Surajit Chakravarty
Rohit Negi *Editors*

Space, Planning and Everyday Contestations in Delhi

Springer

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Editors

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Chapter 1
Introduction: Contested Urbanism in Delhi's Interstitial Spaces

Surajit Chakravarty and Rohit Negi

1.1 Planning Delhi

Cities of the global south are known for being messy and inscrutable in terms of the systems and institutions that govern them. Much is known about the debilitating effects of the chronic lack of resources and technical capacity, rapid population growth, poverty, infrastructure deficits, layers of bureaucracy, and corruption. In addition to all of the existential difficulties, the neoliberal moment has allowed liquid capital to circulate in search of investment opportunities, with weak regulation and under the conditions described above. Delhi, in a short time, has found itself transforming from a minor outpost in the global economy to an important regional node with "world city" aspirations, embedded within one of the world's fastest growing economies.

But when we talk of Delhi's aspirations, whose aspirations do we mean? There are a lot many dreams churning in Delhi's growth machine. For more than half of Delhi's residents, aspirations are as modest as a legal residence, with a water connection that works. State agencies, planners, political parties, developers, civil society and residents contest Delhi's urban space through the channels available to them—regulation, investment, construction, the courts, mass media, social movements, collective practices and individual choices. From this complex interplay of motives what lessons can we distil about the nature of urbanization in Delhi,

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the technologies of governance, the agency of neoliberalism and the production of ordinary spaces and everyday life? To what extent are urban outcomes predictable and when does the local context weigh in?

Comparisons of urbanization across South Asia (Anjaria and McFarlane, 2011), or in "the Indian city" (Shatkin, 2014), are useful for confirming broad trends based on their multiple manifestations, and for understanding the diversity of impacts of structural conditions. Focusing exclusively on Delhi, this volume presents grounded empirical accounts that accumulate evidence regarding the nature of urbanism and urban politics. Studies in this volume view Delhi as a complex outcome of interacting forces, rather than a self-evident product of neoliberalism. The chaos and ambivalence, that have marked planning in Delhi since independence, fundamentally shape neoliberal urbanization, which proceeds in an uneven and highly specific manner. From Delhi's urban condition we attempt to derive fresh insights regarding the disjunctures between planning and ideology, between narratives of growth and realities of immobility, and between facades of modernity and the actual spaces and practices produced in its pursuit.

Delhi has grown relatively swiftly since the 1950s to become a metropolis of over 16 million by 2011 (Government of NCT Delhi, 2012). As the capital of the Mughal Empire, Delhi was a dense and vibrant site, a centre for culture and commerce, for a long time. But the city's position of prominence was really consolidated after it was declared the capital of British India in 1911, and New Delhi was developed as the seat of the colonial government. After independence in 1947, hundreds of thousands of refugees of the partition were settled in Delhi. In continuation of colonial urban form, New Delhi remained an elite-scape housing bureaucrats, politicians, and wealthy residents, unsurprisingly, cornering disproportionate services, including water, power and access to urban parks.

Land development and spatial planning in Delhi have proceeded through a centralised institutional arrangement, of which the Delhi Development Authority (DDA) is the appointed node. In accordance with globally prevalent practices in the 1950s and 1960s, the dominant planning instrument in the city came to be the Delhi Master Plan (the current version has a perspective until 2021), which is a legally-enforceable document outlining the arrangement of land uses and attendant policies, supported by periodic population projections, pooling of land, provision of infrastructures and, finally, allotment of land and housing to the various beneficiary publics. Thousands of hectares have been assembled by the DDA via eminent domain, primarily from rural inhabitants of the hundreds of villages in and around the city, making it the largest land-holding agency in the state. Most of the residential neighbourhoods of post-independence Delhi, along with commercial districts and institutional zones found across the city, were constructed on DDA land.

Yet, the actual requirement of housing and urban infrastructure has far outstripped supply. This has given rise to a variety of informally provisioned housing and services. The gap also creates opportunities for deriving rent from the discretionary space available to the state on account of what Achille Mbembe calls the postcolonial "etatisation of society" (2001), i.e. the bureaucratization of the

practices and processes of everyday life. Over time the land available to DDA for greenfield developments has shrunk. Except for a few pockets the metropolitan area of Delhi is entirely built up, and new developments are concentrated in satellite towns and peri-urban spaces in the city's wider region (known as the National Capital Region, or NCR), which includes territories of three of Delhi's neighbouring states—Uttar Pradesh, Haryana and Rajasthan. The NCR, too, resembles a fragmented assemblage of municipalities, engaged in opportunistic growth around Delhi's core, rather than a planned and managed region.

Since the 1990s, state authorities have repositioned themselves increasingly as facilitators and regulators of private sector participation in urban development. The release of private enterprise in housing has been largely uncoordinated, leading inevitably to an uneven urban fabric with a preponderance of gated communities. Further, the new speculative real estate economy has attracted vast sums of "black" money, leading to inflated values and fears of a housing bubble in Delhi as in other large cities in the country. Meanwhile as the trickling streams of economic gain remain too meagre to keep the lives of the worst off from becoming increasingly precarious, the state is able to use flexible regimes of legality and extra-legality to rearrange spaces and bodies at the margins (Govinda, 2013). In cities where 60 % or more of the residents live in "unauthorized" developments of various kinds (Bhan, 2009), the management of informality becomes one of the most important functions of planning. Informality, though, is only one element of marginality, more fully understood in terms of the subjects' relationship with the structures of political and economic power.

Bhan (2013) argues that planning is a potent vector of urbanization in Delhi precisely because of its failures. Indeed DDA-led planning has been critiqued time and again (Chakravarty, 2015, and in this volume; Lemanski and Lama-Rewal, 2013; Tarlo, 2000; Dupont, 2008; Ghertner, 2008; Sivam, 2003; Pugh, 1991 amongst others). Despite all its shortcomings, however, the role of urban planning cannot be reduced either to absolute failure (Bhan, 2013), or chronic incapacity due to subservience to the neoliberal agenda (Roy, 2009a). Plans carry the weight of law and state machinery, and embody all of society's complex contestations over space and temporality. Once made, they are challenged, recalibrated and rewritten multiple times. Plans do not so much fail as become microcosms of the contested terrain of the city. Thus plans prepared by state agencies are best understood, in the spirit of the Lefebvre's (1991) notion of "representations of space", as one element contributing to the composite social production of space.

1.2 The Context of Neoliberal Urbanism

The mundane and lived urban contestations, addressed by the chapters in this volume, are situated in a specific context. A little over two decades after its inauguration in India, neoliberalism now shapes urban space in deep and diverse ways, yet not necessarily in a manner that can be predicted based on "western" experiences.

Under the political-economic paradigm often abbreviated as "neoliberalism", the state creates the conditions for cycles of private investment and accumulation through policy instruments, financial incentives and enabling infrastructures. Bodies, communities and space are administered and policed in a manner that maximizes productivity of land and natural resources. Supposed indicators of worth, such as a "world class" status, megaprojects, city branding, major sports events, etc., are pursued in keeping with the broader logic of attracting investment from multinational firms (by way of production and service centres) and tourism, further expected to lead to jobs, a broader tax base, foreign investment and overall economic growth. Cities have thus come to be viewed as engines of national growth and development, and operating in competition with each other within a global system (Brenner, 1999; Smith, 2002).

These processes have been examined thoroughly by critical theorists from various vantage points. Harvey (2005) periodizes these developments as a phase in capitalism dominated by "accumulation by dispossession" or profit-making that results from the "non-productive" sectors like land speculation, privatization of the commons and so on. Hardt and Negri (2001), through the concept of "Empire", have argued that the state and capital become an inextricable unity fed by the extraction of surplus through the appropriation of human creativity via immaterial labour. Wacquant (2010) understands neoliberalism as a political project with the state as the pivot, imposing market logics on the commons, while inaugurating unprecedented mechanisms of surveillance and the penalization of marginalized populations. For Smith (1996) the state assumes a "revanchist" stance through punitive policies towards spaces and communities not yielding the highest possible rents. Some of these impacts of neoliberalism are visible in cities in the developing world (Lees et al., 2015). As a diffuse and generalized set of imperatives, the spatial logic of neoliberalism operates in similar ways across planning cultures (Chakravarty and Qamhaieh, 2015), but, nevertheless, is always subject to a process of interpretation, adaptation and localization.

Certainly, each of these frames of interpretation contributes to our understanding of contemporary Delhi. And yet, it is a fraught venture to simply "apply" theory to situations in India or more generally in cities of the Global South, as has been argued persuasively (Donner and De Neve, 2006; Robinson, 2006; Roy, 2009b; Anjaria and McFarlane, 2011; Parnell and Robinson, 2012; Sheppard et al., 2013; Connell, 2014; Ren and Luger, 2014; Watson, 2014; Miraftab and Kudva, 2015).

It is important to extend the analysis of neoliberal city planning and governance beyond the competitive-revanchist world city model, to incorporate heterodox histories, struggles around infrastructures that support everyday life, modes of survival of subaltern populations and structures that underpin the conditions of existence of the majority. To grasp the contemporary urban condition, in other words, it is critical to understand how general processes are conceived, adapted and reshaped by specific contexts.

The paths traversed by specific places must be illuminated by empirically engaged research. It is precisely this method that Tsing (2004) has in mind when she invites us to examine universals as "practical projects accomplished in a heterogeneous world" (8); to illuminate, in the words of Brenner and Theodore (2002, 2005), "actually existing neoliberalisms"(also see Peck et al. 2009). Whereas the state is believed to recede from its social welfare functions as part of the neoliberal transformation, welfare programmes in India have not dissolved, but rather grown in volume, reach and impact. Though the work of state-backed welfare programmes remains uneven, mired in corruption and ultimately still insufficient on many measures, the welfare component of the polity has not diminished and is increasingly inclusive of groups that had earlier remained marginal to the state and economy. These trends sit uneasily with the trajectory anticipated by theorizations of neoliberalism emanating from the Global North. Moreover, what is true of Delhi may not hold in the second- and third-order cities around the country. Therefore, if divergent outcomes are witnessed despite the generality of overarching logics, it must be concluded that local conditions matter. The complex of ideologies, institutions and political practices in specific locales are as important as the gravity of global capital. It is necessary, then, to investigate how broad and universal policy outlooks that represent neoliberalism, are contested, co-opted and contextualized in specific places and systems.

With the opening up of various sectors to private—and global—investment as part of the neoliberal reorienting of the Indian political economy, and the subsequent speculation-driven investment in urban property, a huge "rent gap" (Smith, 1987) emerged at the scale of the city, and in particular at sites that were central and relatively well connected to the existing and emergent economic nodes. What was earlier beautification or other motive-led enforcement of property was now increasingly driven by real estate's "re-enchantment" (Knox, 2005) with spaces that were under some form of precarious existence. Several developments that dot Delhi's landscape today, for instance, are constructed on erstwhile squatter colonies (e.g. Pacific Mall, Punjabi Bagh) or green patches (e.g. Vasant Kunj malls) and wetlands (e.g. Commonwealth Games Village), part of the urban commons. This period has been thus marked by a wave of dislocations for the urban poor. Important research projects (Menon-Sen, 2006; Ghosh, 2008; Menon-Sen and Bhan, 2008; Rao, 2010; Ramakrishnan, 2014) have outlined the immediate impacts of displacement in Delhi.

Neoliberal urbanism was overlaid on a very specific imagination of the citizen as the subject of welfare. As critiqued by various scholars (Ghertner, 2011; Webb, 2012, 2013), mechanisms of redistributive welfare *and* service delivery are deeply enmeshed within webs of patronage that link together politicians, middlemen (*pradhans*), lower-level bureaucrats and local strongmen. Some of these cross-scalar alliances are built around shared occupation and/or caste, as Gill (2009) illustrates in her study of Delhi's waste recycling networks. Such webs of patronage are operationalized for securing de facto tenurial rights and access to basic services to the urban subalterns, in exchange for political support, a form of welfare clientelism distinctive to Indian cities. Such compacts necessarily exist alongside a

degree of insecurity, but that, paradoxically, is also their raison d'etre, and the reason why residents in informal settlements tag their futures to one or another local strongman.

Recently, the Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) juggernaut claimed a majority in Delhi's Legislative Assembly, based on promises to undo the patronage complex, and thereby improve service delivery. In addition, the party was able to win over a large number of lower income voters based on promises of regularizing unauthorized colonies and halting demolitions, a tactic used successfully by the Congress in previous Delhi state elections. To what extent AAP will deliver on its promises remains to be seen.

1.3 Reading Interstitial Spaces

This volume analyzes Delhi's urbanization through the politics and everyday contestations of its interstitial spaces. By the term "interstitial" we mean the ordinary spaces that exist alongside centres of consumption, megaprojects, special economic zones, gated communities, high-end apartment complexes and large infrastructure installations. Interstitial spaces are not of direct interest to large investors and developers, and are typically dwarfed by remarkable artefacts of urbanization. Interstitial spaces are the neighbourhoods, parks and streets that constitute the everyday city. These may be entirely new formations, or evolving socio-spatial entities with changing meanings and functions, or even old places existing in the vestiges of other times.

Yet they are not untouched by state and capital. Rather, in these spaces, neoliberalism is still an incomplete and evolving project, mediated by small developers, with interventions from a number of actors (including state authorities, non-governmental organizations, financial institutions, contractors, lower bureaucrats, etc.), along with counter-vectors of public agency (such as street hawkers, domestic workers, artists, migrants and other marginalized groups.)

In Delhi, interstitial spaces, much like extraordinary objects of analysis, exhibit the influence of policy asphyxiation (i.e. a lack of novel ideas, disjointed vision, haphazard implementation etc.) And they are equally subject to the rules that govern investment and accumulation. Yet, due to a number of historical and political factors, outcomes are unpredictable and require contextual investigation and theorization. While appreciating the structural and global forces at play, these chapters attend to the "friction" (Tsing, 2004) generated in the moments when universal ideas hit the ground. As such, they are keenly interested in spontaneous and scalar reworkings of anticipated urbanities.

Various works have made important contributions to understanding urbanization in Delhi, and in India in general. Confronted by unceasing urban growth, efforts to plan urban development are unstructured, uncoordinated and, in the face of pressures of speculation, insensitive to social and environmental concerns (Mahadevia, 2011). Narratives of "modernization" and democratization coexist with zealous

identities, exploitative regimes of accumulation, and semi-feudal systems of property and labour (Baviskar, 2003; Chatterjee, 2009). In this general scenario, the reshaping of the Indian city as a neoliberal spectacle, its spaces of consumption, and its revanchist outlook towards land uses, practices and groups that compromise the success of the agenda, is well documented (Bhan, 2009; DuPont, 2011, 2004; Ghertner, 2012; Rao, 2010, 2013; Roy, 2009a; Schenk, 2004).

There is also a rich body of work that engages with the existential and political lives in urban slums (Das, 2011; Datta, 2012) and with the imaginaries and performances tied to the city's elite and middle-class lives (Baviskar and Ray 2011; Dasgupta 2014; Ghertner, 2015). Much of the critical work on urbanism and urbanization in Delhi (Srivastava, 2015) pivots around a poverty-versus-consumption dialectic, expressed in spatial terms as the juxtaposition of slums against shopping malls and "gated communities". The tension emanating from the polarization of space is very real in Delhi today, and thus unsurprisingly reported frequently in existing literature.

These studies are a necessary point of departure in locating Delhi within a comparative global framework. Interstitial spaces, however, are inconspicuous in the sense that they do not command public or scholarly attention as do spaces of absolute poverty and deprivation (as also argued by Lemanski and Lama-Rewal, 2013). How, then, does spectacular urbanism (including "spectacles" of both excess and deprivation) relate to ordinary inconspicuous spaces and features of urbanization? If the logic of neoliberal accumulation, interacting spontaneously with local conditions, produces sanitized enclaves and unsanitary slums, what does the same process mean for the rest of the city? What becomes of lands where malls are not financially infeasible? What kind of lived spaces are created in the process?

Studies on the politics of interstitial neighbourhoods, districts and nascent spatial formations are relatively less common. The tendency to "reduce" the dynamics of urbanization to winners-and-losers of "brave new" India obscures the trends, tensions and topologies in the middle. Filling this gap in knowledge, however, is only a part of the challenge. Separate theorization of interstitial and ordinary spaces, within the study of neoliberal urbanism, also leads to advancement in the broader analysis of the logic and mechanics of spatial production. Although slums and squatter settlements are complex formations, and hold much analytical value, a critical objective of this volume is to explore the interstices of scholarship. It is for this reason that we have specifically chosen to focus on interstitial spaces (markets, resettlement colonies, industrial areas, urban villages, public transportation), at the obvious expense of slums and squatter settlements.

As long as neoliberal urbanism is understood through its most visible artefacts, either nodes of consumption and accumulation, or those of absolute poverty, little is known of how neoliberalism is played out in the rest of the city. Studying the "predictable excesses" of neoliberalism also leaves us with an incomplete understanding of local politics, capacities for adaptation, and the agency and ingenuity of those holding power and capital, as also those at the margins of these structures. Ultimately we only obtain a partial understanding of the fuller nature of neoliberal urbanism itself. Studying the contestations of ordinary spaces helps to understand

how the logic of neoliberalism operates in partial, incremental or emergent forms where it is not able to operate expansively. In so doing this volume responds to Maringanti's (2013) call to utilize "ordinary entanglements" as an analytical tool.

This approach yields tangible gains in theorization. For example, the celebratory narrative of economic growth posits increasing disposable incomes and consumption as incontrovertible evidence of success, and poverty as a tragic by-product— temporary, and afflicting only a few, who are destined, eventually, to catch up. In contrast, the studies compiled in this volume locate interstitial spaces as data points on a *continuum* of contemporary urbanization. The trend line, which begins with exclusive residential and retail enclaves on one end, and pockets of absolute deprivation and dispossession on the other, describes a principle (or logic, or function) that applies to all parts of the city with different intervening conditions.

As such, interstitial spaces help elucidate the logic of governance and investment that links the various artefacts of urbanization. Far from being a temporary and unavoidable condition afflicting a few, dispossession is an everyday norm and a deliberate strategy with which everyone has to contend. This argument provides a serious challenge to the narrative promoted by the state (regardless of incumbent political ideology) that, barring outliers, economic growth has increased welfare for everyone and empowered all communities. All parts of the city are under the pressures of the neoliberal growth machine—either directly through investment, or indirectly through labour, rent, support services and regulations. There is, however, more contestation and negotiation of outcomes in the ordinary middle, than there is in the inevitable malls and marginalized slums.

Two clarifications are warranted in this regard. First, "interstitial spaces", as conceptualized here, are not necessarily used and occupied only by the "middle class". As understood for the purpose of this volume, interstitial spaces may be owned, leased, inhabited, occupied, operated or navigated, exclusively or simultaneously, for various periods of time, by people of various economic classes. Like any other space, interstitial spaces, too, are co-produced by their users, owners, developers, planners and elected representatives. Second, the idea of "interstitial spaces" is quite different from the idea of "informality", or spaces falling outside realms of regulation, or leftover spaces as conceptualized by Brighenti (2013), Matos (2009) and Tonnelat (2008) among others. As explained above, for our purpose, the term "interstitial" points to an epistemological condition.

1.4 Organization of the Volume

The studies in this volume are organized into four parts, which traverse aspects of dislocation, citizenship at the margins, tensions between regulation, accumulation and survival, and strategies of labor and mobility, particularly among women. The various narratives offer a kaleidoscopic view of the contestations that define Delhi's urbanism. It is worth noting that the studies compiled in this volume represent an interdisciplinary field, including works grounded in geography,

Fig. 1.1 Locations of the studies presented in this volume. **Map copyright** © Rohit Negi and Surajit Chakravarty

anthropology, economics, urban planning, political science and public policy. We believe this secular outlook is necessary to achieve the fuller understanding we seek of both urbanization and neoliberalism. Locations of the studies compiled in this volume are shown in Fig. 1.1.

1.4.1 Part 1: Dis/Locating Bodies

The first part of the book serves to remind us how bodies are moved strategically in urban space according to the logics of rent extraction. As citizens resist

and negotiate their rights and legitimacy, shifts in state policies and practices continually unmap and remap places and communities. Bodies and populations are redefined and juggled through acts of dislocation, disciplining and the uneven operation of planning instruments.

Seth Schindler studies the precarity of street hawkers, and how, perceived as a nuisance and disruptive of public order, their space and mobility is restricted through coercion and intimidation. Shruti Dubey critiques the processes by which residents of Kathputli Colony were relocated and the land cleared for development. Kathputli Colony was home to a community of craftspeople and puppeteers, a genuine island of creativity, tradition and community (Sennett, 2008; Chakravarty, 2011) in the otherwise overwhelmingly consumerist city.

1.4.2 Part 2: Claims at the Urban Frontier

The three chapters in the second part follow the trajectory of relocated citizens to their new home at the urban frontier—the large resettlement project of Savda Ghevra in Bawana—now receiving waves of arrivals from cleansing drives and megaprojects. Even as residents of resettlement colonies display immense resilience to bounce back from dislocation, their struggles of identity and placemaking are always tenuous and temporary, awaiting the next wave of valuations and changes. Following a predictable trajectory, the peri-urban is "opened up" with less profitable uses, until the land is revalorized. Concomitant characteristics of "frontier culture" (Tsing, 2004; Li, 2014) include unclear boundaries, informality, internal contests and contests with long-term residents. Chapters in this section examine these new sites of vulnerability.

Kavita Ramakrishnan investigates how unsettled citizens re-engage the state in their struggle for legitimacy. Ursula Rao argues that struggles for survival are reset in Savda Ghevra, resulting in competitive micropolitics and processes of gentrification within the resettlement colony. Building on the critique, Rolee Aranya and Vilde Ulset astutely posit resettlement as an incomplete and abandoned state project—a quintessential product of the informalized state, where informality returns within explicitly formalized spaces.

1.4.3 Part 3: Informalization and Investment

Driven by investment in finance and real estate, Delhi has also gained a layer of residential suburbs along with spaces of conspicuous consumption. Several unlikely agents have had a part to play in the property-led redevelopment of the city, including the Delhi Metro, but despite the engagement of such celebrated agents, the process through which land is remade into differentiated property retains elements of informality.

The third part takes a closer look at relationships between investment, informality and governance, particularly at emergent scales and spatialities. The four papers in this section attempt to elucidate the dynamics through which informalized governance is creating new kinds of investments opportunities that are shaping city form. Surajit Chakravarty critiques the "urban village" category, as a socio-spatial entity rooted in layers of informality, and overrun with rentier real estate development in the absence of adequate and appropriate state interventions. Shahana Sheikh and Subhadra Banda in their study of the "unauthorized colony" of Sangam Vihar, find evidence of a community disconnected from state agencies, courted before elections and forgotten soon thereafter.

Delhi also grew as an industrial centre until the 1980s, with both small and large enterprises, attracting millions of migrants from the hinterlands to the city. Though manufacturing sector employment has declined in Delhi in recent times (Negi, 2010), residential areas near the remaining industrial zones have become hubs of flexible and shape-shifting economic activities. Sumangala Damodaran's chapter on the industrial areas of Wazirpur and Patparganj, sheds light on the settlements near industrial estates that accommodate rural workers in dormitory-like conditions, creating new kinds of socio-spatial entities. Bérénice Bon shows how government agencies engage each other through collusion and competition, in developing real estate around Delhi Metro stations. Institutional weaknesses in megaproject development undermine process and externalize social issues.

1.4.4 Part 4: Gendered Mobility

The fourth part focuses on issues of mobility and gender. Sonal Sharma traces domestic workers' attempts to resolve the tripartite spatial challenge that defines their existence in the city—access to affordable housing, access to stable employment, and the means of access itself. Tara Atluri's essay interprets the 2012 Delhi gang rape case from a spatial perspective, employing it as a heuristic to explore the bus as a locus of a feminist-spatial struggle.

1.5 Findings About Delhi

As discussed earlier, the outcomes of neoliberalism are diverse, contested and negotiated. Neoliberalism, as a vector, advanced forcefully by the agents of global capital in conjunction with bearers of political power, pushes urban space in somewhat predictable directions. Yet local conditions and actors mediate specific outcomes. A thorough reading of the production of space, its processes and outcomes, reveals nuances of the local conditions that mould the neoliberal project. State agencies, internally differentiated by power and access to resources, attempt to clear the way for investment, all the while trying to balance measures

of economic success with welfarism. Significantly, private capital, in turn, articulates with Delhi's politics and governmentality to further its advance, leading to novel outcomes such as emergent investment opportunities for small capital and increasingly informalized institutions of planning. Meanwhile, those affected by the developing propinquity between state and capital, attempt to salvage a life at the margins, with varying degrees of success. These "margizens" (Schuilenburg, 2008) must engage with the same formal and informal institutions, understand and adapt to changing rules and policies, and find ways into networks, in order to cobble together basic services, employment and tenure.

The studies find ordinary "interstitial" spaces to be neither immune to the broader urban politics, nor passive towards it. Ordinary spaces, too, are deeply contested, between a variety of stakeholders. The experiences of these spaces challenge usual narratives of victimhood, yet should also not be romanticized, as nascent forms of resistance are able to operate only within strict regulatory and existential limitations. The volume adds to our understanding of neoliberalism as a comprehensive institutional and regulatory logic that affects everything in its path, not just remarkable sites of consumption or deprivation. The selected cases illustrate how neoliberal urbanization operates in spaces where it is fettered and contested. The cases also illuminate the processes and power relations behind Delhi's unique urban complexity.

The volume confirms that Delhi's urban form and planning institutions reveal a disarray of thought and action. Lacking a coherent vision, state agencies find themselves caught between competing ideological positions, layers of bureaucracy and a budget deficit. The state remains a bundle of contradictions, challenged by a dearth of conviction and capacity. The government performs a delicate balancing act between compliance with the neoliberal agenda on one hand, and welfare-based politicking on the other. Consequently, state agencies often appear to be getting in their own way and making contradictory policies. State agencies attempt to make the city "attractive" to capital, but this process continues to be resisted and contested on the ground. Small capital finds rent-seeking opportunities is risky environments where large capital does not (yet) dare tread. For instance, large formal-sector developers are not yet players in the booming unauthorized colonies, but some local builders and contractors are able to make small fortunes in that vacuum. That which cannot be turned into high-end retail gets turned into uses that can derive the maximum rent within the given context.

Popular resistance to formal or informal capital accumulation is carefully managed through de/regulation, shifting of bodies, and incremental offers of legitimacy. Those at the margins of structures of capital and power attempt to maximize their welfare by forming vote blocks, and by finding anchors within informal networks that form to take the place of uneven state welfare functions. The margins themselves have become heterogeneous featuring different kinds of grey citizenship claims. New local markets of welfare, property and labour take shape within the combined context of informality and marginality. These new informalities and grey networks operate across different scales from the Metro system to households and individual properties within the ordinary sites and spaces.