionally eat fish, chicken, or mutton.

signed a separate folder labelled with the date of recording. Initially, the folder names also included the number of the block and the apartment in which the interviewee lived. After the analysis, I replaced these with pseudonyms, deleting the numbers. Interviewees' names were never mentioned in the transcripts or in the audio files.

All of the approximately 1,500 photos and 400 videos were grouped into folders named after religious events such as Muharram and Navratri; accidents like fire and a broken water tank; anticipated events like a municipal election and weddings; and places like Ganeshnagar and the Jamalpur flower market. The organized naming practice enabled me to easily check some visual or auditory details in the process of writing. Photos and video clippings also functioned as reminders of what had happened, transporting me back to the sensory environment in a manner that text was hardly able to do. Therefore, it was useful to start a day of writing by looking at photos or watching videos. I also use some of the photos as illustrations in this thesis.

Filming was an analytical undertaking for me. My intention was not to create a representation of the reality "as it is." Instead, I used the camera as a tool to understand, experience, and examine. As MacDougall (1998, 134) states, "[n]o ethnographic film is merely a record of another society; it is always a record of the meeting between a filmmaker and that society." After returning to Finland, I used some of the video clippings to edit a 20-minute short film "The Goodwill City," which describes the atmosphere of the resettlement site and the rhythm of everyday life—certain sounds, odors, colors, and movements occurred repeatedly. For instance, in the course of my stay in Vatva, I recorded many common sounds of Sadbhavna Nagar: the Islamic prayer call, Dhollywood hits,[30] wedding brass bands, trains arriving at the Vatva station, garbage burning in the streets, rickshaws honking, children laughing and women chattering, street traders moving their pushcarts and crying out their wares with high-pitched voices, monsoon rain pounding on concrete, plastic waste blowing in the wind... By filming and editing, I gained an understanding of the atmosphere and the rhythm of everyday life that is difficult to put in words. The film also depicts the process of ethnographic fieldwork and my relationships with residents of Sadbhavna Nagar.

The field notes were stored in a single folder. I used the filename to describe the date of recording (yymmdd), and the main things observed or discussed: for example, "151121 Vatva is not a city" and "160117 Upper-caste feeling of superiority." The naming was based on what intuitively struck me as the single most important observation of that day. Analysis, then, was not a separate "post-fieldwork" phase but interwoven with data collection right from the beginning. As data collection progressed, my intuitive reasoning based on bodily experiences, affective feelings, and initial interpretation, deepened into a more fine-grained analytical understanding.

Having organized the data into several smaller piles of information, I started reading it more closely, identifying patterns. With the help of the At-

[30] Dhollywood refers to the Gujarati film industry.

las.ti software, I labeled passages of interview transcripts and field notes with code words. Some of them were "observer-identified" etic codes whereas others were "spontaneous concepts" or emic codes used by research participants themselves (Hammersley & Atkinson 2007, 163). The former included codes such as "Distance," "Everyday acts of resistance," and "Perceptions of the government," whereas the latter consisted of codes like "Pakistan," "*Bekār* area," and "We live here out of compulsion." Having coded all the interview transcripts and field notes, I explored the relationships between codes by using Atlas.ti, comparing and contrasting them. Intriguing puzzles started emerging: Why did people consistently characterize their living area with the words *bekār* ("useless") and jungle? Why did they speak highly of the government and Modi in one context, and fiercely criticize him in another? Why did both Hindus and Muslims refer to Muslim areas as "Pakistan"? Why did almost everyone prefer to live in a ground-floor apartment? All these questions are answered in the following chapters. At this point, I sharpened my broad and fuzzy research questions that had initially focused on Hindu–Muslim relations and the socioeconomic consequences of resettlement.

Based on the puzzles emerging from the coding of the data, I identified umbrella codes or themes such as "Atmospheric anxiety" and "The government that throws away." I then wrote an analytical summary of each interview including a few direct quotes related to the themes. I also included some excerpts from my field notes, as well as references to newspaper articles, photos, government documents, and relevant theoretical literature. I printed out all the summaries, two to ten pages long, and read them carefully, refining my themes. Through careful interpretation and higher-level categorization and abstraction, I identified certain themes that I designated chapter headings and certain emic and etic codes that I designated section headings.

# 3 THEORIZING THE STATE AND THE CITIZEN

Anthropological analyses of differentiated citizenship and processual, performative, and disaggregated understandings of the state together constitute the theoretical framework of this study. It thus examines the contextual specificities of state–citizen relations that transcend legalistic understandings of citizenship and clear-cut divisions between formal and informal, or state politics and everyday life. This chapter clarifies my conceptual choices in relation to the anthropology of the state, bureaucracy, and citizenship.

## 3.1 Citizenship

### Liberal and republican conceptions

Citizenship, a powerful ideal throughout the world, does not have an unequivocal definition. In the broadest sense, it describes the relationship between a person and a political entity. The history of citizenship comprises the experiences of the Roman Empire, the Greek *poleis*, medieval and industrializing Europe, and colonial and postcolonial states (Kabeer 2006, 91). Throughout its history, it has entailed the allocation of rights and privileges to some and the systematic exclusion of others. As Kabeer (2006, 91) reminds us, "from its earliest inception, citizenship has been as much about exclusion as inclusion."

Since the Enlightenment, and especially after the French Revolution, citizenship has been primarily conceptualized in a liberal legalistic manner involving membership in a sovereign state, and the rights and obligations held by people by way of their recognized legal status. Walzer (1989, 211) traces the liberal paradigm of citizenship to the Roman Empire and early modern interpretations of the Roman law. The British sociologist T. H. Marshall's often-cited definition of citizenship as "a status bestowed on those who are full members of a community" (Marshall 1950, 28), along with his evolutionary scheme of civic, political, and social rights that are gradually extended to new groups, forms the

backbone for most contemporary liberal definitions of citizenship in the social sciences (Lazar 2013, 1). According to Marshall's theory, based on the history of citizenship in industrializing Britain, the first stage was civil citizenship, which established rights necessary for individual freedom, including the rule of law, freedom of speech, and mobility rights. It was built primarily in the 18th century. The second stage, political citizenship, encompassed the right to vote and to hold office and was assigned by Marshall to the 19th century. The third stage, social citizenship, was constructed in the 20th century and established the right to the essentials of social welfare and health care (Fraser & Gordon 1994, 92). Although Marshall can be credited for drawing attention to the social dimensions of citizenship, various scholars have highlighted that his characterization of expanding rights is silent on gender and racial hierarchies and fits uneasily with the experiences of colonial subjects (e.g., Fraser & Gordon 1994; Kabeer 2006; Sadiq 2017). According to Fraser and Gordon (1994, 93), for example, Marshall's analysis of the three stages of citizenship "fits the experience of white working men only, a minority of the population."

Another influential model of citizenship comes from the republican political theory that defines citizenship through the principle of civic self-rule. The republican paradigm is based on the writings of Aristotle, Rousseau, and Machiavelli, among others, and the historical context of Greek city-states where citizens (not comprising women and slaves) were regarded as parts of a larger ethical whole, a collectivity. According to Aristotle's famous definition, a citizen is a person who participates in ruling and being ruled, thereby creating his political subjectivity. In distinction to the liberal model, the republican understanding emphasizes the political agency of citizens: citizenship is an office requiring active participation in society's political institutions. In contemporary democracies, republican echoes can be heard in the form of the critique of citizens' passivity, indifference, and political apathy (Leydet 2017), rhetoric often used in the context of the weakening of welfare state policies. Active citizenship is also promoted in development policy and practice, where it is presented as a precondition for the deepening of democracy (Kontinen & Onodera 2012, 329).

**Differentiated citizenship in India**

Although the idea of citizenship has become almost universal (Kabeer 2006, 91), rights and obligations associated with it vary considerably from one state to another (Isin & Turner 2002, 3). Citizenship in Finland and citizenship in India entail and enable different things. Moreover, while membership in a political community guarantees the rights of people in theory, it does not necessarily translate into practice. Anthropologists are well-equipped to denaturalize universalizing and normative models of citizenship that link it to a fixed legal status in a nation-state. Through a focus on day-to-day life in different social, political, and geographical contexts, anthropologists have analyzed actually existing citizenship(s) as they appear and materialize on the ground (Lazar 2013, 2). In practice, citizens are often treated very differently based on their positioning in terms of gender, sexuality, race/ethnicity, class, and other social differences.

This leads to *differentiated citizenship*—the use of social differences that are not the basis of formal membership to distribute rights differentially (Holston 2008, 197; see also Jaffe & de Koning 2016, 138).

Holston and Appadurai's (1999, 4) often-cited analytical distinction is useful in studying differentiated citizenship; they distinguish between *formal citizenship*, referring to membership in a nation-state, and *substantive citizenship*, consisting of "the array of civil, political, socioeconomic, and cultural rights people possess and exercise." Substantive citizenship refers to the qualitative nature of citizenship in any given context (Lazar 2012, 344), and it does not necessarily require formal legal status (Holston 2001; Sassen 2005). Sassen, for instance, has shown how undocumented immigrants in the US earn citizenship claims through practices like schooling children and holding a job: "There are dimensions of citizenship, such as strong community ties and participation in civic activities, which are being enacted informally through these practices" (Sassen 2005, 85). Put differently, non-citizens can acquire certain substantive rights through informal practices valued in the society.

While anthropologists have laudably analyzed differences in people's access to substantive rights, even formal, *de jure* citizenship should not be taken for granted (Chatterji 2012). For example, India did not straightforwardly adopt liberal citizenship; rather, citizenship was produced "as a result of complex interactions between a bewildering plethora of actors" including millions of people who became minorities as a consequence of India's partition and independence (Chatterji 2012, 1050; see also Shani 2010).[31] During the partition, India and Pakistan embraced a mix of *jus soli* ("right of soil") and *jus sanguinis* ("right of blood") principles of citizenship, producing a liminal legal status of quasi-citizens not fully protected by the states within which they lived. These "minority-citizens" were deprived of their freedom of mobility and rendered liable to lose their property if suspected of harboring the intention of moving (Chatterji 2012, 1069–1070). While Hindus were considered "natural" citizens of India, it was demanded of Muslims that they prove their loyalty to the newly formed nation-state (Pandey 1999; Shani 2010). As Shani (2010, 153) argues, an ethno-nationalist notion of citizenship gained currency during the partition; indeed, one of the enduring legacies of that time is the question "can a Muslim really be an Indian?" (Pandey 1999, 614) Recently, India's liberal citizenship regime has again begun to shift toward an ethno-nationalist discourse with the amendment to the Citizenship Act, 1955 (Poddar 2018). The Citizenship (Amendment) Bill, 2016, passed in the Lok Sabha in January 2019, provides Indian citizenship for "persecuted minorities" (Hindus, Sikhs, Jains, Buddhists, Parsis, and Christians) from Afghanistan, Pakistan, and Bangladesh after six years of residency. It excludes Muslim sects such as Shias and Ahmediyas who also face persecution in Pakistan (Purkayastha 2018), and persecuted minorities

[31] During India's partition in 1947, Pakistan was proposed as a Muslim homeland and India as a state of Hindus. An estimated 15 million people—Hindus and Sikhs from Pakistan and Muslims from India—were permanently displaced from their homes, making it the largest forced migration of the 20th century (Talbot & Singh 2009, 2).

in other neighboring states, such as Muslim Rohingyas in Myanmar, Buddhist Tibetans, and Muslim Uighurs in China (Poddar 2018, 109–110). To sum up, postcolonial India has drawn on varying combinations of citizenship discourses throughout its history (Shani 2010); therefore, characterizing its citizenship regime as "liberal" would mean overlooking various local specificities.

While differentiated citizenship often results from historical inequalities (Holston 2008), it can also be a positive way of acknowledging group identities in culturally diverse societies and compensating for the discrimination and exclusion of certain groups (Young 1989). Indeed, in postcolonial India, the imported European ideal of rights-bearing, individual citizens was modified to form a group-sensitive citizenship model (Acharya 2001; Sadiq 2017). The Constitution of India was designed to protect cultural diversity based on religion, language, caste, and tribe (Mahajan 2005, 295). As R. M. Smith (2012, 88) states, "from its inception, modern India has routed its trajectory of democratic development through explicit recognition of differentiated civic statuses, albeit with anticipation of a time when special provisions might no longer be necessary." The entanglement of the liberal individualist approach and group identity is reflected, for instance, in the recognition of religion-specific personal laws (see section 1.2) and in granting reservations in education and government employment to historically marginalized populations (Acharya 2001, 80).

Political particularism recognizes the differential needs of religious, cultural, and linguistic groups and guarantees distinctive rights to marginalized populations, thereby working toward equal democratic citizenship. However, it can also contribute to the institutionalization and polarization of caste, ethnic, and religious identities. In the words of Sadiq (2017, 193), "[b]y specifically targeting identities [...], the goal of a common shared 'civic' citizenship is even further away." In recent years, India has witnessed various "anti-reservation" protests insisting on the dismantling of quota-based affirmative action and even the political mobilization of Forward Castes demanding to be included in the reservation system (e.g., the Patidar reservation agitation that started in July 2015 in Gujarat). Votebank politics and informal patron–client relationships based on caste and religion are also common in India. All these factors speak for the importance of paying analytical attention to the local specifics of citizenship—embeddedness in social relations may be the primary factor in the negotiation of belonging and the associated rights and entitlements (Lazar 2012, 342; see also Kabeer 2006).

**Citizenship imposed, citizenship claimed**

Citizenship is both forged and claimed. Particular framings of citizenship are *imposed* through top-down practices of subject-making that can involve both state and non-state actors (de Koning, Jaffe & Koster 2015; Koster 2015). Mechanisms like citizenship education in the UK (Pykett, Saward & Schaefer 2010) and microcredit schemes in Bolivia (Lazar 2004) regulate the conduct of citizens, invoking virtuous behavior in people. They produce normative framings of good citizenship, defining the "norms, values, and behavior […] appropriate for

those claiming membership in a political community" (de Koning et al. 2015, 122). People that fulfill the criteria of a good citizen may find it easier to access substantive rights and resources while those deemed improper or lacking in certain qualities may be excluded. In Finland, for instance, people belonging to the Finnish Kale (Romani) community find it hard to access jobs and housing, both private and public, despite possessing formal citizen status (Vähemmistövaltuutettu 2014). Deeply entrenched negative attitudes toward the Romani people affect their freedom to participate in society as equal members and to exercise their citizenship rights. One of the objectives of this study is to look into *how the everyday reality of differentiated citizenship is produced through spectacular infrastructure development, public discourse, and bureaucratic practices in the context of worlding Ahmedabad*. Who is included in the political community of good citizens and on what terms?

Another aim is to examine *how people construct their citizenship by making claims on the state*. As Lazar (2012) posits, political subjects *make themselves* by claiming citizenship "from below." Social scientists have recently approached citizenship as performative acts (e.g., Isin 2017; Zivi 2012), as a "horizon for political imagination" (Hansen 2015), and as a frame for claim-making (e.g., Bloemraad 2018; Das 2011; Holston 2008). Citizenship claims can consist of radical spectacles and demonstrations that articulate the goals of participants in terms of rights, merit, and justice, among other things, but they can also involve more subtle, quotidian forms of negotiations such as squatting and house building—what Holston (2008, 6) calls "autoconstruction"—writing appeals to government officials in order to avoid demolitions, and illegally tapping water pipes in the absence of access to clean water. Cities, being most impacted by global democracy, are especially crucial arenas for the articulation of citizenship claims and the development of new urban citizenships (Holston 2001, 326; see also Desai & Sanyal 2012). Importantly, then, citizenship claims do not just reference existing rights but "have forces and effects that exceed them" (Zivi 2012, 19); in other words, claims perform citizenship by creatively transforming and reinterpreting conventions, and, in the case of non-citizens, articulating *a right to claim rights* (Isin 2017). In this study, I am interested in the dynamics of citizenship as an imposed regime, on the one hand, and a bottom-up claim, on the other, in the context of world-class city making.

Central to my approach is a view of citizenship as an everyday reality that entangles formal and informal practices (cf. Berenschot & van Klinken 2018). Research has revealed that the poor in India claim and construct their rights through formal institutions such as courts (Desai 2014; Mannathukkaren 2010) and voting (Ahuja & Chhibber 2012; Banerjee 2011; Yadav 2015), and through informal networks—in P. Chatterjee's (2004, 40) terms, the "political society." Political society consists of patterns of relations that are not civic associations nor straightforward replications of kinship organizations (ibid., 39–40). It includes, for example, the practices of negotiating a water supply through big men or *dādās* ("goons"), making use of kinship networks to pressure officials to assign ID cards, or resisting slum evictions through informal associations.

Chatterjee's notion of political society resonates with Scott's (1985) concept of "infrapolitics" developed to account for the quiet and covert tactics used by undermined populations, especially in postcolonial contexts, to assert their views. Infrapolitics includes tactics articulated through networks that are not "political" enough to be regarded as such according to conceptions that place the state at the focal point of politics. While the notion brings to focus "the immense political terrain that lies between quiescence and revolt" (Scott 1990, 199), Abélès (2017) criticizes Scott for implying a hierarchy between the domains of "real" politics and infrapolitics. Abélès' critique can be extended to Bayat's (2013, 46) opposition between public political action and the "quiet encroachment of the ordinary." Chatterjee, Scott, and Bayat all seek to grasp the politics of day-to-day practices analytically, using the notions of political society, infrapolitics, and quiet encroachment, as opposed to state politics and heroic resistance. At the same time, however, they ultimately reinforce a hierarchy of different levels of political action.

I approach citizenship negotiations from a different direction without ranking and ordering them. Hence, I attempt to answer the call of Abélès (2017, 59) to "delve deeper into what precisely constitutes State politics through practices that continue to reproduce it." Essential here is the issue of *recognition*, which "captures the dynamic nature of the politics of citizenship as an active process of making and granting (or denying) claims" (Metsola 2015, 77; see also Hammar 2013). In other words, when state actors and institutions recognize certain people as deserving of their claims (and others as non-deserving)—whether this happens within the sphere of law and bureaucracy or within that of the so-called political society—it constructs and hierarchically classifies citizens. Correspondingly, when citizens make claims on the state, they recognize the authority of the state to respond to their claims. Through mutual recognition, the state and its subjects remake each other and themselves. Formal and informal become inextricably entangled.

Anand's (2011; 2017; 2018) examination of how poor settlers in Mumbai negotiate access to water aptly illuminates the issues of recognition, bottom-up state formation, and the entanglement of social relations and state politics. Anand shows how water infrastructure is not merely extended from the center of the state but "tugged and pulled into settlements" through residents' biopolitical claims (Anand 2018, 168). Dependent on public infrastructure, Mumbai settlers do not organize themselves against the state but, in Anand's words, "hail the state" through their demands. In other words, they recognize the authority of the state to respond to their claims for life-sustaining resources and declare their dependence on it (Anand 2018). Anand's notion of hydraulic citizenship accounts for residents' efforts to secure recognition by inclusion in Mumbai's municipal water regime, including the procurement of documents (e.g., a ration card and proof of habitation over the last twenty years) and the cultivation of personal relationships with politicians (Anand 2017). What distinguishes my study from Anand's approach is its focus on a resettlement context where established social relationships have been broken and people be-

longing to different communities have been forced to take over the maintenance of infrastructures collectively. How do residents of Sadbhavna Nagar organize themselves in such a context in order to make claims on the state? Conversely, how do infrastructures of the resettlement site organize residents' social relationships?

In sum, looking into how the languages of rights, justice, and equality, as well as informal social networks related to religion, caste, kinship, patronage, and friendship figure in practices of claim-making and recognition, I examine how state politics springs from and penetrates informal micro-level practices and social networks. Similar to Nielsen (2014) who has studied anti-land acquisition politics in West Bengal, I analyze how processes of claim-making and organization are implicated in everyday social relations. In other words, I adopt citizenship as a lens through which to view the intertwining of the formal and the informal, state politics and everyday life. I also analyze how the state imposes framings of good citizenship in the context of world-class city making and how an everyday reality of differentiated citizenship is formed.

## 3.2 Constructing the state: Bureaucracy and representation

On the evening of Tuesday, November 8, 2016, Prime Minister Narendra Modi addressed the Indian nation in an unscheduled live television broadcast. In his speech, he announced the nullification of all 500- and 1,000-rupee notes in a move to deal with the corruption, black money, and counterfeit currency that, according to Modi, was being used to finance terrorist activities in India. He assured listeners that "the rights and the interests of honest, hardworking people will be fully protected" as all the smaller notes would remain legal tender and people could deposit their old notes in banks or post offices over the ensuing 50 days. Modi also announced that banks and ATMs would remain closed for the next two days, after which there would be daily and weekly cash withdrawal limits to ensure the dispersal of new 500- and 2,000-rupee notes to all. Toward the end of his speech, he reached out to the common people, asking them to bear with him through difficult times:

> Brothers and sisters, in spite of all these efforts, there may be temporary hardships to be faced by honest citizens. Experience tells us that ordinary citizens are always ready to make sacrifices and face difficulties for the benefit of the nation. [...] I have seen that the ordinary citizen has the determination to do anything if it will lead to the country's progress. So, in this fight against corruption, black money, fake notes and terrorism, in this movement for purifying our country, will our people not put up with difficulties for some days? I have full confidence that every citizen will stand up and participate in this *mahāyajña* [great sacrifice] (*NDTV* 2016).

In the announcement, Modi cleverly turned the demonetization issue into a test of commitment to the nation's future and invoked Hindu religious sentiments by comparing demonetization with the Vedic purification ritual of *mahāyajña*. Embracing demonetization was framed as a civic and a religious vir-

tue, while those opposing it were seen as "anti-nationals." The state was presented as the ultimate guarantor of the nation's future. Good citizens should not doubt its policies but trust without questioning that the state always works for the greater good of the nation.

Modi's televised address exemplifies the public performance of statehood, which, according to Sharma and Gupta (2006, 18), is a "key modality through which states are culturally constituted, and through which state power is enacted." People come to learn about the state and to form ideas and imaginaries about state processes and officials through public cultural texts such as speeches, newspaper articles, posters, leaflets, and radio and television propaganda (ibid.). The state also manifests itself in ritual and theater (Geertz 1980) and in pompous public spectacles (Mbembe 1992) such as Ahmedabad's annual *rath yatrā* of Lord Jagannath, a 14-kilometer procession that is ritually opened by the Chief Minister of Gujarat. Narendra Modi's monthly *Mann ki baat* ("Matters of mind") radio program and his social media presence, including frequent tweets, partake in the production of state imaginaries. "World-class" architecture, infrastructure, and urban planning play an important role in statecraft and subject-making. The promotional material of the new urban spaces and spectacular events—such as the Sabarmati Festival and Kankaria Carnival arranged within these spaces—shape people's everyday experience of the state and perform statehood. All these enactments of state power are affectively charged; they elicit emotions and feelings such as fear, desire, hope, hatred, and pride that are integral to the emergence, transformation, endurance, and erosion of the state (Laszczkowski & Reeves 2018, 2). As Aretxaga (2000, 47) argues, "state officials imagine the state and produce it through not only discourses and practices but arresting images and desires."

**Imagineering**

Adopting a processual and performative view of state formation (e.g., Aretxaga 2000; Bierschenk & Olivier de Sardan 2014; Hansen & Stepputat 2001; Mitchell 1991; Sharma & Gupta 2006; Trouillot 2003), I do not start from the conception of a pre-existing state that molds citizens through a top-down project of worlding. Instead, I analyze how the "the myth of the state" (Hansen & Stepputat 2001, 21) as a unified entity that guarantees the rights of its citizens and leads the nation to progress, development, and glory is produced. Hence, I approach state representations in the context of worlding using the notion of *imagineering*. The word, combining creative imagination and engineering, was originally coined in the 1940s by Alcoa, an American industrial company, and subsequently popularized by Walt Disney Imagineering (WDI), a research and development arm of Disney. WDI consists of creative and technical professionals called "imagineers" who are responsible for designing all the Disney theme parks and attractions (Disney Imaginations, About Imagineering 2018).

Noel B. Salazar (2010) has applied the notion of imagineering in the context of culturally themed environments in Tanzania and Indonesia, showing how open-air parks and museums are used to reproduce and contest dominant

imaginaries of postcolonial nations and their inhabitants, while Orvar Löfgren (2007) uses the concept to illuminate how the building of the Öresund Bridge between Sweden and Denmark was not merely a project of technical engineering, but also one of imagining a future transnational metropolis. Desai (2012a, 45) has used the notion of "city imagineering" to make sense of how entrepreneurial events organized in Ahmedabad between 2003 and 2007 produced "sanitized and conflict-free images of the city" through "image manipulations and silences around spaces and experiences of marginalized groups." I utilize the notion of imagineering in the context of world-class city making to make sense of *how the BJP-led state seeks to define the borders of good citizenship and the nation, and to posit itself as the ultimate guarantor of a better future in order to sustain and strengthen its legitimacy*. In my usage, then, the state is an imagineer that reconstructs itself and the nation through world-class infrastructure development. The notion fits particularly well in the empirical context of contemporary Ahmedabad, characterized by frenzied urban restructuring and aspirations of utopian futurism.

**State imaginaries**

In addition to (spectacular) statist representations, people meet the state in the sphere of mundane everyday practices. Importantly, then, I am not only interested in how the state reproduces its stateness. I also examine how people displaced by development imagine the state, and how it concretely figures in their everyday lives post-resettlement. Hence, my second objective is to examine ethnographically what the "state" means to displaced people and how displacement has shaped their relationship to it. Paying attention to my informants' *state imaginaries*—"*implicit* assumptions about the nature of the state" (Brissette 2016, 1166, original emphasis)—I illuminate the relationship between state representations and the actual workings of the state (cf. Thelen, Vetters & von Benda-Beckmann 2018). I use the notion of state imaginaries to refer to my informants' *ideas and suppositions about the state, shaped by state representations (what the state claims to be and claims to do) and everyday engagements (what the state actually does)*. Through these imaginaries, people discursively construct the state and themselves as its subjects (Brissette 2016). Akin to Brissette (2016), I track these implicit imaginaries through the "background" of more explicit stories, metaphors, discourses, and claim-making practices (see also Taylor 2002).

**Disaggregated state**

Often, people's everyday interactions with the state are mediated by seemingly apolitical bureaucratic documents that condense and embody state power (Gupta 2012, 208). Indeed, in Sadbhavna Nagar, my informants' daily engagements with the state usually involved documents, whether survey forms, allotment letters, school certificates, driver's licenses, death certificates, written complaints, or voter ID cards. In fact, documents played a central part in their

everyday lives, even if only in the form of absence. As Sharma and Gupta (2006, 11, original emphasis) state:

> Whether it is the practice of standing in line to obtain monthly rations or to mail a letter, getting a statement notarized or answering the questions of an official surveyor, paying taxes or getting audited, applying for a passport or attending a court hearing, the state as an institution is substantiated in people's lives through the apparently *banal* practices of bureaucracies. What the state means to people […] is profoundly shaped through the *routine* and *repetitive* procedures of bureaucracies.

In his insightful study on officials working with development programs in rural Uttar Pradesh, Gupta (2012) shows how "the state" practices impersonal structural violence through bureaucracy. Gupta argues that structural violence is not due to the malfunctioning of bureaucracy, but inherent to the working of the democratic state in India. He demonstrates how violence is "enacted at the very scene of the care" through mechanisms such as pervasive corruption and the state's insistence on bureaucratic writing despite the illiteracy of many rural poor (Gupta 2012, 24). It is the indifference of the state to the "arbitrary outcomes" of its bureaucratic practices that becomes a matter of life and death for the poor (ibid.). The indifference explains why the Indian state—the legitimacy of which depends on inclusion of the poor—ends up disempowering the poor through the very programs that are meant to ameliorate suffering (Gupta 2012).

Gupta emphasizes that understanding how state bureaucracy is connected to the high mortality rates of the poor requires a view of the state as *fragmented and disaggregated* rather than a well-integrated, cohesive entity with a common purpose. The state in India comprises not only three branches of government (judicial, legislative, administrative), but also multiple levels (federal, State, district [*zillā*], sub-district [*tahsīl* or *tālukā*], and block) as well as different agencies, commissions, and independent departments. Harmful outcomes for the poor result from the corrupt practices of specific state bureaus and officials, the state's excessive valuation of "paper truths" (Tarlo 2003, 74) over oral narratives, and data inaccuracies (e.g., officials' guesstimates of people's ages). A disaggregated view of the state makes it possible to examine the systematic production of unintended outcomes (Gupta 2012, 47) and the pursuit of social justice by individual policy-makers (e.g., Agarwal 2002, 3–4; Baruah 2010, 33–34). As Agarwal (2002, 3), studying struggles for changing inheritance laws in India, notes, "the State itself can be seen as an arena of cooperation and contestation between parties with varying degrees of commitment to promoting gender equality." Bierschenk and Olivier de Sardan (2014), theorizing state formation in Africa, have also emphasized the importance of studying the heterogeneity of the state, as have Hansen and Stepputat (2001) in their analysis of postcolonial state formation.

An essential feature of the local state in Gujarat is the intermediary role of politicians (Berenschot 2010; 2011a; 2015), *āgevāns* ("community leaders"), community workers, *dādās* and *goondas* ("goons") (Berenschot 2011b; Ghassem-Fachandi 2012a, 94–95), *kāryakartās* ("party activists"), and document middlemen in state–citizen relations, a situation that leads Berenschot (2010, 855) to

speak of a "mediated state." Examining politicians' use of social identities to mobilize support in the Dalit-dominated locality of Isanpur in Ahmedabad, Berenschot (2015, 31) shows that residents depended on political actors to access public resources and tended to support politicians who promised to privilege their community over others. Politicians, on the other hand, directed their efforts and offers to groups—whether based on caste, class, region, or religion—that could deliver the majority of votes in a particular constituency. Mobilizing appropriate us-versus-them divisions, politicians strived to make those divisions central to people's self-perception (ibid., 32). Hence, electoral success depended on candidates' ability to *convey closeness* "both in the sense of being socially connected and feeling a concern for the personal welfare of voters" (ibid., 41). In other words, politicians' eligibility as representatives of specific groups was established in a way that transcended the state–society dichotomy. As Berenschot (2010, 884–885) argues, "political intermediaries—mediating between bureaucrats, citizens and service providers—are a constitutive part of the state in Gujarat." Moreover, in Sadbhavna Nagar, local goons, often involved in inter-state alcohol smuggling and hooch production, assisted politicians in garnering votes so as to prevent police intervention in their activities (cf. Berenschot 2011c, 224), while community workers and document middlemen helped residents in their daily grievances. Thus, my examination of the state takes into account the role of various kinds of actors functioning at the interface between state institutions and citizens.

Importantly, a disaggregated view of the state does not regard the poor as helpless victims at the mercy of state violence and injustice. Instead, it recognizes that the poor use a range of tactics, including the bribery of particular officials, the use of political intermediaries, and the forgery of documents, in dealing with different levels, agencies, and officials identified as *sarkār* ("government") in India. I analyze these practices as bottom-up ways of forming citizenship and as efforts to influence the government to further one's own interests. People's abilities to steer the state depend on their cultural capital, political connections, and economic influence, with some people being positioned more advantageously than others (Gupta 2012; see also Weinstein 2012). A conceptualization of the state as a disaggregated entity enables an analysis of state–citizen interaction at the level of the everyday lives and experiences of human beings.

I approach the state as a concrete assemblage of government institutions and practices (Gupta 2012), and, following Abrams (1988), as an idea that camouflages the fact that the seemingly unified entity consists of various elements of governance. In Abrams' (1988, 82) words, "the state is not the reality which stands behind the mask of political practice. It is itself the mask which prevents our seeing political practice as it is." The state is both an actually existing system and an ideological construction.

To summarize, my examination of the state progresses along four separate but interconnected lines. First, using the notion of imagineering, I explore how the state constructs itself as the primary driver of development and the nation's

future in the context of worlding Ahmedabad. Second, I examine how people displaced by development perceive the state, post-resettlement, by analyzing their ambivalent discourses about Modi and *sarkār*. I am interested in how the "state-idea" (Abrams 1988) and the actual activities of bureaucrats both conflict and support each other, and how this shapes my informants' perceptions of the state. Third, I apply Gupta's disaggregated view of the Indian government to examine and explain why certain resettled persons manage to negotiate benefits and services in bureaucratic engagements, whereas others lose out without anyone being blamed. Finally, I analyze how documents that "look" official are "invested with the aura of the state" (Gupta 2012, 208). My analysis of documents, produced in collaboration with my research assistant Nareshbhai, shows how resettled people associated my study with governmental practices of rule, and how this tendency provided me with indirect information about the process of forming differentiated citizenship.

# 4 WORLDING AHMEDABAD THROUGH DEVELOPMENT PROJECTS

Worlding does not entail a straightforward homogenization of cities (Ong 2011). Nevertheless, world-class city making does instantiate a particular normative temporality, a universal development time (cf. Appel 2018). Worlding is a project of accelerating time, an effort to catch up with countries placed at the top of the seemingly neutral development timeline, communicating with certain translocal symbols acknowledged by all. Urban restructuring projects and public infrastructure construction constitute one of the primary means employed by cities in their attempts to fast-forward time and to metamorphose from "backward" to globally recognized "world-class" cities.

To qualify as a world-class city in the eyes of the transnational community, specific visual criteria of modernity must be met (Larkin 2013, 333). Particular future-oriented infrastructures encapsulate promises of modernity, development, and the "good life" (Anand 2006; Gupta 2018; Harvey & Knox 2015; Schwenkel 2018), which makes them powerful tools for attracting global investors, inspiring and galvanizing the public, and creating spaces for privileged sectors of society. Indeed, a world-class city is recognized by its infrastructure: broad highways, towering hotels and glossy office buildings, high-speed Internet, and uninterrupted water and power supply. When it comes to Ahmedabad, the Sabarmati Riverfront, with its intended allusions to the banks of the Seine and the Thames, suggests that the city is indeed like Paris and London—common reference points for cities aspiring to be world-class.

While urban infrastructure projects testify to a city's becoming modern and developed, they also bring into being "underdeveloped" subjectivities that need to be reformed to become "developed" (Gibson-Graham & Ruccio 2001, 161). Through physical displacements, some people are violently relegated to the "backward" end of the normative timeline of development. In world-class spaces, these people become not only out-of-place but also out-of-time. The ever-expanding gap between the past and the future can be observed in the materiality of urban space—in Ahmedabad, this is particularly visible. While some people are able to move around in carefully patrolled world-class bubbles, oth-

ers appear increasingly obsolete even if nothing has changed for them—or precisely because of this perceived lack of change. In the words of de Koning et al. (2015, 122), this latter group is represented as "deficient, as undesirables who must change their norms, values, and behavior in order to meet the criteria of good citizenship."

In this chapter, I explore state representations, nation-building, and citizen-forming in the context of Ahmedabad's worlding, using the notion of *imagineering*. The concept incorporates both technical and imaginative dimensions, which is why I find it particularly suited to examination of how the state, the nation, and good citizenship are reimagined and recrafted through the materialities, discourses, and future-oriented practices of infrastructure development projects. I focus on three major urban interventions of the 2000s: the Sabarmati Riverfront Development Project (SRFDP), the Kankaria Lakefront Development Project (KLDP), and the Bus Rapid Transit System (BRTS) project. I begin this chapter by addressing each of these projects and the kinds of displacements that they have entailed.[32] After presenting the projects, I examine the developed waterfronts—the Kankaria Lakefront and the Sabarmati Riverfront—as physical environments and demonstrate why they can be seen as symbols of a New India. Finally, I discuss the naming of the resettlement sites of Vatva, showing how it has propagated the Hindu nationalist agenda at the micro level.

## 4.1 Sabarmati Riverfront Development Project

The soundscape of the Sabarmati Riverfront walkway on a Sunday afternoon engenders a feeling of being present everywhere in the city at once. The sounds of the West, the East, and the Old City intersect here to produce an ambiance of synthesis or, alternatively, a jarring cacophony. Here, one can hear the echo of the whole of Ahmedabad.

The monolithic gray landscape of the riverfront, by contrast, speaks in a different language, a language stripped bare of polysemy. At first glance, everything looks the same: concrete structures extending into the horizon as far as the eye can see on both sides of the river. A closer look, however, reveals benches that invite passers-by to rest, trees that afford a respite from the scorching heat, and even a zip-wire that enables daredevils to cross the river in style. Young, love-struck couples leaning against each other are a common sight in the dim evening light. During the long, hot hours of the day, however, the

[32] While the process of displacement and resettlement under the SRFDP has been researched in detail (e.g., Desai 2012b; Desai 2014; Patel et al. 2015), the displacements under the KLDP and the BRTS project have not been systematically analyzed. However, R. Joshi (2014) and Mahadevia, Desai, and Vyas (2014) have presented estimations of the number of people displaced by these projects. My analysis of the displacements under the KLDP and the BRTS mostly relies on newspaper articles, court documents, and displaced people's accounts.

promenade remains empty. Private security guards hiding from the sun beneath the bridges are pretty much the only sign of life. "Officials have the absolute authority to deny entry for visitors," affirms a Gujarati signboard attached to the concrete wall.

Stepping outside the walls of the riverfront promenade, one finds a contradiction to the gray simplicity. Amidst the trees and bushes, one can see traces of demolished houses that once stood by the river: a bare wall; a blue doorway that leads nowhere; a pile of rubble, half grown over by weeds. These are the remains of the past lives of people that were displaced from the riverfront as part of the Sabarmati Riverfront Development Project (SRFDP), an initiative "to transform Ahmedabad's historic yet neglected river into a vibrant and vital focus for the city" (Sabarmati Riverfront, About 2013). Prior to the project, the riverbank hosted a popular weekly market, *Ravivari*, and a thriving cloth dyeing industry, along with other livelihood activities such as urban farming. The area also housed 40,000 families living in a total of 70 formal or informal neighborhoods (Jadav 2011 according to N. Mathur 2012, 65). These included Azadnagar, Kagdiwad, Victoria Garden, Khanpur Darwaja, Raikhad, Dudheshwar Tank, Ramlal no Khado, and Shantipura na Chapra, among others.

FIGURE 4.1. Remains of demolished houses at the riverfront, January 2016.

Many of the informal neighborhoods comprised both Hindu and Muslim residents (Desai 2014, 10). People had either been born by the river or had settled there as a result of marriage or in search of a livelihood. Some of the migrant workers had come from the so-called Cow Belt consisting of the populous

Hindi-speaking northern states of Uttar Pradesh and Bihar. Others had migrated from the villages of Gujarat, or from the neighboring states of Rajasthan, Madhya Pradesh, and Maharashtra.[33] As an affluent state, Gujarat has always attracted migrants (Baruah 2010, 52). In Ahmedabad, riverfront *kaccā* huts, whether rented, purchased, or self-built, enabled centralized living at minimal costs with a stable availability of livelihoods. However, according to the official website of the Sabarmati project, informal settlements prevented direct access to the river and adversely affected the seasonal river's capacity to carry floods. Moreover, the Sabarmati was in a toxic condition: "Untreated sewage flowed into the river through storm water outfalls and dumping of industrial waste posed a major health and environmental hazard" (Sabarmati Riverfront, Background 2018).

The idea of developing the banks of the river was first proposed in the 1960s by the French-American architect Bernard Kohn, who envisioned an ecological valley in the Sabarmati basin (Jha 2013). In 1966, Kohn's proposal, including the reclaiming of 30 hectares of land by the riverfront, was considered to be technically feasible by the Government of Gujarat (Sabarmati Riverfront, Previous Proposals 2019). However, the project did not gain impetus until 1997 when the AMC established a specific public body, the Sabarmati Riverfront Development Corporation Limited (SRFDCL), to supervise the process (Desai 2012b; Pessina 2012). The SRFDCL's Board of Directors consisted of high-level bureaucrats from both the municipal corporation and the Government of Gujarat. Since Narendra Modi, then Chief Minister of Gujarat, had power over the appointment of these bureaucrats, he was able to play a central role in the project (Desai 2012b, 52). Indeed, Modi's agenda as Chief Minister included transforming Ahmedabad into a slum-free model city in the name of cleanliness (*The Times of India* 2010). Bernard Kohn, however, has distanced himself from the SRFDP, citing differences between his original vision—an ecological valley fostering social and economic consciousness—and the anti-poor implementation of the project: "My brainchild was not the Sabarmati Riverfront but the Ecological Valley. My project was socially-oriented—it was an ecological valley for the entire 400 km stretch from Dharoi Dam to Gulf of Cambay. Ahmedabad was only a small part in it" (Jha 2013).

In 1998, a non-profit urban planning firm, the Environmental Planning Collaborative (EPC),[34] submitted a successful project proposal (N. Mathur 2012, 65). According to the original EPC proposal, the project-affected residents were to be resettled in three different locations along the river itself. Of the reclaimed land by the riverfront, 15.48 hectares were to be used for the relocation and re-

[33] According to a survey carried out in 81 riverfront slums in 1997–1998, 96% of the population had a migrant background. The majority (77.8%) had migrated more than 15 years earlier. 65% of the migrants came from Gujarat, 17.9% from the neighboring states (Maharashtra, Rajasthan, Madhya Pradesh), 12% from North India, 4% from South India and 0.7% from East India. 0.4% had migrated from abroad (D'Costa & Das 2002, 189–191).

[34] The founder of the EPC, Bimal Patel, is also the head of the Ahmedabad-based architectural firm HCP Design, Planning and Management, which was responsible for planning the Kankaria Lakefront as well as the new riverfront. Furthermore, Patel is the president of CEPT University.

habilitation of the slum-dwellers to ensure "that none of the project affected persons will have to move too far from their present location" (EPC 1998, 34). Information about resettlement on the reclaimed land or in the municipal corporation's vacant plots was then published in various newspapers, which according to Desai (2014, 9) were the only sources of information for the riverfront-dwellers. Contrary to the recommendations of the 1998 proposal, there was no attempt on the part of the AMC/SRFDCL to engage the residents in the planning of the project. Later, the plans to resettle residents along the riverfront and to fund resettlement housing through the project were abandoned.

The proposal included the EPC's mapping of the settlements by the Sabarmati. Significantly, the results subsumed all the informal settlements into the category of "slums," smoothing out significant differences in settlements' ownership patterns and neighborhood histories. While some of the people had been resettled on the riverfront by the AMC as a result of previous displacements and communal riots, others lived in *chawls* rented out by private landowners.[35] The proposal ignored these differences, producing an internally homogenous category of "project-affected slums" (Desai 2012b, 52).

After the proposal had been completed, the AMC/SRFDCL engaged a Mumbai-based organization to carry out a survey of the riverfront slums, which was accomplished in 2002. According to Desai (2012b, 53), residents did not receive systematic information about the project nor were the results of the survey shared with them; they were also left uncertain about the number of project-affected households and the conditions of compensation.

As the project received more coverage in the local press, NGOs, including the Rahethan Adhikar Manch (RAM) housing rights organization, began to mobilize riverfront residents (Desai 2014, 6–7). The residents themselves also approached the leader of St. Xavier's Social Service Society (SXSSS), an organization that promoted communal harmony in the riverfront neighborhoods. A meeting organized by the SXSSS director adopted a resolution to form the Sabarmati Nagrik Adhikar Manch (SNAM), an association of riverfront-dwellers.

In addition to NGOs, political leaders, too, started functioning as intermediaries between residents and the government (Desai 2012b, 53). In 2004, Congress politician Deepak Babaria formed the Amdavad Shehr ane Riverfront Jhupda Samiti ("Association of Slum-Dwellers in Ahmedabad City and the Riverfront") and tried to mobilize riverfront residents against the Sabarmati Riverfront Development Project.

SNAM leaders wrote various letters to the AMC and demanded resettlement on the riverfront itself. They also asked the AMC to explain why only informal settlements and not the middle- and upper-middle-class buildings by the river were to be demolished, thereby challenging perceptions that legal property ownership was the prerequisite for rightful claims to the city (Desai

[35] *Chawl* houses were originally built to accommodate textile mill workers, but with the closing of the mills, they were sold or rented out to low-income households (Suzuki, Cervero & Iuchi 2013, 102).

2014, 12–13). In April 2005, the SNAM filed a Public Interest Litigation (PIL) in the Gujarat High Court on the issue of displacement. The court ruling then gave a Stay Order asking the authorities to explicate their plans for resettlement and rehabilitation (R&R), and instructing them not to evict riverfront residents until further orders by the court. However, against the court ruling, the AMC/SRFDCL continued with the construction of the project without finalizing their R&R plans. No consultations were held with the residents nor with the NGOs. Despite the Stay Order, the authorities even tried to evict families from a number of riverfront neighborhoods, with varying success (Desai 2014, 6–7).

The R&R Policy was finally prepared in mid-2008, and after that, in 2009–2010, three different phases of displacement and resettlement took place with the court's permission. In the resettlement process, many SNAM leaders functioned as intermediaries between the authorities and the residents. The court also ordered that an association of project-affected families (PAFs) had to be formed to aid the AMC in the rehabilitation process (Desai 2014, 8).

The R&R Policy specified the number of "fully affected" and "partially affected" families (8,000 and 4,000, respectively), the cut-off date for eligibility (December 2002), the size of resettlement apartments (33 $m^2$), the cost to be borne by the beneficiary (87,000 rupees), and the tenancy conditions (a ten-year lease, after which the title would be transferred to the beneficiary). However, the policy was silent on important issues such as the criteria for being "partially affected," the locations of the resettlement sites, the basic services to be provided at resettlement sites, the timing of resettlement, and the documents necessary to prove eligibility for resettlement (Desai 2014, 24). With the preparation of the R&R Policy, the decision was made to finance the resettlement housing under the JnNURM scheme instead of raising the money through the project as planned in 1998 (Desai 2014, 6).

After the three phases of resettlement, in 2010, thousands of families still remained on the riverfront because they did not want to move or because they had not been allotted apartments (Desai 2014, 36). In 2011, the court ordered the SNAM to submit a list of families excluded from resettlement, and in August 2011, the authorities held a single massive allotment draw (Phase 4) for 4,015 families and an additional 162 families recommended by the Buch committee.[36] These people were split across ten different resettlement sites. Besides proof of identity, those resettled in the fourth phase were required to show proof of residence prior to 2007, such as a ration card (Desai 2014, 39).[37] Many riverfront-dwellers found it difficult to prove their eligibility for resettlement: some had lost their important documents in floods or in communal riots while others were harassed by officials due to the incorrect spelling of their names in surveys (Mahadevia et al. 2014, 38–39).

[36] The Buch committee was formed in 2010 to resolve various issues, with retired High Court judge, D. P. Buch, as its head (Desai 2014, 8).
[37] In 2011, the cut-off date of 2002 was ordered to be extended to 31st December 2007 (Desai 2012b, 56).

In mid-November 2011, the final demolition of the slums began. Bulldozers flattened people's homes over the weekend so that the residents would not have recourse to the courts. By Monday, the riverfront neighborhoods had been demolished (Desai 2014, 41). The families whose documents had not yet been verified for resettlement were directed by the court to move to the AMC-provided "temporary site" of Ganeshnagar, located next to the municipal landfill. In the subsequent months, the Buch committee verified 672 of the 1,433 families, and an allotment draw was carried out for them in January 2012 (Phase 5). However, approximately 1,500 families remained in Ganeshnagar claiming that their houses had been bulldozed by the AMC/SRFDCL. According to the AMC/SRFDCL, these people had never been riverfront residents at all (Desai 2014, 42–43). In January 2016, when I last visited Ganeshnagar, thousands of huts still stood next to the municipal landfill (see section 7.3).

The project officially evicted 14,000 households directly and indirectly (N. Mathur 2012, 65). The project-affected families (PAFs) that managed to obtain alternative housing were resettled in flats comprising two rooms and a kitchen built under the Basic Services to the Urban Poor (BSUP) program in 18 different relocation sites (Desai 2014). As mentioned above, the PAFs were divided into four groups for the random computerized allotment draws and each group was assigned three to five resettlement sites, with some sites assigned to more than one group. This procedure was insensitive to the existing social structure within the riverfront neighborhoods (Desai 2014, 29–30).

The SNAM asked for Hindus and Muslims to be resettled in separate areas due to fears of communal violence. In fact, 284 allotments had to be canceled because resettled Muslims were stoned, reportedly by Hindus from surrounding localities. Many Muslim families were, therefore, re-allotted flats in Muslim-dominated areas in Phase 3. Hindus and Muslims were ultimately resettled together at only one site, Vatva 1 (Desai 2014, 31), which today is known as Sadbhavna Nagar, and which I chose as my fieldwork location.

According to Desai (2014), the resettlement of riverfront households was "piecemeal and fragmentary"—different groups within slum neighborhoods were resettled in different phases, in different ways, and at different sites. There was no well-thought-out or articulated strategy for displacement and resettlement. Instead, the process was shaped by grassroots resistance, court rulings, and calculations and pressures connected to the acceleration of project construction in parts of the riverfront. Those who were considered eligible were allotted resettlement apartments at different phases, while many were referred to the Buch committee for a resolution of their eligibility. Many were also deemed ineligible for resettlement altogether and were left without resettlement apartments (Desai 2014).

All in all, the Sabarmati Riverfront Development Project covered a stretch of 11.3 kilometers on the eastern side and 11.2 kilometers on the western side of the Sabarmati; a promenade with a total length of 22.5 kilometers was built along the river. When I last visited the riverfront in December 2017, the 203-hectare area also featured public parks, gardens (some of which had an en-

trance fee), an organized *dhobi ghat* featuring 168 spaces for washing laundry, a riverfront market with vending spaces for rent, large event areas, and empty land yet to be developed.

FIGURE 4.2. The SRFDP covered a stretch of 11.3 kilometers on the eastern bank and 11.2 kilometers on the western bank of the River Sabarmati, July 2015.

Initially, the project was planned as self-financing. To cover the costs of development, including resettlement, 20% of the riverfront land was to be sold for commercial development. However, other sources of finance became necessary as project implementation slowed. Hence, the SRFDCL obtained loans from the Housing and Urban Development Corporation (HUDCO),[38] from commercial financial institutions, and from the AMC to cover the costs of the 12,720-million-rupee (approx. 193 million euros) project. Moreover, entrance fees to parks and gardens have created operating revenue together with the leasing of vending stalls and undeveloped lands used for various events (The World Bank 2015).

Desai (2006; 2012) argues that to attract investments, it was imperative to present the project as a secular development project. This has meant silencing the violent history of the city and downplaying its current Hindu–Muslim segregation. Arenas that challenge the *Hindutva* ideology can exist only as long as Hindus and Muslims have shared spaces in the city; however, the current trend seems to be toward segregation rather than unity (Desai 2006, 12). The divisive resettlement has contributed to the reduction of common spaces for interaction

[38] HUDCO is a government-owned company that provides loans for housing and urban infrastructure projects.

between religious communities, and the city has been further segregated into separate Hindu and Muslim areas (Desai 2014, 47).

## 4.2 Kankaria Lakefront Development Project

Kankaria Lake, formerly known as Hauz-e-Qutb ("Pond of Qutb"), is the oldest artificial lake in Ahmedabad. Situated in the neighborhood of Maninagar, the lake was built in the 15th century by Sultan Qutb-ud-din to function as a water resource for the nearby royal palaces (Yagnik & Sheth 2011, 24). Qutb-ud-din was the grandson of Ahmed Shah, the founder of Ahmedabad. At the center of the circular lake was the garden island of Bagh-e-Nagina ("Jewel Garden"), which functioned as a recreation spot for medieval sultans and nobles. Nowadays the place is known as Nagina Wadi.

In 1928, Kankaria was protected under the Ancient Monuments Preservation Act (Shah 2014). In 1951, self-taught veterinarian Reuben David established a zoo by the lake—the Kamla Nehru Zoological Garden is still functional today. Food vendors and pony ride entrepreneurs also opened shops by Kankaria, and the place was transformed into an affordable leisure location for people from all walks of life (Shah 2014).

After the partition of British India in 1947, Kankaria became a safe haven for refugees displaced from Pakistan. According to the Census of 1951, altogether 41,675 refugees, most of whom were Sindhi Hindus from Karachi and the surrounding areas in the Sindh province, were resettled in the Ahmedabad district (Yagnik & Sheth 2011). In the city of Ahmedabad, the Sindhis were resettled in refugee camps, one of which was built on private land next to Kankaria Lake; the new neighborhood became known as Sindhi Camp.

Sindhis lived as tenants of the private landowner until the municipal corporation, having paid compensation to the landowner, took over possession of the land on March 20, 1974; after that, Sindhis became tenants of the municipality. However, the plot of land had already been earmarked for the purposes of park and recreation under Town Planning Scheme (TPS) No. 4 in 1969 (Gujarat High Court 2007).[39] Thus, it was only a matter of time before the camp was cleared, as the land was wanted for development in the rapidly urbanizing metropolis. The once remote place had now become a profitable asset for the Ahmedabad Municipal Corporation. The Kankaria Lakefront Development Project, spearheaded by Gujarat Chief Minister Narendra Modi, sought to "beautify"

[39] The TPS is an instrument of urban planning that requires agricultural landowners in the urban fringes to give up to 40% of their land to the government in exchange for cash compensation. The land is redeveloped into urban plots with civic amenities and sold at auction. The government also redevelops the remaining 60% of the land and returns it to the landowner, who can then build on it or sell it to real estate developers (Sanyal & Deuskar 2012, 151). In Gujarat, urban planning progresses in two steps: the preparing of a Development Plan (DP)—a macro strategic plan for the entire city or development area—and, consequently, the preparing of TPS micro plans for smaller areas of land (Ballaney 2008, 9–10).

the surroundings of the lake. The 360-million-rupee (approx. 4.8 million euros) project involved the demolition of informal neighborhoods, including Sindhi Camp.

The bulldozers finally came in December 2006. The neighborhoods of Sindhi Camp, Macchipir, K. K. Vishwanath and Indranagar Society by Kankaria Lake were to be razed to the ground. On December 11, each household had received a notice that directed them to vacate the land. "Should you fail to do so, note that the municipal corporation will remove all constructions after 21 (twenty-one) days," the notice said. After the demolition notices had arrived, the residents decided to fight back. They organized demonstration rallies, gave interviews to the media, and filed court cases. Attacking the *Hindutva*-infused local government at its weak point, they threatened it with mass conversion to Islam and, ultimately, with suicide (*Jay Hind Daily* 2006; *Rajasthan Patrika* 2006). For some, losing their home was too much to bear: "during the removal of dwellings a resident named Jagantrabhai died out of shock. Now, as the demolitions go on, the threat looms over the lives of other to-be-homeless people as well" (*Rajasthan Patrika* 2006).

The Sindhi community, in particular, filed several cases in court, both directly and through lawyers. In one of the cases, 49 residents of Sindhi Camp petitioned the municipal corporation to regularize their dwellings and pleaded for alternative accommodation in place of the demolished houses. The petitioners contended that the reservation of plots for the purposes of parks and recreation in 1969 under TPS No. 4 had been illegal, as the municipality had not issued the special notice required under rule 21(3) of the Bombay Town Planning Act 1955 (Gujarat High Court 2007). Documents relating to a case handled in the Gujarat High Court on October 10, 2007, also reveal that the petitioners living in Sindhi Camp drew a line between themselves and "encroachers on public lands," claiming that as "lawfully inducted tenants" they deserved a better location and facilities than displaced slum-dwellers from other areas. One of the contentions presented by the petitioners was as follows:

> The petitioners have been occupying the land in question for the last about 40 to 50 years. The petitioners have constructed buildings on the land in question. The petitioners were not rank trespassers who encroached upon the land in question, but the petitioners were lawfully inducted tenants initially by the then owner of the original plot and subsequently accepted as tenants by the respondent Corporation itself. The alternative lands being offered to the petitioners cannot thereof be of the same area with the same facilities as are offered to the trespassers and encroachers on public lands (Gujarat High Court 2007).

Drawing on their status as the offspring of refugees, the materiality of their houses, and their long history as lawful tenants on private land, the Sindhis mobilized a "politics of difference" (Crossa 2016, 292) in an effort to negotiate better terms of resettlement. Political activities that highlight the "differences within the group as a way to mobilise and influence government policy" are tied with ideas of who is a legitimate user of space (ibid.). From the Sindhi perspective, the Indian government had already officially resettled them on their arrival as refugees—thus, it did not make sense that they had to move

again and share space with "encroachers" who had gradually and unofficially appropriated land. They contested the project discourse that created a broad category of "slum-dwellers" and homogenized all the residents of informal settlements.

The Gujarat High Court did not endorse the legitimacy discourse of the petitioners by regularizing their dwellings. The rationale behind the ruling was that the petitioners could not produce evidence to show that they were lawful tenants before November 1969 when TPS No. 4 was sanctioned (Gujarat High Court 2007); in other words, the petitioners' presence by Kankaria Lake prior to 1969 was questioned. Consequently, the Ahmedabad Municipal Corporation demolished Sindhi Camp and other lakeside neighborhoods in 2006, rendering around 2,000 people homeless (Mahadevia et al. 2014). After the demolition, those deemed eligible for resettlement were given monetary compensation of 5,000 rupees per household and allotted plots of land on the temporary site of Ganeshnagar.[40] In Ganeshnagar, the displaced were supposed to use the money to build a hut and wait for the construction of the actual resettlement apartments. What followed was a long period of limbo, since the construction of the Sadbhavna Nagar resettlement site, which became the home of most displaced Sindhis, was finished only in 2010.

The former lakeside residents did eventually obtain a small measure of special treatment in the process of resettlement due to their persistent mobilization. Sindhis were assigned separate blocks in two resettlement sites: Sadbhavna Nagar and Tikampura. During my fieldwork, Sadbhavna Nagar had a section called Sindhi block, consisting of four apartment blocks inhabited by the Sindhi community. Residents of mixed-caste Hindu neighborhoods by the lake, including Macchipir, were divided into three resettlement sites: Sadbhavna Nagar, Kushabhau Thakre Nagar, and Tikampura, the former two of which are in Vatva. In distinction to riverfront-dwellers, the Kankaria residents were divided into groups and resettled together in individual blocks.

In sum, the Sindhis claimed a legitimate presence by Kankaria Lake based on their grandparents' refugee status and threatened the BJP-led municipal corporation with conversion to Islam, should it refuse their demands. Despite these efforts, the Sindhis were eventually resettled in BSUP sites together with other residents of informal settlements, with the exception that they were assigned specific blocks. This meant that the Sindhis could maintain some form of community.

## 4.3 Bus Rapid Transit System

> Janmarg is a system for one and all. It is about connecting people and ensuring progress. It is also about creating an identity for public transport in Ahmedabad and a sense of pride in the citizens. Janmarg is an image that will define the ethos of Ah-

[40] I could not find official information on the eligibility criteria under the Kankaria Lakefront Development Project.

> medabad as a city that is ready to accept change, a city that has a vision for the future, a city that will transform the image of public transport in India (AMC 2012, 1 according to Rizvi 2014, 56).

The AMC decided to construct a Bus Rapid Transit System (BRTS), branded locally as Janmarg ("People's Way") when Gujarat celebrated the "Urban Year" in 2005. The project proposal was accepted in 2006, and construction began in 2007. The project received funding under the Urban Infrastructure and Governance (UIG) component of the JnNURM scheme. According to the guidelines of the UIG, 30% of the financial contribution came from the central government, 20% from the state government, and another 20% from the city government (Mahadevia, Joshi & Datey 2013a, 71). In addition to the JnNURM, the BRTS project was aligned with the National Urban Transport Policy (NUTP) of 2006 and the "Accessible Ahmedabad" vision that aimed at enhancing mobility for all city-dwellers, including the poor. Sustainability and affordable mobility were among the key objectives (Mitra 2017, 17).

Janmarg is currently the largest running BRTS network in India with a total length of 88.8 kilometers. In November 2009, the average daily ridership was 25,000. In September 2011, the number had increased to 135,000, slipping to 132,000 by December 2015 (*The Times of India* 2016a). Janmarg is operated and managed by Ahmedabad Janmarg Limited (AJL), a subsidiary of the AMC. Bus operation, automatic ticketing, passenger information systems, and maintenance services have been outsourced to private actors under a public–private partnership (PPP) arrangement (Suzuki, Cervero & Iuchi 2013, 99). In spring 2018, the fares of bus rides ranged from 4 rupees to 25 rupees depending on trip distance.

CEPT University, responsible for planning the bus network, modeled Janmarg on Bogotá's TransMilenio, with dedicated median bus lanes and closed corridors. Similarly, bus stations were placed on the median, and during my fieldwork, fares were collected at the station before passengers boarded the bus. In distinction to the TransMilenio, however, the Ahmedabad BRTS did not include footpaths and cycle tracks in all the corridors—in fact, according to Mahadevia, Joshi and Datey (2013a, 79–80), walking and cycling facilities are highly inadequate and often obstructed by signboards, parked vehicles, trees, and so on. Because of the narrowness of cycling tracks, cyclists frequently use the mixed traffic lanes.

Janmarg was highly publicized and carefully branded as a secure mode of public transportation, an emblem of development and progress. Moreover, it was proclaimed that the project would benefit all citizens equally (Mitra 2017, 18). To entice customers, free rides were offered to all for the first three months after opening the first corridor. With its branding efforts, Janmarg aspired to remove the negative image associated with the bus system in India (Mahadevia et al. 2013a, 77), especially targeting the vehicle-owning middle classes (Mahadevia, Joshi & Datey 2013b, 59). Moreover, it was enthusiastically promoted by Narendra Modi who is still associated with it (Rizvi 2014, 126)—something made evident in Janmarg stations, which often display Modi-related advertise-

ments. Janmarg was even featured in Modi's prime ministerial electoral campaign in 2014 (Rizvi 2014, 81–82), as its more problematic aspects only came to the fore after the election (Simpson 2018, 59). Modi's official homepage describes how Janmarg enables Ahmedabad to compete with "leading international financial centres," effectively worlding Ahmedabad:

> Janmarg has always been a project very close to Shri Modi's heart. He fully understood that Ahmedabad, being India's seventh largest city and the largest city in Gujarat with a population of over 5 million people urgently required a transport system that is effective, efficient and can complement the pace of development Gujarat has been going through over the past decade. Almost all leading international financial centres from London, Paris, New York have mass transit infrastructure in place and this is exactly what Shri Modi is seeking to achieve for Ahmedabad for which Janmarg is only the grand beginning (Modi 2012b).

FIGURE 4.3. The Isanpur Janmarg station in eastern Ahmedabad showcases the achievements of Narendra Modi, June 2015.

The first Janmarg corridor began operating in October 2009. Since its inauguration by Modi, the Janmarg has won several awards including the national Best Mass Transit Rapid System Project in 2009 and the international Sustainable Transport Award in 2010. In 2012, Ahmedabad received a Special Mention from the Lee Kuan Yew World City Prize. According to the statement, "Ahmedabad sends a message of hope to cities that are seeking to rise above the proliferating problems of pollution, worsening traffic conditions and inadequate affordable housing" (Modi 2012c). Three projects, in particular, were mentioned as pioneering manifestations of Ahmedabad's urban regeneration: the Sabarmati Riverfront Development Project, the Kankaria Lakefront Development Project, and the Bus Rapid Transit System project.

In addition to numerous national and international awards, Janmarg has also received its fair share of criticism, due mainly to the increased road congestion it has encouraged. The BRTS corridors make traffic movement inefficient, eating up a significant proportion of the road wherever Janmarg operates (John 2016). To ease the traffic, the AMC decided to allow AMTS buses, school buses,

long-distance ST buses and ambulances in BRTS corridors (*The Times of India* 2015).[41] Moreover, despite efforts, the BRTS struggles to popularize public transport in the city. According to a UNEP study, 47% of BRTS users were former AMTS users while 13% had traveled in auto-rickshaws; only 12% had shifted to BRTS from private motor vehicles. The study also found out that while nearly 70% of the BRTS network passed through poor and middle-income localities, only 0.4% of the 580 households surveyed along its routes used Janmarg (*The Times of India* 2016a).

The construction of bus routes required the widening of roads, which meant the demolition of houses and the displacement of hawkers along the BRTS corridor. Estimates of displaced families vary from 1,000 (Mahadevia et al. 2014) to 2,600 (R. Joshi 2014, 216). In addition to those who lost their homes, the project displaced 2,000 street vendors, endangering their livelihoods (SEWA 2010). In a public hearing on displacements arranged by a forum of concerned citizens of Ahmedabad called "Our Inclusive Ahmedabad," 45-year-old displaced vendor Champaben Fatabhai spoke of the effects of the BRTS on street vendors' livelihoods:

> Where will we go? How will we earn? We are not against development but our only request is that we should be provided with an alternative space so that we could earn our livelihood. Only when the government will provide us the option, we will get the justice as citizens (Our Inclusive Ahmedabad 2010, 15).

BRTS-affected people living in Sadbhavna Nagar had been displaced from different informal settlements located in the area of Dani Limda between the Ambedkar Bridge and Kankaria. These include Mahakali na Chapra, Khodiyarnagar, and Banasnagar. According to one of my interviewees, a young Muslim woman, Mahakali na Chapra was a mixed Hindu–Muslim settlement that was demolished in 2007, at the start of the BRTS project. In comparison to displacement under the SRFDP and the KLDP, the whole process took place at short notice. Despite the residents' protests, the demolitions were carried out quickly. Of the displaced, those in possession of state-approved identification documents and proof of residence were resettled in BSUP sites together with people displaced by other development projects in the city. Before resettlement, they, too, had to wait in Ganeshnagar for the construction of resettlement apartments and, according to those whom I interviewed, received compensation of 5,000 rupees per household just like the displaced from around Kankaria.

In Sadbhavna Nagar, people displaced due to the BRTS were resettled together in a few blocks close to the northwestern corner of the site. According to two Muslim men displaced from the Dani Limda area, they had initially asked to be resettled in the Behrampura BSUP site, located close to their previous homes (see Figure 1.1). The AMC, however, denied their requests.

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[41] The BRTS operates along with another AMC-owned bus-based public transport service, the Ahmedabad Municipal Transport Service (AMTS). The two do not compete on the same routes. However, with Janmarg, the AMTS services have become slower and more irregular because the median lanes constructed for the BRTS have narrowed down roads and increased traffic (Mahadevia et al. 2013b, 59).

Although Janmarg was represented as an inclusive project integrating the needs of the urban poor within its ambit, it has clearly not succeeded in these goals. Due to high commuter fares, the lack of proper bicycle tracks and pedestrian paths, and the deterioration of the Ahmedabad Municipal Transport Service (AMTS) with the onset of Janmarg, the poor have been increasingly rendered immobile. The fares of the BRTS—higher than those of the AMTS and shared auto-rickshaws—are too high for the majority of the urban poor, especially women (Mahadevia et al. 2013b). Janmarg is mostly used by middle-income groups with a monthly income of 10,000–40,000 rupees (Mahadevia et al. 2013b, 60).[42] As walking and cycling are the primary modes of transportation in India, especially for the poor, Janmarg has not succeeded in delivering its promises of enhanced mobility for all.[43] Moreover, displacements accompanying the construction works have physically excluded the poor from the city, while rising residential property prices along BRTS routes will likely make it difficult for the poor to access housing in these locations in the future—a process that can be characterized using Tone Huse's (2014, 190) notion of "displacement by debarment." In sum, the construction of the BRTS has severely limited the urban poor's ability to live in the city, to move through it, and to be part of it (Mitra 2017, 28).

## 4.4 Imagineering through waterfronts

Worlding Ahmedabad has involved a radical transformation of certain city spaces. These include the city's two biggest and most popular waterfronts, the Sabarmati Riverfront and the Kankaria Lakefront, which have become prime attractions in the city, advertised to tourists and locals alike. The section that follows looks into the role of the new waterfronts as a means for the city, the state of Gujarat, and the federal state to construct themselves and their citizens as modern and developed, and to uphold the myth of the state as a unified entity with a common purpose.

### Waterfronts as exclusive spaces

The AMC and the state government were not the only actors involved in worlding Ahmedabad. The world-class city was also born out of popular demand and the branding efforts of organizations such as the Ahmedabad Management Association (AMA) and the Gujarat Institute of Housing and Estate Developers (GIHED), which were directed at tourists, residents, and investors

[42] Of the total users of Janmarg, 13.7% belonged to households with a monthly income of up to 5,000 rupees. 37.8% had a monthly income of up to 10,000 rupees, while 62.2% earned 10,000–40,000 rupees a month. Households with a monthly income exceeding 40,000 rupees constituted only 12.5% of the total users (Mahadevia et al. 2013b).

[43] 31% of trips in India are made on foot and 11% by bicycle. Public transport accounts for 16%, cars for another 16%, and two-wheelers (scooters and motorcycles) for 21% of the modal share (Wilbur Smith Associates 2008).

(see Desai 2012a). Real estate developers are slated to benefit from the Sabarmati project in the future, since part of the emptied riverfront land will be sold for commercial use. Moreover, the Ahmedabad-based architecture firm HCP Design, Planning and Management Pvt. Ltd. played a central part as the planner of the new Sabarmati Riverfront and Kankaria Lakefront. Bimal Patel, Berkeley-educated architect and president of CEPT University, was the chief planner of both locations and a vocal advocate of the projects. In fact, he has become the most visible spokesperson of the riverfront project (Shah 2014, 54; N. Mathur 2012, 65). Through the national policies of the JnNURM and the BSUP, the central government has also been an essential player in worlding Ahmedabad.

FIGURE 4.4. Amusement park at the Kankaria Lakefront, May 2015.

According to the official website of the Kankaria Lakefront, the AMC has developed Kankaria into a "modern urban space with best in class entertainment facilities." This, further, "truly represents Ahmedabad city governments [sic] aim to elevate services to international class and transcend into the modern lifestyle" (Kankaria Lakefront, Home 2015). Indeed, the zoo, the Atal Express mini-train, the amusement park, the circular walkway, and the Ahmedabad Eye tethered balloon ride ensure that discerning visitors are entertained. Moreover, a new BRTS station by the lake makes these recreational facilities in the eastern part of the city more accessible to the middle classes from the affluent west side of Ahmedabad.

None of my interviewees from Sadbhavna Nagar were frequent visitors at Kankaria Lake, which had become a gated area with restricted entrance. The lake was surrounded by high fences, with security guards and ticket vendors placed by each gateway. The entrance fee was 10 rupees per adult and 5 rupees per child, except for the early morning when entry was free. Kankaria—

historically a public space open to all—had been transformed into an exclusive space, out of reach for the poorest city-dwellers. This was despite the protests of various groups, including the Congress, over the imposition of fees.


FIGURE 4.5. Street vendors have been replaced by food courts selling pizza, sandwiches, Chinese food, and *pāv bhājī*, December 2015.

Development has also led to the displacement of informal street vendors, as only a licensed, wealthy segment of traders was allowed to set up kiosks inside the gates (Mahadevia et al. 2014). Street vendors are forced to sell their snacks, drinks, sweets, and toys outside the gated area. One of these vendors was Yogeshbhai, a middle-aged Sindhi man displaced from Sindhi Camp, who used to sell omelets next to the lake along with his neighbors. However, with the building of the gates, he was forced out, to continue his business outside the gated area, together with other displaced vendors. The restructuring of the Kankaria area has effectively displaced the poor, both directly, as a result of demolition and the eviction of informal vendors, and indirectly, in the form of entrance fees. Indeed, "poverty" is now virtually absent from the Kankaria Lakefront.

According to Shah (2014), the development of the waterfronts not only reflected the BJP's world-class city aspirations but was also bound up with the ideology of *Hindutva*. In the park next to the lake, the AMC erected a statue of Deendayal Upadhyaya, an RSS volunteer and one of the leaders of the Bharatiya Jana Sangh, the forerunner of the BJP (Shah 2014).[44] Moreover, the official

[44] Deendayal Upadhyaya developed a philosophy called "integral humanism," which envisions the coexistence of Hinduism and the state. According to integral humanism, a state should be run based on *dharma*, a set of rules and natural laws that sustain society (Simp-

website of the Kankaria Lakefront offers a somewhat obscure explanation of the history of the lake, implying that its origins can be traced back to the pre-Islamic era and that Sultan Qutb-ud-din may have only "widened or deepened" the existing lake:

> The lake is said to have been built during the Solanki period. There are various versions of its origin. The lake is said to have been built next to the Kanmukhteswar Temple. Another version attributes the lake to the Kankana Devi from which it takes its name. A more popular version, based on the existing plate at the site commemorating this event, it was built by Sultan Kutubuddin Shah in 15th century, with the work completed in 1451. According to this plate, its name is placed as Hauj-E-Kutub. (Pond of Kutub). Whether the lake existed before this and was only widened or deepened in 1452 or whether it was created from scratch at that time is something that still remains unresolved (Kankaria Lakefront, About Lake front 2015).

The BJP's distortion and manipulation of history was also employed in the marketing of the stone mural park built by Kankaria Lake. In December 2011, during the annual Kankaria Carnival, Narendra Modi inaugurated a 25,000-square-foot sandstone mural depicting "the history of Gujarat since ancient times": "Be it the dockyard of Lothal, the Temple of Somnath, Dwarka or Sabarmati Ashram, Gujarat is home to numerous places that have great historical significance" (Modi 2012d). The stone mural park, named Gurjar[45] Gaurav Gatha ("The story of Gurjara pride"), features stories about figures such as the mythical sage Dadhichi, Mahatma Gandhi, and freedom fighters Jhaverchand Meghani and Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel[46]. The mural also presents a carved Narendra Modi, the culmination of Gurjara pride. An illustration of the mural on the Kankaria Lakefront official website depicts the part of the wall that features Modi, the BRTS, trees, and high-rise glass towers (Kankaria Lakefront, Stone Mural 2015).

The stone mural was by no means the only place where one could see a giant Modi face. In November 2016, the Kankaria balloon was harnessed to advertise Modi's *Swachh Bharat Abhiyan* ("Clean India Mission"). Kankaria—a place strongly associated with Modi and known for its cleanliness—and especially the hot-air balloon, which is advertised as "India's first tethered helium" (Kankaria Lakefront, Balloon Safari 2015), offered a convenient platform from which to endorse Modi's mission and strengthen his brand as a development-

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son 2013, 120–121). In Upadhyaya's view, the state is not supreme, but merely one of the important institutions ("limbs of the body") that regulate and foster social life according to the principles of *dharma* (BJP 2017). Upadhyaya's philosophy has been adopted by the BJP.

[45] The State of Gujarat derives its name from Gurjaratra, a historical region dominated by Gurjara tribes.

[46] Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel, native to Gujarat, was also the first Deputy Prime Minister of India. In 2013, Modi, still the Chief Minister of Gujarat, decided to construct a "Statue of Unity" dedicated to Patel's legacy. The 182-meter statue, currently the highest in the world, was inaugurated by Modi himself on October 31, 2018, Patel's 143rd birth anniversary. It is an effort by the BJP to insert itself into the legacy of the freedom movement, to superimpose the memory of Patel on those of Mahatma Gandhi and Jawaharlal Nehru, and "to enable Prime Minister Narendra Modi to promote the claim of being the sole custodian of national unity and security" (Mukhopadhyay 2018).

oriented leader, projecting it to the upper- and middle-class Ahmedabadis, the primary users of the Kankaria Lakefront.

Much like Kankaria, the riverfront also seemed to be mainly used by middle- and upper-middle-class people. In fact, some of my interviewees who had been displaced from the riverfront told me that it was problematic for them to access the place. For example, Zoyaben and Hassanbhai, a Muslim Sayyad couple in their early 30s, said that they sometimes traveled to the riverfront with their two children to "sit in their place," but that they faced harassment from private security guards who did not always allow them to enter.[47] This demonstrates that the riverfront was not such an inclusive public space as the AMC claimed it to be. Nevertheless, in comparison to Kankaria, it remains an open public space in the sense that much of it can be visited without an entrance fee—it is at the discretion of the security guards whether one is deemed a "proper visitor" and allowed to enter.

The selectivity applied to vehicles as well. In April 2016, the Ahmedabad city police banned rickshaws on riverfront roads. Officially, this was an effort to reduce traffic, curb pollution, and ensure the safety of tourists and other visitors. Nevertheless, taxis and private vehicles were not banned (Khan 2018). Hence, I regard the ban as part of the ideology that Baviskar (2003, 90) calls "bourgeois environmentalism," which is organized around upper-class concerns of wellbeing, safety, leisure, and aesthetics—according to Baviskar, this increasingly directs the character of urban space in Delhi. A similar trend can be identified in Ahmedabad: rickshaw bans and slum demolition are framed as environmental initiatives, leading to an understanding of slum-dwellers and rickshaws (a common source of livelihood for the urban poor) as synonymous with pollution. The following portrayal of the Sabarmati Riverfront illustrates how discourses influenced by bourgeois environmentalism circulate in the media, helping to make them part of everyday common sense:

> Travelling back in time some half century ago, the river Sabarmati was a large, dirty, stinking stream running across the city. The nearby small and big factories would leave the waste to flow free in the river without treating and the river was not at all maintained. The areas that were next to the river weren't preferred and were majorly occupied by slum dwellers. The areas in Ahmedabad that were away from river were looked up to and not the ones by the river. On the contrary, today movies are being shot near this river, marriages are organized, people throw mid-river parties and even Chinese President was welcomed here. There is a drastic change in the river and by the support and work of citizens and officials, Sabarmati has become the model river front project in the state and nation (*Times Property* 2016).

[47] Zoyaben & Hassanbhai 150526

FIGURE 4.6. Rickshaws have been banned from the riverfront roads, December 2017.

**Waterfronts as places of national importance**

After "revitalization," the riverfront has become a place of various kinds of events ranging from cultural festivals to political speeches and rallies. In the wake of the Gujarat Assembly election of 2017, I witnessed Modi addressing a sea of thousands of saffron-clad supporters at a "Gujarat Development Rally" (*Gujarat vikās relī*) by the riverfront. The stage backdrop named Ahmedabad "Karnavati" (see section 1.1). In the same manner as all the BJP politicians' speeches I heard that night, Modi's address began with a collective chant of *Bhārat mātā kī jay* ("Victory to Mother India").[48] In his speech Modi mostly focused on presenting his achievements as the Chief Minister of Gujarat—the Sabarmati Riverfront Development Project was mentioned several times—and on defaming the Congress, especially Rahul Gandhi who was also campaigning in Gujarat.[49] However, Modi's performance was not limited to his speech. The

[48] The image of India as mother goddess, *Bhārat mātā,* is central to Hindu nationalists who represent "the territorial bounds of India as sacred soil, as the very body of the goddess Bharat Mata" (Menon 2010, 10). Hence, defending Mother India's territorial integrity becomes not only the patriotic, but also the religious duty of all Hindus (ibid., 89). In 2016, in a meeting of the BJP's National Executive, BJP leaders claimed that refusing to chant *Bhārat mātā kī jay* is tantamount to disrespect to the Constitution. According to the resolution, "Bharat Mata ki Jai is not merely a slogan. It was a mantra of inspiration to countless freedom fighters during the independence struggle. It is the heartbeat of a billion people today. It is the reiteration of our constitutional obligation as citizens to uphold its primacy" (*The Indian Express* 2016b).

[49] Eventually, the BJP won the assembly election with a clear majority but lost 16 places in comparison to the previous election in 2012. The Congress, led by its newly elected president Rahul Gandhi, managed to gain 16 seats. When the results were announced, both BJP and Congress activists celebrated on the streets of Ahmedabad.

next morning crowds gathered to watch an ingenious political stunt combining Hindu religion and latest technology, when Modi boarded a single-engine seaplane in the river and took off to the Ambaji Temple to offer his prayers. The speech and the seaplane performance on the Sabarmati speak for the importance of the riverfront to Modi's prestige.

The Sabarmati Riverfront has also become one of the country's prime locations for hosting international leaders, affirming the place of Ahmedabad at the frontline of national development. In September 2014, Modi welcomed the Chinese President Xi Jinping and First Lady Peng Liyuan by the riverfront. The all-day program included cultural performances, a candle-lit dinner by the river, and a leisurely stroll along the walkway (*The Economic Times* 2014). During my stay in Ahmedabad, various people from slum-dwellers to real estate agents recounted to me how even the Chinese Prime Minister had taken a walk along the Sabarmati Riverfront. And not only Xi Jinping; in September 2017 the Japanese Prime Minister Shinzo Abe and his wife Akie Abe visited Ahmedabad to lay the foundation stone of the Mumbai–Ahmedabad bullet train project. Together with Modi, the couple also paid a visit to the Sabarmati Ashram where Mahatma Gandhi lived from 1917 to 1930. Modi and Abe then took a walk on the riverfront walkway "before settling on a bench by the riverside for several minutes of light and easy conversation" (*The Times of India* 2017). During the visit, Shinzo Abe was wearing a blue Nehru jacket known as Modi's trademark garb (see also section 8.5).

In January 2018, Modi again received guests of international importance in Ahmedabad. The Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, his wife Sara Netanyahu, and Modi took in an eight-kilometer-long roadshow from the Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel International Airport to the Sabarmati Ashram, greeted by Indians waving Israeli flags along the way. The two leaders then inaugurated the iCreate center, which works with the Israel Innovation Authority to provide technology, mentorship, and financial assistance to budding start-up entrepreneurs. In his inaugural address, Netanyahu praised Modi for "having a vision," thanked the Gujaratis who lost their lives in the "liberation of Haifa," and talked about how in addition to "iPads and iPods," the world should know about iCreate (*NDTV* 2018).

Ahmedabad's urban development projects have also figured importantly in the state-sponsored Vibrant Gujarat Global Summits that display business opportunities in Gujarat. In January 2006 and January 2007, the Vibrant Gujarat events were organized at the Sabarmati Riverfront, and included exhibitions presenting Ahmedabad's future. Through these strategies, Ahmedabad was reimagined and harnessed as a spearhead of Gujarat's development (Desai 2012a, 42–43). More recently, Vibrant Gujarat Global Summits have been transferred to Gandhinagar, the capital city of the state, located 30 kilometers from Ahmedabad. Urban development projects still play an important part in the events—the cover of the reference map of Vibrant Gujarat 2011 featured a logo of the SRFDCL and a photo of the developed Kankaria Lakefront, including the hot-air balloon (Figure 4.7); the kites in the image reference the annual kite festival

organized by the riverfront. Note also that Ahmedabad is named "Amdavad" (see section 1.1), and that there is a *pūrnakalaśa*—a pot filled with water and crowned with a coronet of mango leaves and a coconut—in the lower right corner of the brochure. A *pūrnakalaśa* is a symbol of prosperity and abundance, used in Hindu rites. Blending Hindu symbols and spectacular infrastructure development, the brochure participates in imagineering a world-class Ahmedabad infused with Hindu identity.

Establishing Ahmedabad as a world-class city is a project of national imagineering undertaken by means of spectacular urban infrastructure and place marketing. State-led infrastructure development and public performances of statehood, such as Modi's speeches staged within the developed world-class spaces, can be seen as "stagecraft-as-statecraft" using Caldeira and Holston's (2005) notion. This kind of state formation involves modern states' use of planned public works—from sanitation codes to the building of new cities—to stage an imagined future of ideal subjects who will constitute the nation (Holston 2000, 614). The world-class city, largely created through the development of waterfronts that have been made the primary symbols of its world-class quality, is a project of staging a New India that is dynamic, developed, and devoid of poverty. This is why waterfronts have been made exclusive spaces in Ahmedabad—they exist in a different temporal dimension divorced from the problems of the present.

The developed waterfronts seemed to be a matter of pride for Ahmedabad's city-dwellers—not only as urban residents but also as citizens in Modi's India. They were places through which *world-class citizenship*, a notion that fuses the identities of cosmopolitan urbanite and national citizen, was experienced and performed. Borrowing the words of Lazar (2014, 67), the waterfronts constituted "a stage for national citizenship," being symbolically associated with the nation. They instituted a particular kind of future in the present and stimulated the formation of new forms of collective identity and conduct. They symbolized and steered a new world-class India.

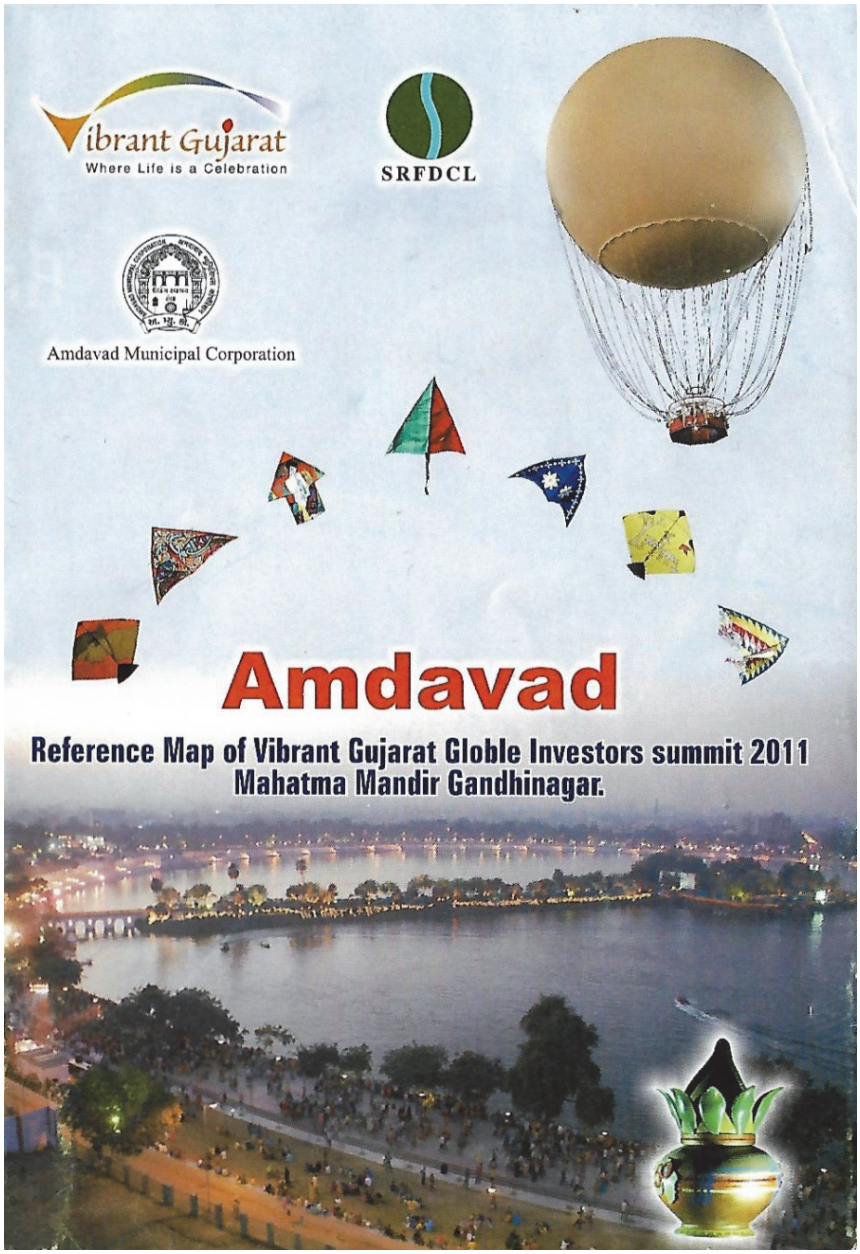


FIGURE 4.7. The cover of the reference map of Vibrant Gujarat 2011.

## 4.5 Politics of naming

By the end of my fieldwork, four of Vatva's seven resettlement sites had been given names by the government: Kushabhau Thakre Nagar, Shyama Prasad Mukherjee Nagar, Vasant Gajendra Gadkar Nagar, and Sadbhavna Nagar. The first three refer to Hindu nationalist politicians. Much like Modi, Kushabhau Thakre started his political career as a *prachārak* in the RSS, later serving as the Secretary and as the President of the BJP. He was also a Member of Parliament.

Shyama Prasad Mukherjee served as a minister in Jawaharlal Nehru's cabinet. In 1951, however, he quit the Congress and founded the BJP's predecessor Bharatiya Jana Sangh. Vasant Gajendra Gadkar, on his part, was the founder of the Gujarat BJP.

The origin of the name Sadbhavna Nagar ("Goodwill City" or "Harmony City") is more elusive. However, it is likely to refer to the so-called Sadbhavana Mission, which Modi organized as the Chief Minister of Gujarat after having been criticized for lopsided development that only benefited the wealthy (V. Joshi 2014). To prove that all Gujaratis were equal in his eyes and that he was committed to the values of harmony and brotherhood, Modi observed 36 fasts in eight cities, starting in Ahmedabad in September 2011. The fasts coincided with the allotment of resettlement apartments in Sadbhavna Nagar; the first apartments were allotted in February 2010 (Desai 2014, 54) and the allocations continued until 2012.

Many prominent BJP leaders were present when Modi began his fast in Ahmedabad, and he invited people from all walks of life to meet him during the fasting period, which lasted until early 2012. The mission included a one-day fast in Godhra, where the train-burning incident had taken place ten years earlier (see section 1.1). After completion of his fasts, Narendra Modi's official homepage praised Gujarat's development and peaceful atmosphere:

> After completion of the 36 Sadbhavana fasts, the country and the world have to take note of the fact that Gujarat's atmosphere of unity, peace and brotherhood is the main reason behind our rapid progress.
>
> On one hand, we have our nation being dominated by the poison of caste, religion based vote-bank politics that has deeply disappointed and broken the trust of every Indian. The "Divide and Rule" philosophy adopted by the Centre has caused irreparable damage to the image of our great nation.
>
> On the other hand Gujarat has adopted the path of peace, unity and brotherhood. Gujarat has shunned vote-bank politics and adopted the politics of development. 'Collective Efforts, Inclusive Growth' has replaced the age-old divisive practice of 'Divide and Rule'.
>
> Gujarat's present decade has presented a model of development based on Sadbhavana and progress and our successful experiment in the form of the Sadbhavana Mission has given a new ray of hope to our countrymen who are immersed in deep disappointment (Modi 2012e).

"Divide and rule" refers to the British colonial policy of creating antagonism between Hindus and Muslims, which, according to Modi, was being repeated by the Congress government. Ironically, some of my informants in Sadbhavna Nagar also interpreted the disruptive resettlement policy as an expression of "divide and rule," since it had torn them out of their established social networks (see section 8.2).

Naming a mixed Hindu–Muslim neighborhood "Harmony City" or "Goodwill City" can be read as hope for peaceful coexistence between religious communities. At the same time, it is part of Modi's imagineering mission, contributing to his reputation as a leader who solves the problems of poverty and

sectarianism by means of development. Through the name Sadbhavna Nagar, resettlement housing is represented as a concrete manifestation of Modi's goodwill, which transgresses the boundaries of class, caste, and religion to promote the development of the Indian nation, while Kushabhau Thakre Nagar, Shyama Prasad Mukherjee Nagar, and Vasant Gajendra Gadkar Nagar advance the legacy of Sangh Parivar icons.

## 4.6 Conclusion

Through the process of worlding, Ahmedabad, the Gujarat State, and the state of India are all imagineered as modern and developed. The process has involved diverse actors and different levels of government, including the national government through its role in financing and drafting the JnNURM initiative. State policies on various levels have been reconfigured around an imagined world-class future. The aesthetics of the flat, hard surfaces of the new concrete structures reflect the purity of an envisioned future, symbolizing a New India and evoking dreams, desires, and aspirations in urban dwellers.

The making of the world-class city has been presented as Narendra Modi's project. Although led by the Gujarat State, the SRFDP, the KLDP, and the BRTS project have become attached to the personality of Modi. The developed world-class spaces have been harnessed to promote the cult of Modi, as evidenced in BRTS stations' advertisements, Modi's speech at the riverfront in the wake of the 2017 Gujarat Assembly election, and the stone mural that associates the Gujarat State's achievements and policies with Modi. In the context of worlding Ahmedabad, the "state-idea" (Abrams 1988), an ideological construct of the state as a unified entity, is in the process of personification—or, if you will, "Modification." Modi has been represented as a guarantor of the nation's future, and worlding Ahmedabad has played a central part in building his personality cult.

To meet the criteria of a good citizen-subject entitled to participate in the future, residents of Ahmedabad have been extorted to become world-class citizens. World-class citizenship is imposed violently and suddenly through house demolition and the displacement of street traders, but also incrementally and surreptitiously in the form of gentrification, entrance fees, security guards, and vehicle restrictions. It is also cultivated through the medium of public discourse, infused by bourgeois environmentalism, and through material structures that generate awe and desire for change.

In Ahmedabad, world-class city visions have been entangled with Hindu nationalist ideas, exemplified by renaming the city "Amdavad" or "Karnavati" on various occasions, and by highlighting the *Hindutva* ideology in the built environment and marketing of the waterfronts.[50] Through the revisioning of

[50] In November 2018, the Gujarat government again expressed its interests in officially renaming Ahmedabad "Karnavati." Gujarat Deputy Chief Minister Nitin Patel publicized

Indian history in these spaces, Muslim presence has been effectively erased from the past of the nation. World-class city making in Ahmedabad is an effort to uphold and reconstruct a vision of India as a Hindu nation. Through subtle, atomized acts woven into the texture of development, the *Hindutva* ideology is gradually engraved in people's minds as they take a walk in the park. A good citizen in "Modified India" is a Hindu citizen.

To sum up, this process of worlding in Ahmedabad illustrates how the rationality of the world-class aesthetic is entangled with Hindu nationalism to the extent that modernity and development become associated with Hindu identity. It is equally addressed externally to foreign tourists and investors and internally to the residents of the city, the Gujarat State, and the nation-state. World-class city making has been subsumed by the Hindu nationalist project, which itself has been reimagineered via the global. Narendra Modi has been presented as the custodian of national development and the epitome of an Indian world-class citizen: globally oriented but firmly rooted in Hindu culture and traditions.

In the next chapter, I examine how the convergence of the world-class aesthetic and Hindu nationalism manifests itself at the micro level. I do this by looking at how people displaced in the name of development spoke of the state that orchestrated their displacement and the dynamics involved in the making of the world-class city.

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these state plans a few hours after the BJP-led government of Uttar Pradesh had announced the changing of the names of Allahabad city and Faizabad district to Prayagraj and Ayodhya, respectively (*The Indian Express* 2018).

# 5 AMBIVALENT STATE

Very early one morning in October 2015, my husband and I took an auto-rickshaw ride with Meenaben and her daughter, who both lived in Sadbhavna Nagar. Meenaben sold garlands every morning from 4 am to 10 am on the pavement next to the Jamalpur flower market by the Sabarmati. That morning, Niklas and I had risen at 3 am and walked to Meenaben's. By 3:30 we had crammed ourselves into the backseat of a rusty auto-rickshaw and were driving toward the city center with a load of garlands stacked on the roof. Meenaben's teenage daughter sat in the front with the driver, who seemed to enjoy speeding along a desolate BRTS lane usually occupied by honking buses.

To the driver's dismay, two idle-looking police officers spotted our fragrant vehicle in the BRTS corridor and directed us to stop, waving their lathis. The khaki-clad police officers told us that our rickshaw was overcrowded but that they would be kind enough to overlook this minor offense if we agreed to pay a *haftā* ("bribe") of 20 rupees. This was business as usual. Our young driver handed over two wrinkled ten-rupee notes without making any objections, and the journey continued. About a quarter of an hour later, we arrived by the river and unpacked the load onto the ground. Customers seeking bright-colored roses, marigolds, and jasmine for the city's numerous temples were soon to arrive.

As I sat by the river in the darkness, waiting for customers and sipping tea with Meenaben, she began to speak of how she used to live just next to where we were sitting. "Modi wanted to make a *mega city*,[51] and that's why we were thrown into Vatva," she explained. "I don't like it, but what can I do?"

Meenaben's choice of words—"mega city" and "thrown"—struck a chord with me. Moreover, I found it interesting that the person said to be performing the treacherous act of "throwing" (*phemknā*) in Meenaben's account was none other than Prime Minister Narendra Modi. What can Meenaben's choice of words reveal about how she regards the state and her place in the world-class city?

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[51] English words used in what were otherwise Hindi sentences before translation into English are italicized when they appear in the text for the first time.

This chapter examines resettled people's *state imaginaries*, or perceptions about the nature of the state, by focusing on the metaphors, stories, and discourses they deploy when discussing world-class city making and the correlative displacement and resettlement. I focus on how people make sense of their displacement and how they renegotiate their relationship with the state: how do residents of Sadbhavna Nagar talk about displacement and resettlement? What kinds of feelings, thoughts, ideas, and imaginations about the state can be interpreted from their descriptions and narratives?

FIGURE 5.1. Selling flowers in the early hours of the morning, October 2015.

## 5.1 The state that throws away

Residents of Sadbhavna Nagar often used the metaphors of "thrown away" and "jungle" to describe their displacement to the urban margins. Both in interviews and in casual conversations, people recounted how either *sarkār* ("government") or Modi had thrown them into a "jungle" (*jangal*), a "village" (*gām* or *gāmv*) or a "dirty settlement" (*gandī vastī* or *gandī bastī*). The demolished settlements, by contrast, were portrayed as peaceful neighborhoods located in the "city." According to people's nostalgic accounts, life in informal settlements was safe, pleasant and harmonious, and they could even feel a sense of pride about living in the "city." As many residents stated, "everything was close by" and "people helped each other." Indeed, in the informal neighborhoods, close-knit social networks—a great source of safety and security for the urban poor (Appadurai

2013; Cornea 2011; Tarlo 2003)—had been established over years of living together as neighbors.

Ramakrishnan (2014, 754) has studied the use of the tropes "jungle" and being "thrown" in Bawana, a resettlement site in Delhi, and calls them "metaphors of marginalization," which relate to how people make sense of their dispossession and negotiate their relationships with the state. In other words, the mobilization of such metaphors is a political act: a truth claim that encourages certain thoughts and actions while constraining others (Cresswell 1997; Lakoff & Johnson 1980). Metaphors construct the reality that they describe. The metaphor of being "thrown," for example, "serves to embed the notion of a second-class citizenship, both in the exclusion from urban dwelling and in the abject treatment by the state" (Ramakrishnan 2014, 769).

In contrast to Ramakrishnan's (2014) interviewees in Delhi, residents of Sadbhavna Nagar often attributed the act of throwing to an individual actor: Narendra Modi himself. In their accounts, the Modi-led state manifested itself as an indifferent or even a hostile state that "throws away." The feeling of having been betrayed by Modi in particular speaks to the authority he holds in the eyes of urban residents—Modi was able to betray them precisely because he had the authority to evoke dreams of improved living conditions and a better future. Statements such as "Narendra Modi broke our houses" and "Modi has destroyed us" held the Prime Minister accountable for not fulfilling his promises. For instance, Poonamben criticized Modi for "running away to Delhi" and for enjoying a life of traveling around the world, leaving the poor people of Gujarat to fend for themselves:

> *Poonamben:* At first, Modi was here, and he was the Chief Minister in Gandhinagar [Gujarat's capital]. Then he became the Prime Minister in Delhi... Now he is visiting new countries and enjoying his life, but what's the use? He never understood the problems of the poor. He got a fine chair and ran away. Anandiben [Patel, the Chief Minister of Gujarat from May 2014 to August 2016] visits rural areas for development purposes... Why are they not developing urban areas? They are only building bridges... That kind of work. Then they just dumped us here like dogs. No one listens [to us]. […]
>
> *Jelena:* Did you vote for Modi?
>
> *Poonamben:* Everyone told us to vote for Modi. Then he will give you a good house, he will do this and he will do that. But he didn't do anything. We will not vote for Modi again. He doesn't keep his promises.[52]

Poonamben's equation of slum-dwellers with dogs is noteworthy: stray dogs are a nuisance and a huge health problem in India and are therefore often subject to violence. Her account emphasizes experiences of helplessness and powerlessness in the face of the local government's demolition drive and subsequent resettlement process, but it also resists facile interpretations of the displaced as passive victims. Poonamben's critique of Modi's foreign travels and the characterization of urban development in Ahmedabad as "only building

[52] Poonamben 151023

bridges" implies a deep dissatisfaction with the current neoliberal order in which image, efficiency, and world-class infrastructure come before the well-being of the poor. Development is visible and tangible in the new clean and green spaces, but it does not bring positive material benefits to the everyday lives of the urban poor. The physical realities of their own lives exist in stark contrast to the world-class spaces of the city center (cf. Desai & Roy 2016). Like the 3D holographic projection used by Modi in his election campaign of 2014, the local government's official success story was starting to look like an illusion—an enticing utopia hovering in the distance, but frustratingly out of reach for the poor. "The mega city is not for poor people," said a Muslim man with whom I chatted in one of the streets of Sadbhavna Nagar. His friend said that Modi was of no use to the poor, adding: "If he were thinking about what's best for the poor, he would hardly have done this."

Omidbhai, a Muslim man in his 30s, also commented on the world-class infrastructure, citing how it had increased urban traffic and resulted in unnecessary displacement of the poor. Omidbhai himself had been displaced from Khanpur, behind the luxurious Cama Hotel. He criticized the BRTS for making the city even more congested instead of easing the flow of traffic:

> And what does the Bhajap [BJP] do? Clean the roads, like the BRTS... The roads have been widened, *no doubt*! But what happened after that, the traffic has increased. Autos are not allowed to drive in the BRTS lane, no one besides the BRTS. And because of it, people have been thrown into the streets. Buildings next to the roads have been *cut*, the whole map has been *changed*. It's good, but is it really necessary to do that in the *city*? There's a whole *road*, *ring road*, so wide... [sarcastically] We have so many autos inside the city, in Ahmedabad. Even Delhi and Bombay don't have as many [italicized words in English in original].[53]

Like Omidbhai, people displaced by development often used the English word "cutting" to describe the demolitions. The adoption of English terms can signal a sense of alienation and dislocation, as suggested by Simpson (2013, 153) who has studied the reconstruction process after the 2001 Gujarat earthquake. Indeed, my informants' accounts were infused with traces of anxiety, anger, and a feeling of having been betrayed by the state that "cuts" and "throws away." Many of my interviewees from the riverfront recounted how Modi, the government, or, in some instances, an elusive "they" (cf. Read 2012), had originally promised to allot apartments within a radius of two to five kilometers of their homes, but had not delivered on this promise. Achalbhai, a Hindu bangle salesman whose parents had moved to Ahmedabad from the populous northern state of Uttar Pradesh, bore a grudge over having been sent "15 kilometers away":

> They could have given us homes within two kilometers [of our homes]. They could have made a smaller riverfront and some buildings nearby. But instead, they sent us

[53] Omidbhai 151121

> 15 kilometers away. Initially, we were told that we would get a house within two kilometers.[54]

Similarly, Manishbhai, a Hindu man in his 60s, recounted how the government had "cheated" people by "discarding" them among people with immoral habits:

> They were supposed to give everyone a house within five kilometers. We lived in a chawl, our group of 27 people. They said, you have to move because of the Sabarmati Riverfront. They said that we will do *cutting*, otherwise our work in the riverfront will not progress. I told them to give us houses at a distance of no more than five kilometers and speak to me then, otherwise don't waste my time. But they cheated us and discarded us here. We don't like to live in this kind of settlement, but don't have any option. People here use bad words, eat *non-vegetarian* food... I don't like such things in Vatva.[55]

Achalbhai's and Manishbhai's misconception of resettlement within a few kilometers of the riverfront can be traced back to the original project proposal by the Environmental Planning Collaborative (EPC 1998). According to the proposal, 15.48 hectares of the reclaimed land by the riverfront was to be reserved for the relocation and rehabilitation of the slum-dwellers to ensure "that none of the project affected persons will have to move too far from their present location" (EPC 1998, 34; see section 4.1). Information about resettlement on the reclaimed land or in the municipal corporation's vacant plots was then reported in various newspapers, which according to Desai (2014, 9) were the only sources of information for the riverfront-dwellers. Having read or heard about resettlement on the riverfront itself and later been denied this right, people felt purposefully excluded and betrayed by the state.

## 5.2 The state that represents the national interest

> Development is at the core of our governance. It is the solution to all problems. It is the way ahead to a dignified life. Development should be sustainable. It must serve as an opportunity for the poor to empower themselves.
>
> *Narendra Modi at the laying of the foundation stone of Chattrapati Shivaji Maharaj Memorial in Mumbai* (Modi 2016)

The BJP has managed to position itself as a party of development and progress—the party of the future. This has enabled it to appeal to the urban middle-class electorate without divorcing itself from the interests of lower-caste and Muslim constituencies (Desai & Roy 2016, 1). The linkage was also manifested in resettled people's, especially Hindus', opinions on Modi and the BJP-led government. The same people that blamed Modi for their unfavorable resettlement also admired and even praised him for bringing law and order to Gujarat

[54] Achalbhai 150612
[55] Manishbhai 151117

and for developing Ahmedabad into a clean mega city with world-class facilities.

My Hindu interviewees commonly expressed discontent with displacement while supporting the world-class city project in general, as it was considered both a spatial manifestation of, and a means to development. For example, when I asked Pradeepbhai, a 70-year-old retired gardener, and his wife Preetiben what they thought about the new Kankaria Lakefront, they praised Modi for developing Kankaria into a "*high class*" area:

> *Jelena:* What do you think about the Modi government?
>
> *Pradeepbhai:* About the Modi government… Modi has done a great job. You must understand that earlier Ahmedabad was in a very bad state, but he has made a lot of good changes like gutter lines, roads… Everything has improved.
>
> *Jelena:* What about Kankaria?
>
> *Pradeepbhai:* Kankaria Carnival. Earlier there was no infrastructure around the lake. After Modi, so many things have improved. Rides, sitting spaces… And a hot-air balloon for flying. Even visually Kankaria is stunning.
>
> *Preetiben:* He even made new roads after demolishing our houses.
>
> *Pradeepbhai:* Between roads he has made the BRTS. The lanes are divided: cars drive on the other side and BRTS buses on the other. Modi has done a lot of improvements, he has not done anything bad.
>
> *Preetiben:* He has even helped many poor people.
>
> *Pradeepbhai:* People were thrown very far away. But Modi has done a good job.
>
> *Jelena:* Was Kankaria a project of the Modi government?
>
> *Preetiben:* Yes, it was his and he received an award for it.
>
> *Pradeepbhai:* He has done everything. It has been named Kankaria Carnival. It has been made for children to play and to have fun, for everyone to have fun. It has been made very high class.[56]

Despite their support of the Kankaria Lakefront Development Project, Pradeepbhai and Preetiben both felt that resettlement had not brought any positive changes to their own lives—on the contrary, it had caused difficulties in the form of increased expenses. Besides, even though they thought that the new house was "good," they would have still preferred to live in their *kaccā*[57] hut by Kankaria Lake, "in the *city*."

The couple could not personally enjoy the infrastructural improvements attributed to Modi. Preetiben was suffering from a chronic illness and the couple mostly stayed at home. During the interview, she complained about the quality of the tap water in the resettlement site, claiming that it causes kidney

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[56] Preetiben & Pradeepbhai 150418

[57] *Kaccā* refers to "temporary" housing made of readily available materials (see section 6.1).

stones. Nevertheless, rather than blaming Modi for their displacement, the couple spoke very highly of him and the tangible improvements he had made in the city. It seemed that in their view, the slum demolition was justified because of the project's impressive result. I suggest that Pradeepbhai and Preetiben had internalized the world-class aesthetic discourse that regards slum removal as necessary for the development of the city and contributing to the greater good (Ghertner 2012, 1181).

Kankaria, a part of the Maninagar constituency, was represented by Modi in the Gujarat Legislative Assembly from 2002 until May 21, 2014. Pradeepbhai and Preetiben's accounts are perhaps understandable considering that they were part of Modi's core constituency—the constituency that enabled Modi's rule as the longest-serving Chief Minister of Gujarat. The couple was trying to convince themselves of the project's benefits for the poor and, in so doing, to hold on to the image of Modi as a generous benefactor. Modi's personality cult plays a significant part in this: Pradeepbhai used the passive voice—"people were thrown very far away"—to avoid stating who had performed the act of betrayal.

Achalbhai and Manishbhai who criticized the distant resettlement (see section 5.1) were also supporters of the BJP and Modi. Like Pradeepbhai and Preetiben, Achalbhai described how Modi has helped the poor by giving them houses, while Manishbhai spoke of the good work done by Modi in controlling deviant behavior:

> He [Modi] has given us a home. What else can he do? It is the biggest thing that he gave us homes. Since the government wanted the land, they could have just thrown us on the road. What could we have done? He has helped many poor people. Even women. So everyone likes him.[58]

> Since 2002, Narendrabhai Modi has done good work, he has not done anything wrong. Up to then, there was a lot of *magajmārī* ["disturbance"] and *guṇḍāgirī* ["hooliganism"], but it has stopped under the BJP government.[59]

Yasminben, a Muslim housewife in her 30s, had been displaced from the Sabarmati Riverfront. When I asked her about what had happened there, she told me how "they cleaned the place [by the river] and threw us in a *camp*." By "camp," she meant the interim resettlement site of Ganeshnagar next to the city's municipal solid waste disposal site, where her family was forced to spend approximately six months in a hut before being allotted a flat in Sadbhavna Nagar.[60] Yasminben's choice of words is noteworthy: when she said that the riverfront had been "cleaned," she likened the slums to dirt that is physically removed in order to make space for something else. In other words, she conceived of her own home through the world-class aesthetic.

The description given by Vimalben, a Hindu woman in her 30s, also utilized the story of how urban development contributes to the "greater good."

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[58] Achalbhai 150612
[59] Manishbhai 151117
[60] Yasminben 150623

According to Vimalben, the new riverfront was a "good thing" (*acchī bāt*) in general, but it did not serve "people like us." In Vimalben's view, the new riverfront had been built to cater to the needs of foreigners. As she said, "I don't like it. But it's good; it's good for you [foreign people]."[61] Hence, displacement and resettlement appeared as unfortunate, albeit necessary, measures taken on the way to attaining the greater good: the world-class city as a symbol and a medium of a globally recognized, developed Ahmedabad.

Similarly to Vimalben, a Marathi Hindu woman named Chandikaben spoke of how the riverfront was good for foreign people; in her view, "Modi did good work" by developing it. However, Chandikaben also thought that Modi had treated the riverfront-dwellers in an unjust manner by dividing them into different resettlement sites:

> He [Modi] threw us here. Everyone thought he'd do good for Gujarat, he was supposed to do good for the poor, but for your [foreigners'] *riverfront*, he divided us [into different resettlement sites]. He took the land and wasted money on it. And now look how things are going there [at the riverfront]. Boys and girls sitting... A garden... Hotels... He did good work. But as a result, we were divided, we were given houses here, in a jungle. If decent houses had been built there [by the river], one room would have been enough for us. Just one room, no more than that.[62]

Concern over Ahmedabad's image in the eyes of foreigners was also discernible in people's worries over how I would present them "in Europe." Some residents of Sadbhavna Nagar were concerned that the photographs I took in the resettlement site would lead foreigners to believe that India is poor, dirty, and backward. A few people even suspected that my purpose was to "make Modi look bad" or to "insult" Indian people by presenting photos of the resettlement site in my home country. They suggested that I take photos of the development around Kankaria Lake instead, and enthusiastically described the toy train, the hot-air balloon, and the amusement rides provided by Modi.

Once I had to stop an interview, conducted outside, because we were approached by an angry drunken man who claimed that I had come to the resettlement site in order to pester Modi. Yet others, both Hindus and Muslims, asked me to take photos of things and situations that, in their view, manifested the government's ignorance of the problems of the poor: broken water pipes, garbage-strewn open spaces, damaged childcare centers, and the unpotable, yellowish water. I was given the role of either a spy for a foreign state or a witness to government indifference, which reflected the ambivalent discourses regarding the world-class city project and the state.

I. Chatterjee (2014a) has conducted a study on eastern Ahmedabad residents' attitudes toward the "mega city" and projects to widen roads. She found that all the Muslim interviewees disapproved of these developments while 51% of Hindus expressed their acceptance, citing their political affiliation to the BJP or stating that wide roads enhanced the image of the city (I. Chatterjee 2014a, 161). My informants' attitudes were not so sharply polarized along religious

[61] Vimalben 151229
[62] Chandikaben 151109

lines. Nevertheless, more often than Muslims, Hindus were torn between acceptance and defiance.

The ambivalent discourses of resettled people indicate that they were very conscious of the growing gap between the world-class image and their material reality. A conflict was apparent between citizenship as a national identity and citizenship as it was actualized in daily life. In the words of Aretxaga (2003, 396), "[t]he nationalist discourse of citizenship remains attached in the social imaginary to the state but clashes with the actual experience of marginalization, disempowerment, and violence." By using the passive voice and the third-person plural pronoun, and by expressing their worry over India being represented as poor and backward, my informants clung on to the empowering utopia personified in the figure of Modi, striving to hide its dystopian shadow. The proximity of the world-class city with its grandiloquent, "foreign-looking" urban design was a source of national pride, even for the excluded.

## 5.3 City vs. *jangal*

In Aravind Adiga's (2008) novel *The White Tiger*, the protagonist Balram Halwai repeatedly speaks of India as a coexistence of two worlds: "Darkness" and "Light." The India of Darkness is characterized by illiteracy, misery, and extreme poverty whereas the India of Light is an educated, developed, and technology-savvy country of the rich and the powerful. Adiga's book recounts Balram's against-the-odds journey from the son of a poverty-stricken rickshaw driver hailing from the small north Indian village of Laxmangarh to an entrepreneur in Bangalore, the IT capital of India.

The metaphors of "Darkness" and "Light" resonate with the terms *jangal* ("jungle") and "city" (in English) used by my informants to draw a contrast between the resettlement site and their former places of residence. Their story, however, was not one of rags to riches in the manner of Balram. Rather, resettlement for them was like a plunge into Darkness. For some, the involuntary relocation to Vatva was a depressing return to the rural village environment, to the "jungle" that they had left behind in order to pursue a better life in the metropolis of Ahmedabad. Resettlement was experienced as a transition back in time, a return to the past. For others, who had spent their entire lives in the informal urban neighborhoods, the "city" was both a *janmabhūmī* ("birthplace") important to their identity and sense of belonging, and a physical location that provided access to employment opportunities. In the "city," *dhandhā-pānī* ("work," "business") and services had been readily available, enabling them to lead a dignified life. As Aarushiben, a Chaudhri woman in her 40s, described:

> If I go to see the place [the riverfront], I'll start crying… Our house was demolished, you know; we were satisfied, we were at peace. It was good. It was no bungalow, it

> was a hut, but we were very comfortable [*sukhad*] there. If I go there, I feel like crying. Our house has been demolished... Our hut was there, it was very good.[63]

In comparison to Balram's India of Light, the "city" appears as a geographical location that provided a glimpse of the Light, both metaphorically and concretely. Indeed, Gulabben, one of my interviewees, described how the slum neighborhoods bathed in city lights at night—people did not have to pay for electricity to find their way in the dark.[64] Another informant, a day laborer named Ashokbhai, nostalgically recalled how people "could get everything close by, earn some money, and live with honor [*izzat*]."[65] Rickshaw drivers, street vendors, and domestic workers earned their livelihoods by serving those living in the Light. With distant resettlement, Ashokbhai had lost his daily wage job in the city center: "After coming here, everything has deteriorated."

Arjunbhai, displaced from the Macchipir neighborhood near Kankaria Lake, used the metaphors "golden land" and "iron land" to illustrate the differences between "city" and "jungle." "The government took golden land from us and gave us iron land in exchange. We should have been given houses inside the *main city*," he exclaimed.[66] While "golden" can be interpreted as a reference to the economic value of the land, it can also reflect a sense of home tied to the land. Sadbhavna Nagar was mere "iron" in comparison to golden Kankaria, situated in the upper-middle-class neighborhood of Maninagar. The "goldness" and "ironness" of the locations could also be observed in the urban space: Sadbhavna Nagar was located next to the chemical industries of GIDC Vatva while Maninagar featured a cluster of jewelry showrooms and designer clothing stores.

Another interviewee, Nehaben, was displaced from Sindhi Camp. She also brought up Sadbhavna Nagar's location next to chemical industries and described Kankaria as a "*hi-fi* area":

> Narendra Modi has annihilated us. He discarded us in such a chemically polluted area that poor people are bound to die in it! Our Kankaria was a hi-fi area. It was a hi-fi area. He removed us from there and gave us houses five kilometers away in a dirty locality like this.[67]

Nehaben's choice of words is interesting. Like her, some interviewees used the English word "high-class" to describe Kankaria and the Sabarmati Riverfront. However, it must be pointed out that the places were seen as "hi-fi" or "high-class" even before they were "developed." What gave the spaces their superior quality was not just the material transformation into world-class places of consumption and leisure, but their central position within the matrix of relationships that provided a feeling of connectedness to the world. It was the ability of these places to bring together flows of money, people, and things within

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[63] Aarushiben 151023
[64] Gulabben 151029
[65] Ashokbhai 150521
[66] Arjunbhai 151221
[67] Nehaben 150418

them that made them "high-class." Sadbhavna Nagar, on the other hand, did not have the magnetic ability to attract people and capital. It was a place into which unwanted people were "thrown" against their will. This perception was also present in resettled people's puzzlement over why middle-class people had willingly purchased an apartment in an "inferior area" like Vatva. As one of my acquaintances, who had been displaced from Kankaria, said: "Why would anyone want to live here? We only live here out of compulsion [*majbūrī se*]."


FIGURE 5.2. Some of the riverfront slums were located behind luxury hotels, February 2011. © Suvi Sillanpää

The geographic metaphor of "jungle" not only describes the physical landscape of the resettlement site and the area's lack of livelihood opportunities, but also refers to the perceived incivility of new, unwanted neighbors (Ramakrishnan 2014). Residents of Sadbhavna Nagar belonged to various regional, religious, ethnic, and caste groups. Many people were previously unknown to each other. Residents often attributed the bad atmosphere of the area to the fact that it was "mixed," that several distinct groups cohabited within it. Manishbhai, for example, had a problem with living among people who ate non-vegetarian food and "used bad words." According to him, he should live in the "city," among "good people."[68] Poonamben, for her part, was of the opinion that houses in the "jungle" should be given to "Mohammedians" whereas her people—it remained unclear whether Poonamben belonged to the Devipujak or Vaghri community—were worthy of resettlement in a "good area."[69] Situating

[68] Manishbhai 151117
[69] Poonamben 151023

her own caste group in the morally superior landscape of the "city," Poonamben distanced it from backwardness in an attempt to portray her social group as civilized city-dwellers, as world-class citizens entitled to a share of the Light.

## 5.4 "All the others are third-class citizens"

On a February Sunday in 2016, I was sitting in an auto-rickshaw on my way to the launch of Esther David's new book *Ahmedabad: City with a Past*, being held at Crossword Bookstore in western Ahmedabad. I did not know the rickshaw driver, who was from Sadbhavna Nagar. Along the way, we started chatting, and the driver mentioned that he did not like living in the resettlement site because of the "low, third-class people" that live there. He said two of these words, "third-class" and "low," in English even though the rest of our conversation was in Hindi. I asked him if he knew some English, given that he had used those words. The driver seemed puzzled and answered, "No, no. Those are Gujarati words, very common Gujarati words." Fair enough, I thought, and enquired what he meant by the term "third-class." He replied that the word refers to people who use impolite language, pick fights, drink liquor, steal things, throw their garbage from their windows instead of using a garbage can, and try to haggle over the price of auto-rickshaw rides. My new acquaintance went on to say that he prefers to socialize with *acche insān* ("good people") who talk politely and pay according to the meter rate. "Well," I said, looking for the right words, "I think you can find many good people in Sadbhavna Nagar, don't you think?" He disagreed and continued to say that good people are only found in the posh western neighborhoods of Satellite, Bopal, and Vastrapur. That is precisely the reason why he preferred to drive his rickshaw there instead of in the eastern part of the city, which he regarded as the abode of "low people."

The terms that the driver used—"third-class" and "low" people—are the same negative expressions that people from the neighboring middle-class area in Vatva used to characterize all the residents of the resettlement sites. One of my upper-caste neighbors, for example, was not happy with the way I spent my days socializing with "third-class people." The residents of our housing estate, all of them upper-caste Hindus or Christians, were particularly concerned about our friendship with Nareshbhai. When he visited our house, curious neighbors sometimes followed him to the porch. A Brahman neighbor, stressing his superior caste status, suggested that I avoid Nareshbhai's company.

As said, resettled people also used the terms "low people" and "third-class people." Like the rickshaw driver, many of my interviewees expressed their wish to live in a "good, clean locality" or "in the city with good people," not in a "dirty slum" with "useless people" (*bekār log*) or "third-class people." Instead of contesting the middle-class "nuisance talk" that depicts slums and their inhabitants as uncivilized (Ghertner 2012), resettled slum-dwellers also conflated urban citizenship with norms of consumerism and civility, like the

bourgeois. This could have been a strategic effort to distance themselves from the "uncivil" or "backward" qualities of loudness, dirtiness, violence, illegality, and poverty, and to locate themselves on the side of development, on the side of good citizens who fit in the beautiful, clean spaces of the world-class city.

Derogatory remarks along the lines of caste, religion or locality were often deployed. Upper-caste Hindus in particular had the habit of attributing littering, "bad language," and the use of alcohol and drugs to the lower-caste Vaghri and Devipujak communities. A young housewife, Nidhaben, for example, said that her block's residents, all of whom were Hindus, were all right, but "all the others are third-class people" (*bākī sab third-class log haĩ*). When I asked what "third-class" meant for her, she answered that "those people keep on drinking and fighting."[70] In a puzzling manner, she later told me that her father-in-law was also a big drinker and a frequent quarreler, but this did not make him "third-class."

I usually asked my interviewees about the kinds of changes they would like to see in the area. A standard answer was that different social groups should be allotted separate areas. Kalpeshbhai, a Sindhi man in his 40s, put it bluntly: "All the Vaghris should go." According to him, Vaghris "don't hesitate to fight or even stab someone."[71] Tejalben, a homemaker native to Rajasthan, shared Kalpeshbhai's opinion. In her view, "lower castes" should be separated from others in order to reduce fights: "Separate places should be given so that there would be no fights. And then all those lower castes, Vaghris... All those lower castes [*nīchī jāti*] fight a lot, and for that reason, those people, too, should be given a separate place."[72]

Poonamben—Vaghri or Devipujak by caste—similarly underscored the effect that the "mixed" quality of the site had on the atmosphere, but unlike Kalpeshbhai and Tejalben, she did not pinpoint a single caste community as the worst culprit in the situation: "People from all different kinds of castes live here. [...] Like, if you collect all the dogs of a village and throw them in jail. How will the dogs behave? They'll fight, right? We have been thrown together like this."[73] In Poonamben's account, notably, the primary culprit was the state that had put together a concoction of incompatible ingredients. In another context, however, she explained that "Mohammedians" were the part of the "mixture" that caused problems with their behavior. In her view, all the problems would be solved by allotting houses in Vatva only to Muslims. Her group should then be transferred to the "city," as they were "pleasant, hard-working people" who "don't like to live in dirtiness." In this way, Poonamben used middle-class nuisance talk to claim a right to residence in the city center and to paint a positive image of the habits of her lower-caste group, resented by upper-caste Hindus.

In contrast to Hindus, my Muslim interviewees tended to downplay Hindu–Muslim segregation. In distinction to their Hindu neighbors, Muslims at-

[70] Nidhaben 150507
[71] Kalpeshbhai 150512
[72] Tejalben 150415
[73] Poonamben 151023

tributed uncivil and immoral practices to people from other neighborhoods, irrespective of their religion, and stressed the municipal corporation's negligent maintenance of the area as a reason for the bad atmosphere. Such was the case with Yaqubbhai who had been displaced from Khanpur Darwaja. According to Yaqubbhai, it was "people from other areas" who caused problems after drinking *dārū* and taking drugs, not "Hindus" or "Muslims." Curiously, Yaqubbhai seemed to interpret my question about the social constitution of a particular block as a question about possible tensions between Hindus and Muslims. He was quick to assure me that such problems did not exist:

> *Jelena:* Are everyone living in this block Muslims? Are there any Hindus?
>
> *Yaqubbhai:* All are Muslims. We have no Hindu–Muslim problems. We are all human beings. We don't have any problems between Hindus and Muslims.
>
> *Jelena:* I am only asking because...
>
> *Yaqubbhai:* [interrupts] We should live like human beings. Our problems, *madam*, have to do with cleanliness: the sweepers don't come, nobody is making the effort to maintain a clean and healthy environment. That's our problem. That's why people get sick. Little children [get sick].[74]

Like Yaqubbhai, other Muslims, too, brought up the idea of "brotherhood" and a shared human nature on the grounds of which Hindus and Muslims were considered equal. This strategy of inclusion questioned fundamental differences in the moral worth of Muslims and Hindus. It attributed immoral practices to individual goons coming from other localities and the lousy state of hygiene to indifference on the part of municipal workers and officers. Muslims never suggested that Hindus, as a category, were responsible for robberies, rapes, drug trafficking, garbage throwing, and other illegalities and nuisances.

Some Hindus also emphasized how Muslims and Hindus both have "red blood." As Shilpaben, a Sindhi housewife said to me in an interview:

> If you cut your skin, red blood will come out. If you cut my skin, red blood will come out. If you cut a Muslim's skin, red blood will come out. […] Humans are humans [*Insān to insān hote haĩ*]. I do not discriminate. Everyone is equal. Everyone has a soul.[75]

This was in answer to my question of whether she socialized mostly with other Sindhis. However, later in the interview, she complained about how people were "mixed," and said that Sindhis should be given a better location to live: "People like these [Muslims] can live here, do you understand? For people like us [Sindhis], this is not a good place to be."[76] Despite recognizing the equal worth of all humans as biological beings, Shilpaben considered Muslims and lower-caste Hindus to be too immoral in their socio-cultural habits to be accepted as neighbors.

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[74] Yaqubbhai 151027
[75] Shilpaben 150508
[76] Shilpaben 150508

## 5.5 Refusing to pay: Suffering and justice

Each household in Sadbhavna Nagar is supposed to pay its share of the allotted apartment's price, 67,860 rupees (approx. 1,000 euros), in installments over the course of ten years. Only then will the apartment be transferred into the beneficiaries' (husband and wife) joint names. The municipal authority has the right to evict residents should they fail to comply with the rules. However, all the residents with whom I spoke in Sadbhavna Nagar stated that they do not intend to pay the required sum of 67,860 rupees for the accommodation.[77] They had only paid the initial deposit of 3,000 to 8,300 rupees (ca. 40–117 euros) in order to receive apartment keys.[78] In my informants' view, the down payment was more than enough. People thought that they were entitled to get "a house for a house" since the state had demolished their previous dwellings. As Nehaben, displaced from Kankaria, exclaimed:

> When he broke our houses, Narendra Modi, our house was there [in Kankaria], it was worth *lākhs* [hundreds of thousands] of rupees. And the land was worth *karōṛs* [tens of millions] of rupees. He removed us from there. Now, then, why should we have to pay for this house? Now the government is saying that pay 60,000 [rupees] or we will *seal* your house. Pay by April 31. They said to pay by April 31, but it has already passed, hasn't it?[79]

Like Nehaben, my interviewees considered the allotted flats to be merely compensation for the demolished houses rather than a manifestation of the government's goodwill—providing resettlement housing was the least that the government could do for the poor after depriving them of their prime location homes. In their view, resettlement was a matter of giving back what was forcibly taken from them (cf. Beyers 2018, 79). This opinion was particularly pronounced among people displaced from Kankaria Lake since they had been forced to wait for the construction of apartment blocks for up to five years (see section 4.2). During this time, they had stayed in Ganeshnagar, in relatives' houses, or in rented apartments. Some had even lived on the streets. As Sindhi housewife Nitaben declared:

> We were only given 5,000 [rupees] and we were also homeless for five years. Imagine the loss we have suffered in those years. Our children have not studied for some time,

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[77] According to a recent report by Desai et al. (2018, 26), the AMC was to provide resettled people with a loan to enable them to pay the installments, but it did not manage to negotiate a reasonable interest rate with any financial institution. The findings of the report indicate that not just residents of Sadbhavna Nagar, but those of other resettlement sites, too, have refused to pay installments. Hence, the AMC has required those resettled after 2014 to pay 27,860 rupees as a down payment for the resettlement apartments.

[78] These sums are based on my informants' accounts. According to Desai et al. (2018, 26), residents were supposed to pay the deposit of 6,900 rupees in three monthly installments of 2,300 rupees. The first installment, along with an "NGO fee" of 960 rupees, was enough to receive apartment keys.

[79] Nehaben 150418

> we have sold our things to feed our families. We were so unhappy. Now what is the point of paying installments?[80]

Another female informant, Shilpaben, told me a touching story of how her family had to move frequently from one relative to another, how her small children cried and missed home, and how her husband had started beating her, frustrated and stressed by their loss. Even when the resettlement houses had finally been built, the family had to undergo numeous bureaucratic difficulties and show persistence and determination to receive an apartment:

> Then we got this house, but they did not want to give it to us. Government officials are *harāmī* [bastards]. In the [AMC's Maninagar] office, you know, the office... They had put our file at the bottom of the pile. I had to pay 200 rupees every day to go there, to the Maninagar office, and they always said, "Sister, come back tomorrow." Then I went back the next day, and again they told me to come back tomorrow. In this way, they made me run for ten days. Then I got very irritated, and I took my children with me to the office. I told them [the officers] to show me the files where my photo was, my children will recognize my photo. […] I told them [the children] to sit down and to go through the files and try to find my photo. They went through the files, the Kankaria documents. […] Then that officer said, "Sister, come back tomorrow." I told him, "Brother, you keep on telling me to come back tomorrow." I said that I live on rent and now I don't have money for the rent and the landlord has thrown all our furniture into the road. Where will I go? "Come back tomorrow," he said. I said: "Not tomorrow, I need it today." Then my son found the document and said, "Mommy, here's your file." Then I told the officer, "Look, brother, here's the file." "Fine," he said. Then he signed it, gave it to me, and told me to go to another office. "You will receive a house."[81]

The family had to borrow the down payment of 8,300 rupees from a moneylender with high interest. Having paid the sum to the AMC, they received the keys and moved their belongings to Sadbhavna Nagar. Upon arriving, however, they found the apartment in terrible shape. "When we came it was filthy. The taps were open, and there was stagnant water everywhere. Everything was dark and black; there was soil, stones, dirtiness..." They also noticed that some wires were dangerously exposed and that there were no windowpanes. Again, Shilpaben traveled to the AMC's Maninagar office. After the visit, the AMC arranged for construction workers to repair the apartment, but Shilpaben had to clean it herself. Until then, the family was forced to sleep outside.

Against the background of traumatic loss of home, five years of homelessness, bureaucratic difficulties, down payment, and the inferior condition of housing on arrival, it is understandable that those of my informants who had been displaced from Kankaria considered the apartments to be a necessary—yet inadequate—compensation from the state. Former riverfront-dwellers, too, had refused to pay; like Kankaria residents, they constructed their moral right to housing through narratives of suffering, blaming the state for the demolition. They also emphasized their marginal economic position, stating that they just could not afford to pay since their earnings had decreased with resettlement. In their view, providing alternative housing for the poor was the moral duty of the

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[80] Nitaben 150504
[81] Shilpaben 150508

state. Citing similar factors, many residents had also refused to pay property tax. Resettlement had brought people within the ambit of property tax, but many residents told me that they refuse to pay until they gain *de jure* apartment ownership.

House installments and property tax demanded by state officials offended the residents' sense of what was right and just. This suggests that they recognized an *abstract state* tied to values of justice and equality behind the *everyday state* of bureaucrats and politicians. Hansen has called this the "myth of the state"—"the imagination of the state as a distant but persistent guarantee of a certain social order, a measure of justice and protection from violence" (Hansen 2001, 222).[82] My informants' political subjectivity as rights-bearing citizens had been shaped by their experiences of marginalization, the feeling of having been betrayed by state officials, and the inferior quality of resettlement housing. Together, these factors had translated into a direct defiance of state policies on the grounds of their unfairness and injustice. Had the displacement and resettlement been implemented in consultation with the residents, they may have been more willing to pay for the apartments.

## 5.6 Conclusion

World-class city making was associated with Modi or with an anonymous, faceless government (*sarkār*). My informants blamed Modi and the government for "throwing" them into the "jungle," for excluding them from the world-class city. The feeling of having been betrayed had given rise to an imaginary of the state as a violent, invasive force that "cuts" and throws away. Yet Modi was a personification of the "state" and the guarantor of a better future, especially in Hindu residents' imaginaries, and they had wanted to believe that the promised future would come for them—indeed, many still did. This explains their ambivalent mix of harsh critique and explicit praise of Modi and *sarkār*: it manifests a conflict between the grandiloquent representations of the world-class future and the material reality of life at the urban margins. People felt betrayed by Modi, who was associated with a modern, developed India that strongly resonated with their values and aspirations. My informants felt that they had been treated in an unjust manner by Modi and the state. Hence, they had refused to pay for the apartments, articulating the right to obtain "a house for a house."

With their long-distance resettlement to a place without jobs and services that was in close proximity to Vatva's chemical industries, the promises of in-

[82] The duality of the state as a myth and as an actually existing aggregate of politicians and officials is rooted in the theory of the "king's two bodies" in medieval England: the sublime (the law) and the profane (the giver of laws) body (Hansen 2001, 224–225; Kantorowicz 1957). In modern democracies, the sublime body has become an abstract space temporarily occupied by the nation or by the elected representatives of the people (Hansen 2001, 225; Lefort 1988, 17).

clusion in the world-class city were exposed as hollow. Displaced people came to recognize themselves as those left behind by development, those relegated to the past. The experience of temporal stagnation and economic loss amidst the hype of growth, progress, and development was a fertile breeding ground for alcoholism, drug abuse, and xenophobic fears among the displaced. By turning against each other along pre-established lines of caste and religion, resettled people sought to claim belonging within the moral landscape of the "city," the future, as opposed to the "jungle," the past. The ubiquitous practices of othering prevented the formation of horizontal solidarity among the residents. Hence, I suggest that world-class city making in Ahmedabad had given new political significance to pre-existing social inequalities and even strengthened them, contributing to the increasing marginalization of the urban poor.

# 6 CONCRETE RELATIONS

The summer of 2015 was sweltering, the temperatures reaching 48° Celsius. A few people in Sadbhavna Nagar could afford to buy an air cooler, but most only had a fan in their apartment. During the summer months, many people slept on the roof or downstairs on a rope-strung bed (*chārpāī*) or a pushcart (*lārī*) because the concrete apartments had become unbearably hot. Sleeping outside on one's pushcart also prevented it from being stolen. The versatile pushcart functioned as a shop in the daytime and as a bed at night.

Dozing outside in the street had its risks. In June, a young man sleeping on a *chārpāī* in front of his apartment was hit by a falling windowpane. He got a deep cut in his shoulder and had to be taken to the LG Hospital. Returning home in the morning, he told me about the accident while his mother was wrapping gauze around the cut. Their neighbor, a woman in her 20s, passed by. Grinning, she remarked how "Modi threw the windowpane down." People who had gathered around us started talking about how the windowpanes of nearly all the apartments were broken—the government had used inferior building materials. In their view, construction deficiencies and the lack of proper maintenance had caused the unfortunate accident.

FIGURE 6.1. Many windowpanes have fallen down from the buildings, May 2015.

This chapter looks into state–citizen relations through the lens of materials, analyzing the kinds of human practices and experiences enabled and constrained by the built environment of Sadbhavna Nagar and particularly its primary ingredient, concrete. Drawing on Tim Ingold's (2007; 2010; 2011; 2012a; 2012b; 2013; 2017) ecology of materials, which emphasizes their generative potential, I analyze how, on the one hand, concrete figures in state projects of representation and subject-making, and how, on the other, its vitality enables the residents to mold the built environment. I also show how the generative potential of concrete undermines human intentions of controlling and arranging social life.

Ingold builds his ecology of materials on psychologist James J. Gibson's (1979) work on the "affordances" offered by objects. In its original sense, an affordance is a "material disposition" (Harré 2002, 27), a possibility for action provided by the materiality of objects: "[M]etal affords making buckets; buckets afford carrying water; bucket brigades afford fire fighting" (Cook & Brown 1999, 389). For instance, concrete affords the state the capacity to mass-produce relatively durable high-rise housing in a short stretch of time. However, it also affords people the opportunity to use the flat surfaces as their canvas for social commentary and political protest. As Hughes and Forman (2017, 678) state, "[m]aterials are more than mere bystanders: they actively facilitate and mediate particular encounters that enable certain kinds of claims to be made" (see also Abourahme 2015). Both state authority and people's political subjectivities are formed through materials.

According to Ingold (2012b, 7), Gibson's mistake is to assume that the world is a fixed and finished reality of formed matter, and that humans are mere "finders" of affordances. In Ingold's (2012b) view, affordances do not exist prior to activity; rather, objects "occur," they come into being through perceivers' perception and imagination (see also Knappett 2004; Rietveld & Kiverstein 2014; Shotter 1983). However, mental assessment is not a discrete cognitive process that takes place "in the mind"; it happens in engagement with the world (Vergunst 2012, 19). When it comes to concrete, humans have practically accumulated knowledge according to which concrete is a strong, durable, and malleable material suitable for mass-produced standardized housing. In other words, concrete has certain functions and material properties due to its history of mobilization. Hence, affordances of concrete do not exist in the material itself or in the disembodied mind of the user, but in the *relation of use*.

Ingold challenges the reduction of the world to a collection of independent human and non-human entities, suggesting that even the anthropological study of material culture (e.g., Gell 1998; Latour 2005; Miller 2005) has often divorced things from the "flows" that bring them to life (Ingold 2010, 7). In Ingold's (2010; 2012a) view, objects are neither passive matter nor do they have innate agency; rather, their vitality springs from entanglements (see also Barad 2007; Bennett 2010; de Wolff 2018). From this perspective, resettlement housing and other infrastructure in Sadbhavna Nagar come into being through a complex process of interwoven human and non-human forces that include the practices of resi-

dents, builders, and state officials, along with natural phenomena, animals, and building materials. Using Ingold's (2011, 160) words, resettlement housing "enfolds within its constitution the history of relations that have brought it there." What may seem like a finished reality of objects and subjects is, in fact, a snapshot of a process of growth, becoming, flow, and formation.

In this chapter, I adopt Ingold's non-dichotomous understanding of human and non-human agency to examine how social and political relations are experienced, negotiated, and constructed through the concrete environment. I am interested in how resettlement housing *forms and is formed by state–citizen relations* in a world-class city. I begin by exploring how the state harnesses concrete in its project of imagineering itself and its residents and how my informants experience the state-formed socio-material environment. After that, I demonstrate how resettled people are able to transform the structures to some extent and to use them for purposes unintended by the state. I also show that residents establish connections to political parties and the local government in their efforts to mold the built environment and access basic services. Finally, I examine how residents perceive the state and their relationship to it in light of decaying concrete housing and the deficient water and sanitation infrastructure.

## 6.1 Forming *pakkā* citizens

In the context of vernacular architecture in India, the Hindi words *pakkā* and *kaccā* are commonly used categories; the Census of India likewise uses the classes of *pakkā*, *kaccā* and *semi-pakkā* to classify different housing types. *Pakkā* literally means "ripe, cooked," and it refers to "solid" or "permanent" dwellings made of stone, fired bricks, concrete, iron, and other durable materials. *Kaccā*, by contrast, means "raw, uncooked" and refers to "temporary" housing made of readily available materials such as bamboo, mud, thatch, jute, plastic, loosely packed stone, and unfired bricks (Census of India 2011, 17). A *semi-pakkā* house, for its part, is a hybrid of both *pakkā* and *kaccā* materials: for example, a house with a wooden frame, an earthen floor, and corrugated iron sheet walls and roof.

Most of my informants displaced from the riverfront and from Dani Limda described their previous homes as *kaccā* huts made of bamboo, corrugated steel, and plastic, among other materials. The houses required constant maintenance and repair to endure environmental conditions, especially the seasonal flooding of the River Sabarmati. Faithful to the etymology of *kaccā,* the huts were, indeed, "raw" in the sense that what was likely to capture the onlooker's attention were the materials rather than the "finished" form. In contrast to *pakkā* houses that (falsely) appear to be hardened, unchanging objects, *kaccā* huts are more distinctly made of "fluxes of materials and their transformations" (Ingold 2011, 26).

In Kankaria, an all-Hindu settlement, many of the Sindhis had lived in *pakkā* or *semi-pakkā* houses. Distinguishing it from other demolished neighborhoods, Sindhi Camp was a former refugee settlement; having lived by Kankaria Lake for nearly seventy years, Sindhi collective life was intimately tied to the place. The place-belongingness was also reflected in the greater "permanence" of their houses, which had been renovated and updated incrementally over the decades. For example, Yogeshbhai, a middle-aged Sindhi man, described how his grandfather had put up a temporary cardboard shelter in the 1940s and gradually solidified the dwelling as his income increased and the family grew larger. Sindhi houses were often occupied by extended families. A *pakkā* house indicated and constructed a sense of security and the will to stay put, but it was also a manifestation of relative economic well-being and status. Not everyone could afford to transform their homes from *kaccā* to *pakkā* – what de Maat (2015, 109) calls "*pakkāfying*"—in the manner of Yogeshbhai's extended family. By *pakkāfying* their houses, people *pakkāfied* their presence in the urban space.

In urban areas of India, *kaccā* is often associated with backwardness, poverty, and especially slums, whereas *pakkā* connotes development and is linked with the imaginary of a "proper home." Cities and their *pakkā* structures are seen to reflect and manifest progress, hence Narendra Modi's Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojana (PMAY) initiative, which aims to provide affordable *pakkā* housing to all Indians, both urban and rural, by 2022 (Dhawan 2018). Providing the urban poor with "permanent" homes has also been represented as one of the major achievements of urban development projects in Ahmedabad. According to the official website of the Sabarmati project, "[s]lum dwellers living on the riverbed and affected by the project have been relocated and provided with 'pucca' housing with secured tenure" (Sabarmati Riverfront, Rehabilitation & Resettlement 2018).[83]

In the context of Ahmedabad's resettlement housing, *pakkā* means concrete, an often used material in modern mass housing around the world from Niemeyer's Brasília to East-German *Plattenbau*. It is associated with the standardization and regularization of local conditions, making it a suitable construction material for modern states (Harvey 2010, 30). Due to its history of use, concrete has become an "appropriate" material for housing projects that aim at modernization. Its material qualities, including durability, strength, and low maintenance, have become known through practice, and have been subsequently attached to concrete as if they were its fixed attributes. This kind of "classificatory knowledge" presents the properties of materials as context-independent, objective facts (Ingold 2011, 160).

The Ahmedabad Municipal Corporation's city planning department was responsible for the planning of resettlement housing blocks constructed under the BSUP scheme, adopting a cost-effective construction technology called the Mascon Construction System. The Mascon System, developed in the 1970s by the Canadian engineer W. J. Malone for the purpose of mass housing projects (MCS, About Us 2010), uses aluminum formwork into which ready-mix liquid

[83] *Pakkā, pucca, and pukkā* are all transcriptions of the Hindi word पक्का.

concrete is poured. This enables a very speedy construction process and the use of unskilled laborers (NIUA 2010, 40). In fact, according to the Mascon website, "the only tool required is a hammer" (MCS, About Us 2010). The technology also promises to provide better earthquake resistance in comparison to conventional structures and permit the building of thinner walls without losing strength. On top of that, walls constructed using the Mascon technology do not even require plastering (NIUA 2010, 40).

The technology has been adopted for housing projects in countries including Iraq, India, Thailand, Malaysia, and the Dominican Republic (MCS, Typical Projects 2010). In 2016, Mascon Construction Systems Ltd. announced that it would build 20,000 apartment blocks for residents of the Kibera and Mathare slums in Nairobi, Kenya, between July 2016 and June 2018 (*Daily Nation* 2016). In India, the Mascon technology has been used in Aundh, Pune, for medium-cost apartments, and in Hyderabad's Lanco Technology Park for luxury condominiums (MCS, Typical Projects 2010). It has also been employed by public bodies in Mumbai, Ahmedabad, and, most recently, Chandigarh, for low-cost housing schemes (NIUA 2010, 41; see also Bodh 2009). In Ahmedabad, the Mascon System was chosen by the AMC not only to reduce construction costs but also to enable easy maintenance which, it was thought, would contribute to cleanliness (AMC n.d., 2). Using the Mascon System, the AMC also positioned itself within the global history of this technological innovation and reconstructed the material qualities of concrete as strong, durable, and requiring low maintenance—and therefore suitable for modernization projects irrespective of the context.

The AMC also sought to maintain cleanliness and order by imposing rules and regulations that governed the use of resettlement housing. According to Rule 12, laid out in the letters announcing house allotment, people are not allowed to make any changes to the houses before they have paid their share of the house price, 67,860 rupees, in installments over the course of ten years: "The beneficiary should keep the allocated building as it is at present. All maintenance charges will be paid by the beneficiary. No changes should be made to the building."[84] People are also not allowed to build anything in the open spaces between the blocks, or sell or rent out their allotted flats. By dictating the use of the built environment, the state had made the mundane materiality of concrete a "matter of concern" (von Schnitzler 2018, 143). Thereby, concrete resettlement housing appeared as a normative technology of control mobilized by the state in an effort to form civilized "*pakkā* citizens."

To sum up, providing a stark sensory contrast to the unruly and "raw" built environment of the slums, the resettlement site of Sadbhavna Nagar was meant to be a neighborhood of order, designed to represent the development of the city, the Gujarat State, and the Indian nation. At the same time, urban planning and concrete architecture were also utilized as tools of social change and control to render the population "legible" to the state and, hence, governable

[84] Ahmedabad Municipal Corporation, allocation letter received by a former resident of Kankaria dated March 28, 2011 (translated from Gujarati).

(see Scott 1998). With their standardized residential units and imposed regulations, the BSUP sites sought to convert slum-dwellers into a homogenous mass of governable subjects categorized as the "urban poor." This was also reflected discursively, as the official Gujarati sign above the main entrance of Sadbhavna Nagar reads: "Ahmedabad Municipal Corporation's urban poor housing program: Sadbhavna Nagar, Ambika Tube, Vatva" (Figure 6.2). Resettled in BSUP houses, people were officially cast in the role of the urban poor, the promised "secured tenure" conditional upon their paying out cash installments for years and playing by the rules that prevent sub-letting and the modification of the standard housing form. In order to retain their homes, the residents were to become passive human material ready to be molded by the materiality of concrete housing.


FIGURE 6.2. The sign over the main entrance of Sadbhavna Nagar, April 2015.

## 6.2 Verticality: Engulfed by the form

Ingold (2011, 154–160) contrasts "categorical knowledge," based on facts and fixed attributes, with "inhabitant knowledge" that people have of their everyday environments. The latter, according to Ingold (2011, 159), grows through lived experiences, traveled pathways, and wayfinding: it is "perpetually 'under construction' within the field of relations established through the immersion of the actor-perceiver in a certain environmental context." Inhabitant knowledge is continually reproduced in relation to an environment. For example, an inhabitant of Sadbhavna Nagar knows her environment by embodied memories that things call up: the knee pain while climbing stairs, the unbearably hot concrete apartments in the summer months, and the unpleasant feeling of walking past certain apartments functioning as drug dens. Inhabited places, according to Ingold (2011, 154), are narrated like stories: "And every place, as a gathering of things, is a knot of stories." In this section, I turn my attention to my informants' knowledge of their living environment: How did residents experience the sociomaterial environment of Sadbhavna Nagar? What did it *feel like* to live there?

The people of Sadbhavna Nagar were used to living in a horizontal neighborhood, and the move to vertical structures was a radical change. In interviews, many people talked about how they used to live "in a *line*" with their neighbors—often consisting of members of an extended family—whereas now the apartments are stacked one on top of another in four floors and neighbors are usually strangers. Living with previously unknown people belonging to different castes and religions required adaptation. People also had to adapt to the built environment, to start thinking through it. Jiteshbhai, a middle-aged Sindhi man living in a third-floor apartment, described the feeling of living in a block of flats:

> *Jelena:* How do you feel about this house?
>
> *Jiteshbhai:* It feels like a central jail. Over there [in Kankaria] they [the houses] were on the ground level. We liked it that everyone had a separate house on the ground level. But here, it's like we have to check if someone has come to our house.[85]

For Jiteshbhai, living in a vertical structure was something new. He had lived his whole life in Kankaria and seemed to feel a deep connection to the place in which he was born. There, the interaction between neighbors was frequent and one knew what was happening in the neighborhood. In the upper floors of apartment buildings, people were isolated from happenings on the ground and did not have much control over visitors who just showed up at the door without the residents' prior knowledge.

Jiteshbhai was by no means the only one who used the metaphor of "jail" to describe the apartment blocks. According to one of his neighbors, the houses were "worse than jail"—a passing remark that brought about fits of laughter

[85] Jiteshbhai 150425

from men gathered in front of a grocery store one hot summer afternoon. In another context, Ashokbhai, an unemployed rickshaw driver, unfavorably compared the resettlement house to his demolished *jhompṛā* (hut) by the river: "This house feels like a jail. We feel trapped. Our hut was excellent! It was airy. Here, it's very hot."[86] Ashokbhai attributed airiness to the cooling effect of the river and the horizontal way of living.

FIGURE 6.3. Elevation drawing (document obtained from the AMC).

Truck driver Waleedbhai shared Jiteshbhai's feeling of isolation and the distress caused by not knowing what was going on around him. Waleedbhai himself lived in another BSUP resettlement site in Behrampura, but frequently visited his family members in Sadbhavna Nagar. With the socially disruptive resettlement policy, the extended family had been pulled apart, and like many others, Waleedbhai would have preferred to live "in a line" like they used to do in the riverfront:

> Here, we don't know what happens in neighbors' houses. When we lived in a slum [*jhomparpaṭṭī*], we got the information about who comes and who goes. Here we know nothing. Even if someone dies, we will not come to know about it. When we lived in a *line*, we knew.[87]

In addition to not knowing what was going on in the neighborhood, verticality was linked with strenuous physical effort. Climbing stairs was not a routinized movement for most people; rather, it was an activity that the state-formed concrete structures imposed on their bodies. Chandikaben, a Marathi

[86] Ashokbahi 150521
[87] Waleedbhai 151128

woman in her 40s, described the trouble of climbing as follows: "It's a headache to go up and down the stairs. We haven't lived like this that you have to climb the stairs. At this age, it would be better to live downstairs. It's very difficult to walk the stairs."[88] Like Chandikaben, the majority of my informants would have preferred to live at ground level because it enabled easy egress and resembled the previous, horizontal way of living in the slums. Life could diffuse beyond the concrete walls and knees were spared from climbing up and down.

The vertical structure could also affect one's health. As the household tap water was not potable, people had to carry drinking water from outside taps connected to the municipal water system. This was strenuous activity if one lived upstairs. Vimalben, a 34-year-old mother of small children, said that her family drank indoor water as it was difficult to carry the water to the fourth floor. "Who can carry that much water? I just drink water from here. I don't go outside."[89] Since fetching water was women's work and women mostly drank water at home, living on the upper floors affected women's and children's health more than men's, who usually spent their days outside the home.

Some elderly and/or disabled people had been able to get a ground-floor apartment by invoking their inability to climb the stairs. Others had been allotted upper-floor flats even though they could not climb the stairs on their own. This was the case with one elderly woman, who required the help of "two to three men" to get out of the fourth-floor flat in her wheelchair. The vertical structure significantly restricted her mobility and made her dependent on other people's goodwill. In another instance, a 40-year-old man and his brother, who had spent their entire lives on the riverfront, approached the office of the SRFDCL in order to get a transfer for their elderly parents who lived on the fourth floor and wanted to get a ground-floor apartment due to health problems. The brothers asked me and a long-term BJP party activist (*kāryakartā*) living in Sadbhavna Nagar to accompany them to the office. The four of us submitted the application in June 2015. When I left Ahmedabad in February 2016, the matter was still being processed.

Residents of Sadbhavna Nagar complained about the vertical structure of their new living environment not only because climbing was an onerous task that took a lot of energy and caused knee pain, or because of the economic opportunities afforded by horizontal living, but also, and perhaps most importantly, because of the difficulty in tuning one's being to the new material environment. As Ingold (2012b, 7) states, a home is primarily an assemblage of sedimented, embodied movements and gestures (see also Jager 1983, 155). I suggest that demolished homes still existed as embodied knowledge, and the everyday interaction with the new physical environment (not yet a "home") was a sensory reminder of both the lost home (as a mental-material ensemble) and the loss of home (the violence of displacement). The home and its tragic loss haunted one's entire being—it "unfold[ed] in the folds of the body" (Ahmed 2006, 9) and was felt as a mismatch between the body and the physical environment.

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[88] Chandikaben 151109
[89] Vimalben 151229

In a way, the residents were "thrown into jail," and I posit that this act of "throwing," in part, is what made the resettlement site a "jail." The jail-like feeling was further strengthened by the rules that forbade any modifications of the standard design of the housing. Trapped inside the fixed concrete structures with undesired neighbors, residents felt helpless. Too fixed, too *pakkā* for alterations to be made, the high-rise houses appeared as a technology of control, a form that engulfed them.

## 6.3 Manipulating the form

Concrete has a "powerful fixing capacity," but it also manifests a volatile power, being vulnerable to environmental conditions, neglect, misuse, and modifications (Harvey 2010, 30). Indeed, in Sadbhavna Nagar, hallways were turned into storage rooms, common plots into outdoor kitchens, and dwelling units into animal sheds, contrary to the rules laid down by the municipal corporation. Concrete afforded these manipulations, both facilitating and impeding people's practices (Abourahme 2015, 202). This section looks into residents' ways of appropriating the built environment and defying AMC rules that forbade modifications.

The size of each residential unit in Sadbhavna Nagar was 33 $m^2$. Each apartment consisted of a living room, a bedroom, a kitchen, a toilet, a bathroom and a balcony (see Figure 6.4). The front door of the apartment opened directly into the living room, which, in turn, provided access to the bedroom. The bedroom window offered a view of the private balcony that had a water tap connected to the communal water tank shared by several apartment blocks. The toilet and the bathroom were both located next to the kitchen. The walls of the apartments were unpainted at the time of allocation to the beneficiaries, and apartments did not have kitchen fittings or accessories. White tiled flooring had been installed in all the rooms, and the windows were furnished with opaque glass and metal bars. Ceiling fans were provided in the living room and in the bedroom, but in some cases they had been stolen before the allotment process.

Some apartments had up to seven residents. Many people, especially those from Kankaria, said that they used to live in bigger dwellings with their extended families. For example, a Sindhi man in his forties from Kankaria used to live in a home so spacious that it could also fit his three brothers and their families. After the displacement, only two 33-square-meter apartments were allotted to the family, forcing two of the brothers to find rental premises from elsewhere. The size of the previous house in Kankaria had not been taken into consideration during the process of resettlement.

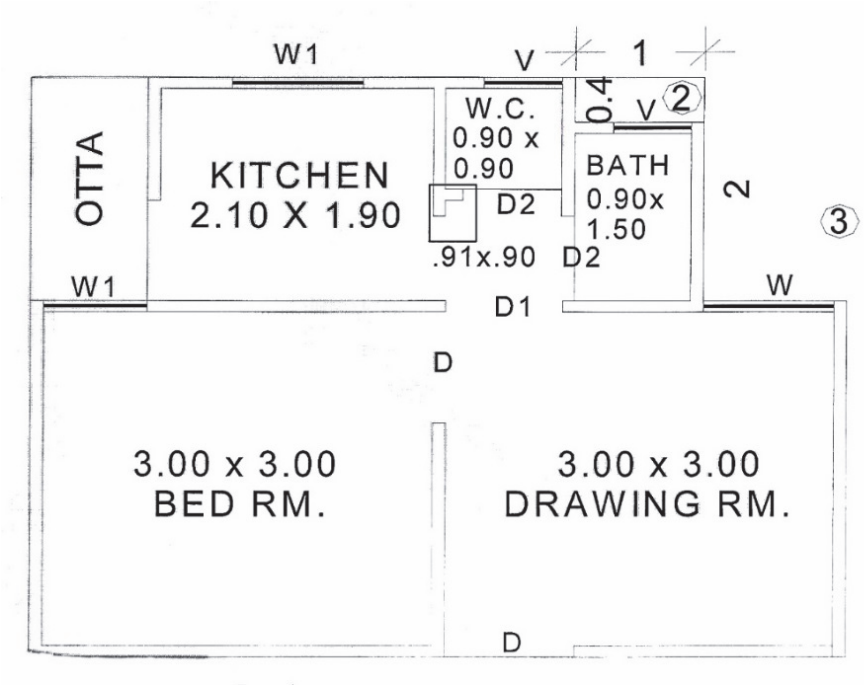


FIGURE 6.4. Apartment layout (document obtained from the AMC).

Leelaben, displaced from the riverfront, also thought that the apartment was too small for her family. However, the biggest problem for her was not the size but the apartment layout. She did not like the fact that the toilet was inside the house—this caused her unease. To make matters worse, the toilet and the bathroom were both located right next to the kitchen. According to Leelaben, "[the former house] was well organized [*vyavasthit*], it had a good sitting space, and the toilet was outside. Here the toilet has been put right next to the kitchen, which distresses me."[90] In an attempt to create orderliness, some people had installed a threshold in the doorways of the washing room and the toilet. A threshold concretely separated dirty spaces from the heart of the house where women worked and food was prepared, and thus served to create and maintain order (see Douglas 1996).

Even though the apartments were small, residents had creative ways of using the existing space and appropriating more space for specific tasks. Many ground-floor dwellers had hacked off part of their terrace wall or constructed concrete stairs outside the balcony. This made it possible for them to reach the interior of their home directly from the outside. The second entrance also made women's lives more comfortable as the space reserved for household activities, such as washing clothes and dishes, could be extended outside. Women living on the ground floor could carry out household activities next to their balconies whereas those living in upstairs apartments had to perform these tasks inside the limited space of the balcony. Vertical living was thus a factor that significantly limited residents' ability to subvert the structure of the built environment.

[90] Leelaben 150508

FIGURE 6.5. Concrete stairs outside a balcony that functions as a kiosk, December 2015.

Living in a ground-floor apartment also offered economic advantages. Many ground-floor dwellers had begun operating relatively profitable businesses by transforming their balconies into small grocery stores or kiosks. Surendrabhai, a disabled man in his thirties, was able to make a decent living by selling groceries from his terrace; the bedroom of his family's apartment functioned as a storage room for rice, lentils, snacks and other food items. Surendrabhai's apartment was located advantageously at the far edge of the resettlement site and attracted customers from neighboring housing estates as well. In addition to the ground-floor position, the spatial location and the social relations of the shopkeeper contributed to a successful in-house business. The majority of the shops were located close to the entrances of the site, enabling outsiders to visit them easily.

Running a grocery store also meant that women could work from home—they could simultaneously take care of their children and make a living. Even Sindhi women who, according to cultural norms, should stay inside the house, were able to run grocery stores and kiosks directly from their balconies. In fact, one family, in which the family members took turns in running a balcony shop, made enough money to buy an extra flat illegally from their neighbors. They lived in one of the apartments and ran a grocery store in the other: business and private life were kept separate. As could be expected, some upper-floor residents were resentful of the business opportunities afforded by the ground-floor apartments. My assistant Nareshbhai considered buying a ground-floor flat in a newly built resettlement site located next to Sadbhavna Nagar. His business instinct told him that establishing a grocery store would prove to be profitable—there was no competition, as the newcomers had not yet set up businesses of their own.

As many of the residents worked as vendors, salesmen or rickshaw drivers, and also kept livestock, they needed a safe place to keep their pushcarts, stock, animals and auto-rickshaws. The urban planners of the neighborhood, however, had not given thought to people's livelihoods—there was no parking or storage space in the area, let alone an animal shed. While some people had sold their animals at the time of resettlement, or transported them to villages, others continued to rear goats and chickens in the new housing area, keeping them in empty apartments. This was the case with Gandivbhai, who had turned an empty upstairs apartment into a goat shelter. The apartment belonged to his brother who, at that time, worked in Saudi-Arabia. Every evening Gandivbhai would herd his goats up the stairs away from night-time thieves. Another man—an auto-rickshaw driver who lived on an upper floor—paid a monthly fee to a woman living downstairs so that she would keep an eye on his vehicle. Sujitbhai's previous rickshaw had been stolen just outside the apartment block, and he naturally wanted to prevent this from happening again. With this arrangement, Sujitbhai obtained an affordable guard for his precious vehicle and the woman downstairs was able to make some easy money.

In the BSUP houses, the entrances to the apartments were placed opposite one another (Figure 6.6). This meant that there was direct visual contact into the opposite neighbor's apartment when the front doors were open. Whether this was deemed good, bad, or irrelevant depended on the relationship between neighbors and people's attitudes toward privacy. In one block, two Muslim sisters, Zeenatben and Zaidaben,[91] occupied corner apartments opposite one another. Every time I visited them, the women had their doors open to ease communication. Since their apartments were located at the end of the hallway, no one else used the small area between their front doors and they had hung Islamic flags and small lights there. In a way, the sisters had turned their apartments into one larger apartment by appropriating the hallway. For Zeenatben and Zaidaben, the visual contact between their apartments was an advantage that enabled the extended family to converse with ease.

In other instances, the doorway arrangement was a source of anxiety. Manishbhai, an elderly Thakor man, told me that he disliked the fact that his neighbor could see directly into his apartment. Without my asking, he explained that he had nothing against his neighbors—according to him, they were "good people" (unlike the "low" Vaghris living downstairs)—but it just did not feel comfortable that they could casually peek inside whenever he had his door open. As the concrete apartments heated up in the summertime, the front door had to be kept open at times for the sake of ventilation.

[91] Zaidaben had not been allotted an apartment of her own, but paid rent.

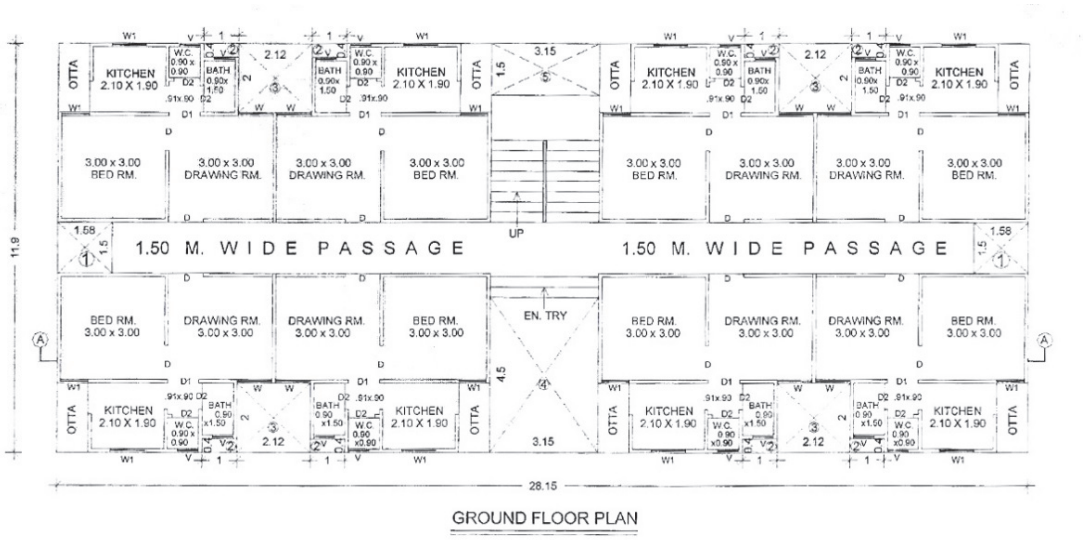


FIGURE 6.6. Ground-floor plan (document obtained from the AMC).

Two Muslim men, Waleedbhai and Arifbhai, shared Manishbhai's concerns. According to them, the design of the doors could even arouse disputes between neighbors over spying on women. The men thought that the houses should have been constructed in another way—the entryways should not have been placed opposite one another. Some people had solved the problem of unwanted observation by installing a curtain across the doorway, which provided some privacy while at the same time enabling better ventilation of the apartment. People responded to the architectural design with material practices that controlled the unwanted gaze of strangers and maintained the privacy of the home.

Finally, the fact that the houses had been left unpainted provided a surface, an empty canvas, for residents to make their mark on the built environment. By painting their walls with bright colors, people strived to transform the homogenous apartments into homes and to express personal identity (cf. Koster & Nuijten 2012, 189). Some people had even added design elements like painted butterflies, color splashes, and decorative tiles to their walls, while many had attached stickers, posters, and flags featuring Hindu gods or Islamic symbols and holy places to their front doors. Frequently, the stickers portrayed gods specific to certain caste communities, such as Jhulelāl, the community god of the Sindhis.

Alterations to an apartment not only reflected residents' identities but also mediated and constructed rank. A local leader, for example, had upgraded his bright corner apartment to show off his wealth and status, extending it into the common space so that it clearly stood out from the gray environment. An opening had been made to the balcony wall enabling residents to enter and exit, while a small spiked fence and a red gate restricted accessibility to outsiders. Few people in Sadbhavna Nagar could afford to make such changes to their dwellings, so the local leader's ostentation reflected and constructed his high social position.

FIGURE 6.7. Door decorations in Sabhavna Nagar.

In complete contrast, some residents displayed a total lack of interest in making any kinds of changes to their apartment; most of these were squatters and tenants whose relationship to the apartment was likely to be only short-lived.[92] For them, it was mainly a temporary shelter instead of a meaningful home. In general, however, it was uncommon for apartments to be completely untouched; usually, occupants had at least painted the inner walls.

The residents of Sadbhavna Nagar did not have a shared class identity—they were first and foremost Hindus, Muslims, Sindhis, Vaghris, Devipujaks, Thakors, Bhois, Chaudhris, Siddis, Marathis, Marwaris, Bhaiyajis, and Gujaratis as well as residents of Azadnagar, Raikhad, Victoria Garden, Sindhi Camp, Macchipir, Khodiyarnagar, and so on. An essential ingredient of identity was membership in social collectives based on caste, religion, ethnicity, and language. This reflects a relational or dividual conception of personhood constructed through interactions with other people and a shared living environment (Daniel 1984; Kärki 2013; Lambert 2000; Marriott & Inden 1977; Read 2010), and the salience of group identities in political and social life. Ho-

[92] The situation of tenants is discussed in section 7.2.

mogenous mixed-community concrete blocks were regarded as an aberration from the regular order of things, and resettled people's appropriation of the built environment was an effort to reconstruct identity and difference and to mold their new homes to suit their multiple ways of life.

## 6.4 Patron–client generated infrastructure

Although social disarticulation and government indifference toward maintenance was a real problem reported by interviewees in the resettlement site, some residents with political connections had managed to improve the infrastructure by negotiating with politicians and low-level state officials in the Vatva ward and in the AMC headquarters. For instance, Lakshmiben and Pramukhbhai, a couple who ran the illicit alcohol and moneylending business in the area, had received money and services from the BJP in exchange for work performed during a municipal election. According to Lakshmiben, they had received "5,000 to 10,000 rupees," which they had distributed among all the volunteers campaigning for the BJP in Sadbhavna Nagar. A couple of months after the election, the AMC also built low walls next to gutters. These walls were meant to prevent flooding on the streets, but they were only constructed in Hindu-dominated blocks in the vicinity of Lakshmiben and Pramukhbhai's home.

Although the walls were meant to enhance cleanliness, they only seemed to aggravate the hygiene problem. Due to the garbage and food leftovers that were regularly thrown into the street, the sewers under the gutters became blocked. Water stagnated and, mixed with garbage, produced a stench of rot and decay. Ground-floor residents in particular were affected by the foul odor emanating from the stagnant wastewater.

FIGURE 6.8. A wall meant to block flooding on the street, February 2016.

In another case, a local leader affiliated with the Congress had paid for the construction of a water pipe to the existing water main. He told me that it was easy to obtain the AMC's permission, since the water was meant "for the public." The tap was installed next to his own ground-floor apartment where he was able to regulate its use. In my understanding, the water tap was only to be used by people living in the two apartment blocks that were under his influence. These people belonged to various Hindu communities, such as Vaghri, Yadav, Chaudhri, and Bhoi/Kahar, who had been displaced from the riverfront. In the manner of the sewage walls, the tap, too, was constructed just a couple of months after the municipal election. During the election, the leader's house had functioned as the Congress's campaign center in the Hindu-dominated area of the resettlement site.

FIGURE 6.9. Building a water connection, January 2016. © Niklas Salmi

Sindhis also negotiated benefits in exchange for political support. The Sindhis lived in the southeastern corner of the site next to a wall that demarcated the limits of Sadbhavna Nagar. On the other side of the wall were Vatva Road and a slum called Ambika Tube ni Chali, which housed Adivasi migrants from Madhya Pradesh (see Figure 6.10). Many of the Adivasis made their living by rearing goats and selling cheap liquor. Some of their huts functioned as liquor dens, and I often saw police officers collecting bribes from the residents. Madhuriben, a beautiful woman who always wore a blouse with a low neckline, hosted the most popular liquor den. In addition to liquor outlets, there were also several Muslim-owned shops that sold fish, chicken, and omelets along the road.

The Sindhis identified themselves as a vegetarian community. Hence, they did not like the fact that there was a slum on the opposite side of the road and

that meat was sold close to their houses. As one of my Sindhi acquaintances put it, "It's not that I'm against slums, but… *non-veg*, we don't like that kind of people." Sindhis also said that thieves could easily jump over the wall and enter their area. There had been a few cases of theft in the past, and thieves were clearly equated with the slum in question, which was also seen to be an eyesore. Therefore, a group of people who had done voluntary work for the BJP during a municipal election asked for the wall separating their blocks from the road to be raised to restrict visual contact with the street and to make it more difficult for people to jump over the wall. According to the Sindhis, a municipal councilor had promised to fulfill their wish. By the end of my fieldwork, however, nothing had been done.

FIGURE 6.10. Vatva Station Road photographed from the roof of one of the Sindhi blocks, May 2015. A newly built unoccupied resettlement site can be seen behind the Ambika Tube ni Chali slum.

The Muslim-dominated part of the resettlement site had also secured some negotiated services over the course of the years. For instance, a water connection had been provided next to the main entrance of the site as a result of frequent complaints from the residents. Next to the water tap, Muslims occupying the blocks close to the entrance had constructed an outdoor drinking fountain dedicated to the memory of a deceased shopkeeper. The drinking place was decorated with tiles that depicted Islamic holy sites and Hindu gods, which I interpreted as a token of, and a wish for, the peaceful coexistence of the two religious communities. I was told that the residents had funded the building of the fountain.

On the western side of the site, Muslims had received funds from an Islamic welfare trust for the building of places of ritual ablution next to one of the mosques. This also required a connection to the water main, which the residents

had built themselves. This was hard work, since the water main was located under Vatva Road, next to the Hindu-dominated part of the resettlement site.

In sum, both Hindus and Muslims negotiated with state officials and politicians to secure access to infrastructure services. In these negotiations, Hindus were more beneficially positioned than Muslims, having patron–client relationships with politicians. Muslims had to rely on the power of their own social networks and the help of a non-governmental organization to access clean drinking water and other basic services.[93]

FIGURE 6.11. The drinking water fountain built by Muslim residents depicts Islamic holy places and Hindu gods, February 2016.

## 6.5 Degradation: Abandoned by the state

Soon after resettlement, two Ahmedabad-based NGOs, SAATH and Mahila Housing SEWA Trust, took the initiative to form resident welfare associations (RWAs) in the resettlement sites. The RWAs were to be responsible for the upkeep of the infrastructure, and were formed on the basis of a shared underground water-storage tank (UGWT). This meant that people living in apartment blocks with the same water source formed one association (Desai, Sanghvi & Abhilaasha 2018); however, due to distrust between neighbors who often belonged to different castes and religions, it was difficult for people to work to-

[93] These differences will be addressed further in sections 8.3–8.4 that examine the AMC's differential treatment of mosques and temples.

gether. Many of my informants also felt that the local government should take care of the maintenance work, not the residents. In their view, the AMC did not address their grievances. Yasminben's characterization of municipal officers and politicians illustrates the general opinion on *sarkār* regarding the provision of basic services:

> They don't pay any attention. They come for elections, and after finishing their work, they don't pay any attention to anyone! They say that we'll do this for you and we'll do that for you, you'll get these services... Before the elections, everyone comes and talks like that. After the elections, they won't even recognize you. That's what happens.[94]

The RWAs did not take off as hoped in the Vatva resettlement sites. Nevertheless, each RWA did manage to select an individual water tank operator from among the residents. The operators' responsibility was to turn the water supply on and off each morning and evening. Water was pumped to the tanks from bore-wells.[95] The water operators collected 20 rupees a month from each household for organizing the water supply, something easier said than done. The operators told me that they found it very difficult to collect the money—other residents often suspected that the operators received a salary from the AMC on top of the collected fee and pressured them to run the water for a longer time. Similar findings have been reported by Desai (2018, 101):

> Ibrahimbhai, a resident and shopkeeper at Sadbhavna Nagar, quit after a year working as the water operator because residents constantly came to his shop to complain about inadequate water, and put pressure on him to run the UGWT motor for longer. He explained that this would only have caused the motor to break down, leading to further fury over the complete disruption of water.

Sadbhavna Nagar was built in 2010, but during my fieldwork five years later, the buildings had already started to decay primarily due to inadequate maintenance. Yet government officials blamed the residents for the degradation—and not wholly without reason. Some people, for example, used a traditional *chūlhā* cooking stove for preparing food just as they had done in the slums. When a *chūlhā* was used inside an apartment, the concrete walls became blackened due to the thick smoke. Others kept goats inside the flats. Yet residents had few alternatives as there were no animal shelters on the site. Moreover, using a gas stove, better suited for small concrete apartments, was much more expensive than using a *chūlhā* heated with firewood—*pakkā* housing had not solved the problem of poverty. Nevertheless, some people had indeed exchanged the *chūlhā* for a gas stove and were using affordable black-market gas for cooking.

Public facilities, too, were used for unintended activities. There were altogether 16 common plots in Sadbhavna Nagar. The AMC had built a water tank

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[94] Yasminben 150623

[95] Residents found this water to be non-potable and complained that it led to health problems such as kidney stones. For drinking water, they relied on municipal standposts and taps in surrounding areas (cf. Desai et al. 2018, 37–38).

on six of these spaces, a childcare center (*ānganvādī*) on four, and a health center on two of them.[96] No buildings had been provided on the remaining six sites. During my fieldwork, only two of the childcare centers were functional, but I was told that one of them would open soon and that one had been open in the past but had been closed due to the illicit activities that took place around the building. Most people who lived close to it were hesitant to talk about what had happened, fearing that it might cause them trouble. From my assistant Nareshbhai, I finally learned that a local big man had started a liquor business next to it. Drunken men had gathered in the open space, and there were frequent confrontations. Soon, the *ānganvādī* workers had had enough of the frightening atmosphere and stopped coming altogether. Garbage collected in the spaces around the empty buildings and they began to decay—even the liquor business was eventually transferred to cleaner premises.

FIGURE 6.12. An abandoned *ānganvādī*, May 2015.

Sadbhavna Nagar was full of stories such as this. For example, one block had been left entirely empty. One interviewee speculated that people who were still waiting for their identification documents to be confirmed might come to live in that block soon. During my fieldwork, however, no one arrived, and the block seemed to function as a rubbish dump. All the movables had been stolen. From the outside, the building looked abandoned and reeked of garbage and excrement. Sometimes, however, I saw laundry drying on one of the terraces, indicating that someone might have been squatting in one of the apartments.

Water tanks, too, were sometimes used for unintended purposes. A group of Muslim women told me that a bootlegger had transformed one of the water tanks into a liquor den. Ironically, police officers occupied an apartment just opposite the water tank. The women showed me the broken door of the tank

[96] The purpose of the *ānganvādī* system is to provide non-formal pre-school education and health services (Government of India, Ministry of Women and Child Development 2013).

and asked me to take a photo of it. I later printed it out and gave it to them so that it could be attached to a complaint they were planning to make to the AMC. The women also asked me to take photos of food leftovers and stains left by policemen spitting out *pān*, a stimulant of betel leaf combined with areca nut and occasionally tobacco. "Policemen themselves make a mess, they chew tobacco and then spit around and throw away food," the women complained.

Without care and repair, infrastructures followed their inevitable temporal trajectory toward decay (see Jackson 2014). The degradation took the form of holes and fissures, cracks and voids, rust and spalling; windows were broken, floors were cracked, and pipes leaked. As Khamanbhai, a middle-aged Muslim man, put it, "These houses will only last for ten years."[97] The Muslim-dominated part of the resettlement site was in especially bad condition: streetlights were broken (or had never worked), and piles of garbage were building up in the open spaces. In VGG Nagar, an all-Muslim resettlement site, one of the buildings had begun to sink. Muslim women mentioned to me that they were scared to walk outside in the dark due to the lack of lighting and the presence of intoxicated men, demonstrating that the physical infrastructure especially affected women's sense of safety (cf. Baruah 2010, 59). Sexual assaults on women and girls were common in the resettlement site.

Concrete is affected by its interaction with the surrounding world: without constant maintenance and upkeep, it rarely remains in the form assigned to it by humans. In Ingold's (2007, 10) words, "[m]aterials always and inevitably win out over materiality in the long term." The decaying built environment undermined state-imposed orderliness. Through the "dematerialization" (Ingold 2007, 9) of infrastructure in the absence of maintenance, people came to recognize themselves as second-class citizens. Some complained that inferior building materials had been used in the pipes and apartment doors in Sadbhavna Nagar whereas other resettlement sites had metal pipes and better-quality doors. This further contributed to a sense of unfair treatment and abandonment, and raised questions about the purpose of resettlement housing: was it meant to empower the poor or was it just a prop and a part of state imagineering? As Zeenatben declared, "We were thrown out of the city. These buildings are just for show, they are of no use to us."[98] In Zeenatben's view, the state had built the houses merely for its own purposes of image enhancement because *pakkā* housing is an emblem of modernity.

A study by Dubagunta and Patel (2015, 21) shows that more than 60% of displaced households resettled in BSUP houses in Ahmedabad wanted to move away from the resettlement sites due to loss of employment, poor infrastructure, the lack of social amenities, and the increased cost of transportation. My findings were similar. With the exception of one Hindu man with a mobile job, all my informants expressed a wish to move out of Sadbhavna Nagar if only it were economically possible.

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[97] Ameenaben & her family members 150831
[98] Zeenatben & Badaiben 150522

Due to the degradation and the garbage, the prevalence of predatory practices, the mixed nature of neighborhoods, and the fact that the residents had previously lived in informal settlements, the resettlement sites of Vatva had a bad reputation in other parts of Ahmedabad—they were regarded as dangerous "no-go" zones and carried a strong "territorial stigma" (Wacquant 2007; 2008). Although the apartments were formal government housing, outsiders and residents themselves generally referred to their location as a "slum area" (cf. Kolling 2016). At the discursive level, even after resettlement, resettled people continued to be "slum-dwellers," people who did not belong to a world-class city. The dilapidated state of their living environment was taken as material proof of the inferior moral quality of the residents rather than the result of bad planning, inadequate maintenance, and a socially disruptive resettlement policy. It upheld and constructed the slum stigma.

FIGURE 6.13. Garbage gathers in the open spaces, June 2015.

Contrary to representations of resettled people as agents of degradation, I suggest that the state of the infrastructure reflects much of what went wrong with the resettlement process. First, the residents were not consulted in the process of planning and implementing the development projects. This resulted in feelings of helplessness and being "thrown away" (see section 5.1). Second, the divisive allotment procedure and the location of the site far from the residents' previous dwelling places scattered friends and members of extended families across the city and made it difficult for people to continue their previous livelihoods. This affected their well-being and their sense of basic security, and effectively broke up relationships of trust and cooperation. Third, the housing typology and the standardized size of the apartments were divorced from the everyday realities of the people; they did not support people's family structure,

livelihoods or household practices. Finally, the municipal authority's indifferent attitude toward the upkeep of the site further alienated people from their living environment, contributing to the stigmatization of the site as a "slum area" and feelings of having been abandoned by the state. As sociologist Jan Breman has noted with regard to the inferior quality of resettlement housing and the water and sanitation problems in the Vatva sites, "Vatva is a planned slum and built to be a slum. Why should people plan a slum?" (*The Indian Express* 2016c).

## 6.6 Conclusion

Drawing on James J. Gibson's (1979) notion of "affordance" and Tim Ingold's (2007; 2010; 2011; 2012a; 2012b; 2013; 2017) ecology of materials, this chapter has examined how concrete afforded and hampered certain intentions, both of the state and of the residents. First, I have demonstrated that concrete, combined with the Mascon Construction System, enabled the state to build standardized, low-cost, multi-story housing within a short period of time. Concrete, poured in place into forms and arranged in straight lines, was supposed to reconstruct the state's pro-poor stance and contribute to the modernity and development of the city, the Gujarat State, and the Indian nation. Concrete housing was also intended to foster cleanliness and hygiene in the resettlement site, and to render unruly "slum-dwellers" controllable subjects of the state. In short, concrete and the Mascon System were employed as tools of subject-making and statecraft. Their history of use in similar modernization projects afforded the AMC the opportunity to utilize them for its specific ends—they were known to be "appropriate" for low-cost housing projects desiring standardization, low maintenance, and high durability. Hence, their affordances are not reducible to the symbolic or the material in a straightforward way; rather, they have been established relationally, in practice.

Despite state efforts to freeze the life of concrete in the form of *pakkā* ("permanent") housing, the material retained its vitality and capacity to stand out from the things made of it (see Ingold 2007, 12). Residents modified the concrete forms to enable income-generating practices, to direct and regulate social life, and to represent and construct collective identities through certain symbols: terrace walls were hacked off, thresholds constructed, doors decorated with religious symbols, and kitchens extended into the common space. By modifying homogeneous apartments, residents turned them into *their property*, resisting the state-imposed standardization that mediated a jail-like feeling. The material environment afforded residents the opportunity to reconstruct themselves and their social lives through these modifications, which had the result of undermining the state's narrative of order.

Apart from individual modifications, my informants had modified concrete housing and other infrastructure on the site through their social networks and connections to politicians. Infrastructure put in place as the result of patron–client relationships, such as sewage walls and water connections, mani-

fests how resettled people's access to substantive benefits and politicians' eligibility as representatives were constructed through acts of mutual recognition in the gray area between formality and informality (cf. Anand 2017; Berenschot 2015). Patron–client generated infrastructure also reconstructed these social bonds, facilitating and encouraging future interaction. In other words, infrastructure not only made patron–client bonds visible in the urban space, but directed social and political life.

Responsibility for maintenance was a disputed issue in the resettlement site. In the AMC's view, residents were to take over the upkeep and repair of the site through resident welfare associations (RWAs). The residents, in contrast, regarded such activities as the responsibility of the state. In the absence of maintenance, and continuously exposed to the weather and to human and animal use unintended by the state, the concrete housing had started to decay, undermining human efforts to harness it in projects of governance and self-making. Through the decay, the resettlement site attained the stigma of a "slum area"—against the wishes of both the state and the residents—while the residents resettled there came to recognize themselves as second-class citizens abandoned by the state. A futile politics of singular blame (see Bennett 2010, 38) assumed central stage in state–citizen relations, further aggravated by the decaying concrete, corroded pipes, and piles of waste.

# 7 ENGAGING DOCUMENTS

During my fieldwork, I often found myself involved in conversations about documents or the lack thereof: election cards that had been lost or destroyed, house allotment letters stored under the mattress, and complaints that needed to be written, copied, and delivered to the local authorities to claim municipal services. Written documents played a central part in the everyday lives of displaced people, many of whom were non-literate (cf. Sharma & Gupta 2006, 13). Middlemen who had clientelist or family relations with state actors were often employed to arrange documents, as the process was likely to take a lot of time. For my informants, lost time equaled lost income. Occasionally, people asked me to accompany them to different government offices, as they thought that the presence of a foreigner literate in English could speed things up for them.

Documents were also centrally involved in constructing the relationship between resettlement apartments and displaced people—they made "property owners" out of "slum-dwellers" (cf. Hammar 2017; Johnston 2014). Conversely, those lacking certain documents, or the skills to manage them, were excluded from house ownership based on their inability to prove their legal status as a citizen of India. Many of these people lived in the interim site of Ganeshnagar on the outskirts of the city, hopeful that one day they would receive a resettlement apartment of their own.

This chapter focuses on the role of paper documents in state–citizen negotiations before and after displacement, analyzing official documents as written artifacts and material processes. Bureaucratic documents are essential in the constitution of citizenship—in the words of Frohmann (2008, 166), they have the capacity "to make things come into being." However, rather than attributing preconceived agency to documents and human beings, I draw on Ingold's (2017) insight that the ability to act and to influence arises from entanglements between human and material lives. The chapter continues to flesh out the materiality of state–citizen negotiations by examining how differentiated citizenship is formed through entanglements of state and non-state actors, displaced people, and paper documents vulnerable to the annual flooding of the River Sabarmati.

## 7.1 Paper truths and propertied citizens

Official identification partakes in constructing a person as a citizen of a specific nation-state. Writing makes citizenship come into being "on paper" and, ideally, enables a person to do certain things: cross a border, open a bank account, or access a resettlement apartment. In Tarlo's (2003, 74) words, documents are "paper truths" whose status as truths is "intrinsically linked to their symbolic value as official papers." Bureaucratic documents have a certain authority precisely because of their affiliation with the modern state "where the written word reigns supreme" (Tarlo 2003, 75).

The power of documents is never absolute as they can be forged and imitated (Das 2004, 227; see also Kelly 2006; Navaro-Yashin 2003). A counterfeit passport, for example, enables its bearer to access some of the benefits of citizenship. Paradoxically, then, the forged passport violates the law while reproducing its authority: entering a foreign country with a fake identification document is, in a sense, playing by the structure of the rules using illicit means (Das 2004, 234). Counterfeit passports are examples of a fabricated paper truth. To succeed, the forger has to pay careful attention to emulating the aesthetics and the material qualities of the original passport: the feel of the paper, the shapes of the holes, the colors of inks.

The most critical paper truth for my informants was the ration card, which served as proof of identity and nationality and enabled people to purchase subsidized food grains, sugar, and kerosene through a network of fair price shops and licensed kerosene dealers. Ration cards are issued by state governments. There are three different types of cards: Above Poverty Line (APL), Below Poverty Line (BPL), and Antyodaya (AAY) ration cards, based on economic positioning. As per the current system, the card is valid only in one particular fair price shop assigned to the cardholder. Thus, most of my informants who had a ration card could only buy subsidized food items in a fair price shop located in the Ahmedabad city center, close to their demolished homes.

At the time of the displacement, a ration card had served as proof of residence. However, the Rehabilitation and Resettlement Policy drafted by the AMC as a result of a court order did not specify which documents, in particular, were required from riverfront-dwellers (Desai 2014, 24). This illustrates the indiscriminate nature of adjudicating the eligibility of applicants: it was made a subject of officers' discretion. Correspondingly, people excluded from resettlement did not have recourse to a list of accepted documents to dispute their exclusion. This is one example of how structural violence was enacted through the arbitrariness of state bureaucracy (Gupta 2012): some families were rendered homeless while others received several resettlement apartments due to sheer luck or to their political or economic clout. For example, a man who had worked as a BJP party activist had been able to secure four apartments for his extended family. He openly admitted to me that he had used his party affiliations in negotiations with the state.

Another vital paper truth for resettled people was the voter ID card, which enabled citizens to cast their votes in municipal, state, and national elections. In Sadbhavna Nagar, I saw advertisements announcing the services of dealers who could arrange not only voter ID cards, but also Aadhar cards and PAN cards (see Figure 7.1).[99] Like the ration card, the voter ID card also served as proof of identity and age. According to people displaced under all three projects, voter ID cards had been accepted as proof of residence in the resettlement process. In some cases, they had been demanded in addition to the ration card. After resettlement, people had to apply for a new voter ID card, as the old one was only valid in their former assembly constituency (Ahmedabad is divided into 21 constituencies). Judging from the high number of resettled people who gathered to vote in the municipal election of November 2015, many had already gone to the trouble of securing a new voter ID card. In general, both Hindu and Muslim residents considered voting important, calling it their "duty" and exhibiting their forefingers stained by electoral ink during the municipal election.

FIGURE 7.1. Advertisements attached to a balcony door describing the services of a document dealer, May 2015.

In addition to the ration card and the voter ID card, people had been asked to provide a birth certificate, school papers, and a driver's license as proof of identity and long-term residence in the neighborhoods to be demolished. Despite having all these paper truths, many people had still been excluded from resettlement. In some cases, it was due to the incorrect spelling of their names in

[99] Aadhar is a 12-digit unique identity number issued by the Unique Identification Authority of India (UIDAI) based on biometric data. The PAN card is a 10-digit alphanumeric identifier allotted to each taxpayer by the Income Tax Department. Aadhar and PAN are considered proof of residence, not citizenship, as they are also issued to foreigners residing in India.

surveys (Mahadevia et al. 2014, 39) or identification documents.[100] In other cases, people had been away from home at the time of the survey. Hence, identity documents were not "reifying abstractions" of citizenship and the eligibility for resettlement, but "an unpredictable and unstable technique of governance, producing considerable anxiety for all those subject to their use" (Kelly 2006, 90).

The fact that identification documents are made of paper also produced uncertainty and anxiety. Paper can be torn, cut, and scribbled over. Due to its light weight, it can be carried around, but it can also easily get lost or stolen. Moreover, not just human, but non-human agency, can damage paper: water can make it limp and the text illegible, fire can turn it into ash, and a gust of wind can blow it away. Many of those who lacked documents blamed the annual flooding of the River Sabarmati for destroying their valuable possessions. In fact, "they sank into the river" (*nadī mēṁ dūb gāe*) was a common explanation for not possessing the required paperwork. Whether or not this was true, it is interesting that people offered the "torque" (Pinney 2005) of paper as an explanation for missing documents. As Pinney (2005, 268) states, the "dialectical process of […] subjects making objects making subjects" is fraught with "disjunctures and fractures." Pointing out unforeseen fractures in the process of mutual constitution, people distanced themselves from responsibility: it was the river, interacting with paper, that had destroyed their citizenship and there was nothing they could have done. Although state officials were well aware of the devastating effects that the annual flooding had on riverfront households, people's eligibility for resettlement was not recognized without the papers.

In her study on women's struggle to access property in slums of Ahmedabad, Baruah (2010, 55) notes that slum residents attached a great deal of importance to documents since "they were eager to preserve all available symbols of entitlement or of the very acknowledgment of their existence." In Sadbhavna Nagar, people who had been fortunate enough to possess some kind of ID, had received a house allotment letter and, finally, a resettlement apartment, handled their paper truths with great care. Most of the people to whom I talked kept the allotment letter stashed under their mattress together with money, identification documents, and other resettlement-related papers, including eviction notices, house down payment receipts and, in some cases, even newspaper articles concerning demolitions. Some residents had spent money on photocopying (*xerox karnā*) their documents and getting the copies certified. One couple had attached a copy of their allotment letter to the front door of their apartment together with a wooden placard stating their names and a phone number. Officials, neighbors, and visitors could directly observe their legal relationship to that particular flat. The original document was kept in a safe place hidden from view. Original documents had usually been laminated or organized neatly inside folders.

Examining how villagers in Uttar Pradesh handle their documents, Gupta (2012, 212) states that the illiterate rural poor treated documents as if they were

[100] A common reason for misspelled names in documents is the Gujarati custom of adding "bhai" (brother) or "ben" (sister) at the end of people's names (Devarhubli 2012).

sacred objects. My observations in Sadbhavna Nagar were similar. Documents seemed to be among the most valuable possessions of my informants because they "could produce magical effects" (Gupta 2012, 208) in the form of constructing propertied citizenship. Since the state exists "as a spectral presence materialized in documents" (Das 2004, 250–51), I suggest that practices of plasticizing documents should be seen as attempts to summon the state, to strengthen state–citizen bonds by extending the life span of paper. By becoming documented, one could become propertied. The more documented one became, the more enduring form one's propertied citizenship assumed.

While propertied citizenship was protected and laminated, it also had to be exposed every once in a while to "the *routine* and *repetitive* procedures of bureaucracies" (Sharma & Gupta 2006, 11, original emphasis). Municipal authorities performed random inspections—which people called *checkings* (in English)—to see if residents had, against the regulations, sold or rented out their apartments. When these took place, residents were required to present their allotment letter, featuring a photo of the beneficiaries, as proof of legal occupation of the apartment. The procedure of showing and checking documents constructed the state as an entity authorized to subject people to random documentary inspection, and citizens as subjects that were required to be prepared to prove their right to dwell in a given place at any given time. The checking practices also reinforced the affordances of documents; each check that was successfully negotiated affirmed the power of particular paper truths to materialize and mediate one's propertied citizenship, which, nevertheless, remained uncertain and revocable due to the capricious and unpredictable workings of the state. Kelly (2006), examining the "documented lives" of Palestinians in the West Bank, and Reeves (2018), writing of Kyrgyz migrant workers' "feel of law" in contemporary Moscow, have also stressed the unstability of documents in the context of administrative precariousness, informal relations, and discretionary judgments. Through the repetitive procedure of showing and checking, propertied citizenship of the urban poor in Sadbhavna Nagar was constantly questioned, but also incrementally constructed. Uncertainty and ambivalence were central features of local state–citizen relations—like paper, displaced people's citizenship was frail and fragile.

## 7.2 Debris: Unequal bureaucracy

Ile. ward no. 37 (Maninagar)
Estate department, Southern zone,
Date 11/12/2006

To [*prati*],
Possessor: […]
Sketch/structure no.: […]
Macchipir hutment (K.K. Vishvanath ni Chali),
behind the swimming pool,
Maninagar, Amdavad

> The land on which your apartment (no. [...]) stands has been reserved for parks and recreation by the Amdavad Municipal Corporation under Southern Town Planning Scheme Number 4 (Maninagar). The decision has been made by the department to remove all illegal residential structures under the Kankaria Lakefront Development Project.
>
> You are hereby notified to empty the reserved plot by removing all your belongings and the abovementioned constructions. Should you fail to do so, note that the municipal corporation will remove all constructions after 21 (twenty-one) days.
>
> [signature of the estate officer]
>
> *Demolition notice received by former residents of Kankaria (translated from Gujarati)*

The bulldozers came at the end of December 2006. A few weeks earlier, each household had received a notice that ordered them to vacate the land: "Should you fail to do so, note that the municipal corporation will remove all constructions after 21 (twenty-one) days," the letter said. Jiteshbhai, a 40-something father of four and a resident of Sindhi Camp, had not received a letter. His nuclear family had been away from home when the AMC had carried out a survey in the area. Jiteshbhai's extended family occupied three adjacent houses in the neighborhood of Sindhi Camp, but the AMC had decided to issue only one notice to the whole family. It was Jiteshbhai's brother who had the letter. This decision had a dramatic effect on Jiteshbhai's life: apartments in the resettlement sites of Sadbhavna Nagar, Kushabhau Thakre Nagar, and Tikampura Patiya were only to be allotted to people in possession of an official notice. But at that point, in December 2006, the slum resettlement sites only existed as a blueprint—there were no apartments to go to. Instead, people with a notice received cash compensation of 5,000 rupees and an empty plot of land in Ganeshnagar, next to the city's garbage dump. That is where they were supposed to build a shack and wait for the resettlement apartments to be constructed. Those without a notice, including Jiteshbhai, had no option but to find a residence elsewhere.

In an interview in April 2015, Jiteshbhai recalled how bulldozers razed the area around Kankaria Lake continuously for 24 hours. An ultimatum of 36 hours to leave the area had been given to the residents, but Jiteshbhai's family had not managed to gather all their belongings and half of their possessions were destroyed along with the house. The family spent three nights out in the open amidst the debris because they were shocked and could not think of a place to go. After that, they sought safety in an *ashram* (a religious retreat). It was not, however, possible to stay in the *ashram* for long, so the family started shifting from one place to another, staying with friends here, relatives there. Eventually, they managed to rent a house in Maninagar, close to Kankaria Lake. The rent was high, 3,000 rupees a month, but Jiteshbhai wanted his daughters to be able to finish their education in Maninagar without having to change school. Jiteshbhai also petitioned the deputy estate officer of the AMC's southern zone office, asking for alternative accommodation for his family, writing the following letter in 2012, by which time his old neighbors had already moved into 33-square-meter, two-room apartments in Sadbhavna Nagar:

[Name of the sender]

Sindhi Camp hutment,
Behind the swimming pool, Maninagar,
Amdavad.
[The current address of the sender]
Date: […]

Respectfully to [*pratishrī*],
De. Estate/Ta. De. Officer,
Southern zone.
Amdavad Municipal Corporation
Maninagar, Amdavad

**Subject: The matter of house allocation**

Merciful Sir [*mēharabān sāhab*],

We have previously lived in a hut [*chaprā*] in Sindhi Camp, Kankaria, Amdavad, but that hut has now been demolished due to the making of Kankaria Lake Riverfront [sic]. When people from the Am. Muni. Corporation [AMC] came to survey the place, we were out of our home taking care of social responsibilities. Officers surveyed outside our house and marked it as an absence of resident in the building, due to which we have still not been allocated an alternative housing arrangement. All our neighboring slum residents have been assigned an alternative arrangement.

We have lived in the place since our birth, and I here present my voter ID card, driver's license, and bank passbook as proof of residency.

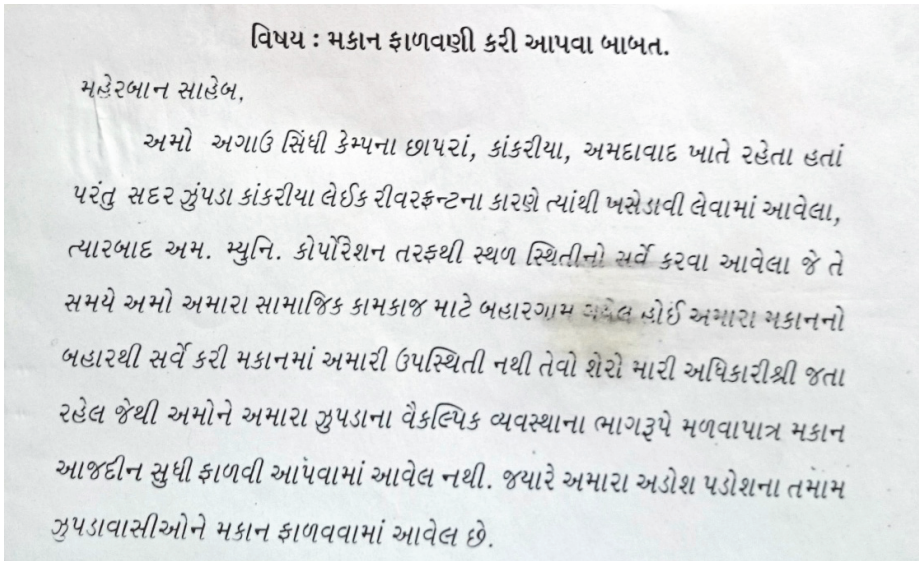
A general notice was issued to us on December 11, 2006, but after that, there has not been any correspondence or allocation of plot or flat to us.

We are from an economically backward community, and in times of such inflation, it is challenging to pay the rent. We are burdened by the expenses of transporting our belongings from one rented house to another.

This is why we are sending this application to you. Kindly allocate us an apartment urgently as part of the alternative arrangement given to Kankaria Lake Riverfront [sic] residents.

Yours faithfully, […]

Jiteshbhai's petition was written in Gujarati, and it had been typed and printed on white copy paper, likely to mimic documents produced by bureaucrats—it had been given an official "black-on-white" look. Before submitting the original letter to the AMC, Jiteshbhai had acquired a certified copy of it and kept the copy himself. In the letter, he addressed the deputy estate officer using the vocabulary of colonial rule: *sāhab*, an Arabic loanword meaning "possessor, owner, master," was used in British India to refer to European officers and the Indian ruling class. In the letter, this "language of deference" (Tarlo 2003, 78) was combined with recourse to the writer's "economically backward position," officers' alleged mistakes in surveying the slum, and language of entitlement: "We have lived in the place since our birth." As a material manifestation of his entitlement and eligibility for resettlement, Jiteshbhai had attached paper truths to his letter: certified copies of his election card, driver's license, and bank passbook.



વિષય : મકાન ફાળવણી કરી આપવા બાબત.

મહેરબાન સાહેબ,

અમો અગાઉ સિંધી કેમ્પના છાપરાં, કાંકરીયા, અમદાવાદ ખાતે રહેતા હતાં પરંતુ સદર ઝુંપડા કાંકરીયા લેઈક રીવરફ્રન્ટના કારણે ત્યાંથી ખસેડાવી લેવામાં આવેલા, ત્યારબાદ અમ. મ્યુનિ. કોર્પોરેશન તરફથી સ્થળ સ્થિતીનો સર્વે કરવા આવેલા જે તે સમયે અમો અમારા સામાજિક કામકાજ માટે બહારગામ ગયેલ હોઈ અમારા મકાનનો બહારથી સર્વે કરી મકાનમાં અમારી ઉપસ્થિતી નથી તેવો શેરો મારી અધિકારીશ્રી જતા રહેલ જેથી અમોને અમારા ઝુપડાના વૈકલ્પિક વ્યવસ્થાના ભાગરૂપે મળવાપાત્ર મકાન આજદીન સુધી ફાળવી આપેવામાં આવેલ નથી. જયારે અમારા અડોશ પડોશના તમામ ઝુપડાવાસીઓને મકાન ફાળવવામાં આવેલ છે.

FIGURE 7.2. An excerpt from Jiteshbhai's letter to the AMC, April 2015.

Overall, Jiteshbhai's written text constructed an imaginary of a state that was to be honored, that should be merciful toward the economically less fortunate, and that made human errors in its bureaucratic practices of surveying. The letter bore features of both complaint—"a demand to redress wrongs committed by a person in power"—and petition—a plea "to the powerful to grant something that is in their capacity to authorize: a favor, an exception, a special dispensation" (Gupta 2012, 167). The authority of the state to survey and to demolish in the first place was not questioned but taken for granted. According to the letter, it was the error of individual officials that had deprived Jiteshbhai of a resettlement home. In fact, Jiteshbhai's discursive adoption of a subservient role, and the annexed identification documents, reproduced and strengthened the authority of the state to assess and verify both his citizenship (whether or not the documents were genuine) and his rights as a citizen (whether or not he deserved to be allotted a house). Moreover, Jiteshbhai's iteration of the aesthetics of state bureaucracy in the form of black typed text on white paper and his use of a layout and structure similar to those in bureaucratic documents sought to endow the letter with the symbolic value of an official paper truth. At the same time, the letter reinforced the centrality of papers and their circulation in the interaction between state and citizen.

To his great disappointment, Jiteshbhai never received an answer to his letter. In 2012, his daughters had all finished 10th grade, and it was time to get the eldest daughter married. Jiteshbhai drove a rickshaw for a living and was often away from home after dark. In Maninagar he was always worried about the safety of his young daughters. Moreover, the 3,000-rupee rent was too much to bear in the long run. Hence, the family thought it sensible to move to Sadbhavna Nagar, a new neighborhood where they could live among old neighbors. It was easy, since some of the wealthier Sindhis could afford to buy or rent a house in a better location. Thus they could rent out the resettlement site apartment that had been allotted to them. This was an illicit practice. The rent was only 1,500 rupees, half

of what Jiteshbhai paid in Maninagar. "I thought it would be better to live here because of the neighbors," Jiteshbhai said when I interviewed him. "I'm a working man, I have a *duty*, and my daughters are young, and in these four *blocks* people's *caste*... That is, we are Sindhi by *caste*, so it is a benefit knowing that our own people live here. If there is any problem, I can rely on them."[101]

However, living in an illegally rented apartment was far from stress-free. State officials turned up unexpectedly, checking if the flats had been sold or sublet. The everyday lives of unofficial tenants were permeated by the unpredictability of future inspections. Gupta (2012, 162) aptly applies Jeganathan's (2004, 69–70) idea of "the anticipation of violence" to characterize this uncertainty and constant readiness for inspections. When officers arrived, the family locked the door quickly and stayed out until the inspectors left the neighborhood, or, alternatively, called the owner of the house asking him to come and present the allotment letter; if Jiteshbhai's family were to be caught, they would be forced to leave their home.

Naturally, the permanent insecurity wore Jiteshbhai down. He could not picture a bright future for his family in Vatva and was not interested in developing the place—after all, any day could be their last in Sadbhavna Nagar. The fact that the fourth floor of his apartment block was half-empty bothered him. Why did the AMC not allot him one of the empty apartments? Why keep them empty for years on end? It made no sense to Jiteshbhai that *acche log* ("good people") like his family had to live in constant fear of eviction.[102] At the same time, the unmaintained apartments above were slowly decaying into uninhabitable debris.

## 7.3 Ganeshnagar: The politics of settling

The first thing that engages one's senses upon arriving in the neighborhood of Ganeshnagar in southern Ahmedabad is the putrid stench flowing in hot waves from the adjacent municipal dumpsite. After the smell, one is likely to notice the fine dust in the air, the massive Torrent Power transmission towers, and the hundreds of makeshift huts and houses dotting the ground. Most have been put together from wooden poles and plastic sheets while some are more durable concrete structures with iron doors and walls painted in pastel colors. Ganeshnagar is an "interim site," a place where residents of demolished neighborhoods from all over the city were directed to stay while waiting for the actual resettlement apartments to be constructed or their identification documents to be verified. In addition to plots of land, the municipal corporation promised to provide the displaced with "infrastructure facilities like water supply, drainage connection and community toilets" (Gujarat High Court 2007).

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[101] Jiteshbhai 150425

[102] Frøystad (2006) contends that the use of the terms *acche log* ("good people") and *chote log* ("small people") to assess people is a form of class positioning that also entails implicit assumptions of caste. According to Frøystad (2006, 160), this practice "tends to blur and conflate these principles of differentiation." In other words, caste and class become enmeshed.

Many of my informants living in Sadbhavna Nagar had spent anywhere from a few months to five years in the interim site. Some of them had been waiting for the construction of resettlement apartments, others for the verification of their documents and, thus, the construction of their status as either citizens or non-citizens. One of the former was Harishbhai who had been only 18 when his home by Kankaria Lake was demolished. After the demolition, a parcel of land in Ganeshnagar together with a compensation payment of 5,000 rupees was given to the family. Harishbhai, his mother, his father, and his sister gathered what remained of their belongings and left for Ganeshnagar, which, to their dismay, was far from pleasant. "The place where we were given land was infested with snakes, there was no water, nothing. It was the garbage dump of the whole of Ahmedabad, of the whole of Gujarat. No electricity, the waste would stink all day…," Harishbhai recalled.[103] After seeing the conditions that awaited them, the family decided not to stay any longer than was necessary. Luckily, they were wealthy enough to rent an apartment elsewhere while waiting for the concrete blocks of Sadbhavna Nagar to be built.

In June 2015, when I first visited Ganeshnagar with Nareshbhai and his friend, hundreds if not thousands of people were staying there, hoping to be allotted an apartment in one of the city's official resettlement sites. Many of the people to whom I spoke lacked documents, while others said that they had lost their allotted apartment due to corrupt officers in the AMC—rumors circulated about people bribing officers and snatching apartments meant for others.

FIGURE 7.3. Huts amidst high-tension power lines in Ganeshnagar, June 2015.

[103] Chhaiyaben & Harishbhai 150415

One of the people living in Ganeshnagar was Sangitaben, an elderly Hindu woman displaced from the city center as part of the Sabarmati Riverfront Development Project. Sangitaben's family had not qualified for resettlement, as they did not possess the required documents; she told me that all their papers had been destroyed by the flooding of the River Sabarmati years earlier. The AMC's contention, on the other hand, was that people who remained in Ganeshnagar after 2012 had never been riverfront-dwellers at all but were strategically trying to get access to resettlement apartments by squatting in the interim site (Desai 2014, 42–43). Sangitaben, however, remained hopeful that one day she would receive a house allotment letter that would grant her family the right to dwell in *pakkā* accommodation of their own.

Sangitaben's family had lived in Ganeshnagar since 2010. I found it difficult to understand how they had survived in such circumstances with small children—her daughter-in-law held a malnourished baby in her arms. Sangitaben told me that two government-sponsored water taps had been installed in the area, but there was no electricity in their house even though, ironically, they lived underneath power lines. The family dwelled in two huts made out of polythene bags and wooden poles. In a later visit, I discovered that the polythene bags had been donated by Deepak Babaria, a Gujarat Congress leader, after a violent storm had ripped huts from the ground.[104] The elderly woman had tears in her eyes when she told me that one of her two sons had died of tuberculosis while living in Ganeshnagar and that the other son was presently on his way to get antibiotics for the same disease. Due to his illness, he had not been able to work for a year.

Sangitaben did not possess the documents that would have made her eligible for resettlement, and thus materially legitimate in the eyes of the state. Without the papers, she was doomed to the liminal existence of the Derridean specter—"neither present nor absent, neither dead nor alive" (Davis 2005, 373), but instead persistently waiting for her rights to be materialized in the form of a ration card, a voter ID card, and, finally, an allotment letter and a resettlement apartment. Leaving the site, however, would amount to accepting the AMC's contention that people who remained in Ganeshnagar after 2012 had never been riverfront residents. In view of the AMC's statement, Sangitaben's bodily presence in the temporary resettlement site amounted to a refusal to let go of a distant dream of propertied citizenship.

[104] In 2011, Babaria, together with the SNAM, submitted to the court a list of project-affected families (PAFs) that had been excluded from resettlement, and in 2012, again filed a Public Interest Litigation (PIL) in Gujarat High Court on behalf of the excluded families living in the Ganeshnagar interim site (Desai 2014).

FIGURE 7.4. Sangitaben's material belongings, June 2015.

In addition to mere physical presence in the site, people used various channels to claim secure housing and to negotiate better services. They engaged with NGOs, including the Rahethan Adhikar Manch (RAM) housing rights organization, which had been involved in mobilizing riverfront-dwellers against evictions (see section 4.1). They also interacted with opposition politicians, especially Deepak Babaria from the Congress, and collectively wrote petitions to different levels of government in an attempt to receive resettlement apartments. Rajanbhai, a local leader and a middleman in Ganeshnagar, showed me a pile of paper consisting of copies of petitions sent to the Gujarat Chief Minister's Office and different officials in the AMC, along with newspaper clippings discussing the plight of Ganeshnagar residents. One of them was about 28 families who had been left without relief after the 2014 storm. Rajanbhai also showed me the poor quality of the drinking water in Ganeshnagar and asked me to take a photo of the yellowish liquid. It seemed that he was engaged both in trying to pressure the government to allot houses to the people he represented (Hindus displaced from the riverfront) and in developing Ganeshnagar into a more livable place. Rajanbhai himself was living in a one-room *pakkā* house with a small garden, right next to one of the water pumps.

Not everyone was eager to leave Ganeshnagar. For Abdulbhai, an elderly Muslim man displaced from Danilimda due to the construction of the BRTS, Ganeshnagar had become home. When we met in January 2016, he had lived there for nine years despite having been allotted an apartment in Sadbhavna Nagar. One of his daughters temporarily occupied the resettlement apartment. Abdulbhai enjoyed living in Ganeshnagar: he had his social networks there, and he liked the spaciousness of the area. Mosques and schools had been built over the years by Muslim residents, and life was back on its normal track. In Abdulbhai's view, Sadbhavna Nagar was congested and dirty in comparison to Ganeshnagar. Abdulbhai's willingness to stay put also showed in the materiality of his house:

the pastel green *pakkā* house had ornamental iron doors, and it was much bigger than neighboring houses and huts. Like Rajanbhai, Abdulbhai functioned as a representative of the people. Unfortunately for him, regulations required him to demolish his house and move to Sadbhavna Nagar, his designated living space. Eventually, he would be forced to move out.

Harms (2013) has studied temporalities of displacement in Ho Chi Minh City, tracing people's different ways of relating to the uncertainty of upcoming eviction and resettlement processes. While some of Harms' informants were oppressed by the waiting, others were able to transform it into a surprisingly empowering experience. Gender and means of livelihoods affected people's ability to play the waiting game: men with mobile means of livelihoods, such as moneylenders, were better equipped economically to benefit from waiting. The experience of waiting also structured people's imaginations of the state. As one of Harms' interviewees said, "[t]he government always keeps us waiting, as if we are going to have to wait until death" (Harms 2013, 354).

In the case of Ahmedabad's evictions, the state had spatialized waiting by creating the interim site of Ganeshnagar, which appeared as a holding room for less-than-citizens and a waiting room for propertied citizenship (see Vajpeyi 2007). However, not everyone experienced waiting in the same way. Sangitaben, for instance, felt oppressed by it: she found it impossible to build a future under conditions of uncertainty and inferior services. One of her two sons had lost his life due to the wretched conditions. At the same time, her embodied presence on the site ensured that she remained attached to the dream of propertied citizenship, even if the bond was fragile.

Rajanbhai, in contrast, was able to use his waiting time productively to build up social networks and solidify his position as a representative of displaced riverfront-dwellers. He was actively involved in developing Ganeshnagar into a decent neighborhood while at the same time pressurizing officials to provide resettlement apartments. Thus he was opportunistically building two alternative futures at once: one in a resettlement site and one in Ganeshnagar in case the first never materialized. Finally, Abdulbhai had transformed waiting into everyday "time as usual" by building up a new life in Ganeshnagar. He was indifferent to waiting and surprisingly uninterested in his allotted resettlement apartment, thereby taking control of the imposed waiting and appropriating the time for his own productive use. Rajanbhai's and Abdulbhai's positions as community leaders undoubtedly contributed to their ability to transform waiting into a relatively empowering experience.

I suggest that people's insistence on staying put—what I refer to as the *politics of settling*—laid the foundation for their incrementally constituted rights. Similar arguments have been made by Ferguson (2006; 2015) in the context of illegal immigration in Africa, by Makhulu (2012; 2015) with regard to the building of makeshift huts on the outskirts of Cape Town, and by Holston (2008, 165–185) in the context of "autoconstructed" peripheral settlements in São Paulo. In Ganeshnagar, people who lacked political and social capital died of illness without anyone being blamed—cases of unfortunate death while waiting—while others with

political connections and appropriate skills incrementally constructed their rights based on their residence in Ganeshnagar. In the best-case scenario, they eventually moved out and joined other displaced people in the resettlement sites. However, there were also people like Abdulbhai who posed a problem for the AMC. If all the residents demanded to stay put in Ganeshnagar, appropriating the area over time, it would have been transformed into a new slum. Therefore, the AMC strictly controlled the building of houses and huts; it was imperative that people demolished them as soon as they were officially resettled. They were to *be settled*, not to *be settlers*. All the signs of permanence, especially *pakkā* houses, had to be removed to sustain the impression of state control over an orderly process of managing the "slum problem."

## 7.4 Entangling the state through documents

Taslimaben, a Muslim woman in her 30s, was displaced from the Sabarmati Riverfront. After displacement, her family had spent six months in Ganeshnagar waiting for the allotment of a resettlement home. Eventually, in 2012, the family was allocated a house in Sadbhavna Nagar. However, due to human error, officials had not checked Taslimaben's and her husband's identification documents beforehand. After allotment, it turned out that they did not actually possess any documents. According to Taslimaben, their IDs had been lost during flooding of the Sabarmati. Hence, the municipal authority canceled the allotment after the family had already moved to Sadbhavna Nagar, and refused to accept their down payment of 3,260 rupees.

Taslimaben's family were living in a resettlement apartment but had no documents that would cement their relationship to it. Officially, they were not property owners. "When we go there [to the AMC's office] with money, they make us climb many floors, tell us to come back in another time, and don't even take our money," Taslimaben complained.[105] She told me that she had paid a middleman to handle the issue and to secure a "*slip*" of the down payment (cf. Cody 2009). This piece of paper would function as proof of financial exchange between herself and the AMC, and justify the family's staying in the apartment. The middleman was expected to use his party affiliations and bribe an official to secure the slip. Hansen and Verkaaik (2009, 16) have called these kinds of figures "urban specialists," "individuals who by virtue of their reputation, skills and imputed connections provide services, connectivity and knowledge to ordinary dwellers in slums and popular neighbourhoods."

A private company called Torrent Power is the sole distributor of electricity in Ahmedabad, having acquired the Ahmedabad Electricity Company Ltd. in 1997. However, for many poor people, the Torrent Power tariff is too high, which is why they tend to turn to illegal electricity suppliers (Mahadevia et al. 2016b, 3). While black market electricity was common—power lines were tapped illegally,

[105] Taslimaben 151028

especially at times of weddings and other celebrations—many people had also become customers of Torrent Power, including Taslimaben's family. Receipts for this consumption afforded them a material tool in negotiations with the state, as recent utility bills are valid proof of an address with which to open mobile subscriptions and bank accounts, among other things. In other words, the electricity bill was a document that enabled people to insert themselves into the webs of documentation that constructed good citizenship and enabled future claims. U. Rao (2013, 771) has made similar arguments in the context of relocation in Delhi, showing how people who illegally bought resettlement plots enrolled their children in schools and applied for electrical connections, inter alia, thereby maneuvering to obtain "follow-up documents" that confirmed their sustained presence. Unfortunately, in the case of Sadbhavna Nagar, Torrent Power had refused to issue electricity bills in residents' names, only issuing them according to housing unit number, thereby limiting their usefulness in this regard (cf. Johnston 2014, 547).

In violation of the rules laid down by the municipal authority, Taslimaben and her husband had also began to modify the house according to their own taste. They had painted the inner walls of the apartment pink, with elaborate green and purple ornaments, and installed a kitchen worktop. A calendar, a picture of Mecca, and posters featuring Arabic prayers decorated the bedroom walls. A double bed, a sewing machine, a table, and a cupboard furnished the apartment. In fact, it was one of the most elaborately furnished and decorated apartments that I visited in Sadbhavna Nagar, and was kept sparklingly clean. Taslimaben and her husband were also on good terms with their neighbors, who supported their quest to stay put.

The family's material appropriation of the concrete apartment, their Torrent Power electricity bills, and the process of securing a down payment slip can be seen as incremental ways of constructing propertied citizenship. In a way, their situation was a material manifestation of the state's success in turning people from "illegal encroachers" into propertied citizens who provided revenue for the state and private companies instead of "stealing" services (cf. Truelove & Mawdsley 2011, 416–417). Even though Taslimaben and her husband lacked formal citizenship objectified in the form of identification documents, they could mobilize their unmediated relationship to the resettlement home in their quest for official documents that would construct them as residents of their particular unit (cf. Hull 2008). Moreover, using the services of a document middleman, they hoped to secure a receipt of the house down payment that would construct their propertied citizenship on paper.

## 7.5 Ethnographic documents and state-effects

Anthropologist Michel-Rolph Trouillot (2003) sees the state as a set of practices and processes that create state-effects—a term originally coined by Jessop (1990). According to Trouillot, anthropologists should approach the state ethnograph-

ically and shift their focus from national institutions and governmental sites to state-effects, whether or not these result from the practices of national governments. Hence, practices of actors such as NGOs, international organizations (IMF, World Bank), the EU, and the UN must be included within the analysis of the state (see also Scott 1998).

One of the state-effects identified by Trouillot is the legibility effect, established by rendering populations governable subjects through their classification and regulation. Physical infrastructure, population censuses, slum surveys, and birth certificates are all means to make society legible and, hence, governable.[106] They give form to society. People come to recognize the state through the practices of control, classification, and knowledge-formation, which mediate state-effects.

Similarly, anthropology—another institution created by the human imagination—describes and renders people's lives legible. Ethnography, the "writing of people," traditionally gave form to "exotic cultures," striving to capture and reduce them to words legible to (Western) audiences. Often produced for imperial interests, ethnographies rendered people governable (e.g., Asad 1973; Pels 1997; Stocking 1991). In some cases, governing people is still the primary purpose of ethnography, as demonstrated by Middleton's (2015) recent examination of government anthropologists studying "tribal" communities in Darjeeling, India. More often, however, governance is merely a by-product: ethnographic research can create state-effects.

Legal anthropologist Annelise Riles (2000) rightly highlights the need to regard anthropologists as producers rather than just observers or examiners of documents. In the course of their fieldwork, anthropologists produce and use a range of ethnographic documentations, from research plans and funding proposals to interview questionnaires, field notes, and, finally, the ethnographic monograph. I am interested in how documents, as material artifacts and written texts produced in the course of ethnographic fieldwork, participate in the everyday lives of the people ethnographers seek to understand. The section that follows is an effort to analyze documents I have produced as paper truths on a par with bureaucratic documents. I explain how these documents were interpreted by my informants, how they affected the data collection process, and how they helped me to gain an understanding of resettled people's ideas of the state.

**"Fill my form": Interview as an opportunity and a threat**

In the course of their lives, the resettled people of Sadbhavna Nagar had been subjected to various surveys that collected and stored information about their age,

[106] Foucault (1978) uses the notion of biopolitics to refer to regulatory mechanisms focused on governing the life of human populations. Biopolitics is centered on "the species body, the body imbued with the mechanisms of life and serving as the basis of the biological processes: propagation, births and mortality, the level of health, life expectancy and longevity" (Foucault 1978, 139). Foucault himself, however, had very little interest in the study of the state (Hansen & Stepputat 2001, 4). His framework of governmentality, developed from the notion of biopolitics, assumed a dispersed form of power non-reducible to the domination of the state or state-like institutions (see Foucault 2010).

religion, caste, number of children, housing type, occupation, and income level, among other things, to function as a basis of rational decision-making. In resettled people's collective imaginations, forms were associated with state violence; their houses had been "surveyed" before the demolitions. To an equal extent, forms were associated with state welfare: one could access government schemes, including low-income housing, by filling out a form, or, more precisely, by "letting one's form be filled out," as many people were illiterate or lacked the required skills to interpret and complete such documents. Not surprisingly, therefore, resettled people associated my study with government surveys. Walking around with pens and papers, I was seen as a bureaucrat, different from a stereotypical Indian low-level official due only to my gender and physical appearance.

When I first started interviewing people in Sadbhavna Nagar, my assistant Nareshbhai suggested that I create a typed English-language "survey form" and an information sheet about my research. According to him, producing a form that aesthetically emulated bureaucratic documents would give me more authority in the eyes of my interviewees and thereby make them more willing to participate in my research. In Nareshbhai's view, I would not be taken seriously unless I had a proper English-language black-on-white document in my hands—English because it was the language of officialdom even though the lower levels of government used the vernacular Gujarati. Trusting his judgment, I drafted a simple form including criteria like "name," "caste," "age," "religion," "address," and "occupation."[107] I also wrote an information sheet that explained the purpose of my research, my intentions to anonymize all the interviewees, and the right of the informant to stop the interview at any time. Based on Nareshbhai's recommendation, I added the logo of my home university to give the form additional authority. For resettled people, then, my interviews became instances of "filling forms"(*form baṛhnā*) or "taking surveys" (*survey lenā*).

The equation of interviewing with form filling had ambivalent consequences. As explained earlier, before displacement people had been obliged to fill out forms in the context of socio-economic surveys. Thus, on the one hand, survey forms carried the connotation of surveillance or control imposed on people—they were a technology designed to elicit information from respondents. On the other, surveys were also seen as a possible way to access resources: if one answered survey questions in the "correct" manner, one might be eligible for benefits. The form offered the potential for change. Hence, my interviewees initially expected that their participation in form filling would somehow directly affect them, negatively or positively. They saw my descriptions and categorizations of them as both a possibility and a threat, and were curious about the effects of the form. "What is the use of it?" my interviewees often wanted to know. In their minds, the use of the form transformed the discussions into situations that had the potential to generate future effects even though I always explained that I had no control over the allotment of BSUP housing or other welfare benefits. The power of the form was so overwhelming that my oral assertions had little effect. Once,

[107] After each day, the data was digitized and anonymized. Original survey forms were destroyed. See section 2.3 for a further discussion on ethics.

an elderly woman approached me on the street outside Sadbhavna Nagar demanding to know why I had not yet managed to "fill her form." In her view, it was unfair that some people were provided with the opportunity to have their forms filled out while others were excluded.

My use of the form, in addition to the fact that I was a foreigner with a university degree, affected people's answers to my questions. Sometimes in interviews, people sought to present their situation and the difficulties they faced in a very dire light. They presented themselves as extremely poor, believing that I would be able to connect them with government schemes. Nareshbhai was quick to notice when people were exaggerating and would exclaim: "Stop that! Tell the truth! She doesn't work for the government!" These practices of exaggerating poverty demonstrated how people sought to control the power of bureaucrats by giving oral accounts that they imagined would yield positive results. I grew frustrated having to explain time after time that I was not a government official; during the first couple of months I had not yet realized the power of the form and its intimate connection to *sarkār* ("government") in the minds of my informants.

Due to the questionnaire being written in English (which hardly anyone could read even if they were literate in Hindi/Gujarati/Sindhi/Marathi/Marwari), people were sometimes suspicious of what I wrote. They suspected that I might miswrite their words. I recorded nearly all of the interviews and assured my informants that the recorder would capture their every word even if I made human errors. I let them know that after the discussion, the whole conversation would be transcribed word for word. Sometimes I also demonstrated how the recorder worked, allowing people to listen to their own recorded voices. I felt that using a recorder increased people's trust in me, separating me from state bureaucrats that relied on writing. People started making sure that I had put on the recorder: "Is it on now? Make certain it is on!" Eventually, around June 2015, I decided to discard the form and continue with the recorder only.

People's attitudes toward my research and the form shed light on their ideas of the state. The resettlement process had resulted in arbitrary outcomes because of individual officers' errors, corruption, and compassion—some people had lost while others had benefited. For them, filling in a form provided a possibility for the improvement of their lives, but it could also result in a loss because the state worked in unpredictable ways. In the words of Pinker & Harvey (2018, 19), the state was "a highly political space, a field of negotiation in which outcomes are hard to discern." The outcomes of negotiations were uncertain because the state was not a unitary totality with a clear agenda. Instead, it was seen as a fragmentary entity, consisting of individuals who made errors in writing, who were corrupt, and who could be manipulated to act in one's favor

**Paving open spaces: Ethnographer as a middleman**

At eight o'clock on a mid-June morning, I was lying in bed when my phone started ringing. It was Nareshbhai, asking me to come to Sadbhavna Nagar. Giggling, he said that he had a surprise for me, something to do with water. He said that "some Vaghri" had asked him to call me so that I could take photographs. In-

trigued, I quickly dressed and went out to meet him. He was waiting for me by the Soda Shop and started leading me toward one of the communal water tanks in Sadbhavna Nagar. As we approached the tank, I noticed that the streets were flooded with water although it had not rained for weeks. A little boy waded through the dirty, ankle-deep water.

When we arrived at the water tank, I saw water gushing at high pressure from a gaping hole in the tank's wall. Plastic bags, wrappers, bottles, and food leftovers that had covered the ground the day before were now floating atop the water, spreading everywhere. A young man was standing next to the broken tank, soaping his body and scrubbing himself clean. On top of the tank, a group of boys turned cartwheels and splashed water at each other, laughing loudly. They asked me to film them, taking turns diving into the tank. "What has happened?" I asked the people who had gathered to watch the water circus. "There's a hole in the tank," I was told in a laconic manner. No one had yet contacted the Vatva-ward AMC office but somebody was about to do so. I learned that this was not the first time that such an incident had happened—people had written complaints about similar incidents many times before. "But they don't listen," someone exclaimed.

Nareshbhai then took me to meet the person who had asked him to call me. It turned out to be Ashokbhai, whom I had interviewed about a month earlier. Ashokbhai wanted me to take a look at the open space next to his block. The ground was muddy and covered in garbage. Toddlers were playing amidst the trash. A few people from Ashokbhai's block came down to greet me and, seeing me taking photos of the open space, they began to complain about dengue fever and malaria. I learned that the area was a mosquito breeding ground, and that people had already thought of a solution to the problem: they wanted the open spaces to be paved. Paving open spaces would not only ease the mosquito problem, they explained, it would also enable the residents to organize family celebrations such as weddings. They would no longer have to celebrate on the street or rent an open plot for weddings elsewhere. This would save them money. They were convinced that paved open spaces would be much easier to keep clean. One of Ashokbhai's neighbors, a middle-aged woman, suggested that I write an English-language complaint featuring a photo to the AMC. Hearing this, some people living next to the damaged water tank wanted their own version of the complaint.

I agreed and returned home to draft the text. Meanwhile, Nareshbhai called the AMC's "complaint number" at my suggestion.[108] The two of us then met up, and I read the text that I had written aloud to Nareshbhai. He made some corrections and additions to my draft. This is what we came up with:

> We, residents of Sadbhavna Nagar blocks no. […] demand that the open area between our blocks be cleaned of garbage and mud and covered with tiles in order to prevent excessive flooding during the monsoon season. The open, grassy area connecting our blocks is a breeding site of mosquitoes. Covering the area with tiles would, therefore,

[108] Residents of Sadbhavna Nagar were not aware of the possibility to register complaints by phone. They always delivered their complaints in person.

> reduce incidents of dengue fever and malaria in our neighbourhood significantly. Children, especially, have been affected by mosquito-borne diseases in the past years. Once the area is cleaned and covered, we will use it as children's playground and as a site for community festivals, e.g. weddings. We promise not to litter the ground once it is cleaned properly.

We traveled to an internet café to print out the complaint letters. After printing, Nareshbhai asked two men, Ashokbhai and Bimalbhai, to collect the signatures of their neighbors for the documents. We agreed that the four of us would meet up the following day and take the letters to the Vatva AMC office. That evening, I also tried registering the complaints in the AMC's English online portal, but without success.

FIGURE 7.5. Photos of the open spaces attached to the complaints.

The next day, Nareshbhai called me to say that the signature lists were ready. I also talked to Bimalbhai on the phone and heard that he had managed to gather 70 signatures. We decided to travel to the AMC office right away: "Why waste time waiting?" the men thought. Ashokbhai, for his part, had collected 37 signatures, but could not come with us due to other obligations.

Nareshbhai, Bimalbhai, rickshaw driver Prakashbhai, and I met up in the street and headed for the office, which was located approximately two kilometers away. On the way, Bimalbhai said that he had worked with the list until 10 pm the previous evening. It had been difficult to get signatures because people were wary of documents that they could not read. They had even suspected that by signing, they would hand over the ownership of their apartment to Bimalbhai. Hearing this, Nareshbhai broke out laughing, beating his forehead with the palm of his hand: "*Are yār,* see what these people think!"

There was no line in the AMC office building. From the empty hall, we were directed to one of the rooms to meet an officer. He asked us to sit down. The officer glanced at the names and the pictures in our complaints and said that he would come and check the situation the following day. Bimalbhai then realized that we did not have copies of the original complaints, so he and Prakashbhai quickly went out to get them copied. When they returned, they asked me to sign all the four documents: two originals and two copies. I did not understand the use of my signing the complaints, but had no reason to refuse. We gave the originals to the AMC officer, and Bimalbhai kept the copies.

Two days went by with no sign of the AMC officer. Then on the third day Nareshbhai appeared on my doorstep saying that an officer had indeed come. Pleasantly surprised, we went to meet him. It was not the same man whom we had met a few days earlier—this was a younger man. He was carrying the original complaints we had filed. Soon, the officer was encircled by people complaining about garbage collection, broken water tanks, mosquitoes, dirty water, broken streetlights, and much else that was wrong with the infrastructure. The officer listened soberly to the grievances and said that the Health Department, which he represented, would take care of the cleaning within two days. Paving the open spaces, however, was the remit of the Project Department and was out of his control. Nevertheless, he could pass on our request to the Project Department, which was located on the second floor of the Vatva AMC office. People seemed satisfied enough with the meeting that had lasted no more than ten minutes. The AMC officer hopped on his motorcycle and sped off down the road toward Vatva village.

After the officer had gone, Bimalbhai and his neighbors began brainstorming on how to deal with the garbage problem. Bimalbhai agonized that people living in upstairs apartments might continue throwing their garbage from their balconies even if the open space was, indeed, cleaned. How to make the residents understand the long-term consequences of their actions? Bimalbhai reminisced about when the area was still brand new and the open space looked like a "garden." Then people moved in and ruined everything with their "dirty habits." Nareshbhai suggested putting up a sign threatening a 500-rupee penalty if

someone were caught littering. No concrete plan for implementation emerged from the discussion.

The next day, I received unnerving news. Six men, street sweepers working for the AMC, had approached Nareshbhai the previous night threatening to beat him up. Due to our complaint, the sweepers had been reprimanded by their boss. They only earned 4,500 rupees (approx. 64 euros) a month for a highly laborious job and now we wanted to "kick them down" with our complaints about the quality of their work! The sweepers belonged to the Balmiki caste, classed as untouchables in the past. Even during my period of fieldwork, many people would not let members of the Balmiki caste enter their houses, fearing pollution from contact with them. In fact, in Sadbhavna Nagar some people had told me that they would never allow a Balmiki to enter their house or touch their utensils. The sweepers were very upset and angry: How could we do such a thing to them? Did we not understand that they worked very hard for very little money? They had families to look after, children to feed!

Somehow, Nareshbhai managed to settle the issue with the sweepers over the next couple of days. Violence was avoided. The Balmikis continued their work, sweeping the streets of Sadbhavna Nagar for meager wages. Bimalbhai finally lost interest in the paving issue as he began arranging his son's wedding. He did not have time for anything else right now, he explained. Ashokbhai, too, went on with his business as usual. Nareshbhai became ill and bedridden. Gradually, our small initiative of local activism lost impetus. The open spaces, for their part, remained unpaved and filthy.

## 7.6 Conclusion

Documents had almost magical effects on the lives of displaced people, who could display and construct their rights to life-sustaining services with them (cf. Gupta 2012), hence their great importance. By collecting and working on documents such as complaints, allotment letters, electricity bills, and down payment slips, displaced people strove to strengthen their relationship to the state and to make claims on it. Copied, filed, stored, displayed, and laminated, the frail materiality of paper documents was manipulated in an effort to summon the state. Borrowing the words of Das and Randeria (2015, S6), residents' practices of manipulating the materiality of documents were "incremental ways in which rights and entitlements are established."

All the undocumented people to whom I talked in Sadbhavna Nagar and in Ganeshnagar claimed to have lost their documents due to the annual flooding of the Sabarmati, attributing their lack of citizenship to the unpredictable power of nature and the frail materiality of documents. According to them, the river had damaged the citizenship tied to the materiality of paper. Thus, they made claims on the state by pointing to the vulnerability of paper to environmental conditions. The municipal corporation, in contrast, stated that these people were merely seizing the opportunity to secure *pakkā* housing and that

they were not eligible riverfront-dwellers. Due to the absence of documents, however, neither party could prove its version of the truth.

Undocumented and unpropertied less-than-citizens were contained in the interim site where they were kept in a liminal state of waiting and, hence, rendered controllable. Ganeshnagar residents' insistence on staying put—engaging in what I have referred to as the *politics of settling*—ensured that they remained attached to the dream of propertied citizenship, whether materializing through resettlement or by transforming the "interim site" into a "permanent" location by building *pakkā* houses and negotiating services by virtue of their paperwork. Residents of Ganeshnagar all worked toward increasing their odds of becoming recognized as a rights-bearing citizen, employing various means including bodily presence, documents, and house construction.

The generative power of documents in enabling citizenship rights was not straightforward, but always dependent on human recognition. Bureaucratic discretion, corruption, and state officials' mistakes in the spelling of names had put people in unequal positions. Some had been able to benefit while others had lost the right to a resettlement apartment. To secure life-sustaining documents, people often employed intermediaries who had extensive social and political networks, thereby seeking to make use of state informality for their own benefit. The fragmented nature of the everyday state was central to their claim-making practices; there were corrupt officials who could be bribed and others who were known to be committed to social justice.

The uncertainty of local bureaucracy was also reflected in people's attitudes toward ethnographic documents such as interview forms that they associated with the state. My informants initially interpreted interviews as practices of "form filling" that constituted both an opportunity and a threat. Survey forms could give access to welfare services—if one knew how to steer the state to one's benefit—but they could also result in loss and suffering, and indirectly even death. This ambivalence illustrates the workings of the everyday state in the lives of the poor.

# 8 MUSLIM IN MODIFIED INDIA

The Ahmedabad Municipal Corporation has been carrying out construction within the 100-meter restricted zone of the protected Baba Lauli mosque on the Sabarmati Riverfront since 2008 (*The Times of India* 2016b). Unauthorized building work and the dumping of garbage and construction debris around the 550-year-old building has continued despite repeated reminders from the Archeological Survey of India (ASI) of the mosque's ASI-protected status. In 2013, the AMC even pasted a demolition notice on the mosque, announcing its plans to construct a riverfront road on the site of the heritage monument, but took the notice down after a member of the Central Wakf Council approached the civic body.[109] The issue was eventually taken to the Gujarat High Court, which restrained the AMC from taking any action. The AMC blamed the "ignorance of its officials for the goof-up" (*The Times of India* 2013), and work continued unabated. In the words of Deputy Municipal Commissioner I. K. Patel, the dumping of waste was only a "temporary arrangement." When it came to the construction works, Patel claimed to have no idea that the ASI's permission was needed (James 2015).

According to A. Roy (2009, 80), urban planning in India must be understood as "the management of resources, particularly land, through dynamic processes of informality." The borderline between illegal and legal, legitimate and illegitimate is not fixed but ever shifting; therefore it is a matter of state power and violence to designate some constructions as unauthorized while protecting others. As Ghertner (2008) argues, many developments that are in accordance with world-class city visions are celebrated as emblems of modernity despite violating planning or building laws, while slums are increasingly designated as nuisances. World-class city making is guided by the neoliberal values of economic growth and profit maximization through infrastructural development, but also by what Ghertner (2015, 4) calls "rule by aesthetics," "a mode

[109] The Central Wakf Council is a statutory board under the administrative control of the Ministry of Minority Affairs. Established in 1964, it administers wakf properties and advises on matters concerning the working of State Wakf Boards. Under Islamic Law, *waqf* (lit. "detention") means the donation of assets for religious or charitable purposes.

of governing space on the basis of codes of appearance." In Ahmedabad, it is not just slum-dwellers that are seen as aesthetically out of place by the state and by the elites; rather, as the Baba Lauli case demonstrates, anti-Muslim attitudes have been woven into worlding interventions. These attitudes were not part of the publicly voiced agenda of the municipal corporation, but were blamed on individual officials' ignorance, which then translated into illicit practices. However, the AMC's persistent violations of the conservation law over the years have not been satisfactorily explained as individual aberrations or exceptions; on the contrary, they speak for a new relationship between a world-class aesthetic and religious intolerance.

This chapter looks at the material and metaphorical spaces available for the Muslim minority in contemporary Ahmedabad by focusing on everyday life in Vatva's resettlement sites. I look into the ubiquitous othering and deterritorialization of Muslims and their living places, the differential treatment of Hindu and Muslim religious structures by the AMC, and coping mechanisms employed by the Muslim minority. Finally, based on my analysis of a BJP poster, I outline what makes a "good Muslim" in Modified India.

## 8.1 Denationalization of Muslims

During the 1980s and 1990s, Muslim-dominated neighborhoods became identifiable elements in the urban landscape of Ahmedabad. Sectarian politics, including not only Hindu extremism but also the so-called KHAM politics of the Congress (see section 1.2), exacerbated intolerance and Hindu–Muslim tensions, eventually leading to the emergence of community-dominated clusters. The crisis in the textile industry also played an essential part in these developments as extremist groups were able to utilize the decreased social interaction between the Hindu and Muslim working classes to their benefit. Communal violence broke out in many places in the city, and Muslims in particular started moving to locations where they could feel safe (Bobbio 2015, 132).

Juhapura, located in the southwestern periphery of the city, was established in 1973 as a relief camp for riverfront-dwellers affected by the annual flooding of the River Sabarmati. Since then, however, thousands of Muslims from various parts of the city have settled there following outbursts of violence. With a population of 350,000 people, Juhapura has become known as the largest Muslim slum in South Asia (Bobbio 2015, 131). Writing in the aftermath of the Gujarat violence of 2002, Breman (2005, 74) notes that the residents of Juhapura live in poverty. In the vernacular, the area is referred to as "mini-Pakistan" (ibid.), deterritorializing its residents from the metaphorical national space of India (see Shaban 2012).

Within Sadbhavna Nagar, too, Muslims were habitually othered—they were spoken of as "low people," drug users, and criminals while Muslim-dominated locales were commonly referred to as "Pakistan" and regarded as

dangerous areas. As one of my Hindu interviewees said, "Ahead, there's the Pakistan border. Some of them drink hooch [*dārū*], some smoke *ganja*, some use *powder*, some use *sugar*... If they don't have money for intoxicants, they'll loot people."[110] Another explained the rationale behind the term Pakistan as follows: "The people across the bridge are all Mohammedians. So that's why the place is called Pakistan." By the "Pakistan border" the interviewee meant the Vatva fly-over, which divided the Hindu-majority resettlement site of Sadbhavna Nagar ("Hindustan") from the all-Muslim resettlement site of Vasant Gajendra Gadkar Nagar ("Pakistan"). Muslim residents of Sadbhavna Nagar were clustered mainly in what was called the "back" (*pīche*) of Sadbhavna Nagar next to the "Pakistan border."

FIGURE 8.1. On the border of "Hindustan" (left) and "Pakistan," April 2015.

I. Chatterjee (2012, 141), who has examined strategies of othering Muslims in eastern Ahmedabad, argues that while the urban poor of India, in general, face socio-economic displacement, Muslims are forced to bear the additional burden of cultural othering. Based on interview data, Chatterjee has identified several spatial strategies of cultural dispossession. One is the naming of all-Muslim locations "mini-Pakistans" or "negative zones." Another is boundary-making—the erecting of gates at the open ends of Hindu lanes to keep Muslims out. Common streets separating two ethnic neighborhoods have become "razor-sharp boundaries." According to Chatterjee, "outsiders may be oblivious of these violent tropes of segregation, perceiving them as roads, lanes or football

[110] The English words "powder" and "sugar" were vernacular terms used for drugs that came in white powder form.

fields, only to be told by locals that they are standing on a 'border'" (I. Chatterjee 2012, 142–143; see also I. Chatterjee 2009).

For many of the Hindus I interviewed, the Muslims of Sadbhavna Nagar were not only "low people" but also "dangerous Pakistanis." Some of my Hindu acquaintances even blamed Muslims for raping and abducting Hindu girls, or for luring unsuspecting girls into "love marriage," something that Hindu right-wing forces refer to as *love jihad* (see, e.g., Punwani 2014; M. Rao 2011). Poonamben, for example, was worried for her daughters' safety in a "mixed area," observing, "Muslim boys can catch them and run away with them. How many girls have run away in Vatva to get married to Muslim boys... But no one listens."[111] The image of women's honor that must be protected from violation is central to Hindu nationalism (Menon 2010, 89). Some people also suspected that Muslims were only "pretending to be poor" when in reality, money was pouring from Saudi-Arabia into their bank accounts, implying that Muslims living in resettlement sites were involved in global terrorism (cf. I. Chatterjee 2014a, 165). At the beginning of my fieldwork, I heard rumors that some of the Muslim apartments were used to hide ISIS terrorists.

The othering of Muslims also took place outside resettlement sites. In January 2016, my husband and I visited a Hindu family living in a lower-middle-class housing estate, about one kilometer from the Vatva resettlement sites. In the midst of conversation I mentioned that there had recently been many mosquitoes where we lived. The father of the family thought that this was natural since we lived "in a dangerous area." He continued that we resided too close to the Pakistan border delineated by the Vatva flyover. The "safe" side, according to him, was "*India*" (in English) where his family lived. I asked him if they used the nickname "Pakistan" before the BSUP houses were constructed, and he said that they did not, as the "dangerous people" used to live in the city center. "But why 'Pakistan,' specifically?" I insisted. "Because of Muslims," his daughter mumbled silently, but the man himself only kept repeating that "Pakistan is dangerous," as if avoiding uttering the word "Muslim."

What is more alarming, even some authorities had begun to use the deterritorializing term "Pakistan." In September 2015, Vatva became the focus of local media attention after it came to light that the Gujarat police had registered a First Information Report (FIR) against four people involved in a fight, mentioning their address as "Vatva, Pakistan." Rakhial police inspector Barkat Ali Chavda explained the incident as follows: "The writer wrote Pakistan as the address in FIR because it was dictated to us by the city control room. This is quite normal here. Those who live there also identify themselves as residents of Pakistan" (Khan 2015). According to another article, "[r]eference to a Muslim-populated area as Pakistan is not uncommon in Ahmedabad where small roads are termed as 'Wagah border' and Hindu populated areas are called 'India'"

[111] Poonamben 151023

(*DNA* 2015).[112] This illustrates how violence "folds itself into the recesses of the ordinary" (Das 2007, xii), constantly reminding Muslims of their inferior status and keeping them in anticipation of violence from the state and their Hindu neighbors.

At the time the articles were published, I had been in Vatva for six months and had noticed that some Muslims did indeed use the term "Pakistan," as Inspector Chavda had maintained; however, I also noticed that many Muslims were uncomfortable with the word and that it was not easy to raise the topic in discussions without hurting their feelings. After the newspaper article was published, I decided to take up the issue with some Muslim residents with whom I had become friends. One of them was Radhwaben, a young Muslim woman:

> *Jelena:* People talk of that side as Pakistan and of this side as Hindustan…
>
> *Radhwaben:* It's because both Hindus and Muslims live here together and on that side, all are from the riverfront, right, so they say that we are *Pakistānī*. They are all Muslims. […] They are from the riverfront [*riverfrontvāle*], that's why people call it Pakistan.
>
> *Jelena:* Do they [residents of "Pakistan"] say that themselves?
>
> *Radhwaben:* They talk like that too. They say that ours is Pakistan and yours is Hindustan. Here, this society is called Sadbhavna Nagar. That is Gadkar, Gajendra Gadkar Nagar.
>
> *Jelena*: But no one uses those [real] names?
>
> *Radhwaben:* No. If someone asks where you live, you answer "in Hindustan." Someone asks where you live, you answer "Pakistan." If you say that "I live in Sadbhavna Nagar," no one will understand. You have to say "Vatva crossing, Hindustan." They answer: "Yeah yeah, I understand."[113]

Post-2002 Ahmedabad is nearly entirely segregated into residential areas of Hindus and Muslims, which is why Mahadevia (2007) calls it a "city with many borders" (see also Jaffrelot & Thomas 2012). Traveling in the city, residents read signs and clues in the socio-material environment—shrines, mosques, temples, flags, hijabs, colorful saris and *bindīs*, beards, and white *kurtā-pājāmās*—mapping out locations as either "safe" or "dangerous," "good" or "bad," depending on the identity of the person interpreting cultural signals in her or his vicinity. From this perspective, "Pakistan" and "Hindustan" become practical tropes directing people either to avoid or safely visit certain areas—the names make everyday life easier for city-dwellers concerned with religious and cultural boundaries. The terms have become so normalized that the official names of specific areas have been forgotten or, in the case of Sadbhavna Nagar, were never assimilated into the vernacular vocabulary. The prevalence of the

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[112] The so-called Wagah border is the primary land crossing between India and Pakistan. The Radcliffe Line, demarcating the boundary between India and Pakistan, was drawn here on August 17, 1947.
[113] Radhwaben 151110

terms affirmed that Hindu–Muslim differences were, indeed, the most significant social division in the city.

Nevertheless, in interviews and casual discussions, some Muslims openly contested the use of the term Pakistan. While Nareshbhai and I were conducting an interview with Badaiben, a Muslim woman in her 60s, she and her neighbor Zeenatben started discussing the tropes:

> *Badaiben:* This is Sadbhavna Nagar. This is the neighborhood of Hindustan, and there, opposite, is the neighborhood of Pakistan. But our people [Muslims] didn't come up with those names. The [real] name of this place is Sadbhavna Nagar.
>
> *Zeenatben:* This is number one!
>
> *Badaiben:* This is number one, and that is number two. The first people came to live on that side and after on this side. But people on our side came up with the names Hindustan and Pakistan. It's wrong! It's wrong, isn't it?
>
> [Jelena nodding]
>
> *Zeenatben:* Children make fun of each other [using the names].
>
> *Badaiben:* They make fun of each other, it's not respectful! Since they were small, they have been made fun of. Hindustan and Pakistan… What's that about? What is this issue of Hindustan and Pakistan? This should be called number one and the opposite one, number two.[114]

"Vatva 1" and "Vatva 2" were the initial "project names" of Sadbhavna Nagar and VGG Nagar, the names used in official documents relating to resettlement. Referring to the sites by their neutral, government-given names, Badaiben and Zeenatben invoked the rule of law and claimed belonging in "India" as opposed to "Pakistan." The strategy resembles Muslims' practices of "counter-naming" denationalized areas in a slum neighborhood in Mumbai, studied by Contractor (2012). In comparison to Contractor's informants, however, who forged links with notions of nationhood and patriotism to counter exclusion, my informants appealed to the idea of an abstract state that should rise above micro-level derogatory tropes and guarantee justice and equality for all (see also section 5.5). Muslims' naming practices have been an effort to call upon the everyday state to abide by the rules of the abstract state.

Nevertheless, in everyday life many Muslims of Sadbhavna Nagar did employ the Hindustan–Pakistan divide for practical reasons—rickshaw drivers, for example, had never heard of a place called Sadbhavna Nagar whereas "Vatva *cārmaliyā*, Hindustan" (see section 1.3) was quite widely known. Hence, Muslims' appropriation of deterritorializing place names by no means signified their embracing a "Pakistani" identity. It was merely a practical necessity in a city where Hindu nationalist ideology effectively permeated the vernacular geographic nomenclature, and where denationalizing toponyms were increasingly adopted also by those working for the state.

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[114] Zeenatben & Badaiben 150522

## 8.2 "They fight, they steal things": Mobilization of difference

Many riverfront neighborhoods, prior to their clearances, including Khanpur Darwaja and Ram-Rahim Nagar, had been "mixed" areas shared by different caste groups and religious communities (Desai 2014, 10), but Kankaria neighborhoods such as Macchipir and Sindhi Camp had been exclusively Hindu.[115] In this section, I present an example of how former residents of an all-Hindu location mobilized Muslims' perceived inferiority and immorality in negotiations with the authorities. I also examine what their claim-making practices reveal about how they view the state.

In the middle of Sadbhavna Nagar, nine blocks had been allotted to people who used to live in Macchipir, Kankaria. Macchipir was one of the locations developed under the Slum Networking Program (SNP), which aimed to provide slum households with access to water and sanitation through a collaboration between the AMC and NGOs (Mahadevia et al. 2014; Nayudu 2009). A few years later, however, the upgraded slum was demolished due to the Kankaria Lakefront Development Project although the SNP had included a ten-year guarantee of non-eviction. After the construction of resettlement apartments, residents of Macchipir were divided into three resettlement sites: Sadbhavna Nagar, Kushabhau Thakre Nagar, and Tikampura.

The Macchipir people were all lower-caste Hindus, including descendants of migrants from Uttar Pradesh and Rajasthan. They were one of the first groups to arrive in Sadbhavna Nagar, and according to their own reports, the atmosphere (*mahaul*) of the area was good in the beginning.[116] It was only after two years had passed that problems started to arise. The Macchipirians explained the change in the *mahaul* by pointing to the arrival of Muslims from the riverfront. The resettlement of Muslims was a surprise to them as they were under the impression that Sadbhavna Nagar would be an all-Hindu site.

In interviews, the Macchipirians said that after Muslims had been allotted houses next to them, activities such as drinking liquor, using drugs, gambling, looting and throwing garbage became more common. As 27-year-old Shivabhai put it: "The people that are here… They are not good. They fight [*jhagrā karte haĩ*], they steal things [*chorī karte haĩ*]. For example, if I park my vehicle outside, then sometimes tires are stolen, sometimes batteries are gone…" Shivabhai's mother, Kavyaben, added that they cannot leave young girls alone due to "Muslim goons." According to her, in Kankaria, it was possible to sit outside

[115] Ram-Rahim Nagar, an informal neighborhood located on the eastern banks of the River Sabarmati, combines the names of the Hindu god Ram and one of the names of Allah, Rahim ("Merciful"). With 40% Hindu and 60% Muslim residents, the neighborhood was unaffected by the Gujarat riots of 1969, 1985 and 1992, and even the 2002 pogrom (Dhattiwala 2006; R. Robinson 2012). Sonia Gandhi therefore awarded the elders of Ram-Rahim Nagar with the Indira Gandhi Award for National Integration (Berenschot 2012, 97).

[116] The term *mahaul* refers to a sense of feeling about a place. People and things are seen to shape the *mahaul* of a place (Read 2010, 91). As Read (ibid.) states, "[a]n assessment of the mahaul forms the basis for assumptions about identity and comment about status and reputation."

even at midnight, as "Muslims didn't come there." Shivabhai and Kavyaben, along with other people, were worried that the bad *mahaul* would "spoil" children, which reflects people's ideas about moral substances shared through a common microcosmos (cf. Kärki 2013; Lambert 1997). As a matter of fact, my informants thought that living alongside Muslims had already changed the behavior of some Macchipirians:

> *Kavyaben:* They didn't do it [drinking and gambling] earlier. They didn't do this in Kankaria.
>
> *Shivabhai:* There's been more of those activities after coming here. They have changed.
>
> *Kavyaben:* People steal, they smash locks and steal if no one is at home.
>
> *Jelena:* So why did they start behaving like this here?
>
> *Kavya:* The government did this, what can we do? When we first came here, no one was like that. When *Miyanbhaī* [a slang word for Muslims] came, it started happening.
>
> *Shivabhai:* When we lived here for two years, you know, no tension at all… Everything was good. After all the *bastīs* ["slums"] came, dirtiness increased… Fighting… All that.[117]

The fact that the nine blocks occupied by the Macchipirians were located in the middle of Sadbhavna Nagar, and surrounded by "mixed" blocks, aggravated their anxiety. To leave the area or to visit the vegetable market, they were forced to pass by blocks occupied by Muslims and other Hindu communities, subjecting themselves to the gaze of the other—daily contact was unavoidable. Sindhis, in contrast, lived in one of the corners of the square resettlement site. They could reach home without the need to pass by other communities' blocks.

Macchipirians were disgruntled with the fact that they had been divided into three separate resettlement sites and allotted apartments together with Muslims. One of them saw this as a technology of rule, saying, "the government *divides* and *rules*, right?"—thus drawing a parallel between divisive resettlement and the British colonial policy of creating religious antagonism (see sections 1.2 and 4.5). The Macchipirians wanted to be united again. As one elderly lady put it, "[a]ll Hindus are divided into different blocks... It [resettlement] should be done on a community basis."

Two Macchipirian community workers (*samāj sevak*), one of whom lived in Sadbhavna Nagar and the other in Kushabhau Thakre Nagar, told me that all the former residents of the Macchipir *chawl* had collectively approached the AMC and the state government requesting to be given apartments together in an all-Hindu area. The men were the leading figures in the struggle but hesitated to call themselves "leaders" (*āgevān*); instead, they emphasized the power of the many. As one of the men, Arjunbhai, put it, "[w]hen everyone comes together to work as a community, as in writing complaints, it has an effect. If

[117] Kavyaben & Shivabhai 151116

there's only one person, it doesn't have much effect."[118] However, negotiations with the state were unsuccessful. The local government refused their request, but the residents remained hopeful; the next step would be to approach opposition parties and the media.

A couple of months after I first met Arjunbhai, I saw a familiar face in the day's newspaper (*The Times of India*). Arjunbhai had been interviewed in an article titled "Slum rehab needs jobs, not new place: Shifting Residents To a New Area Weakens Social Integration." The newspaper piece also featured a picture of the garbage-strewn common space in the middle of the Macchipir area with a subtext "Deteriorating sanitation at Vatva EWS housing" (Yagnik 2016). I walked to a photocopying kiosk to take a few copies of the article and went to look for Arjunbhai as I suspected that he had not seen it yet. After fifteen minutes of asking around, I finally found him in the company of a female community worker who lived in Kushabhau Thakre Nagar. They were both pleased to see the article even though they could not read English. Arjunbhai asked me to give him the original clipping, which I did. He told me that journalists had been in Vatva a few days ago to interview him—or, as he put it, "they surveyed me." He said that some people had been afraid of the journalists and had fled the area. I asked Arjunbhai if he had contacted *The Times of India* himself, and he answered that the contact had been through an opposition politician. "It doesn't matter who takes up our issue as long as someone does," he said, perhaps noticing my slight puzzlement over his shifting affiliations between the BJP and other parties. Arjunbhai added that the residents would like to be allotted houses "opposite Durganagar," which refers to an empty, unnamed resettlement site close to Kushabhau Thakre Nagar. This wish was also expressed by another resident:

> We had requested AMC to give us one home at Trikamnagar or Durganagar EWS housing.[119] More than 900 people were rehabilitated at Trikamnagar. Here, there are gambling dens, there are encroachments and the resident welfare body is defunct (Yagnik 2016).

While the article did not mention Hindu–Muslim relations, Arjun brought it up again in our discussion, reminiscing about how Kankaria had been an all-Hindu neighborhood with no Muslim presence whatsoever. For the Macchipirians, then, the unifying enemy was Muslim, which is understandable against Ahmedabad's historical background of religious riots and India's current political atmosphere. Significantly, however, it was a phantasmagorical, generalized Muslim, not individually identified people. Representing their Muslim neighbors as culturally deviant, the Macchipirians sought to situate themselves within mainstream Hindu society, both discursively and spatially. They strove for a spatially bounded all-Hindu location because they thought that spatial purification was the only way to guarantee safety. Moreover, since "Hindu areas" were associated with higher status and identified as "good are-

[118] Arjunbhai 151221
[119] "Trikamnagar" refers to the Tikampura resettlement site.

as," the Macchipirians' claims can also be seen as an attempt to frame themselves as virtuous citizens in distinction to the bestial other. It was a reframing of citizenship that drew on both the Hindu nationalist discourse and the world-class city ethos associating "Muslim" with dirtiness, immorality, and illegality.

## 8.3 Jhūlelāl temple: Vote-bank politics

Residents of resettlement sites were not allowed to build any kind of structures in the open spaces without permission from the municipal corporation, a fact mentioned in the house allotment letters handed out by the authorities. Nevertheless, many illicit structures, including temples and mosques, have sprung up on the common plots. By the end of my fieldwork in February 2016, there were altogether five temples or temple-clusters and two mosques built by residents inside the walls of the Sadbhavna Nagar resettlement.

The temples on the site had been collectively built by Marwaris, Vaghris, Devipujaks, Bhois, and Sindhis, apart from one that had been constructed by a local leader right next to his own apartment. Open spaces around the temples were significantly cleaner than those that had no religious structures. All the temples also functioned as locations for social get-togethers. During Navratri, a nine-night-long Hindu festival celebrated annually in September or October, the Mātājī and Jhūlelāl temples functioned as centers of all-night *garbā* dancing. While the former drew hundreds of Hindu residents with various caste and regional backgrounds, and also some Muslims who came to look at the dance, the latter was predominantly a Sindhi place with few participants.

The biggest Hindu temple was the Jhūlelāl *mandir* built by the Sindhi community approximately a year after the Sindhis' arrival in Sadbhavna Nagar. Three Sindhi men organized its construction with donations received from various sources, including their local caste association, entrepreneurs from the Sindhi market close to the Maninagar railway station, and individual residents of the area.

Jhūlelāl, a manifestation of the god Varuṇa, is the *Iṣṭa-Dev*, the community god of the Hindu Sindhi community. When, after the subcontinent's partition, nearly 800,000 Hindu Sindhis migrated to India from Pakistan (Markovits 2000, 278), Jhūlelāl migrated with them. Other Hindus in India, however, had little or no knowledge of Jhūlelāl, and they did not readily accept the god of the Sindhi diaspora (Ray 2012, 236). Sindhis feared that they would lose their distinctive identity as expressed through religion, tight networks, Sindhi language and literature, and unique poetry, dance and drama (ibid.); however, as Ray (2012, 237) posits, "they did not forsake Varuṇa-Jhūlelāl, but self-consciously installed him as their unifying hub." The post-partition iconography of Jhūlelāl usually depicts him as a saintly white-bearded man, sitting cross-legged atop a lotus that rests on a golden *palla* fish floating in the Indus (Sindhu) River in modern-day Pakistan (Ray 2012, 238). This is the way Jhūlelāl was portrayed in the form of an idol, located inside the temple in Sadbhavna Nagar, and also in Sindhi

home shrines. Often draped in flowers and shiny garments, the Jhūlelāl idol inside the temple was a central node in the life of the local Sindhi community.


FIGURE 8.2. The Jhūlelāl temple in Sadbhavna Nagar, April 2015.

In distinction to most residents of Sadbhavna Nagar, Sindhis were able to appropriate space quite efficiently due to their resettlement as a group. This echoes Miller's (2010, 87) findings from a working-class estate in North London: "[I]t was the people blessed with strong relationships to other people that also had effective and fulfilling relationships to the material world." The group of young men that had taken the initiative to build the Jhūlelāl temple had been friends since childhood and still lived very close to each other. Rambhai, one of the men, explained the importance of building a temple as follows:

> *Jelena:* Why did you want to build this temple?
>
> *Rambhai:* First of all, you have to understand that there is no other temple nearby. All the women had to go all the way to Punitnagar. In Punitnagar, there's a Sai Baba temple, there's a Shiva lingam. On some specific days, like Mondays and during the holy month of Shravan, we have to visit a temple dedicated to Lord Shiva. In order to perform our rituals, we had to pay a rickshaw fare of 20 rupees. This temple is for everyone, it's a general temple meant to serve everyone (*public ke sevā ke lie*). Anyone can come to see and visit it (*darśan*).[120]

In comparison to other open spaces in Sadbhavna Nagar, the Sindhi area was relatively clean. According to the residents, it was also more peaceful than other areas in Sadbhavna Nagar. The space around the temple was used by children for playing cricket and, as mentioned above, for organizing social get-

[120] Rambhai, Hiteshbhai, Girishbhai & Ranveerbhai 160103

togethers. Women cleaned the area every morning before prayers. When I asked if Rambhai and his friend Hiteshbhai thought that the temple has had an effect on the atmosphere of the area, they answered:

> *Rambhai:* Actually, thanks to building the temple... There's an *ārtī* [Hindu fire ritual] in the morning. There's an *ārtī* in the evening. So in the evening children, elderly people... Anyone who believes in God, anyone who believes in God can come for a visit. They sit and relax for 15 to 20 minutes... They'll feel good about it! It's also good for the public. The public comes as well... They put their hands together in prayer before going to work. The temple is for them, too.
>
> *Hiteshbhai:* One can even arrange a family celebration in the temple premises.
>
> *Rambhai:* Whatever function there is, one can arrange it in the temple premises.[121]

One common explanation offered for building a temple was that there had been a Jhūlelāl temple in Kankaria. Because that temple had been demolished with the houses, it was considered natural to build a brand new Jhūlelāl temple in the new neighborhood space. The temple provided a sense of continuity. As Shilpaben said: "When we came, we did not have a temple. We had God with us, in the house, but we did not have a temple for seating the God. God has to sit with us. So it's the right thing to build a temple. Together."[122]

During my fieldwork, I had the opportunity to attend many kinds of activities centered on the temple, which ranged from serene morning prayers to endless *garbā* dance nights and large birthday parties with loud music, confetti, Sindhi food, and relatives and friends from other places. Even though Rambhai and Hiteshbhai said that the temple was open for everyone, it was only Sindhis that prayed there, as Jhūlelāl is specifically a Sindhi deity—other communities had their own revered gods and goddesses. Family events were not open to everyone; one had to be invited. The party space was cordoned off with a long sheet and people belonging to other communities could follow the event from the other side. They could not enter and join the dance without an invitation. In fact, not even all the Sindhis were invited to family celebrations. After one unusually large birthday party, some Sindhis complained that they had not been asked to join even though the birthday boy had often "drunk water in their house" or "played with their children."

The Jhūlelāl temple was only quasi-legal. The AMC granted the Sindhi community permission to build a temple, but the temple was supposed to be smaller. According to Rambhai, the authorities also specified that the temple should not be constructed in the middle of the open plot. The Sindhi community decided to build a larger temple anyway, but respecting the rules, they built it on the edge of the open space. Rambhai said that the temple had to be large because "it sees many visitors during the festival period." The size of the temple had to reflect the size of the Sindhi community. It functioned as a unifying hub between the Sindhis in Sadbhavna Nagar and elsewhere, both symbolically

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[121] Rambhai, Hiteshbhai, Girishbhai & Ranveerbhai 160103
[122] Shilpaben 150508

and in practice, as the community frequently gathered in front of it to celebrate religious festivals and family functions. The temple demonstrates how objects are constitutive parts of social relationships (Miller 1987, 122)—it not only makes manifest the presence of the Sindhi community, but it also serves to constitute the community that congregates in front of it.

FIGURE 8.3. Birthday party celebration around the Jhūlelāl temple, December 2015.

In terms of the temple's quasi-legality, bending municipal rules and regulations did not have any consequences. Ultimately, the AMC ignored the disobedience, and a municipal officer even attended the inauguration ceremony of the temple, thereby legitimizing the Sindhi community's right to be visible in the urban space. Many Sindhis in the resettlement site were active supporters of the BJP—the current ruling party in the municipal government, the Gujarat State government, and the central government of India—and had received favors from the local government in exchange for the work that they did during elections. Therefore, it would have been unwise on the part of the authorities to take a hard line in the dispute—the temple issue related to the religious feelings of a community that formed a significant vote bank for the party that advocates the *Hindutva* ideology.

## 8.4 Mosques: Deprived of substantive citizenship

The mosques of Sadbhavna Nagar were much bigger than the temples, since they were designed for men to pray within. The mosques had to include facilities for ritual ablution and a *madrasā* (lit. "place of study"). Children gathered in both mosques each morning to attend *madrasā*, in which they studied the Arabic language and teachings of the Quran under the tutorship of religious leaders (*maulānās* or *mawlānās,* lit. "our Lord"). In fact, Muslim residents justified the construction of mosques by referring to the importance of *madrasās*—the children needed a place to study. Outside of study hours, the mosques were used for praying by the men. Women prayed in the privacy of their homes.

With the permission of a religious leader of one of the *madrasās*, my husband and I could attend a two-and-a-half-hour class (7:30–10 am) in a mosque that mostly served people displaced by the construction of the BRTS network. There were altogether three *maulānās*, all young men, and 20 to 25 children from neighboring blocks in the mosque. Children studied each at their own pace: some practiced the correct pronunciation or the writing of the Arabic alphabet, others just idly stroked their books while listening to the others. Every now and then, a *maulānā* raised his voice to override the children's babble and to correct their spelling mistakes. The oldest *maulānā* told us that the mosque had been constructed three years previously. He lived in a village and only came to Vatva to teach. I inquired how he had ended up teaching in Sadbhavna Nagar, and he told me that he had previously been teaching in a mosque in one of the areas from which the residents had been displaced. With their resettlement, he had shifted to Vatva.

Later, I was told that the mosque had been constructed with funds obtained from an Islamic welfare trust, which had also sponsored school bags for the children. During my stay, it financed the building of facilities for ritual ablutions. Jabirbhai, a rickshaw driver in his 20s, told me about the construction process:

> *Jelena:* Do you need permission from the municipality to build a mosque here or...
>
> *Jabirbhai:* [interrupts] Yes, permission is needed, but the government doesn't give permission for anything. Children studied very far, in Vejalpur crossing, you know? They went to study there. It's very far from here. Many accidents happened in the school van. So that's why we started building a *madrasā* here.[123]

Toward the end of the interview with Jabirbhai, a man approached us. He was a respected person in the area around the mosque. I had a map in my hand, and in a friendly manner he asked me to explain what it was. I told him that I was making a map of the area for my research and showed him the mosque on my map. He thought it was good that I had included the mosque and said I should "give the map to the government." In his view, it would legitimize the

[123] Jabirbhai & Suhairbhai 151221

existence of the mosque and give the community a concrete basis of appeal in case the mosque came under threat of demolition in the future. He told me that the community had wanted to construct a *pakkā* mosque from concrete, but the authorities had not given permission for this. He said that had they built a concrete mosque without permission, government bulldozers would have demolished it right away. Thus, the mosque had been built from corrugated iron (figure 8.4). By dictating the use of materials, the BJP-led municipal authority had denied the Muslim minority's request to build a solid symbol of their presence in the resettlement site while at the same time allowing Sindhis, their political supporters, to do so. A *kaccā* mosque can be easily torn down, whereas a bulldozer is needed to demolish a concrete mosque. Muslim residents were well aware of this fact and expressed their anxieties over possible future demolitions.

FIGURE 8.4. Mosque made of corrugated iron, December 2015. Facilities for ritual ablution were constructed next to the mosque out of concrete.

Residents building the other mosque in Sadbhavna Nagar also faced government opposition, with the municipal authority denying them permission to build. However, the residents refused to comply and continued with the construction of a *pakkā* mosque despite the prohibition. During my stay, men were engaged in finishing the mosque, painting it light green, constructing minarets, and adding a fence. They also installed a loudspeaker on the roof of one of the Muslim-dominated residential blocks so that the prayer call could be heard from a long distance. During religious celebrations, the mosque was decorated with colorful lights and flags. The area in front of the mosque was kept clean, and people frequently spent time in the paved space around it.

Over the course of the fieldwork, I heard rumors from both Hindus and Muslims about government efforts to demolish the mosque, along with another *pakkā* mosque located in VGG Nagar. The rationale behind these efforts was that

the mosques were used to "educate terrorists"—a common discourse in an age of global Islamophobia—but demolition attempts were unsuccessful due to residents' resistance. Omidbhai, who worked as a volunteer in the Sadbhavna Nagar *pakkā* mosque, told me that the municipal corporation could not demolish the mosques because it would lead to a "riot."[124]

Holston and Appadurai (1999) have differentiated between formal citizenship, a legal status that endows members of a political community with certain rights and duties, and substantive citizenship, which refers to actual rights enjoyed by citizens. My analysis indicates that the Muslims of Sadbhavna Nagar were deprived of substantive citizenship, particularly their freedom to practice religion, and their rights to equality before the law irrespective of religion, race, caste, sex, and place of birth, guaranteed by Articles 25 and 14 of the Constitution of India. The Jhulelāl temple was allowed to stand because of paternalistic politics, and a municipal officer even legitimized its presence by attending the inauguration ceremony. The *pakkā* mosque, for its part, was left untouched due to fear of violent resistance, which could have led to the ignition of communal violence in the city. Put briefly, Hindu structures were affirmed and, in some cases, even celebrated, whereas Muslim structures were represented as antinational and were only begrudgingly tolerated. Thus, the differing reactions of municipal officials to the building of places of worship contributed to the construction of good (Hindu) and deviant (Muslim) citizenship.

The unpredictability of the municipal government and the threat of future demolitions had the effect of keeping the Muslim population constantly on its toes. This argues for an understanding of violence not solely as a feature of exceptional moments such as riots but as present in the everyday in the form of its anticipation (Das 2007; Hermez 2012; Jeganathan 2004). The specter of terrorism in the public imagination can be summoned at any moment to curtail the rights of Muslim citizens. Moreover, Muslims' reliance on the help of an Islamic welfare trust when it came to children's education and practicing their religion demonstrates the importance of including non-state actors in the analysis of citizenship (see, e.g., Berenschot 2010; Gordon & Stack 2007; Koster 2015; Trouillot 2003), as Muslims were able to realize some of their substantive citizenship rights due to the latter's involvement.

Ghassem-Fachandi (2012b) has argued that there is a bias in the Ahmedabad municipal authority against Muslim physical structures. Erecting Islamic structures can, therefore, be considered a public "spatial tactic" that challenges the dominant order (de Certeau 1984). At the same time, Muslim residents' persistence in continuing construction of the *pakkā* mosque calls into question the exclusionary definition of nationhood and citizenship circulated by citizens and officials alike. The *pakkā* mosque articulated a claim to be recognized as a Muslim and as an equal citizen of India.

[124] Omidbhai 151121

FIGURE 8.5. The bigger mosque of Sadbhavna Nagar was *pakkāfied* in the course of my fieldwork. The picture above depicts the mosque in May 2015, and the picture below shows the same mosque in November 2016.

## 8.5 Mustafabhai, the good Muslim

One morning in August 2015, a large BJP poster appeared on both sides of the main entrance of Sadbhavna Nagar—the first indication of the upcoming municipal elections. The posters featured photos of Narendra Modi and Anandi Patel at the top, together with the BJP's lotus symbol and a Gujarati text: "Do not litter here, legal action will be taken against anyone caught."[125] Below the

[125] At present, there is no nationwide anti-littering law in place. North Delhi, Goa, and Meghalaya have local laws to penalize littering. In Ahmedabad, however, there were no fines or penalties for littering imposed on private households.

text, there were photos of three local people: Bharat Barot, a BJP Member of the Legislative Assembly (MLA) from the Dariyapur Kazipur constituency; Pradipsinh Jadeja, a BJP MLA from the Vatva constituency; and, lastly, Mustafabhai, identified as an "active member" (*sakriyā sabhyā*). Mustafabhai's surname was not mentioned. The photo of Mustafabhai portrayed a clean-shaven man in his 20s or 30s, dressed in an Indian waistcoat once known as the Nehru jacket. In recent years, however, the Nehru jacket has been appropriated by Narendra Modi and renamed by his followers the "Modi jacket" or "NaMo jacket." The color of the jacket worn by Mustafabhai was sky blue, an uncommon color for a traditional waistcoat, but favored by Modi who has the habit of wearing bright, "candy-colored" jackets (*The Times of India* 2014).

Wearing a Nehru jacket or a "Modi jacket" carries certain political connotations. As designer Ritu Kumar has noted:

> The thing about the Nehru jacket is that it combines the old Eurocentric idea of formal wear—a suit—with Indian needs and tailoring. That makes it perfect for officials or for anyone wishing to make a political or patriotic statement, especially if it is tailored in *khadi* (*The Times of India* 2014).[126]

The fact that a BJP election poster featured a Muslim member of the party wearing a jacket almost identical to that commonly worn by Modi is a smart propaganda tool and a strategy for collecting Muslim votes. Focusing on cleanliness and order, the BJP poster was trying to mobilize the Muslim residents of Sadbhavna Nagar. Muslims whom I interviewed, however, had traditionally voted for the Congress. During the municipal election of 2015, the Congress mostly campaigned in VGG Nagar, a Muslim-dominated resettlement site, whereas the BJP had its election tent in the middle of the Hindu cluster of Sadbhavna Nagar. The poster had been placed next to the main entrance of Sadbhavna Nagar, surrounded by apartment blocks occupied by a religiously mixed group of residents.

More than just an incitement to action, the poster inculcates a certain normative framing of citizenship (see de Koning et al. 2015). While good citizenship had been discursively constructed as "Hindu" citizenship, a Muslim could become a "good Muslim" by conceiving of and managing himself according to certain technologies of subjectivity. "Mustafabhai" can be seen as an example of the BJP's vision of an ideal Indian Muslim: a person who is pro-Modi, global but firmly rooted in India, and who downplays his/her religious identity. The poster was targeted at a segment of the population living in a particular neighborhood, and sought to advance the BJP's model of the political community locally. "Mustafabhai" was someone who Muslims should aspire to become. The framing of citizenship articulated by this poster did not exclude Muslims from the imagined political community but constructed a normative definition of a "good Muslim" under the Hindu nationalist rule.

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[126] Khadi is a handwoven cloth, usually cotton. Khadi was an integral part of India's freedom struggle. Mohandas Gandhi's khadi movement, which began in the 1920s, promoted handloom weaving and the use of Indian cloth, urging people to boycott foreign-made clothes.


FIGURE 8.6. The BJP's poster advances a narrow framing of a "good Muslim" and threatens people with legal action should they litter.

## 8.6 Conclusion

During my fieldwork, xenophobic violence had become routinized in daily life, constantly reminding the Muslim community of their inferior status. The discursive practices of Hindu residents and officials constructed a phantasmagorical "Muslim" associated with dirtiness, immorality, illegality, and a "Pakistani" identity. Deterritorializing place names were so common in the city that even some Muslims had appropriated them for practical reasons. In interviews,

however, Muslims contested the use of the tropes of "Hindustan" and "Pakistan," and the exclusivist vision of the imagined national community inhering in this division. Stressing the use of government-given project names of resettlement neighborhoods, they invoked the secular state guaranteed by the Constitution. Muslims' practices of counter-naming were claims for officials and citizens to respect the principle of secularity, elevating the *abstract state* above the muddy ground of communal politics and sectarian interest that permeated the *everyday state*.

The attitudes of officials toward the religious structures of Hindu Sindhis—political supporters of the BJP—and Muslims revealed a bias in the municipal corporation against Islamic structures. This supports Ghassem-Fachandi's (2012b) arguments about an anti-Muslim bias in the AMC. The AMC's differential treatment of temples and mosques directly violated Muslims' fundamental rights to equality before the law and their freedom to practice religion. Nevertheless, Muslims' persistence in continuing the construction of the *pakkā* mosque challenged the definition of who is entitled to a presence in the urban space of Ahmedabad, where concrete had become a highly politicized material. The concrete mosque also incrementally constructed *de facto* social and cultural rights through a network of neighborly relations and a non-governmental Islamic institution, creating dependencies and solidarities outside the purview of the state. This not only demonstrates that formal and substantive aspects of citizenship (Holston & Appadurai 1999) should be analytically separated but also points to the need to understand citizenship outside the formal system of government (e.g., Gordon & Stack 2007; Koster 2015; Trouillot 2003) by paying attention to the processes of mutual recognition that may or may not involve the state.

While good citizenship in Modified India was associated with Hindu identity, a Muslim could become what I call "good Muslim" by conceiving and managing himself according to certain technologies of subjectivity. Nevertheless, the good Muslim was framed as an exception—under the Hindu nationalist rule, "Muslim" as a category remained the enemy, the Other, and the excluded, irrespective of the conduct of actual Muslims. To sum up, an essential citizenship division emerging from my ethnographic analysis is that of non-Muslim/Muslim citizenship. Muslims were subjects of entrenched discrimination, metaphorically and literally excluded from nationhood and substantive citizenship rights.

# 9 FINAL CONCLUSIONS

This study has examined state representations, state–citizen relations, and nation-building in the context of world-class city making in Ahmedabad, which is Prime Minister Narendra Modi's traditional stronghold and a model city of urban development in India. Methodologically, the study is based on ten months of ethnographic fieldwork in the resettlement site of Sadbhavna Nagar, involving participant observation and 58 semi-structured interviews with displaced people/residents of the site. I have combined these data with analysis of newspaper articles, websites, resettlement-related documents, apartment plans, government brochures, and court proceedings.

The analysis has been structured around three questions: How are the good citizen, the state, and the nation imagineered in the context of worlding Ahmedabad? How do displaced people perceive what the state is, what it does, and what it should do according to their discourses and ways of claim-making? What are the roles of documents and infrastructure in forming displaced people's citizenship?

The theoretical starting point of the study consisted of performative (e.g., Abélès 2017; Aretxaga 2000; Mitchell 1991; Sharma & Gupta 2006; Trouillot 2003) and disaggregated views of the state (e.g., Agarwal 2002; Baruah 2010; Berenschot 2010; Bierschenk & Olivier de Sardan 2014; Gupta 2012; Hansen & Stepputat 2001), and anthropological analyses of actually existing citizenship(s) as they are materialized in the everyday lives of people (e.g., Anand 2017; Das 2011; Holston 2008). Within this theoretical frame, I have approached the state and its subjects as mutually reproduced through infrastructure, discourses, and everyday bureaucracy. My particular emphasis has been on the role of paper documents and concrete infrastructure in state–citizen relations. Bringing Tim Ingold's (2007; 2010; 2011; 2012a; 2012b; 2013; 2017) ecology of materials into a discussion with the anthropology of the state and citizenship, I have analyzed how an everyday reality of differentiated citizenship is formed through the dynamic entanglement of documents, infrastructure, state and non-state actors, and differentially positioned individuals. Approaching citizenship through material artifacts, I have avoided associating it strictly with law and bureaucracy

and demonstrated how objects, and practices concerned with obtaining them, entangle the state in both the formal and the informal spheres. They also give rise to new dependencies outside the purview of the state.

A significant finding of the study is that the everyday reality of citizenship for the displaced people was conditioned by their literacy, economic and political clout, religious and caste identity, personal persistence, embeddedness in informal networks, and possession of documents and resettlement apartments. It was also shaped by state officials' compassion, corruption, mistakes, indifference, and biased attitudes. My study thereby adds to theorizations of the Indian state as an informal entity (Anand 2017; Berenschot 2010; Das 2011; Gupta 2012; U. Rao 2013; A. Roy 2009; D. Roy 2013), showing how state actors' biases and informal/quasi-formal solidarities affected the forming of differentiated citizenship. I argue that worlding Ahmedabad had led to an increasing conflation of good citizenship and Hindu identity. Poor working-class Muslims, in particular, were metaphorically deterritorialized, excised from the imagined national community, and concretely denied a number of substantive citizenship rights.

The main anthropological contribution of the study is its call for *citizenship to be viewed as a dynamic, differential everyday reality formed through the entanglement of human and non-human forces via formal and informal relations.* Citizenship cannot be analyzed apart from the social, cultural, and material contexts within which it is constructed and on which its various forms depend. Emphasizing the intimate entanglement of human and non-human worlds, my approach takes into account the agency of displaced people as well as state and non-state actors, afforded and constrained by paper documents and concrete housing.

## 9.1 Modified India

I have examined how the state seeks to reconstruct itself and to determine the borders of the nation and good citizenship through infrastructural development, the aim of which is to make Ahmedabad a world-class city. This process has been conceptualized as *imagineering,* a combination of engineering and imagining (see also Desai 2012a; Löfgren 2007; Salazar 2010). I have demonstrated that development projects in Ahmedabad sought to imagineer a New India that is green, clean, developed, devoid of poverty, and deeply rooted in upper-caste Hindu values. World-class city making defined good citizenship in terms of *civility*, *cleanliness*, *economic prosperity*, *property ownership*, and *non-Muslim identity* while reconstructing a myth of the state as a unified entity centered on Modi.

I have analyzed Ahmedabad's urban restructuring projects within the framework of worlding (e.g., Ong 2011; A. Roy 2011a), which emphasizes the formation of cities through the intertwining of global and local processes instead of situating them on the continuum of homogenizing neoliberal capitalism. World-class city making in Ahmedabad cannot be sufficiently explained by positing it as a straightforward appropriation of neoliberal logic. Nor were the Sabarmati Riverfront Development Project (SRFDP), the Kankaria Lakefront

Development Project (KLDP), and the Bus Rapid Transit System (BRTS) project merely local initiatives driven by the coalition of the AMC, the Gujarat government, and local elites for the purpose of city branding and profit accumulation. Rather, they were part of a broader political project of national imagineering through global-looking infrastructure. The SRFDP and the BRTS were partly funded by the central government's Jawaharlal Nehru National Urban Renewal Mission (JnNURM) and widely publicized as model projects of India.

Studying place-marketing strategies such as the Vibrant Gujarat events organized in Ahmedabad between 2003 and 2007, Desai (2012a, 53) has argued that the "city is [...] the space where powerful links are made between urban citizenship and exclusionary construction of national and regional identities." My analysis of worlding through development projects supports Desai's point while suggesting that Ahmedabad's city spaces had also become important tools for advancing idealized and heroic images of the incumbent Prime Minister. Development projects analyzed in this study were intimately associated with Narendra Modi and undoubtedly contributed to his ascension to the office of Prime Minister in spring 2014. Since then, Modi has used the Sabarmati Riverfront as a platform for political addresses and for hosting international leaders. In his speech inaugurating the Sabarmati Riverfront, Modi emphasized its importance for the whole of "Hindustan." All these factors speak for the importance of Ahmedabad's developed urban spaces not just for the city and the Gujarat State, but also for Indian statecraft and nation-building. The world-class spaces, global in their appearance, have also been harnessed to promote the personality cult of Modi, as exemplified in the built environment of Kankaria Lake and the BRTS stations. I suggest that the worlding of Ahmedabad had practical and symbolic importance for the city itself, for the Gujarat State, for the nation-state, and for Modi personally. The developed spaces addressed people as urban residents, as Gujaratis, as citizens of India, and as Modi's supporters.

Worlding is part of the Hindu nationalist project, which is itself reimagineered via global visual language. The conflation of the world-class aesthetic and an exclusivist vision of India as a Hindu nation was especially pronounced in the developed spaces and promotional materials of the Sabarmati Riverfront and the Kankaria Lakefront. Through public discourse and governing practices that excluded the poor, the projects imagineered an ideal, world-class citizen entitled to participate in the national future materialized by the developed spaces (cf. Ghertner 2015). A Muslim presence was framed as a threat and an intrusion of otherness. World-class city making, presented as a neutral development initiative for the greater good of the nation, was thoroughly infused with Hindu nationalist and anti-poor attitudes (cf. Desai 2012a).

Muslims' belonging to the city and the nation was also questioned in the resettlement sites through the discursive deterritorialization of Muslim living spaces as "Pakistan" by urban residents and officials, the biased regulation of Islamic sacred spaces by the local government, and Hindu residents' portrayals of Muslims as violent, dangerous, immoral, and dirty. Both citizens and author-

ities were involved in discursive practices of othering and deterritorializing Muslims from the imagined national community, defining nationhood by non-Muslim identity.

My study has offered an ethnography of world-class city making under the hegemony of Hindu nationalism. I have shown that aesthetic norms entangle with Hindu nationalist ideas. With Modi's ascent to Prime Minister, the social worth of people has, indeed, become linked to their ability to pay for property, as Ghertner (2015, 198) has speculated in his insightful study on world-class city making in millennial Delhi. Those unable to buy or rent property in the official market have been violently displaced from central spaces. However, my results indicate that people's social worth was also increasingly linked to their religious identification, with Muslims framed as outsiders in the political community of good citizens in Modi's India.

To summarize, my study has contributed to the discussion on worlding (e.g., Ghertner 2015; Ong 2011; A. Roy 2011a; A. Roy 2011b) by showing how world-class city making, promoting the global recognition of Ahmedabad as a destination of tourism and investment, was equally turned inward to advance a narrow, divisive nationalism and Modi's personality cult through global-looking infrastructure.

## 9.2 Ambivalent state imaginaries

Tracing displaced people's implicit assumptions about the nature of the state by focusing on their metaphors, stories, discourses, and ways of making claims on the state, I have identified *state imaginaries*—a notion adopted from Brissette (2016)—that reflect and inscribe different subject positions. First, I have identified a dual ontological imaginary of the state as an *abstract entity* that exceeds its momentary representations, and as an *everyday state* that consists of appointed bureaucrats and elected politicians (see also Hansen 2001; Kantorowicz 1957; Lefort 1988). The abstract state was associated with citizenship as a neutral legal status, national identity, and participation in politics, divorced from group-based identities that conditioned people's access to substantive citizenship rights on the ground. The everyday state, in contrast, was a messy aggregate of bureaucrats and politicians temporarily occupying the "state-idea" (Abrams 1998). This state was the potential provider of substantive citizenship rights in practice and a target of frequent claim-making. Displaced people engaged with the everyday state in order to receive basic services like water supply and garbage collection, to ensure participation in politics, and to procure documents such as voter ID cards, payment slips, and house allotment letters that were needed to construct legal citizenship and to prove one's right to substantive services.

Second, I have traced people's ambivalent ideas of what the state *does*. I define these as *the state that throws away the poor* and *the state that represents the national interest*. In the aftermath of development-induced displacement, my

informants imagined the state as a unified, violent force that haphazardly "cuts" them down and "throws [them] away" into the "jungle," excluding them from the world-class city. This imaginary conditioned their subjectivities as victims of *sarkār* ("government"), and especially of Modi, whom they associated with world-class city making. They felt betrayed by both. This feeling was strengthened by the inferior quality of resettlement housing and infrastructure, crime and fighting in the resettlement site, and the policy of allotting resettlement apartments on the basis of a random drawing of lots that had torn apart both extended families and established communities. Inflated promises of a world-class future and the material reality of the urban margins clashed violently. Modi was blamed for marginalization, unemployment, health problems, inferior infrastructure, and social disarticulation in the resettlement site.

Modi had succeeded in placing himself firmly at the center of the BJP-led state, both in practice, as evidenced by the authoritative demonetization policy pushed through by Modi's small inside circle, and in the public imagination of citizens, including my informants. He not only embodied the future of the nation, he was also represented as an almost mythical hero who could bring about this future for all. The ideas of the state and the nation had been effectively Modified. Therefore, resistance to displacement was framed as a display of antinational sentiments, an undermining of Modi and the Indian nation, instead of being read as a critique of state policy. In the public discourse, consenting to world-class city making was presented as a citizenship duty akin to chanting the *Bhārat mātā kī jay* ("Victory to Mother India"), widely used by Hindu nationalist forces. Hence, many of my informants, especially Hindus, had come to accept displacement as a necessary process. By praising the world-class waterfronts, people expressed their loyalty to the incumbent Prime Minister and the development of the nation-state. Resettled people were not against the world-class city concept—on the contrary, they wanted to be included in it and the New India it represented and brought into being. On the one hand, then, they were complicit citizens of the Modified state in worlding India through the urban space of Ahmedabad; on the other, they were its unfortunate victims, the "discarded" and "thrown away." I identify two contradictory processes in the context of worlding Ahmedabad: one whereby Modi has become a sublime figure and a symbol of the nation, and another whereby Modi is recognized as a fallible politician, gradually stripped of mythical disguises and divorced from the abstract state.

Victimhood should not be equated with a lack of agency, however. Resettled people made claims on the state based on what they thought was right, just, and fair, whether demanding a transfer to another resettlement site or refusing to pay for the resettlement apartments and demanding "a house for a house." In doing this, they constructed themselves as subjects with rights, urging the state, as an actually existing aggregate of people and institutions, to respect higher forms of justice non-reducible to particular institutions. According to my informants, the state should have allotted resettlement apartments on a community basis, not through drawing lots. In their view, mixed resettlement in a distant

locality was not just. These discourses and practices reflect my informants' perceptions of an abstract state associated with the values of justice, equality, and fairness. The imaginary of the sublime, abstract state structured their expectations of what the Modi-led state *should do*, demonstrating how their political subjectivity as rights-bearing citizens had been shaped by the experiences of displacement and resettlement. Further studies can shed light on whether and how the state will exercise its power in the future; for example, the municipal corporation had reserved the right to evict residents if they break the rules and regulations, and if they do not pay the required sum of 67,860 rupees in the course of ten years.

The idea of the state as an abstract entity was also mobilized by Muslims in an effort to correct biased discursive practices on the part of Hindu neighbors and low-level state officials. Muslims of Sadbhavna Nagar contested the use of the deterritorializing tropes of "Hindustan" and "Pakistan" adopted by citizens and state officials alike, and the exclusivist vision of the imagined national community expressed by this division. Stressing the use of the government-given project names of resettlement neighborhoods—"Vatva 1" and "Vatva 2"—Muslims of Sadbhavna Nagar invoked ideas of equality and justice. For them, the abstract state represented a unifying force behind religious identities and sectarian interests. Borrowing the words of Hansen (2001, 224), it was "an organizing concept through which people […] imagine the cohesion of their own society, its order and its institutions." Invoking the secularity of the state-idea was a viable strategy in a situation where most municipal, state, and central government offices were occupied by people sympathetic to the Hindu nationalist cause.

My informants' views on "ethnographic documents," such as interview questionnaires and information sheets, were what initially led me to realize the effects of state bureaucracy in their lives and directed me to focus my attention on documents, in particular. Residents of Sadbhavna Nagar called my ethnographic documents "*forms*," associating my study with government surveys. In their minds, forms were intimately linked with state violence, on the one hand, as people's houses had been "surveyed" before demolitions, and with state welfare, on the other, as people could access social benefits by participating in acts of form filling. My writing, then, was seen both as a threat and an opportunity, underlining the arbitrary and unpredictable nature of the everyday state in the lives of the displaced. Individual officials' compassion, corruption, mistakes, and indifference, along with informal solidarities and biased attitudes, affected the results of displaced people's engagements with the everyday state; however, the disaggregated nature of the state also enabled the manipulation of its policies. Often, people employed document middlemen in negotiating with the state; many had personal connections to politicians and officials, whether through family, friendship, or clientelist relations. Engaging intermediaries was an effort to steer and harness the state's unpredictability and informality to one's own benefit.

To sum up, state politics and informal networks were deeply intertwined, especially at the municipal level, constituting both a threat and an opportunity for my informants who were positioned differentially in social relations of power. Hindus were more beneficially positioned than Muslims to bargain with the everyday state, considering that the local government was permeated by Hindu nationalist attitudes. In this respect, my results challenge Gupta's (2012) arguments about the arbitrariness of state bureaucracy—as I have shown, in Ahmedabad, different Hindu and Muslim citizenships were also produced intentionally and systematically.

## 9.3 Infrastructure, documents, and differentiated citizenship

According to Chatterjee, the politics of the urban poor cannot be understood in terms of citizenship, as it takes place within the domain of the so-called "political society," an informal space of negotiations between the underprivileged and governmental agencies seeking popular legitimacy (P. Chatterjee 2004, 39–40). In Chatterjee's (2004) view, most inhabitants of India are not regarded as rights-bearing citizens by state institutions. Instead, they are governed populations that are only able to access certain benefits and services through informal means, such as by using illegal electricity connections or negotiating a water supply in exchange for their votes.

I have approached the field of citizenship from a different perspective that differs from universalist liberal accounts and conventional divisions between (formal) state politics and (informal) everyday life. Much like Nielsen's (2014), my analysis has challenged Chatterjee's dichotomous understanding of citizens and governed populations by showing how the everyday reality and experience of citizenship emerges out of messy entanglements between state and non-state actors, subjects, practices, and materials. I have shown that resettled people claimed, exercised, and constructed their citizenship rights through courts (sections 4.1–4.2), voting (section 7.1), staying put (section 7.3), building (sections 6.3–6.4, 7.3, and 8.3–8.4), and engaging documents (sections 7.1–7.4). These practices involved varying combinations of middlemen, community workers, local leaders, criminals, state bureaucrats, politicians, and non-governmental organizations, and cannot be categorized as either "formal" or "informal" in a straightforward way. I agree with Berenschot and van Klinken (2018, 107) who posit that "instead of being antithetical to citizenship, the reliance on personal connections to deal with state institutions should be seen as a constitutive dimension of citizenship" since the state itself is informal. Furthermore, my informants also articulated national citizenship by praising Modi and Ahmedabad's developed world-class spaces (section 5.2), and demonstrated a certain kind of rights-bearing political subjectivity by mobilizing languages of justice and equality (sections 5.5 and 8.1).

Like Metsola (2015) and Hammar (2013), I have emphasized the importance of *mutual recognition* in the constitution of citizenship and the state.

Unlike Chatterjee, then, I did not start my analysis from the conception of a pre-existing modern state that governs people as either citizens or populations but, rather, analyzed how public authority and state legitimacy—not just citizenship—are constituted through claims and their recognition (cf. Abélès 2017, 59). I have paid particular attention to the role of infrastructure, documents, and practices involved in obtaining both, in the mutual constitution of the state and citizenship. The section that follows summarizes my findings.

*Infrastructure*

Concrete played an essential role in worlding Ahmedabad. On the one hand, concrete resettlement housing was a technology of subject-making through which the state sought to transform ungovernable "slum-dwellers" into a governable population of "urban poor." On the other, the state used resettlement housing and waterfront infrastructure to manifest and construct its legitimacy as a guarantor of national development. The material "afforded" (J. Gibson 1979) the state the potential to imagineer itself, the nation, and the residents due to the historically established knowledge of concrete as a relatively strong, durable, and low-maintenance material suitable for modernization projects (see Ingold 2011). For the state, concrete was both a symbol and a tool of transformation, a material through which and with which development was pursued. Mobilized in the service of world-class city making, this affordance of concrete was further reproduced.

The socio-material environment of the resettlement site structured people's perceptions of their relationship to the state. Residents used the metaphor of "jail" to describe the four-story *pakkā* ("permanent") housing that restricted their livelihoods and ways of life. Soon after resettlement, they began modifying the standardized material environment in an effort to represent and reconstruct caste and religious identities, and enable certain livelihood practices. By hacking off terrace walls, constructing stairs, painting and decorating apartments, extending kitchens and private gardens into the common space, and using apartments as animal shelters, shops, and storage rooms against municipal regulations, people robbed the housing of its standardizing power. The generative potential of concrete enabled these modifications, undermining state efforts to freeze the life of concrete in the form of orderly apartment blocks. Residents' modifications challenged state-imposed order because of the symbolic power given to concrete structures in the framework of national development, even though these modifications were not articulated through a language of resistance. By materially modifying concrete housing, people came to modify its symbolic meanings in ways that were undesirable from the perspective of the state.

Concrete housing and other elements of on-site infrastructure were also modified through practices that entangled formal and informal relations. During elections, residents negotiated with local politicians and bureaucrats in an effort to obtain infrastructural improvements for their caste, religion, or block-based communities in return for political support. Patron–client generated in-

frastructure, such as sewage walls and water connections, manifested how residents' substantive citizenship was constructed incrementally and how politicians made deals with certain groups in order to stay in power and engender legitimacy in the gray area between formality and informality, state and society (cf. Anand 2017; Berenschot 2015). Infrastructure also reproduced patron–client bonds, encouraging further interaction between residents and politicians.

People's religious identities and their classification as either Muslim or non-Muslim affected their access to infrastructure. Since Hindu nationalist attitudes permeated the everyday state, it was easier for my Hindu informants to negotiate access to services with the officials. Differentiated citizenship was reflected in the built environment and reconstructed through it: open spaces in the Muslim-dominated part were filled with garbage, there were less government-provided water taps, and fewer streetlights (many of those that were did not function). More than Hindus, Muslims had to rely on their social networks to access basic services.

Concrete had become a highly politicized material in the resettlement site due to its apparent "permanence." Municipal officials' differential attitudes toward the concrete religious structures of Hindu Sindhis and Muslims revealed a bias in the BJP-led municipal corporation against Islamic structures (cf. Ghassem-Fachandi 2012b). Nevertheless, Muslims persisted in the construction of a big *pakkā* mosque, defying municipal regulations that only allowed the building of a *kaccā* ("temporary") structure made of corrugated iron and other less durable materials. Muslims' *pakkāfying* (see de Maat 2015, 109) of their mosque challenged the definition of who was entitled to a presence in the urban space of Ahmedabad, and incrementally constructed *de facto* social and cultural rights through a network of neighborly relations and the assistance of a non-governmental Islamic institution. Using concrete, Muslim residents strived to carve themselves a "permanent" place in the urban space and in the national imagination.

The municipal authority expected residents to take over the maintenance of resettlement housing; however, due to their social disarticulation, it was difficult for residents to organize themselves and work together. The residents also felt that the AMC neglected its responsibilities in providing basic services, especially waste collection. Due to the lack of maintenance, the built environment of the site had started to decay, mediating the feeling of second-class citizenship. Because of the material decay and the poor functioning of the water supply and waste management, people questioned local officials' and politicians' commitment to the values of justice, equality, and development for all. My informants interpreted the decay of the material environment as a reflection of state indifference to their welfare. Conversely, according to low-level state officials, the condition of the material environment was evidence that the residents were incapable of leading civilized lives; it was thought that the residents should take over the maintenance work without help from the state. The media were also attentive to the degradation of the infrastructure in Ahmedabad's resettlement sites. Infrastructure and its decay became a language through which fundamen-

tal questions concerning rights, responsibilities, justice, and moral accountability in state–citizen relations were articulated and negotiated.

*Documents*

Documents were a central concern in the lives of my informants. Their legal citizenship status and their access to propertied citizenship through the process of resettlement depended on their possession of identification documents made from paper. Those who possessed government-recognized ID such as a ration card or a voter ID card could prove their eligibility for resettlement and had therefore been more likely to receive a resettlement apartment. Resettled people sought to solidify their documented and propertied citizenship by laminating, copying, storing, and displaying their ID cards, house allotment letters, and other valuable papers. By extending the life spans of these brittle paper documents, residents strengthened their bonds with the state.

Every once in a while, state authorities conducted random inspections of house allotment letters in the resettlement sites to see if residents had sold or sublet their apartments in violation of municipal regulations. My informants called these inspections *checkings* (in English). The procedure of checking legitimized the political authority of the state to subject people to random inspection and defined resettled people as state subjects who had to be prepared to prove their right to dwell. Through document checkings, the state recognized resettled people's propertied citizenship while the residents' consent to being checked affirmed the legitimacy of the state. Regular inspections also maintained the power of house allotment letters to mediate propertied citizenship.

Not only citizenship but also life itself was tied to documents. Many displaced people claimed to have lost their papers due to the annual flooding of the River Sabarmati. Others possessed documents with their names spelled incorrectly. Without approved ID, one was doomed to indefinite waiting in the "interim site" of Ganeshnagar next to the city's garbage dump, or to squatting or living as a tenant in resettlement sites or elsewhere in the city. From the perspective of the state, people without documents were less-than-citizens; some public services were provided for them in Ganeshnagar, but they were of inferior quality, resulting in severe health problems and even deaths.

Undocumented citizens in Ganeshnagar could not rely on the agency of identification documents to construct themselves as deserving and eligible for resettlement. Nevertheless, many felt that their persistent embodied presence in Ganeshnagar contributed to the possibility of their attaining their dream of propertied citizenship. Yet, while some squatted on the site in *kaccā* huts in the hopes of someday receiving a resettlement apartment, others spent their time building *pakkā* housing out of concrete and transforming the "interim site" into a viable neighborhood. The practice of staying put (cf. Ferguson 2006; Ferguson 2015; Holston 2008; Makhulu 2012; Makhulu 2015)—conceptualized as the *politics of settling*—provided the basis for incremental citizenship claims that consisted of petitions sent to officials and different levels of the state, and of engagements with opposition politicians and housing-rights NGOs. Through

these engagements, residents of Ganeshnagar succeeded in gaining some substantive benefits.

While identification documents afforded people the opportunity to make claims on the state, possession of them did not always result in becoming propertied. Bureaucratic mistakes, absence from home at the time of slum surveys, the lack of clarity concerning accepted documents, the shifting cut-off dates for eligibility, the vague policy of a "house for a house," and state officials' corruption had left even some documented citizens without resettlement apartments. For instance, in the case of extended families occupying a single house, only one small resettlement unit had been allotted to them, leaving some members of the family without shelter. These people saw themselves as deserving of a resettlement home since they possessed all the paperwork required to prove their eligibility; in their efforts to negotiate resettlement homes, they sent complaints and petitions to state officials with attached copies of these documents. In other words, people appealed to the agency of state-approved documents to mediate their right to propertied citizenship.

People's access to formal and substantive citizenship depended on their possession of documents and resettlement apartments, on the one hand, and individual officers' discretionary recognition of their eligibility for certain rights and services, on the other. In order to influence government decisions in their favor, people often employed document middlemen who had clientelist or family relations to officials. Through these mediators, people sought to take advantage of the state's informality, uncertainty, and indeterminacy. The state, I have argued, was a political space, open to negotiation (cf. Pinker & Harvey 2018).

My study has focused on paper documents as constituent materials of citizenship. I could not, however, examine whether and how illegal acts of buying and renting resettlement apartments were documented. This represents a gap in the research data. Moreover, my work has been exclusively focused on paper documents—a tendency for which Hull (2012) has criticized anthropologists. In recent years, the Indian government has been encouraging citizens to obtain a biometric Aadhar card. My informants had not yet enrolled for Aadhar at the time of my fieldwork. Whether and how Aadhar reconfigures state–citizen relations in the future would be a timely subject for further research.

I have adopted the perspective of people displaced by three major urban development projects, examining their understandings and ideas about the state and its everyday workings. However, the perspective of state officials has been largely absent from my work. Although I talked to police officers, municipal officials, and politicians in the course of my fieldwork, I did not systematically interview them nor did I investigate bureaucratic administration ethnographically. The constraints and opportunities of politicians' and bureaucrats' work were outside the scope of the present study. Ethnographic research sensitive to the lived realities of state actors would be a fruitful and important avenue for further research, as it would present "the other side of the story."

Further research could also be carried out on the use of ethnographic documents. As I have shown in section 7.5, documents used by ethnographers can create mental associations regarding governance practices of the state, especially in places like India where the rule of the form prevails. By paying attention to the aesthetics of ethnographic documents and people's attitudes toward them, anthropologists can gain a deeper understanding of people's relationships to the state and state-like institutions of authority. Researchers can also avoid unwanted associations with control and regulation in their ethnographic fieldwork by refraining from the use of documents that resemble government surveys aesthetically or practically. The aesthetics and use of ethnographic documents open up exciting channels for methodological experimentations in diverse ethnographic contexts.

## 9.4 Toward inclusive housing

Drafting policy recommendations is not the primary objective of this study. Nevertheless, I feel that it is my responsibility to the residents of Sadbhavna Nagar to offer some suggestions. Some of the following recommendations are representations of my informants' wishes on how to develop the site; others are my suggestions based on ethnographic observations.

It is a generally accepted fact in development policy that the participation of people in the planning and implementation of resettlement projects is crucial if they are to be democratic and successful. Participation was neglected in the case of Ahmedabad's three development projects, which were imposed from above. As I have shown, this negligence had resulted in feelings of alienation and state betrayal among resettled people. Given the current circumstances, I wish to offer suggestions for mitigating communal violence, health problems, gendered crime, and the sense of alienation in the resettlement site of Sadbhavna Nagar.

When disparate people have been lumped together, it is difficult for them to begin developing the spaces around them collectively—especially when regulations govern the modification of the built environment. Unconnected to their surroundings and still recovering from the loss of their homes, residents of Sadbhavna Nagar did not spare much thought to maintaining cleanliness or establishing meaningful relations with their new neighbors. Social disarticulation and the stigma of being considered slum-dwellers, combined with rampant violence, corruption, and the municipal corporation's indifference toward the maintenance of housing infrastructure and garbage collection, had led to a situation in which the resettlement site had started to decay. It had become an unhygienic, violent, and alienating living environment that further impoverished its residents, meanwhile representing and structuring the character of state–citizen relations.

Recognizing the importance of people's socio-cultural life is essential. I regard residents' modifications of the built environment as clues to developing

the site; illicitly built mosques and temples, in particular, helped people to cope and come together as communities in a difficult situation. Hindu and Muslim communities reconstructed themselves through these structures, as shown in sections 8.3 and 8.4.

Religious buildings also contributed to cleanliness. Walking around in the resettlement area, I soon noticed that open spaces containing religious buildings were much cleaner than those that did not. While hygiene may not have been the primary motivation for building mosques or temples, it was certainly a much-appreciated consequence. In fact, one of my interviewees said that it would be good if temples were built in all the open spaces so that the resettlement site would remain clean. Religious structures affected people's behavior, making them more connected to their surroundings and, therefore, unwilling to litter. Providing that the AMC allows these buildings to stay, they can play an important role in facilitating social communication and maintaining cleanliness, and also in improving people's attitudes toward the state. During my fieldwork, I could already see some signs of meaningful cultural routines centered on temples and mosques.

The built environment of the resettlement site did not suit people's livelihood practices. There were no parking spaces for rickshaws and vending carts, nor were there any designated storage or commercial spaces. Some residents worked as collectors of cardboard, newspaper, and plastic items, and without proper facilities, they stored these items in the corridors of residential buildings. Goats and chickens were also kept inside apartments due to the lack of animal shelters. People were afraid of thieves and did not dare to leave their animals outside in the open for the night. Public spaces were also unsafe and frightening places at night because of broken streetlights, while the Muslim-dominated part of the resettlement site scarcely had any to start with. Constructing proper facilities according to people's needs would improve their livelihoods, sense of safety, and the level of hygiene. Since the open spaces are empty, there is plenty of room for constructing additional livelihood facilities.

Residents wanted the open spaces to be paved so that they could arrange wedding parties and other important family events. In addition to paving them, they suggested planting trees, installing benches, and constructing playing areas for children. Both adults and children could meet each other daily in these spaces, increasing the sense of community and the status of the neighborhood in the eyes of residents and outsiders. At the time of my fieldwork, the open spaces did not have cues to guide potential activities that could take place within them—they were just vacant areas devoid of meaning. Some of them had turned into garbage dumps, further increasing people's sense of alienation and the feeling of second-class citizenship.

Infrastructural improvement alone, however, is not enough; it needs to be combined with effective police services and community-building initiatives. In my view, revitalizing the Resident Welfare Associations (RWAs) would be an essential next step. However, I am not convinced that establishing large associations on the basis of a shared water tank is sufficient. The RWAs could be com-

plemented by smaller, block-based housing cooperatives. Each housing cooperative could then nominate one board member to the RWAs, which would only be responsible for matters concerning the water supply. The housing cooperatives, for their part, would take care of block-based issues like repairing sewer pipes, purchasing corridor lights, cleaning common spaces, hiring a security guard, and so on. In fact, in some blocks, people had already started to take care of these issues collectively by gathering a small sum of money from each household to buy corridor lights, or by constructing a separate water tap for the use of residents of a single block. The AMC's commitment to garbage collection and an active stance in mobilizing residents to establish similar housing cooperatives and RWAs could contribute positively toward building trust between residents and the municipal authority. Many residents wanted to develop their neighborhood, as I showed in section 7.5, but due to their social disarticulation and feelings of having been abandoned by the state, the AMC should take a more proactive approach to maintenance instead of devolving the responsibility upon the residents. A policy brief prepared by the Center for Urban Equity has likewise suggested nurturing collective bonds as an essential step toward community governance of services (Mahadevia et al. 2016b).

Importantly, housing cooperatives could also work for the state's benefit: house payment installments could be collected with their help, as many people had outright refused to pay installments or were very reluctant to pay. Development of open spaces in consultation with the housing cooperatives, and the issuance of electricity bills and property tax bills in residents' names, could change their attitudes toward payments and thus facilitate people in gaining *de jure* ownership of the apartments. With improved hygiene, safety and infrastructure, the value of the resettlement apartments would increase. Most importantly, residents' involvement in developing the resettlement site would contribute to their sense of ownership and responsibility for their living environment, transforming it from a prisonlike place of exclusion and alienation to a meaningful home that would foster a sense of self-worth and inclusion in the city. This requires recognizing the urban poor as valuable human beings and equal citizens who have the right to participate in, and belong to, the national community.

# SUMMARY IN FINNISH

Tarkastelen väitöskirjassani valtion ja kansalaisten välisiä suhteita laajamittaisen kaupunkiuudistuksen kontekstissa Ahmedabadissa, länsi-intialaisen Gujaratin osavaltion suurimmassa kaupungissa. 2000-luvun alusta lähtien Ahmedabadissa on toimeenpantu lukuisia kehitysprojekteja, joilla tähdätään sijoitusten houkuttelemiseen, kaupungin imagon kohentamiseen ja ylempien luokkien elämänlaadun parantamiseen. Tavoitteena on tehdä Ahmedabadista Pariisin ja Lontoon kaltainen ”maailmanluokan kaupunki”. Köyhyys ja slummit eivät kuitenkaan sovi vallitsevaan kaupunki-ihanteeseen. Niinpä kehityksen varjopuolena ovat köyhän kaupunkiväestön pakkosiirrot slummeista kaupunkien laidoille rakennettuihin kerrostalolähiöihin. Väitöskirjassani analysoin, kuinka pakkosiirretyt ja uudelleenasutetut entiset slummiasukkaat kokevat valtion ja kuinka he neuvottelevat oikeuksiaan ja kuulumistaan poliittiseen yhteisöön slummivapaaksi maailmanluokan kaupungiksi pyrkivässä Ahmedabadissa hindunationalismin kyllästämässä poliittisessa ilmapiirissä.

Tutkimuksen teoreettinen viitekehys muodostuu kansalaisuuden, byrokratian ja valtion antropologiasta, joka korostaa poliittisen vallan ja kansalaisuuden prosessuaalista ja performatiivista luonnetta sekä valtion sisäistä jakautuneisuutta. Valtio on sekä ideologinen ilmiö että virkamiesten, poliitikkojen, instituutioiden ja eri hallinnon tasojen muodostama konkreettinen järjestelmä. Valtion legitimiteetti vallankäyttäjänä muodostuu paitsi erilaisten symbolien ja performanssien kuten lippujen, paraatien, arkkitehtuurin ja vallanpitäjien puheiden kautta, myös kansalaisten suorittamissa arkipäiväisissä käytännöissä. Äänestäminen, veronmaksu, julkinen vesi- ja jätehuolto, erilaisten hakemusten täyttö ja virastoissa jonottaminen muovaavat ihmisten mielikuvia valtiosta ja heidän omasta asemastaan poliittisen yhteisön jäseninä. Infrastruktuurin ja virallisten dokumenttien kautta kansalaiset kohtaavat valtion ja oman suhteensa siihen kouriintuntuvalla, ruumiillisella tavalla; esimerkiksi puutteellinen jätehuolto voi synnyttää kokemuksen toisen luokan kansalaisuudesta ja välinpitämättömästä valtiosta.

Kansalaisuuden analyysissä sovellan jaottelua muodollisen ja todellisen kansalaisuuden välillä. Muodollinen kansalaisuus viittaa kansalaisen lailliseen statukseen; todellinen kansalaisuus puolestaan muodostuu yksilön mahdollisuuksista harjoittaa kansalaisoikeuksiaan käytännössä laillisesta statuksesta riippumatta. Käsitteellä *erilaistunut kansalaisuus* viittaan muodollisesti tasaarvoisten kansalaisten erilaiseen kohteluun uskonnon, kastin, luokka-aseman, sukupuolen ja muiden sosiaalisten statusten ja identiteettien perusteella. Kansalaisuuteen liittyy erilaisia normatiivisia jäsennyksiä, kansakunnan malleja ja hyvän kansalaisen ihanteita, jotka vaikuttavat ihmisen mahdollisuuksiin päästä sekä muodollisen että todellisen kansalaisuuden piiriin. Toisin sanoen nämä jäsennykset ja ihanteet ohjaavat päätöksentekoa ja yksittäisten viranomaisten toimintaa tuottaen erilaistunutta kansalaisuutta.

Tutkimukseni vastaa seuraaviin kysymyksiin: Miten hyvää kansalaisuutta, valtiota ja kansakunnan rajoja rakennetaan maailmanluokan kaupungin luomisen kontekstissa? Kuinka pakkosiirretyt ihmiset käsittävät sen, mitä valtio on, mitä se tekee ja mitä sen pitäisi tehdä? Millaiset ovat dokumenttien ja infrastruktuurien roolit pakkosiirrettyjen ihmisten kansalaisuuden muotoutumisessa?

Tutkimus perustuu kymmenen kuukauden mittaiseen etnografiseen kenttätyöhön Sadbhavna Nagar (”Hyväntoivon kaupunki”) -nimisellä uudelleenasutusalueella vuosina 2015–2016. Asukkaat pakkosiirrettiin alueelle aikavälillä 2010–2012 kolmen kaupunkikehitysprojektin alla: Sabarmati Riverfront Development Project (SRFDP), Kankaria Lakefront Development Project (KLDP) ja Bus Rapid Transit System (BRTS). Suurin osa asunnoista jaettiin arpomalla. Alueen asukkaat olivat uskonnoltaan muslimeja ja eri kasteihin kuuluvia hinduja (mm. Bhoi, Chaudhri, Devipujak, Gawaria, Rabari, Sindhi, Thakor, Vaghri). He työskentelivät muun muassa rikšakuskeina, kukkamyyjinä, pankkiautomaattien vartijoina, vaate- ja kangaskauppiaina, rakennustyöläisinä, kotiapulaisina sekä vihannesten, hedelmien ja kalan myyjinä. Tutkimusmetodeina käytän osallistuvaa havainnointia ja pakkosiirrettyjen ihmisten haastatteluita. Kenttätyön aikana tein yhteensä 58 puolistrukturoitua haastattelua, joista 57 toteutettiin hindin ja yksi englannin kielellä. Hindi oli haastateltujen ihmisten äidinkieli tai toinen kieli. Lisäksi hyödynnän aineistona esitteitä, verkkosivuja, sanomalehtiartikkeleita, oikeusasiakirjoja ja uudelleenasutusasuntojen pohjapiirroksia.

**Kansalaisuuden, kansakunnan ja valtion rakentaminen**

Maailmanluokan kaupungin luominen Ahmedabadissa oli valjastettu hindunationalistisen agendan ja pääministeri Narendra Modin henkilökultin palvelukseen. Kaupunkikehityshankkeisiin liittyvät uudet julkiset tilat, diskurssit ja käytännöt vahvistivat normatiivisia jäsennyksiä, joiden mukaan Intian kansakunta on hindujen kansakunta ja Modi kansan tahdon ruumiillistuma. Tilojen markkinointi ja rakennettu ympäristö vähättelivät muslimien vaikutusta ja läsnäoloa Intian historiassa. Mikrotasolla muslimien ulossulkeminen kansakunnan kuvitellusta yhteisöstä ilmeni esimerkiksi moskeijoiden ja temppeleiden erilaisena kohteluna, huhuina muslimien väkivaltaisuudesta, terrorismikytköksistä ja hindunaisiin kohdistuvasta seksuaalisesta häirinnästä, sekä ”Pakistan”-termin käyttönä muslimivaltaisista asuinalueista puhuttaessa. Muslimivihamieliset asenteet olivat yleisiä sekä viranomaisten että Sadbhavna Nagarin hinduasukkaiden keskuudessa.

Uudet kaupunkitilat olivat tärkeitä paitsi kaupungin, osavaltion ja Modin imagolle, myös koko Intiaa koskevien mielikuvien edistämiselle. Sabarmati Riverfrontista oli SRFDP:n myötä tullut yksi Intian tärkeimmistä valtiovieraiden vastaanottamisen paikoista. Uuden urbaanin ympäristön suorat linjat ja betonipinnat ammensivat modernin arkkitehtuurin esteettisistä ihanteista: pelkistäminen, muodon yksinkertaistaminen, käytännöllisyys ja hygienia loivat mielikuvaa tulevaisuuteen suuntautuneesta modernista Intiasta. Samalla ne uusinsi-

vat normatiivista, mutta neutraalina esitettyä kehitysmallia, jonka mukaan ”kehitys” on yhtä kuin modernisaatio. Maailmanluokan kaupunkitilat olivat kehittyneen Uuden Intian työkaluja ja symboleja.

Maailmanluokan kaupungin kontekstissa hyvä kansalaisuus liitettiin sivistykseen ja taloudelliseen menestykseen, puhtauteen ja hygieniaan, omistusasumiseen ja hindu-identiteettiin. Uudet kaupunkitilat kutsuivat ihmisiä asettumaan ”maailmanluokan kansalaisen” positioon – ne sekä heijastivat tulevaisuutta että ohjasivat nykyisyyttä haluttua tulevaisuutta kohti. Slummien tuhoamisen, pakkosiirtojen, katukauppiaiden ulossulkemisen, julkisten tilojen sisäänpääsymaksujen, vartijoiden harkintavallan ja syrjivien ajoneuvorajoitusten kautta osa ihmisistä määriteltiin epätoivotuiksi kansalaisiksi. Tullakseen hyviksi maailmanluokan kansalaisiksi heidän tuli muuttaa itseään normatiivisen ihanteen mukaisiksi.

## Ambivalentti valtio

Pakkosiirretyt ihmiset yhdistivät maailmanluokan kaupungin luomisen joko kasvottomaan valtioon tai pääministeri Narendra Modin persoonaan. Yhtäältä he tunsivat tulleensa valtion ja erityisesti Modin pettämiksi, sillä heidät oli suljettu ulos kehityksestä. Haastateltavien mukaan uudelleenasutus oli hankaloittanut heidän elämäänsä: alkoholismi, huumeidenkäyttö, työttömyys, koulupudokkuus, väkivalta ja terveysongelmat olivat lisääntyneet. Modin lupaama kehitys ei ollut tavoittanut heitä; sen sijaan he kokivat tulleensa ”heitetyiksi viidakkoon”, jossa elämä oli takapajuista, arvaamatonta ja epähygieenistä. Valtio koettiin uhkaavana, väkivaltaisena voimana, joka ”leikkaa” maailmanluokan kaupunkiin sopimattomat köyhät pois kaupunkitilasta.

Toisaalta erityisesti hinduasukkaat myös ylistivät Modia turvallisuuden takaamisesta ja Ahmedabadin kehittämisestä puhtaaksi, ulkomaalaisia houkuttelevaksi kaupungiksi. He olivat omaksuneet vallitsevan normatiivisen kehitysdiskurssin, jonka mukaan pakkosiirrot olivat välttämättömiä Intian kansallisen edistyksen ja talouskasvun turvaamiseksi. Heille Modi edusti ihannetta maailmanluokan kansalaisesta, joka oli kuitenkin tiukasti juurtunut hindukulttuuriin. Kannattamalla Modin politiikkaa köyhät hinduasukkaat saattoivat omaksua kehittyneen maailmanluokan kansalaisen poliittisen subjektiviteetin ja asemoida itsensä osaksi kansallista menestystarinaa ja Uutta Intiaa, kun taas Modin vastustaminen näyttäytyi antinationalistisena ja kehityksen vastaisena toimintana. Maailmanluokan kaupunki oli kansallisen ylpeyden aihe myös kehityksestä ulos suljetuille.

Haastatteluissa ilmeni sisäinen ristiriita koetun uhriposition ja tavoitellun maailmanluokan kansalaisen position välillä: samat ihmiset saattoivat haastattelun aikana sekä ylistää että kritisoida Modia ja maailmanluokan kaupungin luomista. Vastaavasti valtio koettiin yhtäältä väkivaltaisena voimana ja toisaalta kansallisen kehityksen turvaajana. Materiaalinen todellisuus kaupungin laidalla oli jyrkässä ristiriidassa Modin lupaaman häikäisevän tulevaisuuden kanssa.

Vaikka Modi näyttäytyi monissa haastatteluissani kansallissankarina, epäoikeudenmukaisuuden ja petetyksi joutumisen kokemuksista voimansa saavat kriittiset äänet indikoivat hänen ympärilleen rakennetun henkilökultin vähittäistä murenemista köyhän hinduväestön silmissä.

**Kansalaisuus sosiaalisena ja materiaalisena suhteena**

Keskustan kaupunkitilojen ohella myös uudelleenasutustalot toimivat hyvän kansalaisuuden tuottamisen teknologiana. Pitkiin suoriin riveihin rakennettujen betonikerrostalojen kautta slummien epäjärjestys ja anarkia kesytettiin sekä visuaalisesti – slummit eivät sopineet vallitseviin esteettisiin ihanteisiin – että hallinnollisesti, sillä uudelleenasutus toi ihmiset julkisten ja yksityisten palvelujen piiriin ja teki heistä helpommin hallinnoitavia. Uudelleenasutusalueelle muutettuaan ihmisistä tuli yksityisen sähköyhtiön asiakkaita ja heidän täytyi alkaa maksaa kiinteistöveroa. Lisäksi heidän oli maksettava asunnostaan yhteensä 67 860 rupiaa (noin 1 000 euroa) osamaksuina kymmenen vuoden kuluessa.

Vedoten omaan köyhyyteensä ja oikeudenmukaisuuden ideaaliin, jota valtion tulisi toimissaan noudattaa, haastateltavat olivat kieltäytyneet maksamasta heiltä vaadittua summaa. Modin ja Ahmedabadin kaupungin mukaan uudelleenasutusasunnot olivat osoitus valtion hyvästä tahdosta köyhiä kohtaan, kun taas pakkosiirretyt ihmiset näkivät ne välttämättömänä, joskin riittämättömänä korvauksena valtiovallan aiheuttamasta tarpeettomasta kärsimyksestä. Koettu kärsimys ja väkivalta olivat muovanneet heidän poliittista toimijuuttaan. Vastoin kaupungin asettamia sääntöjä he olivat myös alkaneet muokata 33 neliömetrin asuntojaan sopimaan paremmin moninaisiin elinkeinoihinsa, identiteetteihinsä ja perhekokoonsa: parvekkeiden seiniin hakattiin oviaukkoja, seinät maalattiin pastellivärein ja tyhjiä asuntoja muutettiin eläinsuojiksi. Näin vankilamaiseksi ja elämää rajoittavaksi koettu homogeeninen ympäristö valjastettiin palvelemaan asukkaiden vaihtelevia tarpeita. Betonisesta ympäristöstä oli tullut väline valtion ja kansalaisten välisessä suhteiden neuvottelussa.

Rakennettua ympäristöä muokattiin myös klientelististen verkostojen kautta, joissa yhdistyivät viralliset ja epäviralliset suhteet. Poliitikot olivat rakennuttaneet alueelle esimerkiksi yhteyksiä kunnalliseen vesijohtoon vastineeksi kannatuksesta kunnallisvaaleissa. Tällaiset käytännöt osoittavat, kuinka uudelleenasutettujen ihmisten kansalaisuus ei ollut ainoastaan ylhäältä alaspäin suuntautuvaa hallintaa, vaan myös konkreettisesti rakennettua. Organisoitumalla ja neuvottelemalla poliitikkojen ja virkamiesten kanssa ihmiset pääsivät käsiksi todellisiin kansalaisetuihin kuten puhtaaseen juomaveteen. Samalla infrastruktuurista tuli osa isäntä–alaissuhteita.

Erilaisilla virallisilla dokumenteilla oli keskeinen rooli pakkosiirrettyjen ihmisten elämässä. Ihmisten oikeus uudelleenasutusasuntoihin oli riippuvainen heidän omistamistaan dokumenteista. Osa ihmisistä oli määritelty kokonaan uudelleenasutukseen kelpaamattomiksi, kun taas osa oli onnistunut hankkimaan perheelleen useamman asunnon. Uudelleenasutusprosessia ympäröivä

epäselvyys, joka johtui yksittäisten viranomaisten harkintavallan korostumisesta tarkkojen ja pysyvien kriteerien kustannuksella, oli tehnyt siitä ennakoimattoman. Dokumenttien lisäksi kelpoisuuden määrittelyyn ja sen kautta asunnonjakoprosessin lopputulokseen olivat vaikuttaneet myös ihmisten lukutaito, periksiantamattomuus, taloudellinen tilanne ja sosiaaliset verkostot, mukaan lukien henkilökohtaiset suhteet poliitikkoihin ja viranomaisiin.

Kelpoisuuden määrittelyn ajaksi osa ihmisistä oli osoitettu asumaan "väliaikaiselle asuinalueelle" Ganeshnagarin kaupunginosaan kaupungin kaatopaikan viereen. Kenttätyöni aikana sadat ihmiset asuivat edelleen Ganeshnagarissa, osa heistä paperittomia, osa uudelleenasutukseen kelpaamattomiksi todettuja. Palvelut Ganeshnagarissa olivat hyvin puutteelliset ja monet olivat siellä asuessaan jopa menehtyneet sairastuttuaan tuberkuloosiin. Ilman dokumentteja ihmisillä ei kuitenkaan ollut välineitä, joilla he olisivat voineet todistaa valtiolle kelpoisuutensa uudelleenasutusasuntoon – he saattoivat vedota vain ihmisarvoonsa. Jotkut Ganeshnagarin asukkaat väittivät, että he olivat jääneet ilman uudelleenasutusasuntoa yksittäisten korruptoituneiden virkamiesten vuoksi tai siksi, että heidän henkilöllisyystodistuksissaan oli kirjoitusvirheitä. Pysymällä väliaikaisella asuinalueella nämä ihmiset pitivät kiinni unelmastaan saada jonakin päivänä oma uudelleenasutusasunto.

Sadbhavna Nagarin asukkaista he, joilla oli hallussaan henkilöllisyysdokumentteja tai asiakirjoja uudelleenasutuksesta, kohtelivat dokumenttejaan suurella arvostuksella. Niiden vaikutusvaltaa pyrittiin lisäämään manipuloimalla niiden materiaalisuutta: paperisia dokumentteja kopioitiin, laminoitiin, arkistoitiin muovikansioihin ja säilytettiin patjan alla. Dokumentteihin suhtauduttiin kuin pyhiin esineisiin, sillä niiden läsnä- tai poissaolo saattoi muodostua elämän ja kuoleman kysymykseksi. Usein ihmiset palkkasivat välittäjiä hankkimaan dokumentteja, joilla pääsi käsiksi tiettyihin kansalaisetuihin. Erilaiset välikädet, joilla oli henkilökohtaisia suhteita poliitikkoihin ja virkamiehiin, olivat olennainen osa valtion ja kansalaisten välistä kanssakäymistä.

Tutkimukseni päätulos on lukutaidon, kastin, uskonnon, henkilökohtaisen sinnikkyyden, sosiaalisten verkostojen, taloudellisen ja poliittisen vaikutusvallan sekä dokumenttien ja uudelleenasutusasuntojen hallinnan yhteys kansalaisuuden toteutumiseen jokapäiväisessä elämässä. Tutkimus osoittaa, että kansalaisuus on sosiaalisesti ja materiaalisesti tuotettua. Näin ollen kansalaisuutta ei tulisi ymmärtää pelkästään lain ja byrokratian kentällä neuvoteltavana yksilön statuksena, vaan analyysissä on otettava huomioon erilaisten artefaktien ja sosiaalisten suhteiden roolit ihmisten toiminnan ja poliittisen subjektiviteetin muokkaajina. Tutkimus haastaa jaon viralliseen valtion politiikkaan ja epäviralliseen arkielämään sekä osoittaa, että paitsi kansalaisuus myös valtion legitimiteetti vallan käyttäjänä rakentuu ja uusintuu virallisten ja epävirallisten käytäntöjen kietoutumisen kautta.

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## Interviews

Name, date of interview, gender (M/F/K [*kinnar*]), age group (1 = 18–29, 2 = 30–39, 3 = 40–49, 4 = 50–59, 5 = 60–), religion (H/M = Hindu/Muslim), residence (S/O = Sadbhavna Nagar/Other resettlement site). All the names are pseudonyms.

### Recorded audio

Aarushiben, 151023, F, 3, H, S
Aasmaben, 150520, F, 1, M, S
Achalbhai, 150612, M, 2, H, S
Aiaben & Taibaben, 150523, F & F, 4 & 1, M & M, S & S
Ameenaben & her family members, 150831, F & M, 1–4, all M, S & O
Anishaben, 150513, F, 1, H, O
Arjunbhai, 151221, M, 3, H, S
Ashokbhai, 150521, M, 3, H, S
Banviben & Nanubhai, 150828, F & M, 2 & 2, H & H, S & S
Chandikaben, 151109, F, 3, H, S
Charuben & Harjibhai, 150629, F & M, 4 & 4, H & H, S & S
Chhaiyaben & Harishbhai, 150415, F & M, 4 & 1, H & H, S & S
Danyalben, 151110, F, 2, M, O
Dinuben, 150513, F, 1, H, O
Gauharben, 150520, F, 2, M, S
Gitaben, Bhageshbhai & Umeshbhai, 150415, F & M & M, 2 & 5 & 4, all H, all S
Gopiben, 160101, F, 3, H, S
Gulabben, 151029, K, 2, H, S
Ishaqbhai & his neighbors (group discussion), 160102, F & M, 2–4, H & M, all S
Jabirbhai & Suhairbhai, 151221, M & M, 1 & 1, M & M, S & S
Jamkuben & her neighbors (group discussion), 160111, F & M, 2–3, all H, all O
Jiteshbhai, 150425, M, 3, H, S
Kalpeshbhai, 150512, M, 3, H, S
Karimaben & Asimbhai, 150522, F & M, 5 & 5, M & M, S & S
Kavyaben & Shivabhai, 151116, F & M, 4 & 1, H & H, S & S
Leelaben, 150508, F, 2, H, S
Manishbhai, 151117, M, 5, H, S
Meeraben, 150418, F, 5, H, S
Naridaben & Hussainbhai, 150520, F & M, 1 & 1, M & M, S & S
Nehaben, 150418, F, 3, H, S
Nidhaben, 150507, F, 1, H, S
Nitaben, 150504, F, 3, H, S
Omidbhai, 151121, M, 2, M, S

Parvanaben & Suhaanbhai, F & M, 4 & 4, M & M, S & S
Parvatiben, 150415, F, 3, H, S
Poonamben, 151023, F, 2, H, S
Preetiben & Pradeepbhai, 150418, F & M, 5 & 5, H & H, S & S
Radhwaben, 151110, F, 1, M, S
Rakeshbhai, 151018, M, 1, H, S
Rambhai, Hiteshbhai, Girishbhai & Ranveerbhai, 160103, all M, all 2, all H, all S
Romeshbhai, 150423, M, 2, H, S
Saniaben, 151109, F, 4, M, S
Sejuben, 150808, F, 4, M, S
Shilpaben, 150508, F, 3, H, S
Sonaben, 150513, F, 3, H, O
Surendrabhai, 150504, M, 2, H, S
Taslimaben, 151028, F, 2, M, S
Tejalben, 150415, F, 1, H, S
Veerubhai & Kuldeepbhai, 151117, M & M, 2 & 3, H & H, S & S
Vimalben, 151229, F, 2, H, S
Waleedbhai, 151128, M, 5, M, O
Yaqubbhai, 151027, M, 3, M, S
Yasminben, 150623, F, 2, M, S
Zaidaben, 150522, F, 3, M, S
Zeenatben & Badaiben, 150522, F & F, 3 & 3, M & M, S & S
Zoyaben & Hassanbhai, 150526, F & M, 2 & 2, M & M, S & S

**Recorded in notes**

Arunaben 150512, F, 2, H, S
Supriyaben & Manojbhai, 150423, F & M, 2 & 2, H & H, S & S

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