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Los Angeles

Window Seats: Making Connection through Transport and Mobility in Bengaluru, India

A dissertation submitted in partial satisfaction

of the requirements for the degree

Doctor of Philosophy in Anthropology

by

Jananie Kalyanaraman

2021

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ABSTRACT OF THE DISSERTATION

Window Seats: Making Connection through Transport and Mobility in Bengaluru, India

by

Jananie Kalyanaraman

Doctor of Philosophy in Anthropology

University of California, Los Angeles 2021

Professor Akhil Gupta, Chair

In Bengaluru city, the state, corporations and business elite invest billions of dollars in big-ticket transport infrastructures (such as freeways, the metro and airconditioned buses) to make the city "world-class." These actors use the rhetoric of "connection" to justify their plans to remedy a city that they portray as otherwise disconnected and fragmented by heavy traffic congestion and a lack of modern planning. Such visions of city-making favor certain industries, especially information technology and consequently valorize the image of the normative user of public transit as a modern professional employed in a multinational corporation, especially information technology. Moreover, these visions of transport planning prioritize transport for mobility sake, without attention to locally meaningful ways of making socio-spatial connection.

Against this broader context of transport planning, and based on seventeen months of ethnographic research conducted in Bengaluru between August 2016 and December 2017, this dissertation examines how people in Bengaluru move. Why do they make the transport decisions that they do? By paying close attention to embodied uses of transport, this dissertation explores the following: Chapter 1 focuses on transport as a means by which "informal" drivers who were

previously landowning farmers, differentiate their work from that of their competitors to assert that they belong in a rapidly urbanizing milieu, contrary to public discourse which paints them as chaotic and antithetical to projects of world-class city-making. Chapter 2 focuses on how women across the class and caste spectrum access and use public transport. I show that public transport mirrors middle-class ideologies of gender and public space and that transport access is entangled in social institutions such as family and aspirations for social mobility. Chapter 3 focuses on the impact of visions of world-class city-making on local marketplaces and housing markets. Finally, by exploring mobilization among middle-class citizens for bicycle infrastructures, Chapter 4 shows that transport infrastructures can also enable collaborations between citizens and the state.

In my dissertation, I present a critique of world-class city-making and the preoccupation with instituting transport for mobility sake without attention to meaningful access. Given that from my interlocutors' experience transport emerges in analytic pairs along with housing, kinship, ties to land, assertions of urban belonging, caste, gender, class, markets, education and industry, I argue that transport needs to be studied by examining embodied use. I argue that different forms of public transport enable different kinds of gendered everydayness from the heteronormative productivity of the cis-woman, middle-class IT worker, to the hyperlocal masculinity of auto rickshaw drivers, which serves to maintain ties to their lands by keeping competitors at bay, to the disproportionate working-class femininity of rickshaw users in local marketplaces whose everyday transactions necessitate flexibility. While transport like other infrastructures has the potential to disenfranchise, my dissertation asserts the uniqueness of transport in being able to serve as a means to individual and collective social mobility in locally meaningful ways.

The dissertation of Jananie Kalyanaraman is approved.

Jessica R. Cattelino

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University of California, Los Angeles

2021

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INTRODUCTION

Lakshmi[1] is 35 years old. She has two young children and lives in a peripheral neighborhood in southeast Bengaluru. She self identifies as low-income. She works in a garment manufacturing factory nearby, where she sews cuffs onto shirts in a poorly ventilated room. There is a paucity of regular, affordable public buses or those buses operated by the Bengaluru Metropolitan Transport Corporation (BMTC), where she lives. This is because the BMTC does not allocate enough buses in her neighborhood. In Bengaluru, the public bus system, the BMTC allocates buses only on those routes where they are guaranteed a revenue. As a result, many neighborhoods with a lot of low-income residents are faced with a shortage of buses. To cope with this shortage of buses, women in Lakshmi's neighborhood rely on "informal" transport systems like share-auto rickshaws and private interstate buses because they charge a very low fare. However, these interstate buses are very unsafe for women and are notorious for enabling sexual assault and harassment. These buses are not very well lit. They have thick curtains which can obscure the view of passengers inside the bus, they have only one entrance making boarding and alighting very crowded and chaotic, and the aisle is very narrow, making women passengers more susceptible to harassment and assault. Women like Lakshmi put themselves through great risk on a daily basis because they cannot access affordable and safe public transport. Alighting from the bus at a traffic light rather than at the designated stop for BMTC buses, Lakshmi dangerously runs across wide roads dodging automobiles, crosses metal road barricades and finally makes it to her place of work. She is often in a great hurry to get to work because delays at garment factories can mean humiliation, pay-cuts and other forms of abuse.

[1] In my dissertation I have used pseudonyms for my interlocutors to protect their identity.

A couple of miles away from Lakshmi's house is the Electronics City freeway. This freeway was constructed exclusively to facilitate congestion-free, speedy mobility to those travelling towards the IT hub. During off-peak hours, scores of high-end airconditioned buses (introduced keeping IT professionals as the main target users), can be found running empty. Unlike other regular buses on the BMTC fleet, these buses have airconditioning, upholstered seats and kneeling mechanism. As a consequence, these buses cost more money, they also consume a lot of fuel and they are expensive to maintain compared to many of the ordinary buses on the fleet. The irony here is that while many individuals like Lakshmi struggle to access affordable public transport (since the BMTC prioritizes bus allocation only those routes with the promise of revenue generation), numerous high-end buses, which cost the BMTC a lot of money, run empty during the day, impacting the revenue earned.

Lakshmi's case illustrates two key points. First, that in the face of paucity of access to affordable public transport, Lakshmi finds alternative ways of commuting that are meaningful to her social circumstances. Second, that public transport systems appear out of reach to people like Lakshmi because the state and transport agencies are more focused on creating world-class infrastructures that treat mobility as an end goal in itself, where "mobility in and of itself becomes a performance objective in planning" (Murthy 2011, 122), rather than strengthening the density of public transport access in ways that are locally meaningful.

Bengaluru, is popularly known as India's Information Technology or IT capital. In the last 2 decades, the state and corporations in Bengaluru have invested billions of dollars in transport systems and infrastructures which make Bengaluru appear world-class. Examples of world-class infrastructures and transport systems in Bengaluru city include tolled expressways (like the Electronics City freeway), airconditioned buses for IT corridors and the metro rail,

which is a billion-dollar project. The metro's first phase alone, which was about 29 miles cost 1.1 billion US dollars to construct (BMRCL 2016).

In many cases, the city's traffic congestion crisis is used as justification for introducing world-class transport systems and infrastructures. Traffic congestion dominates the infrastructural imaginary in Bengaluru: news, politics, and social life are all shaped by discussions about traffic. For example, a 2016 BBC news article titled "Why is Bangalore stuck in Traffic Jams?" cited experts who estimated that the city loses 65bn Rupees ($950m; £760m) a year because of traffic jams (Pandey 2016). The state, corporations, business elite, civic organizations and even a handful of non-profit organizations view congestion as antithetical to connection. In attempting to make Bengaluru world-class, they use the rhetoric of "connection" to shape Bengaluru's mobility and transport landscape. The language of connection used in reports, and by bureaucrats and members of the political class stresses that the ultimate design of big-ticket infrastructure projects is to *connect* different parts of the city with one another. For example: "BMRCL is also working on a connecting link between the Central Silk Board Junction and the Krishnarajapuram (K.R. Puram) junction, which will run along the Outer Ring Road for a distance of about 18kms" (BMRCL 2016, 7), "The Phase-2 of the Metro Rail Project will bring connectivity to the Electronics Industry" (Ibid 13).

In sum, discussions about big-ticket transport systems and infrastructures paint Bengaluru city as fragmented and disconnected. The language of efficient connection serves to emphasize the need for speedy transport solutions to connect specific parts of Bengaluru (especially the airport, IT hubs like Electronics City, etc.) with other locations in ways that are important for Bengaluru's economy/ identity of world-classness. Such emphasis on connecting Bengaluru overlooks the ways that many people's mobility needs are not met by such plans and more

importantly, it delegitimizes the myriad creative ways that many people (for example Lakshmi), *make socio-spatial connection*.

My study is motivated by the following questions: What role does transport play in shaping the urban landscape, that is, how are transport infrastructures and efforts at world-class city-making, related? Why do people make the transport decisions that they do? What role does social location (for e.g. class, caste, gender) play in shaping mobility practices and transport use and access? How is social location entangled with transport use and aspirations for the future/ social mobility?

On the one hand narratives from agencies such as the World Bank (GMR 2017) imagine transportation systems as infrastructures that reduce inequalities by enabling people to access jobs and education that they might not otherwise have been able to reach. They define empowerment as economic agency. Studies by organizations such as the Institute for Transport and Development (Shah et al. 2017) echo these sentiments in their approach to transport in Indian cities. On the other hand, in Bengaluru, top-down plans by the state, transport agencies and corporations for transport infrastructures, focus on world-class city-making rather than enabling equal access. Mobility is seen as an end goal in itself (Murthy 2011). Against this broader context of visions for transport in Indian cities, my ethnographic research is focused on identifying how transport is entangled in visions for locally meaningful socio-spatial connection by users. If not carefully planned and continuously monitored, transportation systems can actually create inequalities and exacerbate social differences rather than diminish them. By paying attention to lesser-known and diverse narratives and practices of mobility that prevail in the city, and the different meanings that are ascribed to what it means to move, my dissertation makes the following arguments. Firstly, I argue that the focus on empowerment as economic

agency by narratives from agencies like the World Bank overlooks the role played by social categories such as caste. Therefore, the relationship between transport, social mobility, aspirations and empowerment needs to be studied by paying closer attention to particularities of social identity. Universal standards of empowerment do not capture the diversity of reasons behind why people make the transport decisions that they do. Secondly, I challenge the narrative of world-class city-making and transport for mobility sake. I study transport by examining it in the context of generative analytic pairs that emerged from my interlocutors, including: urbanization and transport; housing and transport; industry and transport; education and transport, markets and transport, gender/ caste and transport, and kinship and transport. These analytic pairs present an argument in and of themselves. Transport for mobility's sake is not a useful or grounded approach to the benefits of transport since transport is embedded in social life in unprecedented ways. Rather we have to map transport on to its embodied uses to understand who it is serving and who it isn't and how and why. These emergent analytic pairs reveal that locally meaningful understandings of connection emerge from the ways in which transport is entangled in social institutions such as family, work, leisure, aspirations, and gender, class and caste identities. I also argue that public transit produces different types of gendered everyday-ness from the hypermasculinity of share-auto rickshaw drivers who need to keep competitors away, to the heteronormative productivity of the young IT professional who worries about safety and time, and the working-class femininity of the street vendor whose daily commute is characterized by the need for flexibility. The public policy implications of these findings are important if the goal of a public transportation system is to provide mobility for all those who need it.

I did long-term fieldwork on this project from August 2016 to December 2017. Including preliminary fieldwork in 2014 and 2015, and follow-up fieldwork in 2018 and 2019, this dissertation reflects a total of 19 months of field research. In 2016-17, when I conducted long-term fieldwork, there were some key events and discussions that took place surrounding transportation and mobility in Bengaluru that frame the narrative of efficient connection that I challenge in my dissertation. These include: the proposal for the steel flyover (freeway) in 2016 (which was scrapped after protests by citizen groups), the Bengaluru *Namma* (trans: Our) Metro construction, Tender Specification for Urban Road Execution (Tender S.U.R.E.), and demands for a Unified Metropolitan Transport Authority (UMTA). In what follows, I detail these projects more carefully in order to understand how the actors involved define mobility and thereby seek to shape the mobility landscape in the city.

In this chapter, I describe key debates, events and issues surrounding mobility and transport in Bengaluru city, which shed light on how influential actors in the city seek to transform its mobility landscape. Through these examples, I define how the language of efficient connection is linked to aspirations for world-class city-making. I then proceed to explore the politics of mobility by examining the lived experience of world-class city-making from the perspective of low-income women who have faced eviction and forced relocation. I seek to foreground the mobility experiences of people whose interests are often not represented in the more visible debates surrounding transport and mobility, to give a more robust picture of the everyday challenges surrounding mobility and access in Bengaluru. I also examine the role of transport systems and infrastructures in facilitating social mobility. Following this I outline my sites, subjects and methods, and finally, provide an overview of the 4 chapters that constitute the body of my dissertation.

World-class city-making and connection

Outlining some important debates and projects that were shaping or had the potential to shape the city's landscape in 2016-17, I show how each project or issue defined connection.

i. Steel flyover: citizen environmentalism versus state visions for world-classness

State infrastructures are the prerogative of regional state governments in India. As a result, each state sees much variability both, in terms of infrastructural development when compared to other states, and with each passing government. When I was conducting fieldwork in 2016-17, the Congress party was in power in Karnataka State (Bengaluru is the capital of Karnataka).

In the latter part of 2016, with the aim of reducing traffic congestion (Sharma 2016) the Bangalore Development Authority (BDA), which overlooks city planning and development functions, announced the construction of a "steel flyover" (freeway) from Basaveshwara Circle to Hebbal. The freeway was supposed to be 6.9 kilometers in length (4.3 miles) and the estimated cost was stated to be Rupees 1791 crores (USD 236 million). The proposed project also required the cutting down of 800 trees (Financial Express 2017). This project was part of the vision for Bengaluru articulated by then Chief Minister, Siddaramaiah, who desired to make Bengaluru into India's Singapore. The six-lane freeway was meant to ease traffic moving from the Vidhan Soudha, the state legislature, to the city's international airport (PK 2016).

This proposed freeway construction met with a lot of opposition from citizen groups (mostly middle- and upper-class residents of Bengaluru) for many reasons including the feasibility of its claims, on the suspicion of corrupt practices, and the fact that the project would destroy a significant portion of the city's green cover. This led to the "Steel Flyover *Beda*" ("we don't want the steel flyover") social movement. As part of the movement, colorful and

innovative forms of protest began in the city in the latter part of 2016, and they included human chains, riding the suburban rail in large groups (The News Minute 2016), mobilization through social media, and voting on the issue.

These protests emphasized the importance of the tree cover for the city's health and well-being. To cite an example, short videos by citizen activists were circulated on social media to spread awareness of the harmful impact of infrastructures like the proposed steel freeway. One such YouTube video clip by citizen activists begins with the "statutory warning" that "Cutting trees is injurious to health" (Kadaini 2016). The video goes on to expose the hypocrisy and manipulativeness of politicians by insinuating that if trees were vote banks, they would be spared from getting chopped. In the video, an injured homeless man with wild hair confronts a politician giving an interview to journalists: "Only half the capacity to breathe is in our lungs. The rest depends on plants and trees," he announces. To this, the politician responds by parroting the argument made by the government - "So what if we cut trees here, we can plant saplings somewhere else." To which the homeless man responds by striking the politician on his head, killing him with his crutch, and remarking, "So what if this man dies here, another person is being born somewhere else!" This is to say that trees, like human beings are irreplaceable. In an unusual turn of events, after much pressure from citizen groups, the steel freeway project was eventually scrapped by the government.

This proposal for the steel freeway illuminates the state's vision for efficient, world-class connection as being characterized by traffic-free roads. However, citizen activists premise their contestation of this vision on narratives of the importance of green cover, sustainability and well-being. Not only does this example serve to assert the fact that there are contesting visions for

mobility in the city, but it also shows how middle-class citizens are able to successfully assert themselves in the mobility politics of the city.

ii. Tender Specification for Urban Road Execution (Tender S.U.R.E.): Elite transport landscapes

Tender S.U.R.E. was proposed by the Bangalore City Connect Foundation (BCCF), which is a coalition between the Confederation of Indian Industry (Southern Region and Bangalore Chapters) and Jana Urban Space Foundation (JUSP), a non-profit under the umbrella of the Jana group, which serves to encourage "citizen" participation in urban local government. BCCF aims to create a platform that brings together stakeholders (mostly the city's business elite) from outside the government in conversation with the government to "create value-added partnerships" (India Urban Space Foundation 2012). Given that roads in Bengaluru are notorious for their constant state of disrepair and traffic jams, the logic underlying Tender S.U.R.E. is to "get urban roads right" with an emphasis on making them pedestrian and bicycle friendly. The BCCF entered into a Memorandum of Understanding with the Government of Karnataka to implement the Tender S.U.R.E. project.

More than Rupees 17,802 crore (approximately USD 2 billion) has already been spent on the project. This is because they are engaged in a complete overhaul of the roads, the sidewalks and also the underlying utility infrastructures in the city's Central Business District (CBD). To avoid scenarios where freshly asphalted roads are dug up only weeks after they have been laid in order to repair leaky water pipes and electric and telecom cables, Tender S.U.R.E. seeks to "future-proof" roads by streamlining underlying utility infrastructures including power, water, and sewage lines under *sidewalks,* so that they can be fixed when damaged without impacting the integrity of the *road* itself.

This project has come under severe criticism for many reasons including the fact that the work has been incredibly slow and has thus only worsened traffic congestion in many parts of the city; because it has damaged the roots of many trees, resulting in their death; because of inadequate public consultations, making it a case of very elite bulldozing of the city's mobility landscape; and also because of the exaggeratedly high costs of the project. The criticism has centered around how projects such as Tender S.U.R.E. are yet another way for the city's business elite and political classes to usurp the city from the people while profiting from it (see also The New Indian Express 2015).

The case of Tender S.U.R.E. illustrates the stranglehold that elite industrialists have in determining the condition of civic infrastructures in the city. They use the argument that road repair and consequent traffic jams are produced by a lack of cohesion in the way the various utility maintenance and development agencies (water, electricity supply boards, etc.) in the city operate. They attempt to fix this at the institutional level by connecting business elite and the government, to create roads of "international standards." The idea of connection here suggests that international standards of connectivity through mobility can only be brought about by *connecting* business elite and the government.

iii. Unified Metropolitan Transport Authority (UMTA): Integrating governing bodies for uninterrupted mobility

The Unified Metropolitan Transport Authority (UMTA) has been proposed by Praja (trans: subjects) Research Analysis and Advocacy Group (RAAG). Praja RAAG, a citizens group, engages in research and advocacy surrounding civic issues in Bengaluru. The UMTA project is a way of integrating mobility planning and administration. The members proposing UMTA believe that "Modern cities need efficient movement of people and goods, both into of

[sic] the urban settings, and within the city" (Praja RAAG 2016, 12). Much of Bengaluru's mobility crisis - including pollution, accidents, congestion, traffic delays - can be attributed to the lack of a comprehensive institutional authority that overlooks planning. Moreover, through their demand for a Unified Metropolitan Transport Authority (UMTA), they want to revitalize existing Land Transport Authorities (LTA) to ensure that they take over planning responsibilities from existing individual transport and mobility related agencies like the public bus system (BMTC), the metro (BMRCL) and others. They propose to have the planning functions of these individual agencies (BMTC, BMRCL, etc.), which have until now been working in silos, taken over by the LTA, and they will focus more on service delivery in the future. Praja RAAG seeks to emulate LTA models used in Singapore, London and Chennai.

Attributing Bengaluru's traffic congestion and other mobility related problems to the lack of coordination among various urban transport agencies, Praja RAAG advocates UMTA because they believe that the current mobility crisis could have an adverse impact on the city's economy. They believe that the solution to the crisis lies in administrative connection, and that a comprehensive administrative body that overlooks planning is necessary to further enhance the city's development. They also ascribe symbolic value to a unified LTA. According to them, the presence of a unified LTA is an indicator of a "modern city." "Most modern global cities have overarching bodies that perform functions such as planning, commissioning or even executing infrastructure construction, regulating operators and ensuring that standards are set and met, ensuring good inter modal connectivity and so on" (Praja RAAG 2016, 12). As the case of UMTA shows, the idea of connection at the institutional and administrative level is seen as translating into improved spatial connection through transport services. This idea of connection is yet again reinforcing the idea of world-class urbanization and progress.

iv. Public transport: how state preoccupations with world-class standards of mobility and connection impact access and for whom

Urban infrastructures and public transport systems are the prerogative of authorities under their respective state governments. As a result, there can be a great deal of variability in the quality of infrastructure, public transport systems and fares across states. In Bengaluru city, the BMTC (public bus) and the BMRCL (metro) function as parastatals, which are quasi-state agencies. They fall under the purview of the state government, and as research on governance in Bengaluru points out, parastatals "do not have any locally elected representatives for consultations in their panel nor are they held accountable to the BBMP [Bruhat Bengaluru Mahanagara Palike or the municipality for the Greater Bengaluru Metropolitan Area (BBMP)]. These parastatal agencies are only answerable to specific departments in the state government. Hence these bodies are not held accountable to the people of Bangalore" (Idiculla 2015). These parastatals are also structured like corporations and as a result, while they function with the goal of maximizing revenue, with each new government, or during election season, there may be a visible change in the number of buses or with subsidies made available to certain communities of people.

One of the reasons cited by citizens and in newspapers for Bengaluru's heavy traffic jams is that Bengaluru's transition to "IT capital" resulted in the exponential growth of the population in the city, and concomitantly, in the number of privately owned automobiles. This, in combination with the city's shortage of buses, has been seen as the cause of traffic congestion (Pandey 2016). The public bus system, or the Bangalore Metropolitan Transport Corporation (BMTC), is implicated in this problem. The bus system's inability to adequately cater to the

city's mobility needs is blamed for leading to people's purchase of private forms of transport, further leading to increased air and noise pollution and traffic congestion (Ibid).

It was decided that the solution to the congestion crisis in Bengaluru was to build a world-class metro system. Despite the delays in construction, the infrastructural mess and heavy traffic jams caused by the metro construction process for several years, the metro has been touted as world-class. In fact, in 2011, the then Bengaluru Metro Rail Corporation Limited (BMRCL) Managing Director, Sivasailam declared: "The Bangalore Metro, in terms of technology, is comparable to any metro rail system in the world — in Europe, USA or China — and is even ahead of some of them" (Economic Times 2011).

Even as the BMTC was implicated in the city's traffic crisis, as only adding to it and not being able to efficiently provide connection, data from the BMRCL (metro) and BMTC (bus) show that while construction costs for phase I of the metro amounted to an exorbitant USD 1.1 billion (sourced from the Central Government, the State Government and international funding agencies such as the Japan International Corporation Agency (JICA), the Agence Française de Development (AfD), etc.[2] (BMRCL 2016)), the metro enables a mere 360,000 rides per day. On

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[2] According to the BMRCL 10th Annual Report for 2015-2016, "The Revised Project cost of Rs.13,845.01 Crore has been approved by Government of India and Government of Karnataka. While (Rs.8,155.52 Crore) 58.91% of the Project Cost is contributed by Government of India and Government of Karnataka, balance (Rs.5,689.49 Crore) 41.09% of the Project Cost has been raised as Senior Debt from the Financial Institutions. Japan International Corporation Agency (JICA) has sanctioned senior Debt of 64.536 Billion JPY in 2 tranches of 44.704 Billion JPY and 19.832 Billion JPY. During the year 2015-16 the Government of India has released Rs.398.91 Crore towards PTA (JICA) for Phase-1 of BMRC Project. The Agence Francaise Development (AfD) has also sanctioned and released Sovereign Loan of 110 Million Euros. Housing and Urban Development Corporation Limited (HUDCO) the first domestic financial institution has also sanctioned Rs.700 Crore.(Rs.650 Crore actually drawn). In addition to the above the Company has raised Rs.300 Crore from 'Namma Metro Bonds-Series-I' at attractive interest rate."

the other hand, the public bus or the BMTC serves facilitates over 5 million passenger trips on a daily basis. However, it receives only a fraction of the support from the government as compared to the metro. Moreover, the BMTC is also burdened with road and fuel taxes, thereby further adding to its financial stress. During visits to the BMTC and interviews, BMTC officials (Divisional Traffic Officers and Managers) emphasized this imbalance. Moreover, even the metro feeder buses provided by the BMTC were funded by the BMTC, they pointed out, further emphasizing the financial stress placed on the BMTC by the BMRCL. They pointed out that such an imbalance in state financial support explains why the BMTC has grown more dependent on riders for its gross revenue. As a result, the BMTC's fares rank high among public bus fares in the country, and when it comes to the route allocation of buses, they prefer to operate only on those routes that have potential for revenue-generation. The institution of the metro, and the funding imbalance between the bus and the metro then, has had the unintended consequence of taking away transport options for many, especially low-income groups.

As illustrated above, in addition to impacting the city's low-income communities, the rhetoric of world-class connection through the metro has real effects on the physical and material landscape of the city. No doubt, for many citizens, the metro represents a great convenience. However, the effects of the metro have also been to exacerbate commuting difficulties and inequalities of access. To elaborate, the city's metro infrastructure is taking years to build and the process involves creating heavy blockages and traffic congestion in many parts of the city. When this construction is ongoing, many people find themselves stuck in traffic jams for hours every day and in some cases, people seek out alternative routes and forms of transport (for example shifting to scooters and motorcycles from using buses to reduce travel time). The disparity in the state funds distributed between the BMTC and the BMRCL/metro are said to place financial

burdens on the BMTC, which in turn is forced to raise fares, adversely impacting low-income communities. In sum, the steel flyover, the metro, UMTA, and Tender S.U.R.E. all use the rhetoric of “world-class,” and “international” standards of efficient connection to shape the city. What remains to be addressed, however, is where people’s *access* to transport systems fits into these larger narratives and visions of efficient connection. Among the few voices that address the question of access to transport systems in the city is the Bengaluru Bus Prayanikara Vedike (BBPV) or the Bengaluru Bus Commuters Forum, a collective of activists and commuters. The Bus Prayanikara Vedike have foregrounded the impact that the high bus fares and revenue-oriented bus allocation logic of the public bus system, the BMTC, have on various disenfranchised communities in the city, and the ways in which low-income communities are further marginalized when they do not have access to affordable and regular public transportation (see BBVP “Bengaluru Bus Manifesto”). My own research findings corroborated these claims.

As I have illustrated above, infrastructures and systems of mobility and transportation in Bengaluru are shaped by visions of connection, world-classness and citizen contestations in the interest of well-being and sustainability. Building on scholarly critiques of world-classness, I make the following assertions: firstly I assert that the rhetoric of world-class connection disenfranchises those who are not normative subjects of the world-class city. Secondly, I suggest that while transport infrastructures serve as a tool to shape the city by those in power, they are also the medium through which the city is encountered in social institutions like family and in aspirations for social mobility.

In my dissertation I examine transport and mobility as sites through which the city is made and encountered. Susan Leigh Star writes: “Study a city and neglect its sewers and power

supplies (as many have), and you miss essential aspects of distributional justice and planning power" (Star 1999: 379). To elaborate, the study of infrastructure in cities allows insight into power relations that determine city-making. In my dissertation, I see transport for its ability to connect power relations that determine city-making with individual aspirations, kinship, caste, gender, and changing relations to land and livelihood.

My dissertation studies transport as an important component of the process of world-class city-making. Recent scholarship on Indian cities draws attention to processes of world-class city-making (Anand 2006; Ghertner 2015; Goldman 2011). In outlining the process of urbanization underway in Bengaluru, I use geographer Asher Ghertner's (2015) explanation of world-class city-making. According to Ghertner, world-class city-making is a process which is oriented towards an "aspirational target" that cannot really be measured. It is about making spaces and infrastructures in Delhi or in Bengaluru that would be acceptable in any iconic city like Paris or London or Tokyo. In arguing that aesthetics has become a tool for governing space in New Delhi, Asher Ghertner tells us that the project of world-class city-making is a "speculative project" where the "present is wagered on the future" (2015, 10). Similarly, in Bengaluru, big-ticket transport infrastructure projects are oriented towards aspirational futures and goals. They serve as technopolitical tools to govern urban space.

My research also uses anthropological works on South Asian cities, which illustrate the ways in which the developmental state in its preoccupation to make world-class cities through the construction of infrastructures, disenfranchises those who do not operationalize this singular project of world-classness (Anand 2006). My dissertation, shows how projects of world-class city-making, namely the metro, freeways, tolled-expressways and even airconditioned buses in Bengaluru often actively disenfranchise those who do not qualify as normative world-class

citizen. Such attempts at shaping the city based on “aspirational targets” reinforce the role of the state to one of “stakeholder” while giving private actors more leeway (Nair 2000) (of course, unlike Anjaria’s definition of world-classness, Nair is critiquing the vision to make Bengaluru into Singapore). My dissertation, by examining the ramifications of the rhetoric of world-classness for public transit users, builds on critiques of world-classness to show how transport is embroiled in this project.

The aspired goal of these infrastructures is high-speed connection (see also Anand 2006). Deployed by the state, corporations and politicians, the rhetoric of connection promises speedy mobility from specific parts of the city, especially spaces that are internationally visible (for example the airport, IT hubs, etc.) to others. This rhetoric of connection paints the city as fragmented spatially as well as in terms of its potential for boosting the economy because of a lack of modern planning and heavy traffic jams. It serves as a way to justify major expenditures towards privileging elite forms of mobility such as cars (by the construction of freeways and magic boxes), and the metro. Connection is presented as the solution to congestion. In his book *Installing automobility: Emerging politics of mobility and streets in Indian cities*, Govind Gopakumar posits that congestion is treated symptomatically by administrators with the intent to privilege private forms of automobility. He writes that congestion in Bengaluru is not a recent phenomenon and that historically speaking, there have been several attempts to address congestion. He proposes that since the 1990s, the characterizations of congestion have privileged automobility. He writes that this “discursive paradigm” manifests as a technopolitical “regime of congestion” (Gopakumar 2020). Using Gopakumar’s conceptual lens, in my dissertation I see the narrative of connection, which is deployed as the antithesis of congestion, as a discursive strategy that serves to favor elite forms of transport that herald world-classness.

However, in my dissertation, I assert that these big-ticket transport infrastructures privilege transport for mobility sake, without attention to strengthening the density of access in locally meaningful ways. As Kavya Murthy writes:

> "The solutions offered by transport policies and public–private partnerships posit methods of transit that purport to be universally accessible, yet are in empirical fact out of the reach of the majority… Rather than ensuring the directness of links and a density of connectors, by accounting for geographical destination of activities, mobility in and of itself becomes a performance objective in planning, with greater public investment in roads easily accessible by car users rather than modes that facilitate multi-modal access for heterogeneous publics. The unresolved dilemma in the Indian planning scenario is on where good mobility is seen as a sufficient condition for accessibility" (Murthy 2011,122).

Building on this argument, and presenting a critique of world-class city-making, in my dissertation, I examine the myriad ways in which socio-spatial connection is made and defined by individuals by closely following their everyday mobility practices.

I assert that state, corporate and business elite visions of world-class city-making through high-end transport infrastructures and systems including freeways, the metro and tolled expressways, etc. define connection as high-speed, capital-driven mobility. They overlook the ways in which access to transport and mobility such as the everyday tactics used by many people in the city to reach their favored destinations (see chapter 2 on women and public transport, and chapter 1 on share-auto rickshaws), constitutes connection. People's everyday use of transport serves to illuminate not only the ways in which spatial connections are made but also as the

medium through which the city is encountered in social institutions like family, in efforts at negotiating changing ties to land ownership, caste, gender, and aspirations for the future.

Thus far, I have highlighted some key debates between powerful actors including the state, citizens and business elite on conversations and projects surrounding mobility and transport in Bengaluru, which showcase the different visions for the city's mobility landscape, not to mention, have the power to shape the city's mobility landscape profoundly. I proceed to focus on the lived experiences of top-down mobility-related decisions on those whose interests are not yet visible in these dominant conversations. I seek to understand the impact of planning that views mobility rather than locally meaningful access as an end in itself, on individual lives.

Mobility and access

The material excerpt below is from a focus group discussion with a group of women who were forcibly evicted in 2014 from JB slum, a slum in a spatially well-connected part of Bengaluru, and forcibly relocated to a peripherally located, Karnataka Slum Development Board (KSDB) slum rehabilitation building about 14 kilometers (8.69 miles) away.

I am seated on the floor of Rajini's house in the KSDB slum rehabilitation housing facility in the southern periphery of Bengaluru city. Rajini is 22 and lives with her 60-year-old widowed mother in the housing unit. But for the metal cot on which Rajini's mother is sitting, the house is devoid of any furniture. A garlanded photograph of Rajini's father hangs above a small television set. A couple of feet across from me is a group of 7 women, sitting cross-legged on the floor. Rajini serves us some hot tea and snacks.

The slum that they had earlier lived in was built with much care by their fathers and grandfathers. Over the years, they had invested a lot of effort into harnessing political support for

basic amenities like water, electricity and public transport. They told me that access to affordable public transport in their previous place of residence enabled much more freedom in terms of how they balanced their work and domestic lives, in addition to making more employment opportunities available to them.

The government slum rehabilitation facility is located on an eight kilometer (4.9 mile) stretch of road with scarce access to public buses. This is because the BMTC does not earn enough of a revenue from allocating buses on routes leading to this neighborhood. My interlocutors informed me that after their forced eviction and relocation, their husbands had been unable to find employment in the new neighborhood, and children had to travel 14 kilometers each way, every day, to get to their schools. The women therefore had to work additional hours as the sole breadwinners and domestic caregivers of their families.

The reduced access to transport after relocation had a huge impact on their everyday rhythms, not to mention their physical well-being. They were forced to organize their lives around public transport. "We wake up at 3:00 am, do all the housework by 4:00-4:30 am and get ready and leave at 5:00 am to reach work by 6:00-6:30 am. From here [this neighborhood] it is very physically strenuous. There is no direct bus during peak hours [as a result of which many women have to switch multiple buses each way to get to their places of work]. The BMTC complains that there are not enough passengers, which is why they do not want to allocate more buses here. They have to come all the way inside this road for 4-5 passengers. If they can't come when we need buses then obviously there will not be enough passengers!" they make apparent their indignation towards the BMTC's preoccupation with revenue-generation.

They draw my attention to the ways in which the relocation has impacted their access to employment:

> After coming here many have joined garments [factories]. Before that they all did house work. There are many north Indians here [referring to the software sector employees in the apartment complexes in the neighborhood]. They prefer to employ people who know Hindi. There is a language problem here. All are software people! [meaning, people who have migrated to Bengaluru from mostly north Indian states].

The eviction and forcible relocation has impacted their access to livelihood adversely. Not only are many women not being able to find employment in jobs and social contexts that they are familiar and comfortable with, but because of the language barrier, many women are unable to find employment in housekeeping jobs and are forced to find work in garments factories. However, "Garments is very difficult. Many quit [after only a few weeks]. They do not give leave even if people are sick. If we take leave we get fired."

The women also talk about the challenges caused by the high bus fares in combination with the irregular frequency of buses. Since many women now find themselves traveling long distances to access jobs (this new neighborhood does not have employment opportunities conducive to their skills and preferences), they buy monthly bus passes. However, they point out that many of them end up spending almost 1/4th of their monthly income on transport. This is not only because bus fares are high, but also because the lack of access to buses coerces them to rely on auto rickshaws at least part of the way each way, every day. This additional auto rickshaw cost adds substantially to their monthly transport expenditure.

As my interlocutors indicate, the eviction has resulted in a loss of jobs for their husbands, forcing the women to take on the sole responsibility of being the breadwinner for their families. Their domestic responsibilities, in combination with the work that they do for a living,

compounded by the low frequency of access to buses has made them extremely time-poor and is taking a toll on their health and well-being. Thus, the lack of access to buses places an inordinate burden on the women, forcing them to work round the clock. Moreover, as they point out, their transport decisions are not merely dependent on the cost of travel, but also on the ways in which the BMTC's buses are entangled in hierarchical relationships with the metro and other transport systems and infrastructures in the city, not to mention gender roles within the family structure, monthly income, nature of employment, etc. Access therefore, is determined by the networking of multiple variables determined by power relations within the city and within family structures and based on identities such as caste, gender and class.

Having said that preoccupations with world-class city-making in Bengaluru prioritize transport for the sake of mobility with little attention to access, I build on scholarship in the social sciences that see the need to shift from a place-fixed approach to one that studies social worlds through the lens of movement (Urry 2007). Within this line of inquiry, it has been argued that mobility must be studied from an interdisciplinary perspective, across spatial scales, and in the context of materialities as well as temporalities (Sheller 2017). As a result, as Cass et al. (2005) state, one must necessarily refrain from reproducing arguments claiming that social exclusion is engendered by "some combination of distance, inadequate transport and limited ways of communicating; that these exclusions are unfair or discriminatory; and that local and national government should reduce such socio-spatial exclusion" (Cass et al. 2005, 539). According to them, such an understanding places limitations on what social inclusion in the form of access is and is not. Rather, they propose a more fluid conceptualization of access. As Cass et al, further explain,

> What this means is that we need to know more about the spatial and temporal properties of people's social networks *and* about how these vary; only this will provide a point of reference against which to judge whether social-spatial exclusion, or 'access' – by which we mean the ability to negotiate space and time so as to accomplish practices and maintain relations that people take to be necessary for normal social participation – is indeed improving or declining. (Ibid 2005, 543)

In my research, I use this theoretical apparatus. By foregrounding emic perspectives of locally meaningful ways to think of access, I see mobility and access as produced through the intersection of conflicting visions of the urban form, histories of caste, and the temporality of aspired futures. I study claims for increased access within broader theoretical realms of gender, caste, class, global discourses of sustainability and more local visions of world-class city building.

Rather than argue that social exclusion measured through mobility and access to services and facilities can be determined by affordability and distance, I demonstrate that there is a very particular "politics of mobility" (Cresswell 2010) underlying the challenges articulated by my interlocutors. The politics of mobility here indicates a strong leaning towards the tension between projects of world-class city-making, and caste, class, gender and particularities of place. Tim Cresswell writes:

> By politics I mean social relations that involve the production and distribution of power. By a politics of mobility I mean the ways in which mobilities are both productive of such social relations and produced by them. Social relations are of course complicated and diverse. (Cresswell 2010, 21)

In Bengaluru, the transport landscape is hierarchical and is relationally produced. The state, business elite, corporations and even the middle-class citizenry play an important role in shaping the urban transport landscape. For example, buses and freeways have been instituted just to service the IT industry, while little has been done for garment factory workers. Moreover, middle-class citizens often rely on claims for a sustainable future to contest state plans for world-class city-making (as in the case of the steel flyover). In other words, power is inscribed into the landscape as a result of which how one group travels or aspires to travel impacts others socially, spatially as well as temporally (for example, see chapter 2 on the impact of the IT industry on the city's landscape and on the ways in which individuals plan their daily transport practice based on the rhythms of movement engendered by other industries).

It is indisputable that in the case of my interlocutors, power relations shape their distance from jobs and transport hubs, their role within the family, the demands placed on them at work and at home. The distribution of power shapes their access to transport. Similarly, other scholars have studying mobility for its political implications argue that mobility is entangled in the formation of political subjectivities (Bishara 2015). Anthropologist Amahl Bishara's article "Driving While Palestinian in Israel and the West Bank: The Politics of Disorientation and the Routes of a Subaltern Knowledge" (2015) argues that politics is inscribed into space, and for Palestinians "driving is a practice of analysis in action." The act of driving connects an embodied politics of infrastructure with ideas pertaining to territory and history. Geographers Sziarto and Leitner's (2010) study of the Immigrant Workers' Freedom Ride (IWFR) sees the movement as an "effort to construct a counterpublic" (2010, 382). Similarly, in my dissertation, I see mobility as entangled in networks of power. Nevertheless, I pay attention to the ways in which power relations facilitate and/or prevent a familiar *rhythm of access* from forming.

Lefebvre explains the salience of rhythm in producing and challenging social order. He writes: “Objectively, for there to be change, a social group, a class or a caste must intervene by imprinting a rhythm on an era, be it through force or in an insinuating manner” (Lefebvre 2004, 14). Rhythm for Lefebvre refers to interactions “between a place, a time and an expenditure of energy” (2004, 15). It is found in: “a) repetition (of movement, gestures, action, situations, differences); b) interferences of linear processes and cyclical processes; c) birth, growth, peak, then decline and end” (Ibid). I bring together mobility, identity and aspirations for social mobility to understand how people value and make sense of rhythms of access. I problematize the assumption that rhythms of access or sustained access to transport leads to economic empowerment.

Infrastructure, transport and social mobility

The World Bank’s Global Mobility Report (GMR), a first of its kind initiative to understand the performance of the transportation sector at a global scale, and to harness its potential to create a more sustainable future, goes on to reinforce the narrative that increased transport connection can improve international trade and benefit national economies (GMR 2017: 24). The report seeks to “leave no one behind” by supporting “universal access” to transport especially to the poor and those people in rural areas. The rationale behind this narrative is that increased access to transport for the poor and vulnerable (especially women) will result in increased access to social and economic opportunities, which in turn will lead to economic growth (GMR 2017). Anthropologist Edward Simpson critiques the World Bank’s Global Mobility Report for attempting to envision a “global thinking in relation to transport” (Simpson 2019: 41). Aspirations for mobility, he tells us are culturally produced and thus, to

assume the possibility of a universal future of mobility, is to efface the diversity of aspirations and also to neglect the cultural basis of these aspirations. Building on this critique, I draw attention to the role of social complexity and particularities of place in shaping the relationship between transport and social mobility. I argue that transport and its relation to social mobility and aspirations for the future must be seen in the context of social identities such as caste, class and gender.

Scholarship on infrastructure in the Global South, pays attention to the role of social complexity in examining how infrastructure reproduces inequality by encumbering access (Anand 2006, 2012, 2017; Harvey and Knox 2015; Von Schnitzler 2010, 2013, 2014). Others see infrastructures such as oil rigs and hydroelectric dams, corporate enclaves, roads and cities even as sites for "negotiating hydrocarbon capitalism," that is as sites through which economic interaction seems disembedded from social context when it is in fact imbricated in it (Appel 2012; 2019). This seeming disembeddeness absolves US oil companies of all responsibility in the unequal treatment of workers and in producing other forms of inequality. My dissertation reinforces these arguments on the potential that infrastructures have to disenfranchise. However, in unpacking processes of disenfranchisement, my dissertation identifies the uniqueness of transport as infrastructure, in its ability to enable insight into the ways in which the city is encountered in kinship, individual and collective aspirations for social mobility, ties to land, and caste, gender and class. Moreover, transport is unique in its ability to indicate status, and it allows insight into locally meaningful ideas of social mobility.

Paying attention to the role of social complexity in mediating transport access, I take an intersectional approach (Crenshaw 1991) to the relationship between transport infrastructures and systems and social mobility. I show how class, caste and gender are entangled in visions for

social mobility. Chapter 3 for example, examines the adjustments that parents from low-income households make to enable their children to access an education, access to which was impeded by eviction, forced relocation and a prohibitive lack of buses. They explained the rationale behind their behavior – they believed that access to education was crucial to their child's education and they believed that a disruption-free education alone would enable the child to find work that was better than the menial labor that they themselves were forced to do. While increased transport access might allow them to find menial jobs for themselves, for their children it heralded a better life.

In studying transport systems and infrastructures, I am attentive to the fact that despite the dominance of modernization thinking with respect to transport, end goals of economic growth are not always met. Moreover, economic agency/ economic growth are not always the end goals of transport use. Here, I build on scholarship that emphasizes the need to resist evaluating infrastructures in the Global South based on a Western-centric yardstick, but rather to understand infrastructural projects for the generative potential that their condition (whether it be incompletion, repair, etc.) holds for understanding urban social life (Gupta 2015).

Sites and methods

What role does transport play in shaping the urban landscape, that is, how are transport infrastructures and efforts at world-class city-making, related? Why do people make the transport decisions that they do? What role does social location (for e.g. class, caste, gender) play in shaping mobility practices and transport use and access? How is social location entangled with transport use and aspirations for the future/ social mobility? In order to answer these questions, I conducted long-term fieldwork Bengaluru. My fieldwork included paying close attention to two

specific neighborhoods in Bengaluru. One of the main reasons that I chose to conduct a neighborhood study was because caste, class and gender are closely tied to place in Bengaluru and often demographic composition varies significantly by neighborhood. By adopting a neighborhood study approach, I was able to talk to people across the caste, class and gender spectrum, I was able to gain ethnographic insight from a "vertical slice" (Nader 1972) of the city's population. I was able to gain insight on the mobility experiences of more privileged commuters and industry professionals, and the impact this can have on the mobility experiences of others.

The neighborhoods that I chose for my study were selected according to the following criteria: they were radically different from each other in terms of their connection to the city's public transport grid; they differed also in terms of how long each neighborhood had been associated with the city; and, they displayed demographic differences on the axes of caste, class, and religion.

The first neighborhood, Basavanagudi, a centrally located neighborhood in Bengaluru, is well connected to the city's public transport grid (bus and the metro). Planned in the late 19th century, in the aftermath of the plague epidemic, Basvanagudi was built with hygiene and sanitation in mind (Nair 2005; Pani et al. 2010). As a result, wide streets, much distance between residences and the organization of housing on the basis of caste hierarchy characterized the geography of Basavanagudi, which persists even today. When planned, Basavanagudi was mainly meant to accommodate civil servants. The sites in the Basavanagudi extension were stratified along the lines of caste and class.

In contrast, the second neighborhood is peripherally located and was only assimilated within the Bengaluru city boundary in 2007 when the city boundaries were formally expanded to

include neighboring villages (Idiculla 2010). Bordering this neighborhood lies Central road,[3] an 8 kilometer (5 miles) stretch of road, which over the course of my research became increasingly important because it revealed the ways in which difficulties in access to public transport can deepen existing inequalities, but also because it showed the ways in which local communities establish mobility systems like share-auto rickshaws to overcome challenges with respect to access to public transport. Central road was also the official boundary which divided the city from the rural area surrounding it.

Moreover, unlike Basavanagudi, this neighborhood is proximate to Electronics City, an IT hub in Bengaluru's periphery. As a result, the landscape around Central road is rapidly changing from rural to urban. New housing and commercial structures catering to IT sector employees are sprouting rapidly over what were previously mainly farm lands. The demography of the neighborhoods around Central road, which connects two of the city's main IT corridors, Sarjapura road and Hosur road, which was previously comprised of a large number of Scheduled Caste people, is growing to include more high income and "upper" caste communities. The income disparity as well as the mobility disparity in and around Central road are high. However, they have led to the emergence of local, creative forms of mobility systems (like the share-auto system which seldom operate in other parts of the city).

The methods that I used included long term participant observation with at least 30 households from the two neighborhoods. I primarily relied on snowball and random sampling.

[3] Central road is a pseudonym for this site. I have chosen to change the name of the site in order to maintain the anonymity of my interlocutors. Moreover, different parts of the 8 kilometer stretch of road are called by different names because parts of this stretch fall under different wards or municipal administrative units. However, for the sake of simplicity, I call this stretch Central road.

While in Basavanagudi, my interlocutors included residents from the neighborhood, they also included service providers like municipal contract sweepers and street vendors. With Central road, my interlocutors included members of households residing in the KSDB slum rehabilitation buildings, but also snowballed to include IT sector employees living in nearby gated communities and apartment complexes, and others who lived in villages around Central road, street vendors at the local marketplace, and rickshaw drivers who drove "share" autos in the area.

I initially gave members from the households with whom I interacted, detailed questionnaires. The questionnaires gave me a general idea of the amount of money people spent on transportation, the amount of time they spent travelling every day, the places that they frequented, and the steps that they took during their commutes (see Appendix).

I followed up on the questionnaires by shadowing members from these households on their everyday commutes, carefully noting down all the steps involved, listening to their commentaries about their experience of commuting and trying to understand why they made the transport decisions that they did. Keeping in mind the risks and ethical dilemmas (such as placing demands on their time and labor while benefitting from it) (Nakamura 2008) of asking interlocutors to take photographs of their commutes I took photographs of their commutes while accompanying them.[4]

I followed this up with semi-structured interviews to understand what their days were typically like and how transportation figured in the midst of all the other tasks that they had to

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[4] In two cases, I was unable to accompany my interlocutors and they offered to send me photographs that they took on their commutes. One of them travelled by a company shuttle that did not allow non-employees to accompany employees. In the second case, husband and wife used a scooter to travel and because scooters do not accommodate a third person, they said they preferred to take photographs and send them my way because it was more convenient rather than travel by auto rickshaw with me.

fulfil. This gave me more information on how mobility and transport use were embedded in their everyday lives. While I accompanied most people to work on weekdays, many of my interlocutors from low-income communities were only available on Sundays. This is because many of them were extremely time-stressed because of domestic and work responsibilities and Sundays were typically the days when the women would be home, catching up on their week's laundry, washing dishes, going to visit relatives, or going to places of religious worship, cooking more elaborate dishes, and spending time with their families. The husbands of my interlocutors would typically use the day off from duty (if they were employed) to take a nap or drink. Many would be fast asleep by noon. The women had some more time to spend with children and on chores while their husbands relaxed and took naps. Therefore, my Sundays were spent with women interlocutors from low-income communities catching up on the week, and occasionally visiting relatives, temples, or even going to movies with them. I spent weekday evenings, Saturdays and public holidays with my interlocutors from Basavanagudi. I conducted oral histories with individuals from both neighborhoods to understand their own personal trajectories of moving in Bengaluru and to identify narratives of urban transformation through the lens of transport and mobility.

In addition to residents from the two neighborhoods, I also interviewed local auto rickshaw drivers (many of whom I also shadowed), elected representatives, ward engineers, street vendors and municipal contract workers (for example, sweepers). While elected representatives and ward engineers were able to offer insights on the rationale and process that was used to "develop" transport infrastructures in the neighborhoods, street vendors and contract workers offered insight on the lived experience of these infrastructural and spatial transformations. I also interviewed traffic police and crime branch police from the two

neighborhoods to get a more robust idea of what they considered some of the main mobility-related trends and violations.

To gain perspective on the rationale governing public transport systems, I interviewed public relations officers, other officials, as well as drivers and conductors from the BMTC and the BMRCL. I also interviewed historians in Bengaluru about some of the main transport and mobility-related transformations in the city. In addition to auto rickshaw drivers and the rickshaw drivers' union, I interviewed app-based cab drivers to understand how these intermediate transport systems were impacted by government visions for urbanization.

Over and above these interviews, shadowing sessions, and questionnaires, I conducted focus group discussions with many women from low-income communities to gauge some of their mobility-related concerns as a community. Focus groups were typically held inside the homes of people living in these neighborhoods and they became a way to understand the collective experience of the community with respect to transport access. Over and above all this, I relied heavily on my work with BBPV and also on interviews with activists across the city who were mobilizing for change through various social movements, to gain a different perspective from that given to me by the BMTC and BMRCL officials, but also to understand critiques of some of the rationales deployed by these agencies. Finally, I attended meetings organized by non-profit research agencies like the World Resources Institute, academic institutions and activist collectives to understand some of the more elite, global conversations about transport and mobility.

Chapter overview

i. Chapter 1

As processes of world city-making dominate Bengaluru's mobility landscape, public discourse characterizes locally organized ride-share systems as "informal," thereby invoking a dichotomous relationship between formal and informal transport. By closely examining the practice of share-auto rickshaw driving among men from low-income, formerly farm-holding households in peripheral Bengaluru, this chapter argues that the drivers destabilize this dichotomy by differentiating "informal" work. They use the identity category of "local" to distinguish themselves and their work from that of "outsiders." "Local", is tied to their unique experience of urban transformation. It is a discursive strategy that indexes their affective ties to land and territory, and invokes their shared experience of urban transformation, shifts in livelihood, aspirations and selfhood. Finally, "local" conjures up the logic of orderliness which defines their practice and distinguishes it from the practice of "outsiders." The discourse of "local" versus "outsider" serves to justify efforts towards preventing "outsiders" from participating in the system. In addition to illuminating experiences of urban transformation among men from peripheral, low-income communities, this chapter argues that the efforts of the local share-auto rickshaw drivers are a way to establish belonging in a rapidly urbanizing socio-spatial environment.

ii. Chapter 2

This chapter examines the impact of the stratification of the public transport grid in Bengaluru on women's mobility in the city. In this chapter, I ask: How do state aspirations for urbanization shape public transport systems in Bengaluru? How does urbanization interact with prevailing notions of gender and what implications do these processes have for women's socio-

spatial mobility in the city? What social significance does public transit acquire in the popular imagination? By examining gender-based seat segregation, the installation of surveillance technologies for safety and by contrasting the commute experience of women from garment manufacturing industries with IT professionals, I present the following argument. By showing that public transit favors particular industries, especially IT, I argue that the normative user is imagined as a modern, professional and engaging in "productive" labor is considered the ideal use of public transit. Public transport therefore serves to uphold heteronormative, "upper"-caste, ideologies. Moreover, the transport landscape demonstrates a relational quality, where some industries like IT have the power to shape the spatial, temporal and social lives of many.

This chapter goes on to challenge claims that access to transport will lead to increased social mobility. Critiquing these claims for reducing social mobility to mean economic agency, this chapter examines emic ideas of social mobility by paying close attention to the relationship between caste, gender and class.

iii. Chapter 3

Transport infrastructures in Bengaluru are increasingly shaped by aspirations for world-class city-making by the state and corporations. However, these shifts are experienced differently by the city's residents, vendors, entrepreneurs and drivers. In this chapter, I examine experiences of Bengaluru's changing urban form through narratives and practices surrounding transport (infrastructures, systems and automobiles) from a diverse range of actors including street vendors, auto rickshaw drivers and long-time, elderly residents of Basavanagudi. What connects these narratives and experiences of transformation is that they are linked to different kinds of markets including physical, digital and housing markets. This chapter focuses on markets and transport because the relationship was mobilized by my interlocutors in their narratives and

practices. In this chapter I ask: What different kinds of relationships emerge between different kinds of transport systems and marketplaces? How are they experienced and narrativized by those closely involved in the processes?

I present three distinct ethnographic scenarios in this chapter.

The first ethnographic vignette focuses on the demolition of an "informal" marketplace in a peripheral part of Bengaluru by municipal officials. What we really see in this case is the way the world-class city is violently superimposed on pre-existing urban formations. "Informality," although a central part of the urban condition (Anjaria 2016), is effaced by the municipality, with the intention of instituting urban formations that are based on visions of world-classness, where "informality" is seen as antithetical to the project of world-class city-making.

The second ethnographic vignette pays close attention to the role that auto rickshaws play in meeting complex and diverse mobility needs in the city. Bengaluru's rickshaw drivers see algorithm-based, digital transport marketplaces such as cab aggregators as a threat to their livelihood. In stark contrast to the algorithm-based mode of operation of cab-aggregators, the rickshaw drivers' logic of operation, which is based on ideas of being master of their own will and time, enables them to provide critical mobility services. Their services not only enable insight into uniquely gendered economic practices that make the city, but they also serve to sustain them. Moreover, these rickshaw drivers' work allows insight into different kinds of gendered everydayness – from the masculinity of the drivers, to the working-class femininity of users.

The third section of this chapter unpacks the phrase "bungalow model to apartment model," which expresses the experience of urban transformation as felt and lived by elderly, long-term, middle-class residents of Basavanagudi. In looking at the relationship between

housing and transport in this context, this section illuminates the importance given to the role of kinship and its relationship to housing and transport.

iv. Chapter 4

This last chapter examines Cycle Day, a social movement organized by the Directorate for Urban Land Transport (DULT) in collaboration with NGOs and citizens. This social movement aims to revive the practice of cycling in Bengaluru city. In this chapter, I ask: Why does demand for bicycling infrastructures take the form of community building activities such Cycle Day, rather than protests? What kinds of social formations arise around claims-making for bicycle infrastructures? What do these narratives tell us about middle-class experiences of urban change in Bengaluru? Through an ethnographic examination of Cycle Day, I focus on narratives of revivalism, community and scale. I found that these narratives are commonly used by Cycle Day participants, and more generally by middle-class residents of Bengaluru, to describe their experience of Bengaluru's trajectory of urbanization and their aspirations for the city's future. I also show how the event enables insight into the ways in which the demand for bicycle infrastructure allows state and citizen aspirations for a world-class yet sustainable Bengaluru to converge. Finally, I foreground narratives from communities who rely on bicycling for work and other utilitarian purposes. Highlighting the emerging dichotomy between cycling for work and cycling for recreation, I emphasize the fact that the experience of bicycling in Bengaluru is highly differentiated. I argue based on these ethnographic insights that mobilization for bicycle infrastructures in Bengaluru is built on middle-class desire for *recreational bicycling* and aspirations for sustainability as well as restoring a fading sense of community.

CHAPTER 1

Un-fare: share-auto rickshaw drivers on "informality" and urban transformation

It was after noon on a week day in June 2017. I stood on the unpaved, muddy stretch meant to serve as the sidewalk to the narrow, asphalted road outside the government slum rehabilitation building in the interior of Central road, a rapidly urbanizing, 8-kilometer stretch of road along the south eastern municipal border of Bengaluru city. On the other side of the road, stray dogs lay in the mud outside a tiny shop that sold fresh pork, samples of which were suspended from the ceiling at the store's entrance. A small group of men - some of them residents of the slum rehabilitation buildings - gathered outside the tea shop adjacent to the pork shop, smoking their cigarettes and drinking tea as they chatted with each other. With each passing automobile more dust rose into the air. Despite being a peripheral part of the city, which until 2007 was categorized as a "village," the road was heavy with traffic which included two-wheelers (scooters and motorcycles), bicycles, cars, cabs and auto rickshaws.

Barely a couple of minutes into my wait, I flagged an oncoming auto rickshaw (see Figure 1). The driver was a curly-haired, thin, young man who looked to be in his mid-20s. A couple of passengers already sat behind him in the passenger seat. He was driving share. Share-auto rickshaw driving is a practice in which drivers take on board well beyond the state-stipulated limit on the number of passengers of three, in return for a much-reduced fare compared to the standard metered fare charged for a rickshaw ride. Although unusual in the interiors of the city, this practice is a meticulously organized system on Central road. The driver's khaki uniform hung loosely about his narrow shoulders. His shirt puffed up with air and his half-sleeves flapped in the wind as we began driving towards the end of the road. Further

along, the two passengers to alighted, leaving just the driver and me in the rickshaw. As we continued down Central road, a couple of young men started running alongside the auto rickshaw, gesturing with their hands at the driver and shouting at him in Kannada, the local language, to turn around. “I will drop the passenger off and come back” he shouted to them nervously. Soon after, another auto rickshaw, overflowing with passengers, drove past us on the other side of the road. It was driven by an underage driver. He appeared to be not more than 15 or 16 years old, well under the minimum age to acquire a driving license for auto rickshaws, which is 20 years of age (CiSTUP 2012). This young driver pointed at my rickshaw and threatened – “see you around the corner” as he passed us by. My rickshaw driver seemed to get increasingly nervous. He reached into the pocket in his shirt, and pulling out a bundle of 100-Rupee notes, he handed it over to me for safe-keeping until we reached the end of the road. “The local share-auto drivers here are very aggressive, they do not like drivers from outside driving share in this area,” he said. He picked up a passenger in the city who needed to be dropped off at a nearby apartment, and that is what brought him to this neighborhood. Since he was already here, he thought he could drive share rather than drive empty until he reached the end of the road, to make some quick money. The last time he was in this neighborhood, the rickshaw drivers here threatened him and warned him never to come back. They took away the money he had on him at the time. Over the course of my fieldwork from late 2016-2018, I encountered

multiple instances where rickshaw drivers from “outside” the area were afraid or reluctant to enter Central road because they feared run-ins with the “local” share-auto rickshaw drivers.

Figure 1: Share-auto rickshaws queued up at the entrance to Central road, with each driver awaiting their turn

Share-auto rickshaws are a phenomenon specific to peripheral pockets (like Central road) and a handful of neighborhoods in more interior parts of the city, which face a paucity of access to public buses (see also CiSTUP 2012; Prasad 2018). Auto rickshaws are considered to be a form of privately-owned public transport in Indian cities. They exist alongside large-scale public transport systems (like the bus and metro), and they have the ability to reach areas that are inaccessible to larger public transport systems (Anvita Arora 2010). Rickshaw drivers need to abide by a number of rules and regulations outlined in the Motor Vehicles Act (including a passenger limit of three and a prohibition on stage-carriage (CiSTUP 2012)). In contrast, the share-auto rickshaw system on Central road is a reduced-fare, ride-share system that is organized and managed by local men from primarily low-income households. Many of these drivers come

from households that sold their farmlands to real-estate developers who in turn were building high-end condominiums and offices on them. In using the binary of "local" and "outsider," the local share-auto rickshaw drivers justify their right to drive share in the area while simultaneously serving to highlight why other drivers are not legitimate participants. This binary does the work of distinguishing the local drivers and their work from outsiders.

Examining the share-auto rickshaw system, allows insight into the entanglement of identity and mobility. Scholars working on mobility have identified and discussed the diverse ways in which mobility is tied to identity. For example, it has been argued that national identity is produced through mundane practices like driving (Edensor 2004), middle-class status is maintained while co-opting a practice which is associated with the urban poor, namely bicycling, by distinguishing the practice of bicycling by using special gear and asserting concern for the environment (Anantharaman 2017), political sensibilities are forged through driving (Bishara 2015), and "professional" identity can be used to regulate and govern deregulated transport systems (Hickey 2010). Using ethnographic insights from interviews, oral histories and shadowing sessions with share-auto rickshaw drivers, in this chapter, I illustrate how the practice of driving share makes visible, the identity of "local." I ask: why is this identity tied to driving share? What are the social processes, experiences and relations underlying/or cementing the relationship between driving share and the identity of local?

In this chapter, I assert that the identity of "local" is a discursive category. It is operationalized by local share-auto rickshaw drivers to distinguish themselves and their work from other rickshaw drivers. I draw on Tarini Bedi's work on hereditary Muslim taxi drivers in Mumbai, to make this claim. Bedi explores the collective identity of "chillia" to argue that it is tied to the process of urbanization experienced by Palanpuri Momins through their participation

in Bombay's labor force. She tells us that the identity of chillia is a "discursive strategy" used by the drivers to differentiate themselves from other ethnic taxi driving communities in the city (Bedi 2018). While chillia is entangled with ethnicity and religion, I show that the identity of local does not neatly map onto pre-existing ethnic, religious or caste identities.

When I conducted fieldwork between 2016 and 2018 in Bengaluru city, I found that the local share drivers would often co-mobilize the identity of local with the following three themes. First, they would emphasize their long-term presence in the area, which I read as an assertion of their affective connection to the territory. Belonging as many did to households undergoing livelihood shifts from farming to other options including rickshaw driving, the second way in which local was constructed was through its relation to ongoing shifts in livelihood access in and around Central road. This serves to articulate a right to work based on agrarian selfhood and shared experiences of urban transformation. Third, the local share drivers were well aware of the precarity of the system. They knew that misconduct could lead to police action. This precarity led them to meticulously organize the system to prevent tussles among themselves and also present a façade of orderliness that mimics "formal" work. This serves to reflect the fact that local drivers understand informality as a "mode" (Millar 2018; Roy 2005, 2011), thereby distinguishing their practice from that of outsiders. Local thus indexes an affective sense of belonging, agrarian selfhood, and orderliness of practice. Local is also a form of social membership based on particularities of place and furthermore, it does not map neatly onto categories of caste or religion. Local thus serves as a discursive category used by local drivers to keep outsiders away and to distinguish the work of local drivers from the work of outsiders. In other words, local does the work of differentiating "informality."

Share-auto rickshaws are classified as "informal" public transport because they are seen as lacking regulation (Mani et al. 2012). In cities of the Global South, "informal" transit systems are defined as lying "outside the officially sanctioned public transport sector" (Cervero 2000, 3) and they are often seen as chaotic, adding to traffic jams, causing environmental pollution, and as being the necessary livelihood of those stuck in an endless cycle of poverty (Ibid). In Indian cities, planners see mobility as "an end in itself" (Murthy 2011, 122), and the rhetoric of "world-class" is deployed by the state to institute infrastructures (Anand 2006), thereby privileging private automobility (Gopakumar 2020). In Bengaluru in particular, where visions of world city-making characterize the materiality of transport systems and infrastructures like IT corridors (Goldman 2010; Nair 2000, 2005, 2015; Sonti and Rao 2014), in public discourse, "informal" systems like the share-auto are perceived as chaotic, unsafe, illegal, causing traffic congestion and polluting the environment (Srinivasan 2016). Such characterizations invoke and reinforce the formal-informal binary.

The formal-informal binary has limited analytical purchase (Agbiboa 2019; Bedi 2018; Millar 2018; Roy and Al Sayyad 2004; Roy 2005, 2011). Rather than take the binary as a given, this chapter unpacks how the share-auto rickshaw drivers make sense of public discourse which posits formal and informal as being in binary opposition. Furthermore, as Kathleen Millar points out in her book on the catadores of Jardim Gramacho in Brazil, adopting a binary approach to formal and informal reinforces the idea that such work is a necessity for those who are not needed by global capital, thus effacing the generative potential of the work itself (Millar 2018, 3). With this in mind, this chapter focuses on the complexity of the work performed by the local share-auto rickshaw drivers to show how their work navigates and even repurposes these top-down categories that are imposed on them.

I argue that in navigating the formal-informal binary, the local share drivers are in fact differentiating "informal" transport work. Matteo Rizzo's (2011) study of informal transport workers in Dar es Salaam launches a critique of the tendency to view informal workers in African cities as exercising agency by bringing deregulation from below. Rizzo argues that such thinking effaces the structural constraints that bind them. Rizzo goes on to illustrate how under neoliberalism, the oversupply and "fragmentation" of labor prevent an exercise of bottom-up agency. Giving detailed insight into the emergence of "classes of labour," Rizzo shows how informal transport workers are "fragmented." In other words, the workforce is categorized into three groups "*daladalamen* for life, day *wakas* and *wapiga debe*. Each group performs a different task. While *daladalamen* can subcontract work to the underemployed day *wakas*, the *wapiga debe* hit the body of the bus to solicit passengers. In contrast to the fragmentation of informal workers, this chapter illustrates the *differentiation* of informal transport work on the basis of social membership.

In India, the informal workforce is regulated by social identities including ethnicity and caste (Harriss-White 2003). These identities determine opportunities in the labor market (Surie and Sharma 2019). Amidst these conditions of employment access, auto rickshaw driving emerges as what my interlocutors considered to be a caste-neutral profession for many low-income individuals. As many drivers in Bengaluru would remark, "Anyone can drive an auto rickshaw." It is the "poor man's vehicle" and rickshaw driving is a profession meant for "those who are not educated."[5] Moreover, it was common to hear drivers remark that driving auto

[5] Although the drivers say that rickshaw driving is a profession for those who are not educated, the implication is that it is meant for those who have not received an education beyond 8th grade. In order to obtain a driver's license and badge for driving rickshaws in the city, applicants need to have completed their 8th grade (CiSTUP 2012).

rickshaws made them “masters of their will” and “time.” Similar to what Philippe Bourgois (1995) argues in his study of Puerto Rican drug dealers in East Harlem who engage in the illegal drug trade to avoid the ignominy that is often the byproduct of working in the formal economy, these claims about caste-neutrality and being masters of their will assert the drivers’ need for professional respectability, and the ability of rickshaw driving as a profession to be able to meet this need. However, this freedom and respect are contextual. The freedom of being masters of their own will simultaneously “frames new forms of oppression” (Sopranzetti 2017, 85). Share-auto rickshaw driving on Central road not only meets this need for professional respect, it also allows drivers to earn money while bypassing otherwise stringent rules imposed on rickshaw drivers. As a result, it is a coveted practice among local men and drivers from the city. Differentiation of the work of driving share thus refers to the local men setting themselves and their work apart from outsiders. Unlike the informal transport sector in Dar es Salaam (Rizzo 2011), where there are different “classes of labour” that many compete to perform and where the same person can move between categories of work, the difference here lies in the fact that all the drivers do the same work, but the category of local actively distinguishes local drivers and their work from outsiders.

My intervention lies in the assertion that the differentiation (rather than fragmentation) is based on whether a local or outsider is providing the labor. “Local,” which is used to distinguish the work of local drivers from outsiders, is a form of social membership based on particularities of place. It conveys a shared experience of urban transformation common to the share-auto rickshaw drivers. Local is a discursive strategy used by share-auto rickshaw drivers to navigate

the formal-informal binary. It is a reflection of how the drivers themselves understand "informality." Knowing the stereotypes (of congestion, chaos, lack of safety, lack of accountability, pollution) that attach to informality in public discourse, they use local to mitigate these negative perceptions of informality. This is because local indexes specific themes of affective ties to land, shifting livelihood patterns and agrarian selfhood, and orderliness. I argue that the drivers, by using the discursive strategy of local to set themselves and their work apart from that of outsiders, actively differentiate informal work based on social identity emerging from shared experiences of urban transformation.

Valuing space through affective ties

When I conducted fieldwork between 2016-18, Central road was in the throes of dramatic urban transformation. Evidence of this transformation was visible along the 8-kilometer stretch of road. Empty farmlands and under-construction behemoth structures like condominiums and office buildings, incongruously sat beside each other (see Figure 2). However, the experience of urban transformation was highly differentiated even among the inhabitants of areas surrounding Central road. It was common to hear people who had migrated here more recently from more central and urbanized parts of the city say "there was nothing here" just "farm lands and trees" when they first moved to Central road. That "development" only began around 2012. However, long-term local residents, many of them share-auto rickshaw drivers, often narrated the past of the areas surrounding Central road as eventful and rich with historical significance. Presenting narratives from the share-auto rickshaw drivers and contrasting them with the sentiment behind "there was nothing there," I suggest that they show very different ways of valuing space. I argue that the drivers' stories infuse the space with meaning and index affective entanglements with the

lands that they used to own and farm on. On the other hand, “there was nothing there” sees urban transformation as the starting point for valuing the space.

Figure 2: Urban transformation along Central road. Empty erstwhile farm lands, condominiums under-construction and small local business dot the length of the road

Bengaluru’s municipal authority, the BBMP or Bruhat Bengaluru Mahanagara Palike (Trans: Greater Bengaluru City Corporation) was formed in 2007. During this time, 100 wards (municipal administrative units) which were under the Bangalore Mahanagara Palike (BMP) or the former municipality were merged with 7 City Municipal Councils, 1 Town Municipal Council and 110 villages, and brought under the jurisdiction of the BBMP (Idiculla 2010). The jurisdiction of Bengaluru city was redrawn from 226 km^2 to over 800 km^2 (Ibid; Times of India 2009). Villages and small towns surrounding Central road, were among those brought under the jurisdiction of the BBMP. A result of these changes, ongoing urbanization accelerated around Central road and adjoining areas. Changes to the landscape included accumulation of farmlands by real estate developers (many of which have been converted into real estate on which condominiums and colleges have been built), changes to transport infrastructures such as the

asphalting of parts of Central road and its bifurcation into a two-way by the city municipality, and the proliferation of supermarkets and commercial complexes.

Residents of surrounding neighborhoods informed me that in the last decade, particularly since the expansion, not only has the physical landscape surrounding Central road transformed, but the population has grown exponentially and more diverse in terms of caste, religion and class. I provide a brief summary of the population in and around Central road. A number of households in the neighborhoods around Central road were previously engaged in farming. Many of these households, members of which had been long-term residents of the area, self-identify as belonging to Scheduled Castes and the Telugu Reddy caste. Others who live in these neighborhoods belong to low-income households that had been pushed out of the interiors of the city because of high cost of living, and had migrated here a few years ago upon finding that these neighborhoods were more affordable to live in. Many of these low-income migrants from the city, over time, set up small local shops and others had settled as street vendors in an open marketplace at the entrance to Central road. The population also consisted of people who had migrated from rural Karnataka and Andhra Pradesh in search of livelihood opportunities. While cities prove too expensive for them in terms of cost of living, fringe areas such as Central road are more affordable. Adding to the existing population of low-income groups, in 2005 the Karnataka Slum Development Board (KSDB) acquired land on Central road to build a slum rehabilitation housing. Between 2009 and 2014-15, over a thousand households living in slums in the center of the city were forcibly evicted and relocated in this far away rehabilitation housing, which contained 1328[6] units. Over time, the residents of this rehabilitation housing

[6] Data from the Karnataka Slum Development Board, 2017. Received by email.

(especially the women) would serve the purpose of providing cheap and disposable domestic labor for the more wealthy IT sector employees who gradually began to settle down in the large apartment complexes here because of the proximity of the neighborhood to the city's more established IT hubs, and also because the land prices here were much lower compared to in the interiors of the city, prompting them to purchase land and build large independent houses within gated communities.

People who lived in the slum rehabilitation buildings and some others who had moved into upscale apartment complexes not before 2010 would note that "there was nothing here" when they first moved to the neighborhoods through which Central road cut across, just "scrubs, farms and trees." However, in stark contrast to this narrative that obliterated the past of the spaces surrounding Central road, only recognizing its life with the beginning of urbanization, many of the share-auto rickshaw drivers would narrate rich stories of the dynamic past of the spaces. These narratives of spatial nostalgia ascertained the historical and personal significance of these spaces to the local drivers.

Rajkumar's stories were among such. Rajkumar is an auto rickshaw driver in his 40s. He is usually in his khaki uniform, his large frame seated in the front seat of his auto rickshaw, which is lined up behind a few other share-auto rickshaws at the Sarjapur road-Central road intersection. A couple of younger drivers in casual clothes usher pedestrians towards the first auto rickshaw in the line. They collectively make sure that the first rickshaw in line is the first one to get the passengers and the first to leave. Keeping in mind that all the drivers in the queue are trying to earn money, they are very disciplined about maintaining order.

Rajkumar is a licensed driver and drives in the city. However, when he grows tired of the excessive traffic there, he takes part in the share-auto rickshaw system on Central road. Like

Rajkumar, the group of drivers around us consists mostly of men who live close to the Central road – Sarjapur road intersection. Rajkumar informs me that he was born and has lived most of his life in "this village," he points to the village beyond the tall buildings.[7] His family used to own land on Central road, but on that land now stands an engineering college. "We used to farm on that land, it has been almost 20 years now since my family lost the land…" His family used to cultivate *ragi* (finger millet). If they still had the land then he would not be driving auto rickshaws. He tells me that "Many people in this area used to own lands. A lot of them have been bought over for the construction of apartment complexes. After their lands were sold off or taken away, many people were forced to take up other jobs," of which auto rickshaw driving is one.

Rajkumar's family has lived here for generations. He has vivid memories from his childhood of different spaces around Central road and adjoining areas, which hold much personal importance to him. For example, he remembers finding bullets in the fields when he played with his friends. The bullets were from the nearby military training camp. He remembers collecting the bullets and giving it to the local store where they recycled newspapers and metal. The copper in the bullets would be melted and extracted and then it would be sold.

In addition to stories of personal significance of the neighborhoods and spaces surrounding Central road, and contrary to the narrative that there was "nothing" on Central road until urbanization accelerated, Rajkumar emphasized the historical significance of the place through stories that have been passed down from his grandfather's generation. He informs me that British officials would hunt in these areas before India got independence from the British,

[7] The official boundary of Bengaluru city, i.e., the municipality's jurisdiction ends with Central road. Beyond Central road, there are many villages and small towns.

indicating that his family has lived in this area since before India became independent from British rule. “The elderly people here will tell you that this place has changed a lot!”, he says.

> If you ask my grandfather, he will tell you that the British used to come to these parts. They used to come and hunt animals such as rabbits. They would cut the feet off the game and take it with them. They would not take the whole animal, they would only take the feet! When I asked my grandfather the reason, he said ‘counting…’ to keep count that ‘yes, we have hunted these many.’ If the village folk accompanied the British on the hunt, they would give the rest of the animal to the village folk.

Rajkumar’s narrative expresses the significance the space holds for him. Establishing his family’s presence in the area even before India became independent from British rule is a way of asserting the legitimacy of his presence and his right to work in the area. Similarly, having experienced life on Central road when open fields were in abundance, and stray bullets from the military camp could be found strewn around, Rajkumar is drawing attention to his having been part of the spatial transformation of Central road across time. Many share-auto rickshaw drivers narrated similar stories of the space holding personal significance for them. Unlike the migrant motorcycle taxi drivers moving between village and city in Claudio Sopranzetti’s book, *Owners of the Map*, who see the village as backward and the city as symbolic of progress, or others who take pride in being “backward villagers” (2018, 100), the stories from these share drivers do not romanticize any one stage of “development” or the lack thereof. These stories were about witnessing, experiencing and *being part of spatial transformation*.

Jonathan Shapiro Anjaria reads the “Narration of presence in Mumbai’s past” as an “assertion of one’s legitimacy in the present” (Anjaria 2016, 104). Similarly, Rajkumar and Vasu’s narratives of being present in Central road’s past is an assertion of their legitimacy as

locals in its present. Just as Anjaria says that hawkers use the language of connection, sentimentality and intimacy in their invocation of the idea of "home" to plead against being evicted (ibid 105), I argue that these narratives from local share-auto rickshaw drivers invoke a sense of belonging and connection to the space by virtue of having been a part of its past. Their stories inscribe the space with affective meaning. These spaces are no doubt determined by power relations. However, as Anjaria writes, these are also "densely affective spaces, made meaningful through entangled histories, relationships and mundane practices" (ibid).

The statement "there was nothing here" until urban transformation speeded up, foregrounds the centrality of urbanization in affirming the value of Central road and adjoining areas. This statement simultaneously overrides alternative ways of understanding and experiencing spatial transformation, while also erasing histories and versions of the landscape that came before. What I have sought to do by foregrounding the stories from share-auto rickshaw drivers is to highlight other ways in which space is valued, and lay the foundation for how these experiences of spatial transformation and spatial significance undergird social membership or local-ness that the share-auto rickshaw drivers invoke to distinguish who gets to participate in the share-auto rickshaw system and who does not.

I have argued that local is indexed to affective ties to space and land, that are unique to the local drivers who have grown up in this area and have been part of urban transformation, not to mention come from families who owned lands and farmed for a living. I now proceed to suggest that local is associated with shared experiences of urban transformation, agrarian selfhood and shifts in livelihood trajectories.

Displacement and shifts in livelihood

Livelihood options for people engaged in "low-skill" work in India are horizontal (Surie and Sharma 2019). Much of this has to do with restrictions placed by caste identity on access to employment. Within the available options, finding respectable work is very challenging. As a result, auto rickshaw driving serves as a popular option (for "poor" and under-educated men), and driving share is especially desirable since it offers drivers greater freedom compared to many other forms of "low-skill" work. For driving share, one would not need the permit, fitness certificate, license, uniform, badge, insurance and tax certificate, display card, emission test certificate or registration certificate, all of which must mandatorily be carried by rickshaw drivers (CiSTUP 2012). In fact, often, share drivers would borrow their friends' rickshaws and drive them around without having to deal with the restrictions that accompanied driving in the city. As a result of the freedom accompanying driving share, the local share-auto rickshaw drivers face much competition from outsiders, who included rickshaw drivers passing through the neighborhood (as illustrated in the opening vignette), and men from the slum rehabilitation housing.

Agrarian livelihoods deeply influence selfhood and identity (Surie and Sharma 2019). Studying the experience of migrant drivers who work for digital mobility platforms such as OLA and Uber in Bengaluru, who migrate to Bengaluru in search of work because of climate change induced agrarian crises in rural Karnataka, Surie and Sharma show that pride in agrarian selfhood and caste for Vokkaliga Gowdas and Kuruba caste members is expressed by the use of bold stickers with caste names, which are pasted on the cabs. Although many of the local share auto rickshaw drivers in my study self-identified as Scheduled Castes and Telugu Reddys, I assert here that the discourse of local indexes an agrarian selfhood for them as well. This

selfhood is constructed as "good" and in radical contrast to that of competitors from the slum rehabilitation facility, who bear the stigma of being from a slum

To illustrate this further, I outline the livelihood trajectories of the local share-auto rickshaw drivers and contrast them with the experiences of the men from the slum rehabilitation facility.

i. Livelihood trajectory of local share-auto rickshaw drivers

Me: Did your family own land here?

Local share-auto rickshaw driver: Yes.

Me: Where is the land?

Local share-auto rickshaw driver (pointing): "We sold it and now Blue Lagoon apartments stands on it." He points to the multi-storeyed, multi-building apartment complex that advertises luxuries like gym and swimming pool.

Drivers at different share-auto rickshaw stands on and around Central road echo this experience of losing or selling lands. A number of them come from households that previously owned lands and relied on farming for their livelihood. However, in the last two decades, they informed me, there has been a spike in urbanization and corresponding reduction in the availability of groundwater, making farming unfeasible. While in some cases the changes brought about by urbanization and a drop in groundwater levels have led farmers to sell their farmlands to big real estate developers,[8] in other cases, erstwhile farm-holders have constructed homes on their lands for renting out to tenants, or have found themselves mired in legal battles

[8] See also Michael Goldman's (2010) discussion of the dispossession of those living and working in the periphery, in the interest of world city-making. Both Goldman and Janaki Nair (2015) address the issue of unfair compensation of dispossessed farmers in peri-urban Bengaluru.

over their lands. Some rickshaw drivers also narrated stories of farmers being forced to pawn their lands, to appease the demanding in-laws of their daughters and sisters, who would sometimes demand money, cars or other expensive commodities. In some cases, these arrangements led to the farmers losing their lands permanently upon not being able to make the full repayment. In other words, the local share-auto rickshaw drivers belong to households that are coping with shifts in livelihood opportunity that accompany urbanization.

These changes have also brought about a shift in local people's attitudes especially towards education and aspirations for the future. During the ride to my destination on Central road, Vasu, a familiar face and the driver of the share-auto that I had boarded explained how some drivers were processing the shift from farming to driving:

> There are a lot of apartments in these areas now. Farming can still only be found in the villages beyond the municipal border. This area is the border. This road is the border. Those days, you could only see fields as far along as your eye can see. He points to the right side of the road. You could see fields this whole stretch. Nothing is the same anymore…. Even if their fathers and grandfathers were in the farming occupation, this generation goes to school and gets an education. Once people are educated, they look for other opportunities. They do not want to farm. The trend now is to sell away farm lands because there are many new [real estate] developers taking over in the area. People, after they are educated also realize that land value is extremely high and they sell their property. This is why farming is gradually dying out in these areas. People are selling one acre for one crore Rupees [well over USD 100,000]… Driving an auto rickshaw allows me to be master of my own will. I can enjoy my independence and my life, without having to work by someone else's dictates.

Noting that neither the landscape nor livelihood opportunities or aspirations remain the same, Vasu's narrative is significant for the insight it provides into the ways in which urbanization intersects with shifting livelihood opportunities and aspirations, especially for the younger generation of local men in and around Central road. Farming is no longer viable not only because of a drop in groundwater levels, but because an increase in education among local households and rapid urbanization has led men from erstwhile farming households to aspire for a different life, resulting in their seeking out more lucrative opportunities including selling their farmlands or repurposing the land by building property that can be used to bring in a rent.

As studies on rural to urban migration in South India show, shifts in aspiration have implications for shifts in selfhood and identity (Singh 2019). Even as the local drivers grapple with shifts in selfhood, as their aspirations differ from their fathers and grandfathers, I assert that the emic idea of local gets invoked and further cemented as one that is closely tied to the selfhood that is built on agrarian livelihood, firsthand experience of urban transformation and consequent livelihood shifts. For the local drivers, driving share on Central road is an enactment of their having been part of the collective experience of transformation from rural to urban, and consequent shifts in livelihood from farming to rickshaw driving, not to mention, sharing in the practical difficulties of finding respectable work.

ii. Men from the slum rehabilitation facility

In contrast to Vasu's narrative, which mirrors the experience of *many* local drivers, the livelihood trajectory of the majority of men in the slum rehabilitation facility was defined by their forced eviction from the city's center and relocation to its periphery, namely, Central road. The eviction and relocation led to many of them losing access to their jobs and social networks, which used to help them to find "low-skilled" jobs in carpentry, construction, painting, and so on

(see also Balaji 2018). Unpacking conditions determining access to "low-skilled" work around Central road illuminates the role of gendered dimensions of labor division and their impact on employment availability for men. Central road is surrounded by garment manufacturing factories. These factories are a source of employment for many women from lower income households. In fact, a majority of workers in this industry are women (Roychowdhury 2008, GATWU n.d., PUCL-WSS 2016). With the increase in the population of IT employees, Central road and neighboring areas have also seen a corresponding increase in the number of condominiums and gated communities, day care centers, and pre-schools that cater to the needs of IT employees. Many of these developments offer employment opportunities (housekeeping, janitorial services, cooking, and child-care) for the women from the low-income households on Central road, including the government slum rehabilitation housing complex. However, the men from the slum rehabilitation complex are bereft of adequate "low-skilled" job opportunities. While one may speculate that the plethora of new building constructions may hold unskilled contractual labor opportunities for painting, carpentry, masonry, etc., which are primarily male-dominated jobs, that is not the case on Central road. My interlocutors informed me that building construction supervisors hire the labor of migrant men from the northern Indian states including, Bihar and Orissa. These migrant workers, by virtue of not having any support networks in the city, and not being able to speak the local language, are vulnerable to underpayment and other forms of exploitation. As a result, building construction supervisors demonstrate a strong preference for migrants. Therefore, men from the slum rehabilitation housing complex find themselves at a complete loss when it comes to seeking employment. However, it becomes important to note that the employment needs and aspirations of these men were not monolithic. The paucity of low-skilled employment adversely impacted the large pool of middle-aged and

older men who depended on construction work, painting, carpentry, and such for a living. Younger men sought out more "trendy" work and avoided menial work. Driving share was especially appealing to them. There were also men who were professional drivers and drove cabs/rickshaws in the city. They were less impacted by these conditions.

That being said, driving share emerged as a popular option for these men, especially those who owned rickshaws or were able to learn driving from friends and manage access to an auto rickshaw.

The auto rickshaw thus serves as an easily available and socially acceptable option (especially for the younger men) for both the local men as well as men in the slum rehabilitation complex. This makes the practice highly desired. The local drivers therefore deploy "local" as a justification to prevent outsiders or competitors from participating in their system.

iii. Local as "good" versus stigma of slum

The livelihood histories and trajectories of the local share-auto rickshaw drivers and the men from the slum rehabilitation facility differ significantly. While the local share-auto rickshaw drivers are from households transitioning from farming as a form of livelihood, the men from the slum (at least those who own rickshaws or can borrow them from friends) are essentially maintaining their status as drivers or they alternate between other jobs and driving share.

While the local share drivers are grappling with a shift in identity and selfhood due to changes in aspirations and livelihood, which have occurred in tandem with urban change, the stigma[9] of being from a slum overdetermines the identity of the inhabitants of the slum

[9] This stigma attached to slum does not correspond to caste identities. This is because, like the majority of men from the slum rehabilitation housing complex, many local drivers were themselves from similar Scheduled Castes. Moreover, the local share drivers had also made exceptions and allowed friends who were not former land owners to participate in the system.

rehabilitation facility. Friends at the facility would say: "it is not safe here for women, this is slum!" Young men discussed among themselves the hardship of finding jobs in the neighborhood because they were from the slum. Others who had kin in the slum dwelling but had managed to move out themselves would say: "I cannot raise my children in a slum!" The stigma of "slum" impacts many aspects of their lives including employability, and self-image.

The local share-auto rickshaw drivers capitalize on the stigma attached to the idea of "slum" to justify the share-auto system's rejection of drivers from the slum quarters. The stereotype of immorality and potential for misdemeanors and crime that are associated with slum dwellers are used to keep them from participating in the share-auto system. For example, on one occasion, when the local share-auto drivers queuing up at Central road were confronted by a car-owning resident from one of the condominiums, who levelled the accusation that one of the drivers recklessly drove past, making a dent on the car, the drivers were quick to shift the blame onto the slum drivers.

When asked why the drivers from the slum could not queue up with the local rickshaw drivers, one of the more senior "local" members of a share-auto rickshaw queue that is located on a street perpendicular to Central road, explained to me:

> We maintain this restriction [about who gets to participate] because only the poor from the area get into auto [rickshaw] driving and they want to maintain this space for the poor to eke out a livelihood, there are already too many drivers in the stand and allowing more would only increase the wait time for everyone. Moreover, if it is someone from the area, then there is a sense of security that the person is a good person.

As his statement shows, this system is an important form of work for many local men from "the area" who are coping with major shifts in livelihood. There are, no doubt, many categories of

"poor" men for whom rickshaw driving is a suitable form of work. Nevertheless, the driver points out that it is important to exercise discretion while allowing drivers to participate. His words also demonstrate an implicit assumption that local means "good person" as opposed to an outsider. This association between local selfhood and "good" is only further cemented by the stigma associated with slum.

While local refers to agrarian selfhood, the shared experience of urban transformation and the shift in livelihood transition, it is further constructed as "good," in opposition to the stigma attached to those from the slum. I proceed to examine how local also indexes the way in which local rickshaw drivers make sense of the formal-informal binary.

Local as emic understanding of the formal-informal binary[10]

The share-auto rickshaw drivers not only have to manage competitors, they also need to deal with regulation by the police. Managing regulation requires both evading checks by the traffic police, as well as mitigating negative stereotypes about share-auto rickshaws as being chaotic, law-breaking and causing traffic congestion. I proceed to show how the drivers meticulously organize themselves. I argue that the meticulous organization of the share-auto rickshaw system on Central road not only allows the drivers to maintain fair access to trips for

[10] Purnima Mankekar and Akhil Gupta (2019) write that the lives of Bengaluru's BPO workers, are characterized by disjunctive temporalities. Disjunctive temporalities manifest bodily through the disruption of circadian rhythms, and missed periods. The embodiment of such disjunctive temporalities constitutes their subjectivity as BPO workers. Mankekar and Gupta provide an important analytical lens through which to understand the emergence of a certain professional identity through the entanglement of labor, affect, global capitalism, embodiment and temporality. In this chapter I show how the share-auto rickshaw drivers construct themselves as "professionals." This professional identity in a certain way runs parallel to the other new professional business outsourcing sectors developing in the city (e.g. call centers, a la Gupta and Mankekar's newest work).

local drivers and maintain order, thus, avoiding any conflict with the law, but it is also a reflection of how they understand the formal-informal binary and actively navigate it.

Using Actor Network Theory, Govind Gopakumar argues that in Bengaluru, the "sociotechnical assemblage" of drivers, "street side artefacts," social media platforms as well as policy, form a constellation that privileges automobile travel while "proliferating congestions and immobilities" for others (2020, 138). Against this broader background, systems like the share-auto rickshaw automatically acquire meaning that is in opposition to the vision of de-congested automobility, world-class urbanization and connection. In language used by legal and administrative bodies, share-auto rickshaws are categorized as "illegal" transport that raise concerns about safety (because of aggression among drivers and a lack of driver accountability in the event of an incident), traffic congestion and pollution (Srinivasan 2016). According to officials from the Bengaluru Metropolitan Transport Corporation (BMTC), or the public bus agency, share-auto rickshaws impact their revenue from the area by reducing the number of BMTC commuters. These perceptions of the share-auto rickshaw system as "unsafe", exacerbating traffic congestion and pollution, "illegal," and detrimental to the financial well-being of the public sector (namely the BMTC), overdetermine the identity of the system. These narratives reinforce a dichotomy between formal and informal driving.

Despite being widely used by passengers across the caste, class and gender spectra, share-auto rickshaw driving is considered "informal" from a legal and administrative point of view since the drivers provide stage carriage services, which are "(buslike) [sic] services, characterized by shared fixed-route services with intermediate stops for boarding and alighting..." (Mani, Pai and Aggarwal 2012, 5) and have more than three passengers while

driving. These practices flout rules for rickshaw driving that have been laid down by the Indian Motor Vehicles Act.

Such negative stereotypes make the system vulnerable to police attention. Even small misdemeanors can have consequences for the drivers. For example, on one occasion, conflict between local share-auto rickshaw drivers on Central road intersection led to the system being wiped out for a couple of days. The local street vendors told me that a quarrel between some local drivers got out of hand and the police had to intervene. The share-auto queue had disappeared and the occasional rickshaw could be seen cruising the road, covertly picking up passengers along the way.

Recognizing the precarity of their circumstances, the local share drivers maintain orderliness and mitigate negative perceptions through meticulous organization. The share-auto rickshaw system run by the local drivers is characterized by a systematic operational strategy. The system is organized in order to ensure that each local participant gets a fair number of trips. Many of the share-auto rickshaw drivers themselves informed me that there are over 60 local drivers who cruise in and out of the queue at the Hosur road-Central road intersection alone. It is therefore important to make sure that they operate systematically. A collective group effort is made to usher prospective passengers to the auto rickshaw that is first in line. This system ensures that every driver gets his turn and enables them to optimize on the time spent and money earned. As a result, most drivers are able to do 14-15 trips in a day.

Although there are at least three major share-auto queues in the areas surrounding Central road, the drivers have divided the territories up in order to not encroach on each others' wait-time. Therefore, drivers queue up at their designated locations (determined by where they live – to elaborate, drivers who live close to Hosur road will queue up at the Hosur road-Central road

intersection, and those living in close proximity to Sarjapur road will line up at the Sarjapur road-Central road intersection). This is because, the greater the number of drivers, the longer the queue, and the greater the time each driver spends waiting. As a result, the drivers tend to be very particular about who gets to be in which line. Typically, they would go on a trip dropping passengers off, and when they get to the end of the route, rather than park at the share-auto queue on that end, they will turn around and cruise their way back to their respective queues.

These efforts at organization are made because of the shared need to sustain access to income for those drivers who are "local." However, this raises the question: if the share-auto rickshaw system is so meticulously organized, what about the system is "informal"? What does it tell us about how the drivers understand "informality"?

I argue that local share drivers see informality as a "mode" (Millar 2018; Roy and Al Sayyad 2004; Roy 2005). The following two examples illustrate my point.

Firstly, narratives surrounding the share-auto rickshaw system from state officials and citizens effectively seek to reinforce a false separation between the state's vision for "world-class," congestion-free urbanization, and "informality" (Srinivasan 2016). In contrast however, share-auto rickshaw drivers would narrate the story of the system as intertwined with urbanization. As Rajkumar once told me:

> In those days there were lots of fields and farms. There were not so many vehicles or traffic. To get anywhere, you had to walk. Until 2004, this was a narrow mud road. It was only in 2004 that this was made into a tar road. There was also no traffic till 2004, because the population was very small. Only after the IT company on Sarjapur road was set up, did all this change. People began to realize that this road is a shortcut from Sarjapur road to Hosur road, and then the traffic started.

Central road became a thoroughfare between Hosur road and Sarjapur road because of the IT company. The exponential increase in the need to travel from Hosur road to Sarjapur road through Central road led to the emergence of the share-auto rickshaw system. Until then people living in and around Central road traveled in the following ways:

> Those days we had the *307 luggage gaadi*[11] and small privately-run Swaraj Mazda [van] seat vehicle. There were very few buses. People would have to walk to Sarjapur road to be able to board the Swaraj Mazda. It would drop them off at the closest centrally located bus stop in the city and from there they would have to board city buses to get to their destination. Ticket fares on the 307 used to be 2 and 3 Rupees. In the 307s people would just sit on the floor of the automobile. On the other hand, the Swaraj Mazda or the *seat gaadi* had actual seats and would accommodate some 25-30 people. Those days [1990s] many people in these areas had cycles, and now many have 2 and 4 wheelers [meaning scooters or motorbikes and cars]. People used to have bullock carts and tyre *gaadis* [also bullock carts, but with rubber tyres instead of wooden wheels].

As Rajkumar's narrative illustrates, the share-auto rickshaw system emerged with the establishment of the IT corridors and the mobility needs engendered by them. Prior to that, local residents walked, cycled, used bullock carts and relied on other creative and "informal" systems such as vans and open-backed trucks. The share-auto rickshaw system began as an offshoot of urbanization prompted by IT operations and global finance. It was in fact, a form and product of metropolitan urbanism, rather than being antithetical to it (Roy 2011; Anjaria 2016).

Second, many of the local share-auto rickshaw drivers would also drive "officially" in the city. This allowed them to move between "formal" and "informal" driving practices.

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[11] Which are privately-owned "tempos" or large, open-back cargo trucks.

By driving in the interiors of Bengaluru city, the auto rickshaw drivers understand their relationship to the state. Accounts from drivers made it clear that this relationship is marked by exclusions, exposure to traffic jams, pollution, and hyper-policing and harassment.

In Bengaluru, many big-ticket road infrastructures (for example, the Electronics City freeway, Mahatma Gandhi road, etc.) often do not accommodate auto rickshaws. Such exclusions seek to remove auto rickshaws from Bengaluru's façade of world-class urbanization. Interlocutors often claimed that when drivers paused even for just a few seconds to drop a passenger off at their destination in certain parts of the city, traffic police would levy fines on them for *parking* in prohibited areas. The traffic police are also notorious for noting down rickshaw number plate details for no valid reason and charging drivers falsely with penalties, demanding bribes, threatening to confiscate auto rickshaws, and on occasion even physically beating up auto rickshaw drivers. Moreover, drivers also noted that the nature of passenger demand in the city could often take drivers far away from their own residential locations, thus making their return home at the end of the work day, an expensive affair (especially if they do not find passengers going the same route, the drivers would have to drive back in empty rickshaws, thus losing significant amounts of money on fuel). The city also has numerous one-way roads, which force them to drive empty for long distances until they find passengers again (see also, CiSTUP 2012, 169). The design of road infrastructures, hyper-surveillance and harassment by traffic police, compounded by the unpredictability of passenger availability were among the many challenges of driving an auto rickshaw in the city.

In contrast however, driving share on Central road and in adjoining areas entailed a different set of rules. While these rules allowed local share drivers to violate the law (by

providing stage carriage services and taking on more than three passengers at a time), they required them to wait in line and not queue up where they were not allowed to.

Through these examples I wish to highlight that the drivers' emic understanding of informality is as a "mode." Ananya Roy argues that not only the poor, but even middle-classes and elite engage in informal housing and land markets in Second and Third World countries (Roy and Al Sayyad 2004; Roy 2005). As Kathleen Millar writes, such an approach "makes it possible to observe how various actors and institutions—not just urban poor, who have long been conflated with informality—engage at times in a way of operating that involves negotiating, sidestepping, or modifying norms and legalities" (Millar 2018, 131). As Millar points out, this approach divorces social actors, especially the poor from informality, and instead draws attention to practices. The local share-auto rickshaw drivers, by meticulously organizing the system are not only preventing skirmishes among themselves and therefore avoiding any conflicts with the police, they are also mimicking orderliness or formal practice, which distances them from informality. Moreover, the local drivers would never describe their queues as a share-auto rickshaw "stand." This is because "stand" belongs to the discourse of formality. Auto rickshaw stands are often created for pre-paid auto-rickshaws. They are notified and operated by the Traffic Police and the physical infrastructure for the stand is provided by the city municipality. While auto rickshaw union members can make requests for a stand where they can wait to pick up passengers., they would need to approach the traffic police as well as the municipality for approval. By preventing such a characterization, the drivers are also asserting the fact that they are not making claims on, or competing for formal status.

Unlike the drivers from the slum and from the city who were not allowed to line up and instead had to resort to chaotically cruising Central road (while bearing the risk of being

interrupted by local drivers as the vignette opening the chapter indicates), the local drivers distinguished themselves and their practice through meticulous organization. Local thus refers to the logic of orderliness, which distinguishes the drivers and their work from other informal rickshaw drivers. What these local drivers do is neither formal nor informal in the way that the terms are conventionally understood. They use their emic understanding of the formal-informal binary to set their work and themselves apart from outsiders. In doing so, they distort the binary.

Conclusion

Using insights from interviews, shadowing sessions and oral histories with local share-auto rickshaw drivers on and around Central road, I have shown that the identity of local serves as a discursive category. Local indexes affective ties to land for the drivers, many of whom are from erstwhile farm-holding households. Local also refers to selfhood that is associated with having agrarian roots, and indexes the state of flux that this selfhood is in as drivers' aspirations change and drivers face livelihood shifts. Finally, I show that local reflects the local drivers' emic understanding of informality. For the drivers, the *practice* determines informality. As a result, by meticulously organizing the system, they differentiate their work and themselves from other informal workers. Thus, I argue that local serves to actively differentiate the work performed by those who are considered to be informal transport providers.

Dichotomies of formal and informal, which circulate in public discourse as well as in scholarly cliques do not adequately capture the lived realities of my interlocutors. As individuals at the lower end of the class as well as caste spectrum, the local drivers need to carefully navigate these categorizations, which are placed on them in order to maintain access to their right to work. The local practice of driving share repurposes these top-down categories of formal and

informal in a way that both mitigates stereotypes about informality and makes sense in the context of their locally meaningful social matrix. The discursive strategy of local does the work of indexing the local drivers' practice to locally meaningful ideas of selfhood, affective ties to land, shared experience of urban transformation and livelihood shifts, and shifting aspirations, which are no less meaningful when compared to "official" discourse.

This chapter provides insight into how the slippery process of urban transformation is experienced by drivers from low-income communities in fringe areas. In the face of uncertainty, urban change, precarity and marginalization, urban communities of drivers have been examined as political actors (Ference 2016; Sopranzetti 2014), as agentive in their ability to conjecture about the hopeful future in order to navigate the precarious workday (Agbiboa 2017), and even as "non-consenting infrastructures of people and things" (Bedi 2016, 403). Rather than theorize the practice of driving share, as resistance, agency, or disempowerment, this chapter suggests that the differentiation of the labor of local drivers from outsiders is a form of assertion of belonging in a rapidly transforming socio-spatial milieu. They seek to distinguish themselves and their work from that of outsiders to establish that they belong in the context of urban change that seeks to oust the informal and peripheral.

CHAPTER 2

Women and public transport

In Bengaluru, the experiences of public transit among users vary based on their class, caste and gender identities, but also based on the industry they work in. For example, middle-class cis women's experiences vary greatly from those of low-income intersex and transgender women, and the experiences of IT workers differ greatly from the experiences of women employed in the garment sector. These differences in experience are often along the lines of fare-affordability, limited frequency of buses, time taken by the commute, time spent in wait, physical exertion during the commute, issues of safety and risk during the commute, and instances of harassment by drivers, conductors and fellow passengers.

In this chapter I provide a close examination of narratives and experiences of public transit especially among women commuters (from Basavanagudi as well as from neighborhoods around Central road) across the class, caste and gender spectra to unpack the impact of the state's urbanization agenda on women's mobility practices in the city. Since public transport serves as a site that brings together state aspirations for urbanization with prevailing notions of gender and public space, I ask: How do state aspirations for urbanization shape public transport systems in Bengaluru? How does urbanization interact with prevailing notions of gender and what implications do these processes have for women's socio-spatial mobility in the city? What social significance does public transit acquire in the popular imagination when it comes to women's mobility?

In what follows, this chapter first examines the impact of state aspirations for urbanization on public transit systems in the city. Unpacking state initiatives such as the introduction of high-end airconditioned buses, the metro and also fare-subsidized buses for low-

income groups, I show how the state's urbanization agenda has impacted public transport systems by creating a hierarchy between the metro and the bus system, and has enhanced hierarchies among different categories of buses.

I further proceed to show how such hierarchies within the public transit system shape and define "women's safety" and consequently affirm specific gender roles and stereotypes (of women as needing protection). I explore concerns surrounding safety through the preoccupation with CCTV cameras and surveillance, and seat reservation. I also show how such hierarchies valorize certain kinds of productive labor (especially IT) as more deserving of state expenditure than others. My ethnography of the everyday mobility experiences and narratives of women public transport users also reveals that this stratification has unprecedented impacts on social institutions like family and on aspirations for social mobility.

This chapter focuses on women's narratives and experiences with mobility to make a broader argument about gender and public spaces and services in Indian cities. As feminist thinkers have argued, women's roles in society are produced relationally and through the intersection of multiple layers of identity, in this case, class, gender and caste (Crenshaw 1991). Based on my ethnographic evidence, I use scholarly work on women and public space in Indian cities (Phadke et al. 2011) to argue that public transit reinforces prevailing middle-class, heteronormative prescriptions for gender roles in public spaces.

Symbolic and financial (amenities-based) stratification of Bengaluru's public transport systems

In Bengaluru, public transit systems are highly stratified in terms of their symbolic value as well as in terms of the amenities they provide commuters. This hierarchy exists between the

metro and the bus system and also within the bus system, which has a diverse range of categories of buses.

For example, the metro, which is imbued with the promise of world-class city-making, not only receives crores of Rupees as financial support for capital costs from the State as well as Central governments (not to mention international development agencies such as the Japan International Co-operation Agency (JICA) and the Agence Francaise de Development (AFD)), it also attempts to create the experience of world-classness in the following ways: by enforcing queuing up, using multi-lingual public address systems, air-conditioning the metro, conducting security checks at entrances to the station, and so on.

Officials from the BMTC as well as activists characterized the relationship between the BMTC and the Bengaluru Metro Rail Corporation Limited (BMRCL) as hierarchical and stratified. For example, during a visit to the BMTC (August 26, 2017), I was informed by a managerial level BMTC employee that the BMRCL gets several crore Rupees from the state government. The BMTC on the other hand receives only a fraction of that financial support from the government, yet is burdened with paying heavy taxes (such as Road Tax, Motor Vehicle Tax, Diesel Tax, etc.). The BMTC was also tasked with providing feeder buses to connect commuters from local bus stops to nearby metro stations, while having to pay for the cost of these buses from its already depleted coffers (Philip 2017). I use this to emphasize that the metro, as a billion-dollar, world-class infrastructure, which was intended to cement Bengaluru's position among global cities, received much financial support from the state especially in comparison to the BMTC or the public bus system. BMTC officials often used this imbalance in funding to emphasize the BMTC's financial precarity, which, according to them led the BMTC to rely heavily on revenue from commuters to fund their operational costs and to raise fares.

As for the BMTC's fleet, the Vajra and the Atal Sarige buses serve as examples to illustrate the stratification of the fleet. The BMTC introduced airconditioned buses with kneeling facilities and hydraulic doors, manufactured by Volvo, in 2006. These buses were largely introduced on IT corridors, with the intent to serve the city's IT sector. The fares on these buses are much higher than on the other standard buses. This bus stands in stark contrast to the Atal Sarige fleet. Named after the late Prime Minister of India, Atal Bihari Vajpayee, the Atal Sarige was introduced in 2009 to commemorate Kanataka's first ever Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) win. These buses connected some of the city's low-income peri-urban neighborhoods with more centrally connected bus terminuses. While they charged only half the fare charged by standard buses, these buses were designed differently with the intention of accommodating low-income commuters like street vendors, construction workers, etc. and they were a different color from the rest of the BMTC fleet. Moreover, only 25 of these buses (a much lower number in comparison to the Vajra fleet which comprised more than 800 buses in 2017) were introduced, and this number reduced by over half by 2017.

Even as expensive, elite forms of public transit especially the metro has occupied a central place in the city's transit landscape, many residents of Bengaluru, especially from low-income neighborhoods, find themselves with limited access to affordable public transport. Researchers (CSTEP 2015), activists (especially those activists affiliated with the Bengaluru Bus Prayanikara Vedike or the Bengaluru Bus Commuters' Forum (BBPV)) and officials from the BMTC attribute this to the BMTC's need for increased state financial support. This scarcity of financial support has had a twofold impact. Firstly, it has led to a rationale within the BMTC that upholds the allocation of buses based on the revenue-potential of the routes and secondly, it has led to fare-increases to increase revenue-earned. Illustrating the impact of the need for increased

financial support on the BMTC, a news article from the national daily, *The Hindu* points out that while the city's vehicular population has grown by 560% in the last 21 years, the Bangalore Metropolitan Transport Corporation (BMTC), "have failed to keep up. Between 1997 and February 2019, the BMTC's fleet has grown by just 4,431 buses" (Kidiyoor 2019). The article cites transport experts in the city who assert: 1) that the revenue earned by the BMTC ought not to be a central source of funding for the system's operational costs and 2) if revenue earned is an important source of funding for operational costs, then that will only lead to higher fares, thus coercing users to shift to other forms of transport, especially scooters. The need for the state to step in to finance the parastatal system is emphasized.

During fieldwork, I found that the allocation of buses based on revenue potential has impacted low-income commuters in the following ways. Firstly, it has resulted in limited access to buses in many neighborhoods, especially those that are peripherally located and have a high number of pass-holders. To elaborate, many regular commuters who use *multiple buses* on their daily commutes, prefer to purchase monthly and annual passes since the overall expenditure on daily commutes reduces significantly when compared to the cost of buying tickets for multiple buses, daily. Commuters including garment factory workers, street vendors, domestic help, and school and college going students are among those who rely on bus passes. When bus allocation is predicated on revenue-generation, bus drivers and conductors, who are under pressure to meet daily revenue targets prioritize routes with high ticket sales over those that contain a large number of pass holders. As a result, many low-income commuters are forced to find other alternatives such as auto rickshaws, or walking long distances for at least a part of their commute. Secondly, in an effort to earn more revenue, the BMTC allows private companies and schools to charter buses during peak hours. As a result, many regular commuters find themselves

traveling in extremely crowded buses or waiting long periods of time during morning and evening peak hours for buses because of the paucity that is produced by this process of chartering.

Having introduced the ways in which public transit systems in Bengaluru are stratified based on their symbolic value as well as on the basis of finances/ amenities, in what follows, I examine the impact of the hierarchies (between the metro and the bus and even among different buses) within the city's public transit systems on women's mobility in the city. What implications does the stratification of public transit systems have for how women move in the city and how they experience gender in relation to public services and spaces? What implications does it have for perceptions of safety for women commuters? What are the variables that are invoked in women's narratives about gender and public space?

The variables invoked in narratives surrounding women's mobility include: gender-based seat reservation on public transport, surveillance and women's safety, and experiences of mobility in relation to the mobility practices that have been fostered by/are associated with different industries. Paying close attention to these three variables, I examine the impact of hierarchies within the public transit grid on women's mobility in Bengaluru. Through the ethnographic vignettes that follow, I explore not only the lived experience of stratified public transit by women commuters, I also draw attention to the fact that given the entanglements of labor and caste, these narratives demonstrate how public transit facilitates/ shapes prevailing ideologies of caste.

i. Seat and entrance segregation

Gender-based seat reservation in public transport is a phenomenon that is common in India. However, in many countries, especially in the Global North, this is not a common practice.

This no doubt further reaffirms the salience of asking how practices surrounding public transit reflect and reinforce gender norms.

Most BMTC buses have gender-segregated seats and entrances because unsegregated entrances create opportunity for sexual assault during boarding and alighting. In order to reduce the incidence of sexual assault, the BMTC has enforced gender-segregated entrances (source: Roundtable with BMTC MD, Ekroop Caur, February 22, 2017). In addition to segregated entrances, the BMTC like many other public transport systems in India (Tamil Nadu State, Mumbai's BEST, etc.) has reserved seating in buses for women. The first few rows are designated for women (see figure 3) and declare a monetary penalty for those men who wrongfully occupy those seats. Save the few priority seats for the elderly and disabled, the rows in the latter half of the bus are unmarked and observed as "general," meaning anybody can occupy those seats. Nevertheless, it is commonly observable that men typically sit in the back and women in the front seats. Occasionally, women when accompanied by men sit in the "general" seats towards the back of the bus.

It is however important to note the ways in which seat reservation and entrance segregation vary based on the laboring class that the bus is intended for. The BMTC offers a range of buses, purportedly keeping in mind the diverse social classes that use the bus service. For instance, the Volvo manufactured airconditioned buses named Vajra, which were introduced in 2006 were meant to cater to the commute needs of IT sector employees. Unlike the standard BMTC bus of that time, the Volvo buses came equipped with airconditioning, low-floors, bus kneeling, upholstered bucket seats and so on (see also Vasudevan et al. 2014). The fares on these buses were also much higher than the fares of standard BMTC buses. For example, according to

data that I received from the BMTC, as of 2017, the fare on a standard bus for a distance of 10 kilometers was Rupees 19. The fare on a Volvo Vajra bus for the same distance was Rupees 50.

The Atal Sarige on the other hand, is the steadily diminishing fleet of buses with subsidized fares. This fleet was meant to connect remote, low-income areas in the outskirts of Bengaluru with relatively more centrally located public transit hubs (see also Shastry and Bhatt 2013). Between these two categories of buses (the airconditioned Volvo and the Atal Sarige), which lie on either end of the fare spectrum, there are the standard buses which cater to a broad demographic. The Atal Sarige is meant to attend to the needs of low-income people, and the Volvo air-conditioned buses to more wealthy populations.

Figure 3: Ladies seat on BMTC bus (source: Blanknoise.org)

Figure 4: Seating in the Atal Sarige with room in the middle for vendors' tools and luggage

While these efforts at the prevention of sexual assault on buses through the gender segregation of entrances and seats are prevalent on standard buses, the airconditioned Volvo buses and the Atal Sarige are exceptions to this rule. This peculiar omission raises questions about who is deemed worthy of these rules, who these rules are meant to protect, and more importantly from whom?

During interviews, women commuters who relied heavily on the Atal Sarige asked me why they were not privy to seat-reservation and why the Atal Sarige could not accommodate bucket seats. Instead, the Atal Sarige, which was introduced to "provide fast, reliable and direct connections to the urban poor to their work destinations" (Shastry and Bhatt 2013, 57), operates buses that are designed differently from all the other BMTC buses. The bench-like seats (without arm rests) run along the inner edges of the bus chassis, leaving the center completely empty for

standing room (see figure 4). The large aisle space is meant to accommodate tools and goods carried by passengers who consist mainly of street vendors, construction workers, flower sellers and other “informal” workers (Shastry and Bhatt 2013). The unique design and color of the bus visibly associate it with particular forms of labor and particular social classes. This lack of gender-based seat reservation has implications for women who rely heavily on the Atal Sarige. As many of them pointed out to me, the absence of gender-based seat reservation often led to conflicts with male passengers who would occupy the seats towards the front of the bus, seats that commuters have been socialized to associate with being “ladies’ seats.” Their narratives behoove the question of which buses have seat reservation and why.

While on the topic of seating on Atal Sarige buses, an assistant professor at a research and teaching institute pointed out during an interview that the BMTC’s airconditioned buses did not have gender segregated seats either. She questioned the underlying assumption: “If there is airconditioning do people somehow behave better?” In other words, she is making apparent the assumption that middle-class men, who inhabit and have undeterred access to upscale spaces and services, which are marked as upscale by the use of the airconditioner, are assumed to be incapable of harassment/ assault. Her question, in combination with the indignation of the women who commute using the Atal Sarige serves to illustrate the underlying logic that governs gender-based seat reservation on public transit. From the fact that gender-based seat reservation is found on standard buses but not on the upscale Volvo Vajra fleet and the Atal Sarige, it becomes evident that seat reservation is intended for buses used by the middle-classes, especially middle-class women. Much like Shilpa Phadke et al (2011) direct our attention to the narratives of women’s safety that exists in Mumbai, in this case as well, the body of the middle-class working woman is constructed as worthy of protection from the moral turpitude of “Othered”

men (especially low-income and caste, and migrants) who use public buses. Middle-class patriarchal ideologies of public space construct men of poorer social classes, and men from minority communities as criminal, thus justifying a logic which seeks to prevent middle-class women from inhabiting the same spaces as these men for fear not only of their violation, but more importantly of willing integration (Phadke et al. 2011). Similarly, the seating logic across BMTC buses serves as an extension of these very ideologies and seeks to protect middle-class women from these "Othered" men. In the process, the low-income woman (such as the Atal Sarige user) is further marginalized as unworthy of protection, and the assumed moral uprightness of the middle/ upper middle-class male IT employee who uses airconditioned buses is upheld since airconditioned buses do not have seat reservation on the basis of gender.

During interviews, many women users of the BMTC told me that they preferred buses with gender-based seat reservation. However, the ways in which the practice is distributed across buses, reinforces heteronormative gendered stereotypes along the lines of social class and caste. The question of caste becomes salient here since caste is deeply entangled with labor in the Indian context. The privileging of buses catering to IT professionals is thus a form of valorizing those caste groups (predominantly Brahmins and other "upper" castes) who are more easily integrated into the IT industry (see also, Upadhya 2016). On the other hand, the almost patronizing/ oppressive structure of the Atal Sarige exemplifies the attitude of public agencies towards "informal" work and workers, which also correlate significantly with scheduled castes and other minority/oppressed groups. Thus, the differences in seating practices, need to be understood within the context of caste hierarchies and their relation to public spaces and services in Indian cities.

In examining the impact of hierarchies within the bus system on gender-based seat reservation and its consequences for women commuters, I have shown how the relationship between labor and caste are reinforced. I have argued that exploring seat reservation reveals the ways in which the ideal public transit user is the middle-class working IT professional. In what follows, I explore narratives and surveillance practices surrounding women's safety to further understand the significance that such perceptions of women and safety has for how the woman commuter is imagined. I also examine the implications that such valorization of the normative body and work has for non-gender binary individuals and those not employed in "modern," "productive" labor.

ii. Safety, public transport and the modern Indian woman

At a number of busy intersections in Bengaluru city one can find large public service billboards from the city police: "She is a child; Just a young girl; Don't rob her innocence [sic]" (see figure 5) and "She is Woman with Hope and Power Don't take that away from her; Save her Honour! [sic]" (see figure 6). These billboards encapsulate not just the pervading fear for women's safety in the city, but also the protectionist attitude towards women. Several local feminist groups took offense at these billboards, leading to a flurry of criticisms against the so-called awareness raising efforts of the traffic police. Summing up the critiques of the billboards as pointing out the "regressive" and "patronising" ideology underlying the message, one newspaper article quotes a young artist's reaction to the posters: "There is a strong embedded archetype of the man as the

protector and the hero, and the woman as the carrier of honour. Instead of challenging that definition, these messages perpetuate that rhetoric” (Rajaram 2015).

Figure 5: Women’s safety billboard installed by the Bengaluru Traffic Police
Source: *Bangalore Mirror*

Figure 6: Women’s safety billboard installed by the Bengaluru Traffic Police
Source: *Deccan Chronicle*

This debate illustrates the contentious relationship between some of the dominant ideological disagreements surrounding women’s mobility and safety in Bengaluru.

In what follows, I show how measures taken by the Central Government and the BMTC to ensure safety for women on buses reinforce the middle-class, patriarchal standard of how

women's bodies must be protected. I add that attempts for increasing women's safety through the installation of CCTV cameras, panic buttons and smart phone apps, ultimately controls how women should be seen and subsequently must behave in public. I show that these endeavors simultaneously define middle-class bodies as worthy of protection in contrast to the bodies of women from lower income groups. They valorize the heteronormative gender binary while simultaneously defining safety as oriented towards women's bodily safety from sexual assault. These measures extend middle-class patriarchal ideology to public transport, subsequently raising the question of what function public transport really performs in shaping gender roles.

In India, narratives of safety are often used by government policy and state transport agencies to "empower" women by enabling them to have greater mobility. Nevertheless, it has been argued that these narratives and measures are acutely protectionist in nature and reinforce patriarchal forms of control over women's bodies, public spaces and resources. Moreover, these measures reinforce middle-class, patriarchal values of "othering" men from low-income, caste and minority groups (Phadke et al 2011). In what follows, I explore the ways in which national policy,[12] and public transport systems like the BMTC construct women's safety, and subsequently define the social significance of public transport when it comes to gender.

In Indian cities, mainstream debates surrounding women's access to urban public spaces and transport are centered on the question of women's safety. The brutal gang rape and subsequent death of the 23-year-old woman on a private bus in New Delhi in 2012 only fueled these debates and protests. In response to this incident, the Central Government allocated 10 billion Indian Rupees (US $140,750,000) in the 2013 Union Budget, towards initiatives by

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[12] Specifically, the Nirbhaya Fund which was introduced by the Central Government in the 2013 Union Budget.

government and non-governmental agencies for ensuring the safety of women. This initiative was named the Nirbhaya corpus fund.

Many of these measures targeted public transportation systems across the country. For instance, a look at the list of proposals made by various state governments to the Ministry of Women and Child Development (2019), requesting funding from the Nirbhaya corpus for various safety initiatives especially on public transport, is very telling of the ways in which women's relation to public spaces and transport is perceived. The list of proposals include the installation of CCTV cameras on buses, "Safe City" initiatives, panic button installation on buses, etc. Mechanisms of control and surveillance dominate the solutions proposed to tackle women's safety. In keeping with the Nirbhaya scheme's measures, in Bengaluru city there have been several efforts to install surveillance technologies such as CCTV cameras, panic buttons and alarm systems in BMTC buses (S 2019). These measures have not only been undertaken by the BMTC, but also by well-meaning NGOs.

Measures implemented under the Nirbhaya Fund have been critiqued for not implementing changes in a "systematic or comprehensive manner" (ITDP 2017: 12). Moreover, an ITDP report on women and safety in points out that in India "technological and project level interventions largely circumscribe the discussions on women's safety in India without an embedded inquiry into how transport systems and institutions are gendered" (ibid). As indicated by this critique, there is a lack of alignment between how policy and state transport systems attend to the issue of women's safety, and the ways in which women think about safety and organize their commutes/ lives around it. Others have suggested that this is an "instance we find the conversation around actual improvements towards women's real and perceived safety and

security being lost under the larger themes of surveillance and smart technologies. It also overlooks the need to think about ways for improving human interaction" (Campbell 2019, 252).

In February 2017, during a Roundtable with activists and researchers, the then Managing Director of the BMTC, Ekroop Caur, was asked about the effectiveness of the installation of CCTV cameras on BMTC buses. Is it even feasible to have live monitoring of CCTV camera footage? How many cameras even really work? Are these cameras even likely to prevent sexual harassment? To these questions, the MD replied that while CCTV cameras had their shortfalls and that it was unlikely that these cameras would be able to really capture less visible acts of harassment and verbal harassment, their purpose was to serve as "deterrents" to potential perpetrators. Acknowledging the fact that sexual assault is in fact a larger, systemic issue, the MD agreed that measures such as CCTV installation were more a symptomatic addressal of larger issues.

Many women informed me during interviews that CCTV cameras made them feel safe. Nevertheless, surveillance is a double-edged sword. When incidents of assault are recorded on camera, they often circulate endlessly on news media and social media circuits as objects of voyeurism rather than awareness creation.

I have shown that national policy and the BMTC's safety measures often take on protectionist dimensions while reinforcing heteronormative gender stereotypes. Moreover, through these measures, safety is articulated as a means for *empowering* heteronormative, modern, middle-class women to move in the city. Phadke et al. point out in their book on women and safety in Mumbai (2011), that this narrative of empowering women by protecting them, a form of middle-class social control, reinforces the "good girl" trope. That is the idea that when women are outdoors, they must be engaged in activity that is socially productive. That is, if

outdoors, they must be headed home or to work. They must never inhabit public spaces without such productive purpose. They must never loiter.

In attempting to make the bus safer for the "modern," middle-class woman, certain patterns/ spatial practices of middle-class patriarchy are only reproduced. This raises the question, what idea of womanhood do these measures legitimize and valorize? Poulami Roychowdhury suggests in her article on the 2012 New Delhi rape case (2013), that representations of the victim as the epitome of the new, modern Indian woman who participated in the global economy, in opposition to the perpetrators who represented the "old," "backward," even "rural," non-modern mentality, played an important role in getting the case much international attention. Roychowdhury explains how this ideal is characterized. In constructing the victim as the modern Indian woman, she was represented as:

> someone who "wanted 'more' out of life, 'a smart overcoat, a Samsung smartphone.' In undisclosed family photographs, she was described wearing 'western clothes,' and keeping her 'long, dark shiny hair down and flowing— never tied up.' Regardless of how the real Pandey may have understood herself or conducted her life, the media's Pandey was emblematic of a decidedly modern Indian woman. This woman is no longer 'confined to the home,' but is 'out and about, in the malls and movie theaters,' and has fully 'embraced the aspirational lifestyle.' She is professionally successful and consumer-oriented. (Roychowdhury 2013: 283).

Similarly, Phadke et al. (2011) point out in their study of "women and risk in Mumbai," that traditionally speaking, women's naturalized space is seen as being within the private sphere, therefore, when in public, they must legitimize their presence by engaging in productive economic pursuits.

Public transit thus constructs the normative commuting subject as one who is engaged in "productive" labor, especially labor directly associated with the global economy, like IT. During fieldwork, my interlocutors who identify as Aravani (intersex/eunuch/transgender), point out, that the further one stands from the middle-class hetero-patriarchal mold of what it means to be a "woman," the more marginalized they are. Moreover, the fact that their work of "collection," is discounted and not considered productive, they are further removed from the respect and security that accompanies "productive" work. As gender non-binary individuals who are excluded from conventional dependence on transport for livelihood (because of the kind of work that they do), my interlocutors Priya and Vinodini affirm the ways in which the public transit system valorizes middle-class ideals of gender and labor.

a. Vinodini and Priya

On a warm, sleepy Sunday afternoon, Priya and I are both seated on a mat on the floor of her house. The house is very bare. There are few belongings in the small living room besides the round mirror on the wall and the floor mat. Priya tells me she is 32. She has large patches of scar tissue on her face, one beside her mouth and the other across her left cheek. Her hair is in a small bun at the back, and she is in a sunny yellow saree with sequins along the border. Priya pours some bright orange Fanta into two tall stainless-steel tumblers, and offers one of them to me, keeping the other for herself.

Vinodini, her friend, who also identifies as *Aravani* (transwoman) strides in and joins our conversation. She has a very purposeful air about her. Vinodini is in her early twenties, she has sharp features and kohl lined eyes. She is wearing a string of fresh jasmine in her ponytailed hair and a large "imitation jewellery" necklace. Her saree is a shiny green and gold.

The two of them have just returned from "collection," their form of livelihood where they walk from shop to shop in the neighborhood, asking for money.

> …Look at me for instance, I have completed SSLC [Secondary School Leaving Certificate], but I have not found a job. Regular jobs as household help can be dangerous for people like us [because they are highly vulnerable to harassment and assault by virtue of their gender, caste and class status], and government jobs are difficult to find even with an education. To land one without an education is nearly impossible. For those who can't find govt jobs, all that is left is collection…

says a vexed Vinodini. She continues speaking rapidly in Tamil:

> When we go for collection, people look at us *oru maadiri* (in a peculiar manner). They say 'chee' as if we are disgusting. Some people tease us, some worship us like we are holy, and some look at us in a sexy way. They ask us to go with them, but we do not go. Sometimes, we do react to being teased. We look like ladies, so why not treat us like we are ladies? They do not tease and harass ladies, why us?

Vinodini continues:

> If ladies react, people support them. But if we react, who will support us? We get no support from people. *Yengalukku naangale* (we are on our own). People tease and harass us on buses. They are disgusted by us. We sit in the reserved ladies' seats, but even ladies will not sit next to us. Because of all this we just go places by auto [rickshaw] even though autos are very expensive.... We just accept the situation and pay the amount. Our needs have to be considered separately by the government, because their measures do not allow us even to earn a livelihood.

Priya and Vinodini informed me that traveling by auto rickshaws was also a hassle. Most of the time they would have to rely on familiar auto rickshaw drivers to travel safely since the likelihood of discrimination and harassment are very high, especially if the driver is unknown to them. Moreover, passengers in share-auto rickshaws would often alight prematurely to avoid traveling in the same auto rickshaw with *Aravani.*

As Priya and Vinodini point out, mainstream safety measures on transport systems do not accommodate the needs of gender non-binary individuals. Gender-based seat reservation does not recognize them and moreover, it does nothing to address their mobility needs, or even systemically change people's mindsets about gender non-binary individuals. If anything at all, existing safety measures only serve to valorize and assert the hegemony of the heteronormative, middle-class user, engaged in productive labor valorized by middle-class ideology. Neither their work nor their gender is recognized in these spaces, thus coercing them to seek out alternative ways to commute in the city.

Building on these ideas, I assert that public transport serves to reproduce middle-class, neotraditional gender roles to support a modern, capitalist cause. Here is where the role of surveillance technologies for safety is crucial. These technologies including CCTV cameras and panic buttons and apps reinforce the ideal of "modern," "productive" womanhood. They index the image of urban, modern women who are technology savy, and have "embraced the aspirational lifestyle." Morgan Campbell (2020) in her study of women bus conductors in Bengaluru also points to the prevailing preoccupation with framing CCTV cameras as the solution to gender-based security-related issues in urban India. Challenging the preoccupation with smart cities and technological interventions as solutions to creating more gender-inclusive spaces, by examining the work of lady conductors on BMTC buses, Campbell argues that human

interaction and negotiation are vital in the creation of gender-inclusive transportation. In other words, while the efficacy of these technologies is debatable, what I seek to argue here is that in the pursuit of "women's safety," the use of surveillance technologies only aides in reinforcing the image of the "modern Indian woman."

iii. Specific industries foster particular mobility practices: Constructing the normative subject through transport

In what follows, I examine insights from interviews and shadowing sessions with women employed in IT companies and garment manufacturing factories in Bengaluru. I emphasize two key ideas: first that the public transit landscape in Bengaluru is heavily shaped by specific industries and companies. Second, that the existing public transport system reinforces labor related hierarchies by valorizing certain industries and certain forms of employment over others.

I share the travel account of Divya, a 26 year old IT engineer to understand the travel experience of young women professionals who depend on public transport for their commute. Her experience sheds much light on the ways in which the IT industry has shaped public transportation in Bengaluru. Moreover, her account highlights the ways in which different industries foster particular mobility practices and how these mobility practices impact how others move in the city.

Following Divya's account, I explore insights from women garments factory workers, which I collected during interviews with them. I use their narratives to provide a contrast to the experience of being a woman professional in IT. I assert that the public transit systems in the city valorize certain industries and affiliated mobility practices over others.

a. Information technology: Divya's commute

Divya lives in Basavanagudi. She travels by bus in the morning, and in the evening, she returns by a cab arranged by her company. On the cab ride she is accompanied by colleagues and a company security personnel who escorts the passengers to make sure they return home safe. She has some safety precautions that she takes every day. When the cab leaves the office building she calls her parents to inform them that she is on her way back.

> I do that [from the cab] so that they [the driver and security escort] are aware [that her family knows of her whereabouts] and don't take advantage. Once I had a very new driver and he did not know the route. He took a wrong route and I really got scared. It was the middle of nowhere and totally dark. Both escort and driver were new. I did not know what to do. I called transport team. Fortunately, I had my mobile that was charged. It so happened that I switched on Google Maps and guided him. That was scary. I really did not know the place. And in between if I don't get mobile signals and 3G does not work it is a problem. The map just discontinues.

Divya's narrative draws attention to factors that many women consider important to feeling safe. She does not feel safe she is alone in the cab with strangers, when she has to commute through lonely, dark routes and when there is no internet connection/or phone service (which would allow her to reach out for help should there be an emergency). When Divya gets dropped off at a place near her home, her father comes to pick her up since it can be pretty late at night and there are wine shops/local bars along the way and these joints are frequented by a lot of low-income and working-class men. Divya and her family, like many in the city perceive such spaces as being unsafe for women. On the question of safety and buses, Divya and her younger sister Sriya agree that BMTC buses feel safer than cabs. Sriya tells me:

> I've been traveling by bus for a very long time. From my school days. So I am used to it. There are more people around. I feel like there are authorities who are accountable for my safety. Though autos and cabs are also there, but here I have more people. They will be watching. If something happens, they will come forward and help.

She adds that although they live in an old neighborhood in Bengaluru, which as a result of its age, is extremely well connected to the city's public transport network, both she and her sister face last mile transport issues with respect to accessing buses to their next transit center.

> Another thing is, when both of us to go to our offices we have to go to the same place to catch bus. Both of us need a bus to Banashankari from here and it is not there. We do not have connectivity to that place. I am planning to make a complaint. Asking them [BMTC] to introduce a bus. We can make a request on the BMTC website, mybmtc.com.

It is December 2016. It is 8.00 am and Divya is getting ready to leave for work. Her mother brings freshly cooked *idlis* (rice cakes) and South Indian filter coffee from the kitchen for Divya and for me, while I wait for Divya. It is 8.37 am when we leave her home in Basavanagudi. I compliment Divya on her matching nails and her backpack (both, bright purple). Her eyeliner is a shimmery bright green and she is wearing a green *kurta*. She tells me "I have the colors of the peacock on me today. That is what working in IT does to people. From the time that I was very young, I have loved to experiment and use a lot of colors." Divya's father would normally drop her off by scooter at the Banashankari bus stop from where she travels by bus to her place of work. However, today, because I am accompanying her, we are taking an auto rickshaw.

When we reach the BMTC's Banashankari Traffic Transit Management Center (TTMC), 10 minutes into our commute, we alight from the auto rickshaw and walk into the TTMC (see figure 7). Divya who is holding her black smartphone in her hand, recounts the time she lost her phone here. She paid a heavy sum of Rupees 33,000 with her own money, for that phone. It slid out of her bag when she didn't notice. She was very upset about it. At the Banashankari TTMC, five minutes into waiting, three number 600 buses enter, one after the other. The crowd swarms towards them and people elbow and push each other to get in. The fight for seats is on! The first couple of buses fill up completely. Divya and I run towards the third bus. Divya realizes that we may have to stand all the way to Silk Board, our next stop. Airconditioned buses are rare or non-existent on the route she has to take from this bus stop. Only the part of her commute from Silk Board to Electronics City is covered by airconditioned bus. This is because that part of her commute is considered to be an IT corridor, where BMTC has allocated a generous number of airconditioned buses.

Figure 7: At the Banashankari bus stand waiting for bus number 600

She has been traveling to the Electronics City branch of her company for the last month since her previous project came to an end. She tells me that earlier, the company had chartered buses to pick up and drop employees, but since the new CEO took over, he has been advocating cost-cutting and therefore, the buses were scrapped. Since then she has been on her own with making travel arrangements.

Figure 8: Morning peak hour crowd inside the 600 bus

Divya tells me she feels sorry when she sees elderly women on the bus struggling to find a seat. “Although I want to give them my seat, I am myself so exhausted, that I need to stay seated.”

As we pass through Jayanagar, the roads are wide and tree-lined. The houses along the roads are built on massive properties. Divya explains to me that her colleagues, many of whom recently migrated to Bangalore for their IT jobs, do not know about Basavanagudi or Jayanagar. “All that they know and have heard of are Whitefield and the fancy, modern places.” So when she talks to them about Basavanagudi, she makes it a point to tell them of its “heritage” and of the Bull Temple and other famous cultural landmarks.

Figure 9: Wide roads as the bus drives through Jayanagar

We hit a traffic bottleneck as we reach BTM Layout. Divya says excitedly: “In this [traffic] jam is where there are lots of transgender people.” While we wait at the red light at the intersection, they seem to be asking a tempo driver for money (that is how a lot of them earn a living because many avenues of employment are closed to them). “Look, can you see them harassing drivers?” She tells me that the driver of the tempo that she used to take to her Sarjapur office always said that “when you are nice to transgender women who come asking for alms, the rest of your day is likely to be smooth and hassle-free because they will bless you.”

Immediately after our bus moves out of this intersection, we are met with yet another intersection and Divya laments that such intersections make the trip lengthy and difficult to bear. To “kill” time she often uses Facebook on her phone, while on the bus. She is also getting anxious that today the wait at intersections seem to be taking longer than usual and she might be getting late for work. She is currently not on a project (she is a freelancer in the company), and is

being shifted from one office to another. It is only when she is assigned a project will she have a steady office to go to. She is even contemplating looking for another job. She was in fact offered a job in Whitefield, but the commute from her house to Whitefield is longer than the one she has to undertake now, by 10 kilometers. As a result, she did not take it up. Why would she move and pay rent when her parents have a house here? It would be an unnecessary expenditure. To avoid an even longer commute she decided to continue with her current job. However, she is getting tired of it now. It has been four years already, and switching between offices and in between projects is very difficult.

Figure 10: The image is of a private bus driver waiting at the "informal" bus stop for private IT buses in BTM Layout. Private operators charge higher fares than city buses (BMTC buses), but they typically pick up passengers going to one specific company and drop them right at the door step

Divya tells me that a number of people who have moved to Bangalore for IT jobs, live in Paying Guest accommodations (PGs) in BTM Layout. Along the way, she tells me that we are soon going to see a number of small startups and PGs. Soon after, a few IT employees board the bus and Divya excitedly remarks that they are from her firm. "Do you know them?" I ask. "Ours

is a huge firm, and it is impossible for me to know everybody. I realized these ladies work in my firm because they also have the company tags with ID cards around their necks. Private company bus drivers often identify passengers based on the tags that they wear" (see figure 10). All the while that our bus is stuck in the traffic jam, we can hear the driver of a private bus call out to the employees of a particular IT company. "People have the flexibility to either pay on a day-to-day basis or even on a monthly basis in such arrangements. If it gets crowded then he will drive even while they are standing. Passenger comfort is secondary to the money he gets from the service," Divya says.

Figure 11: The formal bus shelter for BMTC buses

Most bus stops in BTM Layout have been informally partitioned into two segments. The public and the private. Those IT employees who take BMTC buses wait at the public bus stop (see figure 11) and those who take private or "company buses" (company shuttles) stand on the side of the city bus stop (see figures 12 and 13), which is the makeshift stop for private buses and IT employees waiting to board them.

Figure 12: Commuters waiting for private buses

Figure 13: Commuters waiting for BMTC buses at the same location as figure 12

Figure 14: A private travel agency bus that Divya claims has a contract with an IT company to pick up and drop its employees

As our bus inches through the traffic, Divya is getting quite anxious that our bus is being slowed down by the traffic more than usual. Although there are no automobiles in front of the travel agency bus (see figure 14), it has blocked all the traffic behind it since it halts at will on the side of the road to pick up passengers rather than pick them up at bus stops. Our bus has no way of overtaking this travel agency bus because there is little or no room left on the road. As soon as the bus gets moving again, Divya points to the furniture store that appears on the left, informing me that she likes to dream about how some of the furniture, especially a white upholstered set would look in the dining area of her parents' house. Window shopping keeps her occupied on the bus during these frustrating jams.

Divya tells me to stay alert to take photographs since this road is lined with startups and paying guest accommodations for IT workers (see figure 15). Plenty of advertisements for PGs and startups dot the BTM to Silk Board route. Divya is the one to spot all these boards and she

directs me to take photographs. She tells me that I should shadow her on a weekend trip to work and that way she will even be able to show me around Electronics City. Today she is stressed

Figure 15: Banners containing advertisements for paying guests and startups

about getting late for work, and she says that if she doesn't get a seat on the bus, sometimes, she has to stand the whole duration of the trip while managing her stress levels. It is this stress that makes her want to quit her job and look for something closer to home. She tells me that as soon as we reach she will need to run out to swipe her card, or she will have to extend the length of her day. She typically spends 8 hours at work, but when she was on a project at a different office, she would have to spend at least 9.5 hours at work. This was in addition to 3 hours spent commuting every day. "My friends often joke that if they count the total number of hours – for every nine years of work, we would have spent 3-4 years in travel." She is not quite sure of the calculation "but it was something like this," she tells me.

Unlike most other bus stops in the city, the BTM bus stops are filled with "fashionable" young people who are clearly not low-income. A lot of the people who live in the PGs here are

from other parts of the country, they are not from Bengaluru. They migrate to Bengaluru to work in the IT sector.

When we finally alight from the 600, we see a 356 CW parked awkwardly across a short divider. We hop over the divider, dodging oncoming traffic and board the 356 CW. The 356 is very crowded and we are forced to stand at the very front of the bus, near the entrance.

“The BMRCL plans to cut all the trees on this road down to construct the metro. The construction will take at least a few years. In the meantime, what are people to do, they will only be worsening the traffic bottleneck” Divya states angrily. As someone who was “born and raised” in Bengaluru, she is very concerned about the city’s green cover and well-being.

Figure 16: The stretch of road that the BMRCL is planning to construct the metro’s Phase IV on

Figure 17: The bus finally approaches the beginning of the Electronics City Elevated Expressway

The Electronics City Elevated Expressway, a 9.985 kilometer (6.2 miles), tolled (a fee of Rupees 5 is included in the bus ticket fare) expressway is restricted to cars, scooters and buses (heading to Electronics City). All other forms of transport crawl painstakingly beneath the freeway in long traffic jams. Today however, the crowd in the bus is causing a delay. The bus will not move until the conductor sells tickets to all the passengers. As a result, the bus, which normally would have been speeding on the pothole-free, traffic-free freeway, is crawling, waiting for a signal from the conductor. As is typically the case with freeways, there are no stops for the bus for the entire 9.985 kilometers, which speeds up the travel considerably. On the left, one can see a lot of multinational industries such as Toyota, and high-end hotels (see figure 16). On the right there are a number of big IT firms including multiple Infosys buildings, the Wipro offices, etc.

The infrastructure in Electronics City is maintained by the Electronics City Industries' Association (ELCIA).[13] On the right is the compound wall of a major Indian IT company. Big industries have set up large campuses in this area and the campuses include numerous facilities for employees. Divya tells me that her office campus has a butterfly garden and a little pond with a bridge running over it.

Figure 18: Industries on the left side of the road

[13] Electronics City Industries' Association (ELCIA) was formed in 1992. The purpose of the association was to address some of the concerns faced by the industries in Electronics City. Infrastructure happened to be a key concern among them. (Source: About Us | ELCIA)

Figure 19: Electronic City freeway

Figure 20: The check post that signals entry into Electronics City

Figure 21: Radically different quality of infrastructure. Evenly paved sidewalks in Electronics City

As the bus patiently makes its way, a number of single occupancy cars, many of them SUVs wait in traffic ahead of us. We finally arrive at Divya's company gate. The bus stop curves to the side so as to not cause a bottleneck in the traffic. Additionally, there are trash cans on the road, and the tiles on the pavement are evenly laid, making for easy walkability. As soon as we alight (at 10.08 am), Divya makes a dash, promising me that she will return as soon as she swipes her time card. I wait for 10 minutes, when she returns to tell me a proper goodbye. She tells me that if I accompany her on a weekend then she might even be able to show me around a little bit. It tends to be less crowded on weekends. I am happy to take her up on her offer. She turns around and runs back inside the large campus guarded by security guards and tall gates.

As Divya's case illustrates, many women users of the BMTC face similar problems with respect to last mile access, timeliness, crowds, discomfort and safety. However, the following patterns emerge from Divya's case:

Firstly, her commute reveals how different industries have shaped the transport landscape in Bengaluru city. The construction of the Electronics City Elevated Expressway, the introduction of Vajra buses, and the use of numerous cabs and private shuttles for IT employees are a few examples of how the IT industry has shaped public transport infrastructures and landscapes in Bengaluru. These systems and infrastructures have proliferated in number and in turn have transformed the character of certain parts of the city. For example, as Divya points out to me during her commute, BTM layout because of its proximity to the IT industry and by virtue of being along IT corridors with access to airconditioned buses and private company buses, is chock-full of paying guest accommodations for IT professionals for whom access to transport to their companies is convenient from that part of town. Divya's narrative is also important for drawing attention to the ways in which these measures actually impact people's everyday lives. Divya gets progressively anxious as new forms of traffic delays emerge at each stage of her commute (be it the travel agency bus holding up traffic as it waits to pick up passengers on the side of the road, the heavy crowds leading to full buses and forcing us to wait to take the least crowded bus, the delay in ticketing by the conductor because of the large number of passengers in the bus). She already spends several hours of her life at work and traffic delays only further extend the percentage of time that is lost. For many women hours spent waiting on/ for buses can have serious implications in terms of lost wages, lost time with children, less time to do household chores, etc.

Secondly, her narrative draws attention to the ways in which particular industries foster particular mobility practices, which then have an impact on others commuting within the city. To illustrate, a high numbers of airconditioned buses, single occupancy cars, private shuttles and cabs characterize the mobility practices associated with the IT industry. This for example, is

extremely different from the experiences of those who work in garment manufacturing industries. While IT commutes are characterized by long periods of time spent in IT company shuttles or Vajra buses, and in traveling long distances from the city's center, the experience of women in other industries, particularly garments, which has been a part of the city's landscape for a lot longer than IT, are characterized by a lack of access to public transport. The interviews with women garments factory laborers which follow, illustrate this is in more detail. Many women commuters who work in garment manufacturing factories take greater risks since they use inter-state private buses (which are notoriously unsafe for women), spend much longer (sometimes hours in wait for buses), walk on railway tracks, hire open-backed trucks, share auto rickshaws and use company shuttles to get to work. These practices which characterize the mobility patterns of those women working in garments manufacturing industries emerge because of a lack of access to buses and in many cases because bus fares are very high.

As I have shown above, different industries cultivate different mobility practices. Moreover, these practices cluster in different parts of the city at different times of day and they have a ripple effect on the mobility practices and patterns of many others in the city. For example, women commuters who traveled to work near Lalbagh would inform me that 10-minute auto rickshaw rides could turn into 30-minute rides in these areas because of Life Insurance Corporation workers. One of my interlocutors, Mrs. Kumar, who taught at a college near Lalbagh would leave at 9:45 am to reach college by 9:55 am for her class at 10:30 am. "If I leave at 10:00 am I will reach at 10:30 am. But if I leave at 9:45 am by the same form of transport [auto rickshaw], I will reach by 9:55 am. There will be more traffic when I leave at 10:00 am because all the Life Insurance Corporation employees will be heading for work only at that time. You see, their work begins at 10:30 am unlike most others who begin at 9:00/9:30 am.

To avoid getting stuck in traffic and getting delayed for my 10:30 am class, I leave home at 9:45 am" although it means spending and extra half hour at work. Similarly, garment factory workers on Hosur road (one of the major garment factory hubs in Bengaluru) would find that the amount of time they spent waiting in buses was determined by the traffic headed towards or from IT companies.

As studies have shown decisions pertaining to travel and commutes are determined by the intersection of multiple identities and social relations (Levy 2013). Moreover, travel choice is often not an individual decision. It is determined by "unequal power relations in the household, in the community and in the city" (Levy 2013, 49). Studies on low-income women and transport in India have shown that time spent on commuting adversely impacts the time that women can give to household chores and leisure (Anand and Tiwari 2006), thus weakening their agency (Alberts et al. 2016). This finding is important for the everyday lives of these women because in addition to work-related demands and household labor, the mobility practices cultivated by different industries has a direct impact on the time my interlocutors spend at work, in commute, doing household chores and engaging in leisure activities. In other words, my research shows how women public transit users not only negotiate household demands with work related demands, but they also negotiate the commute rhythms of various others engaged in "productive labor" in different industries, when they make their travel choices.[14]

[14] This finding is important because not only is this pattern applicable to non-public transit users, it is also a noticeably global phenomena and transcends gender. For example, tech employees in Mountain View CA informed me that they would try to time their commute either before or after Google employees were off the roads. Some of them would even try to bike rather than drive in order to avoid traffic-related delays.

b. Garments

Unlike the IT sector, although Bengaluru's garments factories have been around for a longer time, they have received little support in terms of public transport infrastructures from the state and the BMTC. Even in the 1980s and 90s, Bengaluru's garments factories are said to have employed large numbers of women (Nair 2005). In fact in 2001, 70000 workers were said to be employed in garments factories in Bengaluru, and over 70 percent were women (ibid). At present, the three main garment factory hubs in Bengaluru, which include the Bommanahalli, Nayandhalli and Peenya Industrial Junction are said to employ 355,000 workers. In the Bommanahalli and Nayandhalli areas alone, 85-90 percent of the workers are women. Most of them earn only around Rupees 7000 (approximately USD 100) per month (Fields of View 2019).

When asked about the commute patterns of women garments factory workers, representatives from Garments Mahila Karmika Munnade (interview, December 4th, 2017) an organization that addresses grievances from women garments factory workers, gave me the following details. Emphasizing the fact that many of these women are very time-poor and that BMTC fares are very high, the representatives pointed out the creative travel arrangements that many women working in garments factories had to make.

> They [the women] leave home at 7:00 am and leave work at 5:30 pm to reach home only by 7.00 pm. Most people use private [interstate] buses, some use BMTC and autos [auto rickshaws]…. Many come here to work in garments from outside the city. Most of the women do not use BMTC because it is so expensive. They will form a group, if 10 or 20 people are coming from the same neighborhood they will form a group and hire an auto [rickshaw] and pay them [the driver] on a monthly basis for everyday pick up and drop. Per head it would cost Rupees 600 to 800 just for transport [per month]. They will not

make passes [BMTC monthly passes] because they do not use bus, and BMTC pass will cost [Rupees] 1050…. They cannot even really use bus passes that much because they only need the bus to commute from home to work and back. On Sundays they will have a lot of house work or they might have to go out of town to their villages so they cannot use it to go out anywhere and of course these passes cannot be used for interstate travel. So it is not financially viable.[15]

Most workers on Tumkur road, Peenya, Bommanahalli and Nagawara only use private bus because on private buses they charge lower fare. If it is Rupees 15 on BMTC they will only charge [Rupees] 10 on private bus. They are happy to save even just Rupees 5. Such workers only use private buses and auto rickshaws. In areas like Maddur where there is a factory, lots of people come from villages almost some 4000 people, and they all use rickshaws on monthly payment basis. Where can we save money on our salaries if we use BMTC buses? This is the general sentiment. These autos and private buses cost Rupees 10-15 per trip. So they all just hire out these autos and it only costs some Rupees 300/600 per month.

Even Nayandhalli side some 4000 workers are going to Jairam Das and Mysore circle. The bus ticket cost even for just one stage [the distance between two bus stops] is Rupees 15. So people going to Jairam Das walk on a railway track to get to the factory because the road will be too long-winded but the railway track will be a shorter route.

[15] This decision about whether or not to purchase a bus pass depends on where the commuters live. If their commute requires them to use multiple buses each way to and from work, then they will likely buy monthly bus passes since it will prove more affordable than purchasing multiple bus tickets every day. In this case, the representatives are referring to commuters who use rickshaws *in lieu* of buses.

When they see a train approach they will step to the side. [BMTC] Bus will cost Rupees 17 each way from here to Jairam Das. They do not use BMTC, they find other ways to commute.

They sometimes travel by Udayaranga, etc. [private travels company]. They struggle and stand at the doors, etc.

As the excerpt from the interview illustrates, many women working in garments factories, unable to afford the high bus fares charged by the BMTC, make alternative arrangements such as sharing auto rickshaw rides, hiring open-backed trucks, using private inter-state buses (which are considered to be very unsafe for women), and even walking on railway tracks. More importantly, the mobility practices of this community emerge around the unaffordability of BMTC fares.

Although some garments factories organize buses for their employees, there are many challenges that come with using these company buses. For instance, depending on the proximity of their residence to the factory, a factory worker might be the among the first to be picked up and last to be dropped off (as they have to wait for all the other passengers to be dropped off along the way), which robs them of several extra hours from their day. Moreover, if they are working overtime, they will not be able to use the bus in the evening and will have to find ways to get home on their own because company buses operate at a fixed time and do not wait for employees. Although factories provide workers with this option, the transport cost is deducted from their income.

The representatives went on to add that transport has further implications for the workday. "If they miss the company bus in the morning and end up taking a different bus, they will be stopped at the [company] gate and shouted at and humiliated for being late. They will have to write an apology letter or lose half a day's pay." Due to a combination of factors

(especially the low fares), many garment factory workers end up using private, interstate buses. These buses are especially popular on Hosur road as they enter the city and make their way to Kalasipalayam. Along the way, many drivers pick up local commuters for a small fee, which they pocket. However, these private buses are notorious for being unsafe for women. As the representatives themselves pointed out:

> Sometimes on private buses the drivers would have consumed alcohol, will be chewing *Paan Parag* [a tobacco product] and he will have the radio on. So there is no safety on private buses. There will always be suspicion on these buses. On BMTC the employees have a responsibility and accountability. But on these buses there is no one to ask the drivers to stop chewing or talking on the phone. Even if they tease girls we cannot question them. On government buses we can take bus numbers down and hold them accountable by complaining to the authorities. But in private buses who can we approach?
>
> Girls are too scared to say this happened or that happened. Too much stigma and fear of retaliation. Village girls are too scared of shame and worry that even if one or two people know the whole village will come to know. Even in the factory they will not complain if something happens for fear that people will find out and they will lose face. They just put up with all this for 5 years then collect Provident Funds and move on to a new company because minimum 5 years is needed to get Provident Funds.
>
> On BMTC we can ask people to move but not on private buses. Sometimes they would have drunk alcohol or will be chewing *paan paraag* but we cannot say anything. They [male passengers] fall on us when the driver brakes, etc.

Illustrating the challenges women garment factory commuters face on private buses, including vulnerability to sexual and other forms of harassment, the representatives indicate the need for more affordable fares on the BMTC by highlighting the fact that the BMTC, by being a government agency represents more safety because there is a sense of accountability on these buses. Having more affordable fares on the BMTC will allow many of them to have safer commutes. They continued: "If there is a fare reduction targeting garments workers it might encourage more of them to actually use the BMTC."

As the excerpt from the interview with the representatives shows, women garment factory workers leave their own unique imprint on the city's transport landscape (see Appendices for shadowing session with garments factory worker – Lakshmi). These mobility practices and patterns emerge as a result of the BMTC's high fares, and also because the BMTC clearly favors the IT sector (according to BMTC 2017 statistics, which I received from the organization, their total fleet consisted of 6425 buses. Out of these, 827 were air-conditioned Volvo buses that catered to IT corridors). Moreover, in some cases the BMTC only allocates buses on routes that create more revenue for the agency. As a result of these factors, garment factory workers seek alternative ways of moving around mostly by non-motorized and informal transport systems. While some of it involves informal arrangements on auto rickshaws and private buses, some of it involves risky measures like walking long distances on railway tracks. This also highlights the ways in which the productive labor of the IT commuter is valorized over the work of many others, especially those women employed in the garments industry and as informal sector (as vendors, janitors, domestic workers, etc.).

Thus far, I have addressed the ways in which public transport is highly stratified in Bengaluru. This has consequences for how women in the city commute. This is with particular

regard to those employed in sectors like garments and IT, which employ and number of women. I have also illustrated how the bus system privileges mobility associated with certain kinds of social class, caste, gender and labor (especially IT). The normative subject is constructed as a modern, middle-class IT employee. I have also suggested that my interlocutors' narratives and experiences draw attention to the ways in which this uneven relationship between different kinds of labor unfolds in the city's transport landscape, and I assert that women's mobility decisions must be studied not only in terms of family, work and household labor but also in terms of how the mobility patterns of different industries have a cascading impact on the mobility and everyday lives of others in the city. From here, I proceed to examine how transport is entangled in aspirations for the future and social mobility.

Empowerment, aspirations and social mobility

Narratives such as the World Bank's Global Mobility Report (2017) and the Institute for Transport Development and Policy's policy brief (2017) suggest that "universal" transport access is crucial to enable people to access the workforce and this in turn can lead to increased economic growth. The Institute for Transport Development and Policy (ITDP) brief goes so far as to say: "Ultimately, transportation is the fulcrum that allows women to participate in the workforce, which can create a societal shift to transform the entire world economy" (2017, 17). These narratives tell us that transport access is intimately tied to livelihood, social mobility and economic growth. They define empowerment as economic agency.

Anthropologist Edward Simpson critiques of the World Bank's Global Mobility Report (2017).[1] He writes that the report attempts to envision a "global thinking in relation to transport" (Simpson 2019: 41). He draws attention to the role of culture in shaping aspirations for mobility.

To assume the possibility of a universal future of mobility, according to him, is to efface the diversity of aspirations and also to neglect the cultural basis of these aspirations.

Using Simpson's argument and challenging these rather universalizing claims about transport, livelihood and social mobility as economic agency, I unpack the significance that many of my interlocutors ascribe to transportation. I examine how they discuss the role of transport in terms of their aspirations for the future and for social mobility. I also examine their narratives and experiences to understand the unprecedented implications of transport access for social institutions such as family. I use insights from interviews and focus group discussions with women residents in the Karnataka Slum Development Board (KSDB) slum rehabilitation housing facility on Central road and one-on-one interviews with other women who lived in the housing facility.

The location and demography of Central road are important here because they shed light on the transport challenges faced by the community of residents.

The construction for the KSDB slum rehabilitation housing facility began in 2009 on Central road. The buildings were located approximately halfway into Central road, which was 8 km/about 5 miles in length. Over 1000 households from slums located in the interiors of Bengaluru were evicted and forcibly relocated in this slum rehabilitation facility. The buildings were therefore primarily occupied by residents from low-income households. I want to add here that Central road, by virtue of its recent assimilation within the Bengaluru city boundary (after 2007), was still balancing elements of rural with the urban. I discuss this transition from rural to urban further in chapter 1, where I examine the share-auto rickshaw system and social membership. Central road was also faced with a paucity of access to BMTC buses because of its

low revenue-generating potential. For my interlocutors from JB slum, the distance between their previous place of residence and this new place was more than 14 km (approximately 9 miles).

Given this context I seek to understand the role that is ascribed to transportation in when it comes to aspirations for the future, and aspirations for social mobility. I found that children's access to education was a key issue that my interlocutors raised. In what follows I unpack this relationship between access to education, public transport and aspirations for social mobility.

i. Education and challenges to transport access

The excerpt below is from a focus groups discussion with a group of women who were forcibly evicted in 2014 from JB slum[16] and relocated to the KSDB housing facility. JB slum was in a central part of Bengaluru city, with ample connection to the city's public transport grid. JB slum was built with much care by their fathers and grandfathers. Over the years, they had invested a lot of effort, including harnessing political support, for access to basic amenities such as water, electricity and even buses. However, after the eviction and forced relocation, my interlocutors' households faced many transport-related challenges. The women found themselves having to travel long distances and spending hours on crowded buses to get to their workplaces. Many preferred to hold on to their old jobs because they did not find suitable jobs in the new neighborhood. Moreover, they found themselves having to work hard and compromise on sleep and leisure in order to be able to access the handful of (oddly timed) buses that came to their neighborhoods. Many expressed concern about the difficulties faced by their children when it came to commuting to school.

[16] I have used a pseudonym for the slum to protect the identity of my interlocutors who might become identifiable if I revealed where they previously lived.

> The 7:00 am bus goes to Silkboard and ends there because it is attached to some factory nearby [they have a contract with the factory to pick up and drop off factory employees]. So our kids have to get down at Silkboard and take another bus from there. There is an 8:00 am bus to Jayanagar and KR Market. But school begins at 9:30 am and if they take the 8:00 am bus they will not reach on time. So the kids have to take the 7:00 am bus. There is another bus at 1:00 pm, which goes to KR Market. But this bus is oddly timed and does not benefit anyone. The 3.30 pm bus, which is actually the 8:00 am bus doing its rounds, goes to KR Market from here. At 5:30 pm there is a bus that leaves from Jayanagar but it only arrives here at 7:45 pm. The children finish school at 3:30 pm but will have to wait till 5:30 pm for the direct bus. Instead, they just take whatever bus is available at that time and walk several kilometers back home in the evening to avoid share-auto costs [for the last mile].

The paucity of BMTC buses in the neighborhood has placed dramatic time constraints on the women, while also impacting school and college-going children adversely. Not only do many of them have to wait inordinate periods of time for poorly-timed buses, they also need to commute at odd hours since that is the only way for them to access transport.

ii. Transport, education and social mobility

Alongside its many adverse impacts, forced movement like evictions can have an adverse impact on the education of young children. When I visited the Rashtriya Madhyamik Shiksha Abhiyan (the government initiative for promoting secondary education in public schools), an official, who preferred to remain anonymous informed me that the children of construction laborers often drop

out of schools because their lives are marked by so much movement. Not only do they migrate from villages to cities, but they also move from one construction site to another.

In fact, a report documenting the eviction of people who lived in the slum in Ejipura in 2013 and the impact that the eviction had on their lives, states that the school drop-out rates, and cost of education increased after the eviction, as did the distance traveled by children (Palavalli et al 2017):

> In the post-eviction period, 22 children dropped-out of school due to financial losses of their families directly caused by the eviction. Children also lost books and valuable documents during the demolition process. As a result, many of them could not appear for their annual examination and could not join new schools either.
>
> Financial problems and increased school fees resulted in many children dropping out from schools and working to supplement their family income. After the eviction, many families have had to move to distant locales and do not have accessibility to government schools…
>
> After the eviction, school fees reportedly increased by 75 per cent, from Rs 863 a month to Rs 1,509 a month, whereas tuition fees increased by 32 per cent, from Rs 385 to Rs 508. But the expenditure on school books per year reduced from 62 per cent (Rs 2,011) to 49 per cent (Rs 1,942). On further inquiry, it was indicated that this is a result of a combination of factors, such as the number of children who have dropped out of school and are currently working, the need to reduce spending on non-essentials, and in some cases, school fees being inclusive of the cost of books. (Ibid, 22)

As the excerpt from the report states, while the actual demolition itself led to a loss of property including school books, causing students to miss annual exams, and forcing them to give up their education, the migration of many of these households to new parts of the city, often far away from their previous place of residence and with a lack of government schools has forced children to give up their education.

When I did my research I found that the increased distance between home and school, not to mention increases in transport cost (because of the dearth of BMTC buses on the last leg of the commute, forcing people to pay for share-auto rickshaws) was a real concern among my interlocutors. To accommodate the needs of low-income students, the BMTC has provided subsidies. For example, the BMTC announced free bus passes to SC/ST (Scheduled Caste and Scheduled Tribe) students in 2017 (TNN 2017).[17] However, my interlocutors informed me that the pressure for generating revenue devolved onto drivers. BMTC drivers being under immense pressure to meet their daily revenue targets often avoid picking up large groups of students since they do not have to buy tickets. In fact, a lot of concerned parents at the slum rehabilitation facility, and education activists also pointed out to me that BMTC drivers and conductors are also very rude to children since they carry large backpacks which occupy a lot of space in the bus. Drivers and conductors get upset because children and their bags occupy large amounts of space without adding to their revenue targets (children often carry bus passes and do not have to buy day tickets) (BBPV 2016). The dearth of BMTC buses on Central road (where the slum rehabilitation facility is located and where a large population of the students are SC/ST) means that the student pass is only of value part of the way (as the mothers from JB slum indicate,

[17] The parastatal structure of the BMTC leaves the organization at the mercy of the whims of the ruling government.

children often have to walk back in the evening from the nearest hub since there is no bus available).

While elite schools and corporate firms enter into contracts with the BMTC to charter buses, government schools often cannot afford the cost of chartering buses. As a result, government school students who live in bus-sparse areas are faced with challenging travel conditions. Moreover, when there was an increase in chartering, there was a simultaneous shortage of buses for ordinary commuters. Chartered buses typically operate during peak hours and ordinary commuters either on their way to work or returning home found themselves having to bear the brunt of such bus shortages (Menezes 2017). While the BMTC allocates at least one bus if they know that a significant school/college going population exists in a particular area, issues of distance, timing, etc., impact school children in unprecedented ways.

I have established that access to public transportation thus plays a key role in access to education for children. I have also shown that evictions and other forms of forced mobility impact children's education adversely. Nevertheless, what I seek to further explore is what the relationship between transport and access to education can reveal about the role of transportation in aspirations for social mobility. I further illustrate this by examining excerpts from my conversations with Kamakshi, a friend and resident of the KSDB slum rehabilitation facility.

a. *Kamakshi*

Kamakshi's plans mirror the prevailing life stage narrative in India. In commonly heard middle-class and upper caste narratives of settling down, the story goes thus - "get married, buy a car and buy a house." Kamakshi wants her two sons to settle down. However, she has two different plans for them. For her older son to settle down she needs to buy him an auto rickshaw

– because he has not completed his education and might need to drive an auto rickshaw to earn his livelihood. For her younger son, her plan is that he must finish his education. Once he is done, she will buy him a 2-wheeler (scooter) that he can ride to work, and make sure he is settled.

Kamakshi is a little over the age of 40. She is married, with 2 sons. She works at a pre-school. She looks after the children during the day, and once they leave, she cleans the premises. Her hours extend from 9:00 am to 5:00 pm, and she is paid Rs. 6000 (approximately USD 83) every month. Her 44-year-old husband worked as a security guard for a few months at a nearby company and upon not receiving his salary on time, he recently left his post. For the last few months he has been unemployed. On rare occasions he finds painting jobs through relatives who are "painting contractors."

Kamakshi's older son has been unemployed since December. He is 20 years old and loves to dress fashionably. She tells me that when he was in the 5th standard, she transferred him from an English medium private school to a Kannada medium government school because they could not afford his school fees. Her son was unable to cope with the language transition and feeling demoralized, he lost his inclination to study. Kamakshi is punitively unkind to herself over his inability to find or hold on to employment. Unlike her older son, with her younger 16-year-old son she tried to ensure that his education did not suffer any interruptions.

Unlike many residents of the KSDB slum rehabilitation facility who were forcibly relocated, Kamakshi and her family live as "illegal" tenants in one of the residences in the housing facility. They were not evicted, rather they moved home to the slum rehabilitation facility wilfully. Unable to afford the rapidly increasing cost of living in the slum (located in the

center of the city) where they previously lived, they decided to move to this peripheral rehabilitation quarters.

When they moved, Kamakshi decided that it was in the best interest for her younger son, aged 16, to stay in "the city" with relatives so that he would not have to travel long distances on a daily basis at least till he completed his Pre-University College education. Therefore, although Kamakshi, her husband and older son moved house, she made sure that her younger son stayed behind. She did not want to disrupt the continuity of access to education for her son, by changing schools or shifting his residence.

The low frequency of buses, traffic jams, long distances, and paucity of "good quality" schools nearby mean that children have to travel several hours to go to school or college. Therefore, the residents of the slum rehabilitation settlement either left their children with relatives in the city [as in Kamakshi's case] so as not to disrupt the children's access to "good quality" education, or would have them commute several hours a day in extremely crowded, infrequent BMTC buses [the case of the women from JB slum]. Mothers often reported to me that traveling for several hours in city buses exposed children to harassment and exhaustion.

While Kamakshi is relieved that her son's education has not been disrupted, leaving her son with relatives resulted in its own set of anxieties. Kamakshi expressed distress at her son's greater attachment to the aunt (her husband's sister) who looked after him, than to his own mother. Moreover, she knew that her relatives exploited her son by making him do all their household chores. She was very upset about it. However, if she brought her son to live with her, and he stopped going to college, she knew she would be held responsible for it and would be shamed by her extended family and community. She consoles herself with the thought that her son is doing well academically, and that his future is bright.

As illustrated by Kamakshi's case as well as the narratives by the women who were forcibly evicted from JB slum, public transport intersects with gender, class and caste in complicated ways. As members of Scheduled Castes, these women are constantly facing uncertainty with respect to housing and eviction. Their access to frequent and affordable transport and consequently livelihood, education, and social networks is determined by where they live. Whereas development narratives claim that improved access to public transport will enable women to empower themselves as economic agents, they underestimate the limitations placed by caste on class-based social mobility. As part of a community that has been systematically deprived of access to basic resources (education, health, food) for centuries, many Scheduled Caste individuals like Kamakshi are still doing the menial labor dictated by their caste identities. Increased access to affordable and safe transport might present them with more job opportunities, but these opportunities remain within the range determined by their caste. As many parents informed me, their efforts at educating their children are to ensure that their children do not do the same jobs that they are doing, for example masonry, municipal contract sweeping, domestic help, coolie work, working as security guards or laboring in garment factories. Strategies such as leaving children with relatives so as not to disrupt their access to transport and education, or making children travel long distances in troubling conditions is meaningful in terms of the mothers' desire for a future for their children where the constraints of caste on access to employment would be less binding.

These women and their families do not have access to effective public transport. Precarious housing makes them live far from where their children go to school, and thus Kamakshi (and others like her) decided to leave her younger son with her in-laws so that he could access school without any disruptions caused by distance or lack of transport facilities.

School was easily accessible from her in-laws' home because of the density of bus connection from where they lived. Had there been more regular and safe access to buses from Central road, Kamakshi would not have had to leave her son with her in-laws family. I also want to assert here that the case of Kamakshi is an example that serves to undermine claims by the World Bank and others that universal transport access leads to economic empowerment for the following reasons: firstly, that transport access is mediated by a series of factors including where individuals live, the BMTC's revenue strategy, state funding to the BMTC, the role of bus drivers and conductors and fare affordability by users. Therefore, what does universal access even mean in a postcolonial city? Secondly, defining social mobility as economic agency does not capture the social complexity that shapes how transport is entangled in visions for social mobility. Social mobility is mediated by social systems such as caste in countries like India. As a result, transport access must take into account these pre-existing systems and the limitations imposed by them. By exploring the practice of leaving children with relatives because of precarious housing and transport access, it becomes apparent that aspirations for social mobility are seldom only about economic empowerment, they are linked to greater projects of emancipation that are entangled in histories of caste-based oppression.

Having established the ways in which transport is entangled in family, caste and aspirations for social mobility, I have asserted the need to understand public transport as socially significant in ways other than its ability to contribute to economic growth. Moreover, access to public transport needs to be understood in the context of caste because of how deeply entangled they are.

Conclusion

In this chapter, I have used ethnographic insight to argue that public transport systems imagine the ideal normative user as a modern, middle-class IT professional and that public transport, especially the bus serves as a platform for upholding middle-class gender ideologies in public spaces. I have examined the politics surrounding seat segregation and the valorization of IT labor to illustrate how caste and gender intersect on public transport and how caste identity correlating to IT work is privileged when more resources are channeled towards Vajra buses. I have also highlighted the fact that the industry-determinism of the city's transport landscape needs to be addressed as an important factor while studying gender, caste and urban mobility since it has a cascading effect on the everyday temporal rhythms of many.

I argue that the valorization of heteronormative, "modern," gender roles and "productive" labor through safety measures on public transport makes it a site for the extension of middle-class ideology. This however, makes way for the exclusion of those who lie outside of these roles especially transgender people and sex workers. During interviews sex workers would inform me that conductors and drivers would call them names and refuse to give them their tickets in their hands (a form of disrespect) because of the work that they performed. Sometimes they would refuse to stop the bus when they saw them waiting at bus stops.

I have also explored the ways in which public transport in-access can have unprecedented impacts on social institutions like family (as in Kamakshi's case because of her anxieties about her son's greater attachment to his aunt) and ethnographic inquiry has the potential to unearth some of these links that are otherwise omitted in transport planning. Moreover, discourses of

social mobility through transport access need to be revisited to consider specificities of place and social complexity (such as caste and kinship).

This then behooves the question, what does gender-inclusive transport look like? What radical reimagining does it require?

CHAPTER 3

Transport Systems, Infrastructures and Marketplaces

Transport infrastructures in Bengaluru are increasingly shaped by aspirations for world-class city-making. However, these shifts manifest differently in different socio-spatial contexts and are experienced differently by the city's residents, including vendors, entrepreneurs and drivers.

In this chapter, I examine experiences of Bengaluru's changing urban form through narratives and practices surrounding transport (infrastructures, systems and automobiles) from a diverse range of actors including street vendors, auto rickshaw drivers and long-time, elderly residents of Basavanagudi. What connects these narratives and experiences of transformation is that they are linked to marketplaces albeit of diverse forms including physical, digital and housing markets.

Setting out on the task of showing how urban change is different in different parts of the city, this chapter focuses on markets and transport because the relationship was mobilized by my interlocutors in their narratives and practices. This chapter explores the analytical purchase of studying the relationship between transport and marketplaces within the broader context of world-class city-making.

I present 3 distinct ethnographic scenarios in this chapter. The first ethnographic vignette focuses on a market demolition in the interest of "service road improvement" in an "informal" marketplace in peripheral Bengaluru. The area in which the marketplace is located, Central road, has only officially been part of Bengaluru's urban jurisdiction for the last decade and is undergoing rapid rural to urban transformation, overseen and orchestrated by Bengaluru's municipal officials. This section unearths conflicting logics for what the city-making means for

street vendors and municipal officials, by telling the story of the municipality-initiated demolition of the marketplace.

The second ethnographic vignette pays close attention to the role that auto rickshaws play in meeting complex and diverse mobility needs in the city. Algorithm-based, digital transport marketplaces such as cab aggregators threaten the livelihood of the city's auto rickshaw drivers. Their algorithm-controlled enforcement of certain labor practices in combination with other factors (such as haphazard cab parking and increased traffic) contribute to what many auto rickshaw drivers in the city perceive as their marginalization and as a threat to their livelihood. In stark contrast to this algorithm-based mode of operation, the rickshaw drivers believe that their autonomy and logic of operation enables them to provide critical mobility services that not only enable insight into unique and creative economic practices in the city, but also serve to sustain these practices. Unpacking this relationship between transport services offered by digital transport marketplaces and auto rickshaw drivers in the city, I use ethnographic insight from a shadowing session with a flower seller to illustrate the critical role auto rickshaws play in providing mobility services that are attuned to local mobility cultures, economic practices and needs.

The third section of this chapter unearths the meaning of the phrase from "bungalow model to apartment model," which is common among long-term, native residents of Bengaluru. This phrase encapsulates a very specific experience of Bengaluru's urban transformation. In this section, I argue that this narrative is not only a commentary on changing trends in housing, but also a reflection on the shifting relationship between housing, kinship and access to private automobiles, especially cars.

The overarching question that frames the three sections of this chapter is motivated by how processes of world-class city-making shapes the relationship between markets and transport and how these shifts are perceived and made meaning of by local actors. This chapter asks: What different kinds of relationships emerge between different kinds of transport systems and marketplaces? How are they experienced and narrativized by those closely involved in the processes?

Transport and retail on Central road

Focusing on a peripheral part of Bengaluru, namely Central road, I examine the slippery process of transformation from rural to "world-class" urban as the city municipality, the Bruhat Bengaluru Mahanagara Palike (BBMP), extends its authority over areas that until a decade ago were external to its jurisdiction. I examine what this transformation entails, what urban structures and materials carry the weight of this transformation, the contestations that emerge around it, the stories that emerge from it, and finally, how it is experienced by those who depend on these spaces (in this case, street vendors).

In this section, I unearth different visions of urban that emerge through an exploration of the changing relationship between transport and retail. These become apparent when seen through the demolition of an "informal" marketplace on Central road. I show how the vision of congestion-free roads is deployed by municipal officials as a justification to evict street vendors and consequently efface an entire chain of relationships between "informal" retail, transport service providers, and customers to institute new rules about how the "public" must move.

In late November 2017, there were rumors about the demolition of the reportedly three to four decades old marketplace at the entrance to Central road. The marketplace began at the entrance to Central road (at the intersection with Hosur road) and extended about 1 kilometer

(0.6 miles) into Central road. While most “authorized” traders had bakeries, travel agencies, photo booths and clothes stores in small, single and double-storeyed buildings (some of them semi-residential) on the sides of Central road, the *open* marketplace was host to a vibrant array of street vendors whose wares ranged from fresh fruit and vegetables, freshwater fish and poultry, manually created metal products, manual tattoos, plastics, and freshly-butchered meat. In contrast to the *open* marketplace at Basavanagudi, where no meat or seafood was sold, an indicator of the dominance of brahmins and Jains (both vegetarian communities), the presence of butchers and fish sellers at the Central road marketplace hint at the diversity of the population in the area, which as residents would report, has a heavy presence of Scheduled Caste people, non-brahmin Hindus, Christians and Muslims in addition to others.

The marketplace on Central road exemplified the ubiquitous phenomenon of how street vending and transport form around each other. Some of Bengaluru’s central transport hubs like Kalasipalayam and KR Market are also bustling marketplaces. The marketplace of Central road exemplified the ways in which the socio-spatial relationship between street vendors, the “informal” share-auto rickshaw system (see chapter 1), and other goods transport service providers, which emerged over time through the initiative of local low-income residents, facilitated the seamless performance of everyday tasks (such as buying groceries on their way home) for nearly *all* local residents. Tucked into a nook in the marketplace was the share-auto rickshaw stand, which was located by a tea stall frequented by “tempo” (open-backed trucks used to transport goods to various parts of the city) drivers who parked their tempos by the long line of share-auto rickshaws and share-auto rickshaw drivers. Tempo drivers were often summoned by local store owners to transport commodities and make deliveries. Garment factory workers, students, and sometimes even IT sector employees would alight at the Hosur road –

Central road intersection from their respective company shuttles or BMTC buses, purchase produce from the marketplace and board share-auto rickshaws to return home.

The rumor of the imminent demolition of the open marketplace spread wildly among street vendors who until now had not had to deal with the prospect of an eviction of this scale, and were thus unprepared as they had not formed an association to represent their rights. This is because Central road and adjoining neighborhoods were enfolded into the Bengaluru city boundary less than a decade ago and the areas were only just transforming from village to city. On a Sunday afternoon, two days before the demolition took place, a young social worker (from a local NGO) and local representative of the National Street Vendors Association held an impromptu meeting at the marketplace, where she asserted the need for the vendors to unite and form a local-level collective and formally join the National Street Vendors Association. This would help them garner support in resisting demolitions. However, the local-level collective was never formed. Two days later, the marketplace was demolished by Joseph Cyril Bamford (JCB) excavators. Vendors (some of them very old) could be seen hurriedly pushing their carts a couple of kilometers down Central road to find new spots to vend. Others watched as what was left of their makeshift wooden stalls was demolished and turned to rubble (see figures 22 and 23)

Figure 22: JCB excavators demolishing the marketplace

Figure 23: Vendors and local residents watching as stalls are razed to the ground

The reason cited for this eviction by officials from the Bruhat Bengaluru Mahanagara Palike (BBMP), or the city municipality was "service road improvement." During interviews following the eviction, BBMP engineers responsible for the project informed me that due process had been followed – the elected representatives of the area it seems, had pointed out the need to "improve" the *kutcha* or crude service road. In this case, although the elected representative to the municipal corporation was a woman named Chaitra, she was merely the token representative. Her husband "Chewing Gum Cheena," where Cheena was short for Sreenivas (he earned the nickname because he always chewed gum), was the one who really called the shots. Based on his recommendation to the municipality, a proposal had been drafted, it had been approved by the necessary authority in the BBMP, and the project began!

In a phone interview on December 8th, 2017, the BBMP Assistant Executive Engineer responsible for the concerned municipal zone where the eviction occurred, explained the process for the eviction and the rationale behind it. Justifying the BBMP's decisions, he pointed out that the asphalted main road had existed for a very long time, but it was the vendors who did not respect the integrity of the road and its purpose. Deploying the language of world-class city-

making, he said the demolition was meant to facilitate unhindered mobility to automobiles, and reclaim the road from vendors who had occupied it without any municipal authorization.

He went on to explain that Central road itself was quite wide and did not require any intervention, but its occupation by street vendors was unauthorized, and "so we have evicted them." He made a clear distinction between the purpose of the main road/ carriageway and the service roads. Central Road comprised of a wide main road, divided by a low-step concrete median into two lanes, to facilitate the movement of traffic in opposite directions. On the outer edge of the main roads were the muddy (un-asphalted) service roads. Authorized commercial establishments lined the service roads, and street vendors were stationed in makeshift wooden stalls, with their pushcarts and baskets along both sides of the service roads. While main roads are meant purely (ostensibly) for the rapid movement of automobiles, the purpose of the service roads is to allow local residents on scooters and in cars to exit the main road (at the nearest intersection) to purchase commodities from the commercial establishments and join the fast-moving traffic at the nearest intersection once they are finished with their shopping. He added: "Earlier the service road was there but it was not being utilized for the purpose that it was meant. Earlier they [the vendors] had blocked the entire service road and the surface was soiled. It was very dirty… now because of population explosion and too many vehicle population [sic], now the necessity has come to improve the urban road." The BBMP's plan for service road "improvement" included keeping the integrity of the structure of the roads. They merely wanted to cover the mud service roads with interlocking pavers (or concrete blocks which do not sit flush against each other but have a small gap between them. These gaps are filled with material such as sand). These pavers are meant to even out the ground, making it easy for pedestrian use as well. "The move is to bring usage back to public" he said.

His language echoes the sentiments of world-class city-making, which pervades urban transformation through transport infrastructure in Bengaluru. He articulates a very particular vision for what the service road must be used. The service road carries the weight of world-class visions of urbanization; it is meant to allow consumerism and free flow of automobiles to accommodate the population increase.

I asked him to clarify what he meant by saying that they wanted to bring the road "back to [the] public." He replied: "It [the service road improvement] is not on the basis of public demand because it is hundred percent the property of the BBMP." To elaborate, in India, State transport systems and infrastructures fall within the purview of State governments and not the Central Government. In Bengaluru city, the city municipality, the BBMP oversees road infrastructures including roads (arterial and sub-arterial), streets, freeways, underpasses, sidewalks, pedestrian crossings, barricades, and so on. Therefore, as the engineer points out, the decision for implementing infrastructural plans are made by BBMP officials. He responded to my question by saying "there is no need to [conduct a] study." Studies and vehicular census are necessary for big projects like highways. But in this case because it is a service road, there is no such requirement. He continued:

> The local corporator [Chewing Gum Cheena in place of his wife Chaitra] and Member of Legislative Assembly (MLA) have come to know that these service roads are not being put to proper use because of urban surface and unauthorized occupation by these unscrupulous elements like these unauthorized vendors. They actually requested the BBMP to bring out a master plan and send a proposal to the government and after receipt of necessary funds to prepare estimate and do the work. That has been done. Now the tender process is over and work has been

> entrusted to one guy. The request comes from these elected representatives. We officials will keep moving [being transferred]. I stay in Bangalore North. How will I know what is happening in other parts of Bangalore? I was transferred six months ago. These elected representatives [like the corporator and MLA] are there from the beginning they will know from which road what is going on. They will bring to notice of government in my locality it is like this. That is how funds have been sanctioned and work has started. Road is not being widened. Whatever road was there, it is being improved.

In the above excerpt the engineer points out that recommendations for road infrastructures, which are meant to be "public" goods are based on suggestions made by local elected representatives such as BBMP corporators (in this case, Chaitra's husband Chewing Gum Cheena) and MLAs. However, street vendors, who were most impacted by the "improvement," narrativized this process of world-class city-making by drawing attention to the reportedly underhand practices of elected representatives and politicians.

Immediately after the demolition, I followed some vendors who had hurriedly pushed their carts and moved their produce further down Central road. While some vendors lived around Central road for most of their lives, others migrated here from adjoining villages, and many vendors in the area had migrated to Central road and adjoining areas from the interiors of Bengaluru city over the last few decades, upon being unable to cope with the increasing cost of living in the city. Rejecting the BBMP's claims that vendors illegally occupied the road, and as a testament to his right to vend on Central road by virtue of his long association with the place, an elderly man, a street vendor in a white *dhoti*, *kurta* and turban informed me:

> I have been trading at this marketplace for forty years now and I have had a stall for thirty years. It was but a forest for many years. No buses, nothing. There were no people, no roads. Cows and sheep used to graze here in abundance. The road was made about twenty years ago. Now they want to evict us.

His words emphasize the fact that some of the vendors have been here much longer than the infrastructure, illuminating the fact that new infrastructures are not only physically transforming the landscape, but also pushing out people and whole systems of spatial organization.

A passerby whispers to me that a minister from the Cabinet of the then Chief Minister of Karnataka, Siddaramaiah, had entered into a partnership with a major real estate developer. They had constructed a condominium with a large number of residential units, a few kilometers into Central road. Upon not being able to find buyers and tenants, they came to the conclusion that the entrance to Central road was much too "unsightly" and "chaotic" for the elite, "VIP" class to whom they were trying to cater. That is why they evicted the street vendors. "If VIP cars come this way there will not be enough room for their big cars, and the roads look unsightly, so they want to remove the vendors. They [the municipality] have promised a new marketplace after two months. But they should construct that first before evicting the vendors. Can the vendors sit on the road? [Referring to the fact that their makeshift wooden stalls and shelters had been demolished and they now had to sit on the ground and in the sun]." Many street vendors and share-auto rickshaw drivers reinforced this backstory about corrupt political leaders, real estate developers, and elected representatives of the municipality being hand-in-glove, when asked about why the marketplace was being demolished.

In this atmosphere of growing suspicion, anger and betrayal, the fear of speaking out against the local corporator and the municipality was rife among street vendors. A middle-aged

woman vendor asked me who I was, and then asked me to change her name when I transcribed the recording, before angrily saying:

> We [the street vendors] are in limbo! We had been conducting business there for 30 years. Selling vegetables. It was close to the bus stop so we could take a bus to KR Market to buy produce to sell at our stalls and leave our carts tied to our spots. But now… We have never had to face evictions before so we did not have a vendors association. When we tried to form an association the local politicians [Chewing Gum Cheena and the MLA] did not allow us. 'Why do you need an association when we are there? You want to organize because the road is being torn down. But why do you need an association when we are here for you? Do you know have faith in us.' The politicians, the corporator Chewing Gum Cheena said. If we move our stalls away from the Central road entrance, we won't have business. That is because that [Central road entrance] is a marketplace, and has been for 40 years. In people's memory, that spot is a marketplace. Who is going to think to come here? People get down from the bus and the marketplace is right there for them to buy. We are not going to have business if we are here. If we have to come from home we have to take an auto rickshaw [rather than just walk] that will be more expensive.

Naga emphasizes two distinct points – firstly that the vendors not only found themselves losing livelihood opportunities, but they also found that they did not have an organized collective through which they could voice their concerns. For this she held elected representatives like the corporator's husband Chewing Gum Cheena responsible. Not only had he been responsible for their eviction and consequent loss of livelihood, but through false assurances of trust, he had

actively dissuaded the vendors from forming an association. Forming an association would have allowed them to formally associate with the National Street Vendors Association and garner more support. While Cheena clearly stood to profit from the proceedings (by aiding the politicians), the vendors had lost their sole source of livelihood.

Secondly, Naga pointed out that in over the last 30 years, the physical space where the marketplace was located had been embedded in people's memories and every day routines. Disrupting that space and evicting vendors would have far-reaching consequences on the lives of many who commute through the marketplace. To illustrate, the erstwhile marketplace was in close proximity to bus stands which saw many buses headed towards KR Market, a centrally located wholesale market from where many street vendors would procure wares. Access to KR Market for vendors was very easy because of the proximity of the marketplace to the bus stands, however, now, the vendors would have to find other (possibly more expensive) ways to transport fruits, vegetables, flowers, and other commodities to their new spots. In addition, local residents were accustomed to alighting at their bus stops at the Central road – Hosur road intersection on the way back from work, purchasing groceries and produce from the marketplace and then taking a share-auto rickshaw back home. However, the eviction of the vendors would affect all of these commuters and also the share-auto rickshaw drivers. As one vendor pointed out: people prefer to alight at the bus stop, buy produce from vendors and take a share-auto rickshaw home, "who is going to alight at the bus stop walk two kilometers to buy produce and then board a rickshaw to go home?"

This section has illustrated the ways in which the language and vision of world-class city-making is deployed by municipal officials to transform road infrastructures in physical marketplaces. However, these processes of transformation do not take into consideration the

interests of those who are instrumental in sustaining the dynamic economic and social practices that thrive in these marketplaces. For the vendors and the share-auto rickshaw drivers on Central road, their understanding of functional space is predicated on the seamless transactions that occur between customer/commuters and the vendors and rickshaw drivers. However, for the municipal officials it is about creating movement for "public" without taking into consideration the existing patterns. What we really see in this case is the way the world-class city is violently superimposed on pre-existing urban formations. "Informality," although a central part of the urban condition (Anjaria 2016), is effaced by the municipality, with the intention of instituting urban formations that are based on visions of world-classness, where "informality" is seen as antithetical to the project of world-class city-making.

Having examined the relationship between transport and "informal" retail, I draw attention to the emergence of digital transport marketplaces and their consequences for less technologically dependent forms of intermediate public transport, namely, auto rickshaws.

Auto rickshaws versus digital transport marketplaces

When it comes to intermediate public transport in Bengaluru, digital transport marketplaces such as OLA and Uber, embedded as they are in the mobility practices of more upwardly mobile communities, especially those who are part of the IT and ITES industries, use web-based applications to bring together transport demand and supply. In other words, their mobility services are strictly governed by algorithms. On the other hand, auto rickshaws attend to and facilitate creative forms of mobility that lead to important economic transactions that are alienated from and by digital networks. In this section, I unpack narratives from auto rickshaw drivers that establish the unique nature of service provision enabled by auto rickshaws. I provide

ethnographic evidence of how the auto rickshaw, by virtue of its size, turning radius, shape, and the kinds of sociality that it engenders, is extremely important not only in facilitating the smooth operation of informal retail commodity chains, but also in allowing a uniquely gendered series of economic transactions to thrive.

In the last decade, cab aggregators such as OLA and Uber have made a very successful foray into the transport sector in Bengaluru city. Much of this success has been attributed to the exponential growth in "middle-class" population, leading to the subsequent increase in the number of people who have the disposable income to afford services provided by OLA and Uber. The increase in the growth of the customer base for cab aggregator services has largely been credited to the emergence and growth of the Information Technology (IT) and Information Technology Enabled Services (ITES) sectors (Panigrahi et al. 2018; Goel et al. 2018).

Private cab aggregators enjoy widespread patronage from employees in IT and ITES industries. They abide by international management models and use smartphone technology to navigate the city's streets. Auto rickshaws by contrast are privately owned, and regulated by government mandates. Reporting that the increasing presence of app-based cabs had led to a fall in their daily income by 30%, during interviews, auto rickshaw drivers asserted the salience of the auto rickshaw system in a city like Bengaluru. Many of them emphasized that Bengaluru is a city, which is characterized by ad hoc growth and consequently, a large number of narrow, unplanned streets. The narrow width of the auto rickshaw enables it to access these areas, while cabs are not designed to handle narrow roads. Moreover, auto rickshaw drivers would point out that cab drivers were "outsiders" while rickshaw drivers were "locals." The use of the term "outsiders" directs attention to the phenomenon of rural to urban migration by many agriculturalists who have been impacted by climate change (see also Singh et al 2018; Surie and

Sharma 2019). A number of men from rural Karnataka, migrate to Bengaluru in search of work, and they often end up working as cab drivers for OLA and Uber. Auto rickshaw drivers on the other hand, typically tend to be men from low-income households in Bengaluru who do not have enough of an education to eke out a livelihood by any other means. They resort to auto rickshaw driving since it is a guaranteed source of income. As long-term residents of the city, many auto rickshaw drivers pride themselves in their cognitive maps of Bengaluru. Moreover, they note that "outsiders" employed by OLA and Uber depend on unreliable technologies such as poor internet connection, smartphones, and navigation systems (such as Google Maps, OLA for instance relies on Google Maps to serve as its primary route navigation system). As one rickshaw driver said to me, "When their internet connection fails, they will stop to ask auto [rickshaw] drivers: 'How can I get to X road from here?'" The argument is that auto rickshaw drivers are more likely to have cognitive maps not only of the city's ever-changing geography, but also of the traffic rhythms, which would determine which roads are congested, when, and what alternative routes could be used instead.

Despite the decrease in their daily earnings, many auto rickshaw drivers I interviewed were reluctant to join these digital transport marketplaces.[18] This was because of their skepticism of technological dependence in navigating a city like Bengaluru, and also because of self-identified labor standards and practices, which they thought were incompatible with the algorithm-based system followed by cab aggregators. During fieldwork, I found that the increasing presence of OLA and Uber cabs on the streets of Bengaluru threatened the livelihood of local auto rickshaw drivers. Most auto rickshaw drivers I interviewed informed me that their daily income had fallen by 30% in the last three years. Although they had the option of working

[18] A number of rickshaw drivers have signed up with OLA Auto but many others resist it.

for OLA as “OLA Auto” drivers, they showed a strong disinclination, stating the following reasons. Many said they preferred to be “masters of their own time.” It has been widely reported that OLA and Uber have been notorious for their lack of transparency with respect to driver remuneration. Moreover, drivers are constantly under surveillance and cannot even take breaks between trips especially since trips are assigned even before current trips end, leaving no time for drivers to take a break from having driven long distances in heavy traffic and pollution (see also Rosenblat 2018 on the adverse impact of algorithm-based work on Uber drivers in the United States). Second, some drivers (especially older drivers) were uncomfortable with acquiring and using expensive smartphone technologies. This was both because smartphones are expensive and also because they require adapting to an entirely new technology. In comparison, auto rickshaw driving was a *respectable* option available to the “poor man”/ anyone (caste neutral) who did not complete their secondary education.[19]

As I have also pointed out in chapter 1, the notion of *respectability* is very important for auto rickshaw drivers. Auto rickshaw drivers come from all age groups and castes. They assert that rickshaw driving is a caste-neutral profession for the “poor man.” Although it is considered caste-neutral, there is a high incidence of men from minority communities, Scheduled Castes and Tribes, turning to rickshaw driving for a job because of systemic issues pertaining to poverty and education. Until a few years ago, the Other Backward Classes Commission and Scheduled Caste and Tribe Commissions supported the purchase of auto rickshaws through loans, for men from the said communities. The label of caste-neutrality and the fact that drivers get to be masters of their own will and time, endow the profession with much desired respectability, which is

[19] Regulations indicate that Drivers need to have completed education up to the level of standard 8 to get a license (CiSTUP 2012).

something algorithms strip the profession of cab-driving, of. As respectable masters of their own time and will, unlike Uber and OLA drivers, auto rickshaw drivers can choose to refuse passengers, take deviations to avoid traffic, take breaks between rides and determine their hours. They can also adjust to meet the mobility needs of passengers in ways that cab drivers cannot.

In this section of the chapter, I use the story of Vijayalakshmi to illustrate how auto rickshaws, by virtue of these characteristics, are salient to the diversity of mobility cultures and economic transactions in the city. I do so by highlighting the ways in which auto rickshaws facilitate a creative array of commodity chain networks and gendered "informal" retail practices that other available forms of transport such as the public bus, the metro and cab aggregators cannot fulfil.

i. Vijayalakshmi

Vijayalakshmi is a flower seller in the local marketplace in Basavanagudi. Her spot is in a corner where the main marketplace intersects with a narrow alleyway (see figure 24). A blue and white parasol stands over her blue wooden table covered with a bright orange tarpaulin sheet. Customers keep stopping by to purchase jasmine and crossandra from her. The flowers have all been neatly strung up into long garlands, which lie coiled on the table. For those customers seeking shorter garlands that women can place in their braids or offer to idols of gods in their homes, Vijayalakshmi has a neat pile of shorter bits of strung up flowers.

The commodities and services available at the marketplace in Basavanagudi attend to "upper" caste (mostly brahmin and Jain) "vegetarian" food and ritual requirements. This is in rather stark contrast to the marketplace on Central road, which includes butchers and fish sellers in addition to vegetable and fruit sellers and has a much smaller number of flower vendors, indicating the presence of a much more diverse population in terms of caste, class and religion.

The marketplace in Basavanagudi consists of fruit and vegetable stalls, and stalls that sell paraphernalia used by Hindus for everyday religious practices. With the exception of one military hotel (where meat is served) on the road where the marketplace is located, the marketplace has many "vegetarian" restaurants (indicating that customers/ owners are likely brahmins), banks, pharmacies and stores selling sarees and imitation/fashion jewelry. The flower sellers have an entire section of the marketplace devoted to their trade. The fragrance of jasmine and rose among other flowers greets passers-by even before they arrive at the flower stalls. The large number of flower stalls serve to meet the daily needs of the many temples in and around Basavanagudi, which require large quantities of flowers to adorn Hindu deities every day. Moreover, flowers are an important form of ritual offering to Hindu deities and many traditional Hindu households engage in daily ritual practices which involve offering flowers to God.

Transport use by vendors in the marketplace are shaped by gender as well as by the lifespan of the commodity being sold. While a bus stop with an abundance of buses to KR Market (the wholesale marketplace from where most vendors acquire their products) is located in Basavanagudi's marketplace, making accessibility to buses rather easy, most vendors prefer to make private transport arrangements. Fruit and vegetable sellers often rely on tempos (open-backed trucks) to transport produce from KR Market, because fruits and vegetables tend to be considerably heavier, and tempos make it easier to transport produce in bulk. However, since flowers tend to weigh a lot less, flower sellers use motorcycles/ scooters or auto rickshaws. To be more precise, men use motorcycles/scooters and women flower vendors typically use autorickshaws. Vijayalakshmi commutes to the wholesale market every afternoon to buy flowers since flowers perish quickly. They often do not last beyond one day especially since the flowers that she sells stay out in the open all day.

Vijayalakshmi is 43 years old and has lived in Bengaluru since the time she was born. Her husband is 44 years old. They do not have children of their own, but are raising her husband's sister's daughter. The girl's mother died soon after childbirth and they have been raising her since. They live in a rented house nearby. Her husband drives an auto rickshaw for a living.

She is at the marketplace by 7:00 am every day. At the end of the day, she leaves for home at 9:30 or 10:00 pm. She never uses the bus to commute, only auto rickshaws. "The timings of buses do not suit me," she says. Her trade requires efficiency, speed and flexibility (in terms of route taken, avoiding traffic, etc.) and buses tend to slow things down. Therefore, she informs me that auto rickshaws are more suited to her travel needs.

Every afternoon, she leaves for KR Market to acquire fresh flowers for the evening and for the next morning. The quantity of flowers that she buys depends on how much she has already sold, and how much is left over from the previous day. The flowers typically last a day. If she does not sell them on the first day, she refrigerates them overnight and brings them the next morning to sell at the marketplace.

On her way back from KR Market after purchasing flowers, she stops at various lower/lower-middle income neighborhoods and hands the loose flowers to women to string them up by 5:00 pm. On her way to the market in the evening at 5:00 pm, just in time for customers to make their evening ritual purchases, she picks up the finished garlands from the women and brings them to the marketplace.

What follows is a step-by step documentation of Vijayalakshmi's commute to KR Market and back.

Figure 24: Vijayalakshmi's stall at the marketplace

Figure 25: Flowers left over from the previous day's purchase

It is a little after noon. Gesturing to the flowers leftover from the previous day's purchase, Vijayalakshmi tells me that she will not let them go waste, but will give them to the elderly gentleman who everyone refers to as *thatha* or grandfather, sitting nearby, and ask him to sell it. Thatha is a thin old man with dark skin and white hair. He seldom speaks, but moves with great agility. He wears large spectacles and his cheeks sink into his toothless mouth. Although the old man has family in the city, he prefers to live at the marketplace. He used to be a vendor here and now that he is too old to have his own stall, he does odd jobs for the other vendors. He

sleeps in the municipal marketplace, a small space carved out by the municipality for the vendors, which is too small of a space to accommodate the large number of vendors. Vijayalakshmi very carefully monitors his diet and only she can determine when he may eat and what he may eat. “He has ulcers, he cannot eat everything” she explains when I offer to buy lunch for everyone.

A friend of hers is also sitting with us on the sidewalk, waiting for Vijayalakshmi to determine when we can leave. At 12.18 pm the three of us set out by auto rickshaw (see figures 26 and 27).

Figure 26: Taken at 12:18 pm. Vijayalakshmi is in the green and beige saree and her friend behind her is in a red saree. We just have to step off the sidewalk and an auto rickshaw appears in front of us

Figure 27: Taken at 12:19. We board an auto rickshaw almost as soon as we set out for KR Market

We have just to step off the sidewalk and an auto rickshaw appears in front of us (see photo 2.6). Vijayalakshmi informs me that for the last 15 years she has been taking the same route to KR Market, from where she sources raw materials at wholesale price. On some days however, she has to take a deviation to pick up payment from a household where she delivers garlands every morning. She gets paid every 15 days. They use the garlands to perform their daily prayers to Hindu Gods. "They need extra flowers because they have a Venkateswara idol" she tells me. "They buy in bulk because they have both an office and their household needs." Today we will be taking a slight deviation to get her payment.

Vijayalakshmi informs me that over the years one of the most remarkable transformation has been in the volume of traffic. It has increased a great deal, she says. I ask her in Kannada if she has ever *taken* the bus to KR Market. "I wanted to, but they did not let me" she replies, mocking my use of the Kannada word for "take" rather than "use." At that point, the auto driver asks what is going on, and upon learning that I am PhD student studying transport, he chides her and asks her to respond to me properly. "She is only a child doing her college homework, you should give her proper answers." She then goes on to tell me that it is very rare for her to use the bus because of time-related issues. Buses take too much time.

The auto rickshaw driver assumes that Vijayalakshmi and her friend are actually sharing the auto rickshaw and adds "sharing and auto [rickshaw] make more economical sense if more than one person is going. If only one person is travelling, it makes more sense to take a bus, but for two or three, sharing an auto is a much more economical way of travelling." This is because a number of women municipal contract workers (*pourakarmikas*) and women vendors from the market, in order to save money on their commutes from home or to KR Market, share auto rickshaws rides by splitting the fare according to where their respective destinations lie. Rickshaw drivers are familiar with these practices and tend to be very accommodating.

Making a reference to the fact that vendors travel to KR Market at particular times of day, for example, at 5:00 am to source fresh produce for the day, and then in the afternoon when there is a lull in customers at their stalls in the marketplace, the auto rickshaw driver informs me that for those vendors who go to the market early in the morning, police stand in wait at 5.00 am and stop their rickshaws and ask for money. They take a bribe rather than fine them for overloading the auto rickshaws beyond the permitted capacity and carrying large amounts of "luggage" in *passenger* auto rickshaws. "Even if the fare is only Rupees 30, they charge a bribe of Rupees 50."

There is quite a lot of traffic along the way and the delay is only exacerbated by some road repair work on the road (see figure 28). The repair work has blocked one half of the road, turning what normally serves as a two-way street, into a one-way. When the auto rickshaw slows down because of the repair work, Vijayalakshmi's friend swiftly alights from the auto rickshaw and makes her way to her destination.

Vijayalakshmi instructs the driver to drive into some alleyways. Her instructions are very last minute, but auto rickshaws as a form of transport are very friendly to contingencies.

Passengers can give instructions at the very last moment and still make the turns. Rather suddenly, Vijayalakshmi asks the driver to stop in front of a 3-storeyed house with a very ornate façade. Mumbling in her usual disgruntled way, that she will be back soon, she disappears into the gate (see figure 29).

Figure 28: Road repair work holding up the traffic and Vijayalakshmi's friend alights here

Figure 29: Vijayalakshmi asks the auto driver to stop by this house and alights to go get her payment

She returns and we head out again. She informs me that she delivers flowers to this house every morning before setting up shop in the marketplace. Her house is in the opposite direction

so this is quite out of the way for her. She takes an auto rickshaw from her house, comes here, delivers flowers, and then goes to the marketplace.

In preparation for her trip to KR Market, Vijayalakshmi has a large bag with several bags folded up and neatly packed into it. Today she intends on buying 10 kilograms of *mallige* or jasmine; only 1 kilogram of crossandra because the prices have gone up and it is quite expensive; marigold or *sevanthige* that has been strung together; and 2 kilograms of oleander. The quantities that she buys also depend on rates. The rate of flowers can vary on a daily basis. "If you look at the pattern in a week, on Thursdays flowers cost more, because everyone prays on Friday" she informs. She spends Rupees 5000 (approximately USD 70) on average per day and she has her regular stalls at KR Market where she makes purchases.

In the meantime, the auto rickshaw driver remarks that the narrow road that we are on is completely blocked by goods carriers being loaded/dropping produce off at KR Market. "We'll have to try another route," he says turning the auto rickshaw away (see figure 30). Vijayalakshmi remarks – "jams will clear, but bad roads will not go away and they cause a lot of problems during the rains." We alight and the fare is around Rupees 60. When I pay the auto rickshaw driver, Vijayalakshmi refuses to allow it. "It is all part of the business" she says firmly as she hands him a Rupees 100 note.

The market is very crowded but Vijayalakshmi is extremely fast and she darts through small gaps between people with dexterity (see figure 31). We head to the basement, which is where the stalls that she frequents are located (see figure 32). The floor is covered with a thick layer of organic waste comprising flowers, leaves and stalks that have been stampeded upon by the crowd into a flat, damp, cushion-like layer. Despite the heaps of organic waste, the basement smells of fresh flowers and perspiration.

There are small flower stalls lining both sides of the basement and they contain abundant heaps of fresh flowers like roses, marigold, jasmine, and more. Vendors sit in their elevated stalls, besides the heaps of flowers, haggling with customers, wiping perspiration off their foreheads with towels and sleeves, and scooping flowers into bags for customers at great speeds.

Figure 30: The auto rickshaw driver decides to turn away from this route since the roads are completely blocked by goods carriers transporting produce/ picking up produce at the marketplace

Figure 31: Vijayalakshmi rushing off into the crowd

Figure 32: In the basement there are three stalls from where she regularly buys flowers

Figure 33: Vijayalakshmi buying flowers from a stall

Vijayalakshmi purchases marigold worth Rupees 1000. The marigold has been strung up and large coils of it sit in baskets, ready to be sold. It is not bought by weight. Instead, it is measured by the vendor's arm length. Vijayalakshmi tries to physically extend the angle of his arms to put more distance between his palms and consequently to get more flowers as he measures out her share, but the vendor laughingly pushes her away. He asks her who I am and she explains that I am a student interviewing her for "homework" (see figure 34).

In total she buys 15 kilograms worth of jasmine for Rupees 200 per kilogram; 2 kilograms of crossandra for Rupees 1200; and 15 kilograms of a jasmine variant for Rupees 200 per kilogram. Leaving me to watch over the bags, within seconds she appears with a "coolie"/ porter to carry the bags up to the exit (see figures 35 and 36).

Figures 34, 35 and 36: Vijayalakshmi buying marigold; Vijayalakshmi hires a "coolie"/porter to carry the flowers to the exit; The porter carrying the flowers up the stairs, out of the market and to the main road auto rickshaw stand

The porter carries her luggage all the way upstairs and out of the market to an auto rickshaw stand. There, Vijayalakshmi pays the porter his standard fare of Rupees 30, and with his help loads the flowers into an auto rickshaw. Men from nearby slums looking for employment, work as porters in the KR Market. Since the marketplace has very narrow roads that are completely inaccessible to even small automobiles like auto rickshaws, porters provide a great solution to a very unique last mile problem. Moreover, the unique geography of the *pete*

over the decades has allowed the prevalence of archaic forms of transportation including the concept of transporting commodities using porters.

The driver of this new auto rickshaw, a complete stranger, complains to us that his younger daughter aged 21, who he is trying to get married off, does not lift a finger at home. He is concerned about how she will manage once she is married. He has found a policeman for her to marry. Vijayalakshmi responds by complaining about her husband's sister's daughter, who lives with them. "She also does not lift a finger at home. She is rude and I am worried about how she will adjust to her in laws once she gets married." They continue to discuss their daughters and nieces as we drive. He informs us that he also runs a small restaurant in north Bengaluru and is currently looking for a cook. Vijayalakshmi's husband also runs a small hotel and he does all the cooking himself. A number of auto rickshaw drivers work multiple jobs. Rickshaw driving gives them the freedom to do so.

Vijayalakshmi very suddenly asks the driver to pull over. A woman is waiting by the side of the road. Vijayalakshmi reaches into her large bag, and pulling out a smaller (half-kilogram) plastic bag of loose jasmine buds, she sprinkles some crossandra in it and hands it over to her friend (see figure 37). At the next intersection, another friend is waiting for her. The auto rickshaw barely stops and Vijayalakshmi swiftly hands the woman a bag of jasmine with a small amount of crossandra sprinkled over it, and instructs the driver to keep going. The process is very well orchestrated and it is evident that this is regular procedure. She pays the women Rupees 50 per head to string together one kilogram of loose buds. She hands out bags to women from 15 households in different lower-middle income neighborhoods in and around the marketplace where she has set up her stall.

We arrive at the first stop and Vijayalakshmi rushes out to distribute flowers to a group of women who gather around as soon as she arrives (see figures 37 and 38). She gives them each one bag of jasmine with a handful of crossandra. As she goes from house to house, distributing flowers, a group of little children who have returned from pre-school follow her in a line (see figures 39 and 40). It is evident that she is a familiar presence in this neighborhood. She pays the women every three or four days. While she does not keep track, the women keep a record of the work that they do for her in notebooks. When I ask her how she found all these contacts across so many different places, she tells me that when her husband used to drive an auto rickshaw, he went around making inquiries, asking around if people know women who would string flowers together.

We finally arrive in Vijayalakshmi's neighborhood at 1:50 pm. She quickly pays the auto rickshaw driver and picking up her bags, she steadily walks over to distribute the rest of the bags to women in her neighborhood (see figures 41 and 42).

Figure 37: Lakshmi handing over loose buds to a woman waiting on the street

Figure 38: We arrive at a lower-middle income neighborhood

Figure 39: Vijayalakshmi distributing bags full of jasmine buds to women

Figure 40: Going from house to house, distributing flowers

Figure 41: Little children following her as she distributes flowers

Figure 42: We finally arrive in Vijayalakshmi's neighborhood

Figure 43: Distributing the rest of the flowers

When we finally arrive at Vijayalakshmi's house, it is a quarter past 2:00 pm. She is ravenous and so am I. Although her house is fragrant from the food her husband and his helpers have cooked to take to his restaurant, he hasn't left any rice for her and she is angry. She makes a phone call to her husband and orders him to send over rice if it is leftover. Turning to me, she

asks: "shouldn't husband and wife look out for each other? He could have left some food at home for me."

She used to string flowers in the afternoons before going back to work, but not anymore, because the running around work is too tiring and does not leave her any time for stringing the flowers into garlands. Her husband used to help her before, but not since he started his own hotel. Now, she is all on her own and there is no time to also do the tying. "It is a hassle finding people to do the tying. Getting the flowers from the market is the easy part," she tells me.

Her entire family used to be in this flower business, but now it is just her. When her mother would do business, she remembers, they used to take a *jatka* (horse cart) all the way to the KR Market. Those days it would cost them Rupees 5. The *jatkas* were all parked at the Asoka Pillar Mohmeddan block. Everyone else in her family is doing other things, she is the only one still in this business. It takes too much effort and running around. At 5:00 pm she will hire yet another auto rickshaw to collect all the garlanded flowers from the women that she distributed bags to in the afternoon, and take them to her stall to sell.

The above ethnographic vignette illustrates the following:

Flexibility: Even as auto rickshaw drivers find their livelihood being threatened by the influx of OLA and UBER app-based cab services, the city's ad hoc growth, which manifests in the form of narrow alleyways inaccessible to cabs, reveal the enduring need for the auto rickshaw. Moreover, auto rickshaws because of their size, small turning radius can take sudden turns and make last minute route changes. Besides, they enable a certain sociality between passenger and driver, which facilitates a great deal of flexibility for the passenger, who can request brief halts, multiple stops and sudden changes in destination, if necessary (since cabs are monitored by online algorithms, it is impossible for cab drivers to function autonomously or at

the whims of the passenger). As is evident from Vijayalakshmi's case, her entire trip to the wholesale marketplace and back home is contingent on this element of flexibility that the auto rickshaw provides. Multiple stops, changes in routes taken to hasten the trip by avoiding traffic jams and even some gossip and venting along the way are important constituents of the commute.

Gendered everydayness: The city's rickshaw drivers critique algorithm-based cab-aggregators for their enforcement of unfair labor practices. They disapprove of algorithm-based driving practices since they do not allow drivers to be "masters of their own time" and will. Rickshaw driving on the other hand offers them this freedom. This need to be masters of their own will is embedded in a discourse of masculinity. As a result, the rickshaw ride allows insight in the toe ways in which different kinds of gendered everydayness is produced on Bengaluru's streets. While rickshaw driving allows a performance of the masculinity of drivers, the element of flexibility afforded by the auto rickshaw enables a disproportionate working-class femininity of their clients, whose everyday entrepreneurial transactions necessitate flexibity, sociality in the form of gossip and venting, etc. Vijayalakshmi is among those who rely heavily on auto rickshaws for her trade. While men in the marketplace typically use scooters to transport commodities such as flowers from KR Market to the marketplace at Basavanagudi, women like Vijayalakshmi, who do not own private automobiles are heavily dependent on auto rickshaws for their everyday livelihood. What is even more exciting about Vijayalakshmi's work is the way in which she creates a chain of employment for many women along the way. The ability to enable women to access employment from their homes is a trait that is unique to the auto rickshaw.

In this section I have endeavored to foreground the role of the auto rickshaw in facilitating complex gendered economic transactions that no other form of public transportation in the city is equipped to fulfill.

"Bungalow model to apartment model": housing, transport and kinship

Thus far, we have seen the impact of shifts in Bengaluru's transport landscape on "informal" retail in physical marketplaces. I have also illustrated the ways in which auto rickshaw drivers, by virtue of their being "masters of their own free will," provide versatile mobility services that are essential to the needs of unique, gendered economic transactions that are so salient to "informal" retail. This of course is in stark contrast to the rather inflexible, heavily surveilled, algorithm-based services provided by other forms of intermediate public transport in the city, such as cab aggregators. Here, I explore the relationship between transportation and the housing market in Basavanagudi.

Historian Janaki Nair writes that in Bengaluru, the "industrial suburb" characterized residential development from the 1960s up until the 1990s. It was in the 1990s when the emergence of real estate developers successfully recast the idea of the apartment as the replacement for the modest site that housed an owner-occupied home (2005). Illustrating the ways in which real estate developers are now reframing the ideal home and prime property as one that is in close proximity to the city's metro, I use narratives from upper-class, erstwhile and current colonial bungalow owners to foreground an alternative story of the relationship between transport and housing.

Bengaluru's urban form is changing rather dramatically. Many of the changes are being brought about by major transformations in transport infrastructures and systems. At the same

time, the city is struggling to cope with traffic jams and disruptions in mobility. Given these circumstances, real estate developers now emphasize the proximity of advertised properties to the city's world-class metro, which escapes the traffic on the roads. Even as this narrative of the becoming of "prime property" through transit-oriented development is on the rise, the experience of the dramatic shifts in the urban landscape are experienced differently by different groups of people. In this section, I explore how some of Bengaluru's elderly residents from one of its oldest neighborhoods, who are experiencing this transformation in very personal ways as their own homes and familiar structures in their neighborhoods are being demolished only to be rebuilt as apartment complexes, explain this transition. I seek to understand what their narratives of change, encapsulated in the phrase "bungalow model to apartment model" can tell us about the impact of urban transformation.

In this section, I provide ethnographic insights from interlocutors who represent a more privileged section of the "vertical slice" (Nader 1972) of the city's demography. I focus on more affluent, "high" caste families (mostly brahmins and Telugu Shettys). I try to provide insights from a "vertical slice" because people's transport-related behaviors are conditioned by the ways in which they learn to value transport systems, infrastructures and automobiles. I try to ask "'common sense' questions in reverse" (1972, 6). This is because, how one community uses transport can have a significant impact on the ways in which many others move (for example, chapter 2 unpacks the ways in which IT motivated transport systems and infrastructures impact many commuters and chapter 4 explores the ways in which middle-class demands to "revive" recreational cycling in the city are shaping the city's transport landscape through the inclusion of bicycle lanes). In this section I address how elderly residents from more affluent communities in Bengaluru discuss shifts in their access to transport. I focus on the relationship between transport

and housing for two reasons – firstly, because they were organically co-mobilized in the narratives of my interlocutors. Secondly, there is an emerging and important body of scholarship on the impact of transport infrastructures and housing on low-income urban communities, and the project of studying up necessitates using some of these same metrics to engage with more upper-class communities. This body of scholarship on transportation and housing among low-income communities has focused on slum dwellers, evictions and transportation access to discuss the impact of evictions on further disenfranchising low-income groups in terms of their mobility practices, which have far reaching consequences on other aspects of their lives (Anand and Tiwari 2006; Alberts et al. 2016; Coelho et al 2012; Fields of View 2017; Lucas 2011; Mathur 2013). In attempting to provide a comprehensive "vertical slice" on transport access, caste, class and gender in Bengaluru, it became important that I address the question of housing markets and transport trends among other urban groups. Moreover, as I have mentioned above, transportation is a relational field and therefore, needs to be understood across the social spectrum. I therefore seek to understand the relationship between housing and transport as co-mobilized by members from more privileged urban groups and seek to understand why and how are they interlinked.

My interlocutors include elderly residents (mostly brahmins and Shettys) of Bengaluru who have lived in the city for generations, and whose forefathers got property in Basavanagudi in the early 1900s, when the layout was just being planned in the aftermath of the plague. Many of them inherited huge bungalows from their ancestors. With rampant changes in the city's urban form, many residents are witnessing the cascading effects of urban change on spaces that are more familiar and personal – like their own neighborhood, the streets they grew up in and now, even their own homes. Basavanagudi, where bungalows were a predominant form of housing,

has been consumed by the trend of transformation of bungalows into apartment complexes for the last couple of decades at the least.

Elderly, long-time residents of Bengaluru from families in Basavanagudi narrativize shifts in real estate trends and transport, especially access to the car, through the lens of shifting kin relations. While access to cars and real estate from the early 20th century up until the 1980s was discussed as mediated by joint families living together in bungalows, post-liberalization shifts in housing trends and increased car purchase are associated with the breakdown of the bungalow into apartments and subsequently the joint family, into nuclear families. Based on these narratives, I assert that for them, kinship is key in enabling access to transport and housing. Kinship plays an important role in enculturating people into discourses on the value of transport. While anthropologists have shown how urbanization is experienced viscerally through the body (Frazier 2019), I argue that these narratives from my interlocutors draw attention to the experience of urban transformation on social formations such as kinship.

Where one lives is deeply entangled with how one moves in Bengaluru city. Sedimented histories of place, and social location of residents are closely intertwined with access to mobility and transportation. Basavanagudi's spatial history has allowed it to remain one of Bengaluru's most pedestrian-friendly neighborhoods. Basavanagudi is one of Bengaluru's oldest *planned* neighborhoods and since it was planned in the aftermath of the plague in the early twentieth century, hygiene and sanitation were major concerns of the planners (Pani et al. 2010; Nair 2005). As a result, Basavanagudi was built with wide roads, and with much space between residences (to also reproduce caste hierarchies by accommodating caste difference). These traits remain to this day, allowing Basavanagudi to be one of the more pedestrian friendly neighborhoods in Bengaluru. Many bungalows and villas in the neighborhood were the property

of wealthy, influential residents holding important posts in government and civil services. While the logic underlying much of the planning was determined by caste hierarchies, residents of Basavanagudi, mostly brahmins, eulogize the impact of such spatial orientation for the ways in which it has allowed the existence of many pedestrian friendly streets with wide pavements and a dense canopy of trees. Some of my interlocutors who were loyal, long-time residents of Basavanagudi would describe how the thick canopy of trees in a popular marketplace in the neighborhood allowed several species of birds to nest in them. The chirping of birds overpowered the neighborhood. When famous Kannada literary figures walked on the streets, they would carry large umbrellas to prevent bird droppings from falling on them. Even as residents in many parts of Bengaluru struggle to walk due to a lack of sidewalks, unruly traffic, etc. walking is an important part of everyday sociality in the lives of many of my more elderly interlocutors in Basavanagudi. A number of them set out on early morning walks and meet up with friends in parks, temples and tea shops every day.

i. Kinship, cars and enculturation

An interest in high-end cars is by no means something one is born with. Individuals are enculturated into discourses of value. During interviews, I found radical differences in the ways that interlocutors from low-income backgrounds, who had spent their childhood in villages before migrating to Bengaluru, related to transportation, in comparison to those from wealthy families in Basavanagudi. Elderly interlocutors from *low-income*, especially previously rural backgrounds at best expressed a mild utilitarian interest in transportation. When I asked about the first car/ scooter in their village, they did not remember nor care very much. The relationship with transport for many was mostly limited to using public transport or bicycles to get to work and in more grim cases, it was marked by eviction from urban slums (after they migrated to

Bengaluru from their villages), and loss of livelihood because of Bengaluru's metro construction or because of urban freeway constructions. Many of them even narrated having experienced episodes of caste-based discrimination on public transport. Thus, their experiences of transportation were often characterized by disenfranchisement. In radical contrast, I found that elderly residents, many of them descendants of well-to-do brahmins employed by the Kingdom of Mysore in the late 19th and early 20th century and Shettys who owned successful businesses, who lived in ancestral bungalows in and near Basavanagudi, along with grandparents, uncles, aunts and cousins, discussed their abundance of access to family-owned transportation through their kinship networks.

Many of my interlocutors from wealthy, "high" caste families in Basavanagudi, showed great interest and enthusiasm on the subject of transportation — both public (although considered to be of lower status, public transport was still a technological novelty when they were growing up) and private forms. In discussing the grandeur and awe-inspiring qualities of transport systems and infrastructures, the narratives of access to transport, especially horse-driven carriages, cars and scooters, were mediated by kinship networks in relation to housing trends. The structure of housing, where large joint families lived in massive ancestral bungalows, enabled shared access to elite modes of transport, and enculturated individuals to relate to transport as technological marvels and grand status symbols.

While the first passenger car to ever have been used in India was in the year 1897 (Agnihotri and Chaturvedi 2013), up until the year 1928, cars had to be imported from overseas. This was because British colonizers deemed it more profitable to sell imported cars in the Indian market rather than to encourage the manufacture of cars in India (Sagar and Chandra 2004). In 1928, General Motors established an *assembly plant* in India (in Bombay), and was followed by

Ford establishing assembly plants in Madras and Calcutta. The 1940s saw the emergence of domestic companies setting up assembly plants - led by Hindustan Motors Limited 1942 (Hindustan Motors Limited was an initiative of the Birla Group). This was followed by the establishment of Premier Automobile Limited by the Walchand Group, and finally, Standard Motor Product of India Limited was established in 1948. The domestic production of cars, however, only began in the 1950s (Chattopadhyay 2013; Sagar and Chandra 2004). These shifts in the car industry had a strong influence on patters of car ownership and access.

a. Radhika Krishna

My interlocutors noted that in the early 20th century, horse-drawn carriages were used by British and elite Indian households. Passenger cars were extremely rare and mostly owned by British colonizers. In fact, Radhika Krishna, one of my interlocutors, a woman in her late sixties, shared some of her important memories of hearing about transportation from her grandmother. Radhika’s family was very affluent. Radhika’s grandfather held an esteemed position in the Mysore Maharaja’s Judicial Services. He along with his wife moved to Bengaluru around 1910. He then went on to buy large quantities of land in Basavanagudi, on which he built their house in 1940. The architecture of the house was very modern and radically different from any other house in the neighborhood. In fact, Radhika informed me that the principal of a local engineering college was enamored by the architecture and encouraged engineering students from his college to go see it. That was the house that Radhika grew up in with her family comprising her sister, parents, cousins, uncles and aunts. Although *she* no longer lives there, her uncle and his family continue to live on that property.

From a very young age, Radhika was accustomed to hearing stories about transport and even seeing and using expensive and relatively rare forms of transport (like cars). Her narrative

is remarkable because it demonstrates the ways in which she was naturalized into discourses of transport as status symbols and technological marvels by her family members:

> Don't know which year it was. My grandmother told [me] that they heard that there was a *gaadi* [vehicle] that moves without horses in South Parade (that is what they called M G Road). Before that they had seen only horse drawn carriages. My grandmother was also from an affluent family in Shimoga. Her father was a lawyer and he had a horse drawn carriage in Shimoga. They were all very curious. Cantonment, South Parade and all were British where caste Hindus wouldn't want to go. It was because they eat beef and meat and all those kind of taboos [sic]. I am guessing…. As you can see, crematorium and cemetery are near Lalbagh North gate…. In those days cemeteries and crematoriums were in the outskirts of the city. There was a connecting road but in those days it was not a proper road. They [her grandmother and her friends] walked from Basavanagudi to South Parade. They had to walk. They did not have their own transport and there was no public transport. Since they would not eat outside, they packed their own picnic lunch. This was because they did not know at what time this car would come down South Parade. They all walked there, sat on the road and waited. Finally, it came at 4 o'clock. They were sitting there the whole day she and her friends. They must have taken the children. There would have been very few people on the road. Once the car came they walked back home…. I don't know the make [of the car]…. Some Englishman [was driving it]. They would call them *Dorey*… the white man.

Radhika's narrative is important in terms of illustrating the ways in which transport acquires a certain value as stories about transport begin to be passed down generations. The experience of being a spectator to the grand arrival of motorized automobiles in the city only further cements the affective quality of awe for motorized transport.

Radhika also talked about driving in the context of gender and empowerment. Radhika described her father as a very progressive man who wanted to ensure that both his daughters were well-versed in many skills, not restricted to gendered activities like embroidery and cooking. Activities such as driving for women, were seen as rather transgressive in the 1970s and 80s. In the excerpt below, Radhika describes how people in the city reacted to the novelty of women riding bicycles and driving cars. These acts are thus coded with gendered and caste-based meaning, where they cement progressive upper caste ideals of what empowerment for women looked like.

> It was in the 1980s and I was in my 30s. I think there were a few more women. I think when we were learning to drive then there were very few women. My sister was born in 1945 and she started driving in the early 60s as soon as she turned 18. Then there were no women or very few women driving. I really don't know why… maybe it wasn't the done thing. My father was very particular that we should do everything so we learnt cycling. The only unusual thing was that we were women and there were not too many women cycling. Even when I went. You may want to ask my sister. People would say oh! Lady cyclist!. Later it was lady driver! They would point at us…. Typing was another skill we were supposed to learn. Cycling, driving and typing were mandated by my father. Maybe he wanted us to learn something other than cooking and embroidery.

I suggest through the above excerpts that stories shared by kin play an important role in the process of enculturation into discourses of value. In this case, perpetuating and reinforcing the idea of transport (especially cars) as technological marvels and status symbols. Asserting the entanglement of cars with the structure of the family, I show that cars are also entangled in brahminical notions of empowerment for women.

ii. Kinship, housing and car-ownership

Radhika's narratives illustrate the ways in which narratives of value are passed on by kin and also how perceptions of the car are deeply entangled in family structures, and subsequently, caste and ideologies for women's empowerment. Here, I show how access to cars, in addition to being determined by the politics of manufacturing, was mediated through kinship networks, which were maintained by contemporary housing practices among brahmin and Shetty households in and bordering Basavanagudi.

a. Raghuram Shetty

Raghuram Shetty, a sprightly old gentleman in his 80s reminisced about the horse-driven coaches, cars and motorcycles that his family used when he was growing up. His grandfather was a merchant and they belong to the Telugu Shetty community. Telugu Shettys are a successful business-oriented community in Bengaluru. His grandfather is said to have built their business from scratch. He purchased land in the early 20th century and built two houses for their rather large family comprising two sons and four daughters. Up until 1954, the entire family lived together in the same house. Raghuram described mealtimes in their home when the large family of almost 50 people would congregate:

> We used to assemble together for lunch and all – 30 to 50 people. We used to sit. First elders and then youngsters. We have to give respect to elders. That is our tradition.

Access to privately own transport was through kinship networks. Raghuram narrated several episodes about riding horses in the city, and traveling by expensive cars and motorcycles owned by his joint family as he was growing up. However, he remarked on the shift in ownership of automobiles over time especially once the joint family dissipated into nuclear families. He points out that his access to cars was through his family members but over time, as the family broke up into smaller units, so did their property (their "property was divided"). This was paralleled by transitions in the passenger car manufacturing industry in India, especially from the 1980s, when cars were becoming more widely accessible to consumers across the class spectrum, leading to growth of car ownership and increase in traffic congestion. Therefore, it was no longer about two cars owned by a family of fifty, but multiple cars per nuclear family. As Raghuram himself noted:

> First they had coaches. A cart drawn by two horses. We [referring to his large joint family. In fact, he mentioned that he was born in 1932 and coaches existed prior to that time] had one. First car in Bangalore is ours. First telephone is ours… Then we bought a Nash car during Second World War -- military people sold the car to us for Rupees 1500. Now it would cost us Rupees 2 to 3 crores (between 260,000 USD and 400,000 USD). It was from the company. I had Royal Enfield [motorcycle]. VSA, Norton, Volga, Sunbeam Talbot, Harley Davidson 35 HP... I have driven all the vehicles, I have driven all the cars. We had Chevrolet and Nash then Austin then Plymouth…. Those days Chevrolet and Dodge were

famous. Later Wolsey came. Later Vauxhall, then Citroen then Chevrolet. Then Plymouth. Before 1940s. *When the property was divided, we had two to three cars, which were sold.* [Now] *Everyone in my house has 1 or 2 cars. Where it was 2 cars for all* [members of the joint family] *now there are 30 or so cars after the division* [of their family into smaller units over the decades] (italics added by author).

Raghuram's nephew, 60-year old Gopal, a car dealer explains the chronological order and changes in of the division of their property, which eventually led to their entering into a joint venture with a developer to turn the property into a 13-storeyed apartment.

Although different people had different versions of how their ancestors got land in Basavanagudi, Gopal informs me that his great grandfather, a merchant was invited by the Dewan of Mysore to buy land in Basavanagudi in the early 20th century. "People did not have that kind of money. Only rich could afford it. Slowly the extensions developed. Government civil servants were given land."

Gopal confirms Raghuram's history of their family and property (see figure 44). From the early 20th century until 1954, his great grandfather and his two sons lived in the same house with their respective spouses and children. In 1954, the families of the 2 sons began living in separate houses with their respective spouses and children. Gopal's grandfather was one of the 2 sons. Gopal's grandfather had 9 sons and 2 daughters. Raghuram (Gopal's uncle), was one of his sons. All 9 sons lived together with their families in the large house with 14 rooms until 1972. After 1972, the house saw a series of partitions (where the whole family lived under the same roof, but new walls, kitchens and bathrooms are built into the existing structure to separate each family from the next) and multiple iterations of divisions (where the property itself is divided into more

independent houses). In the year 2013, the 9 sons, their children and grandchildren all came together and decided to convert the property into a single 13-storeyed apartment complex. This was because it was not lucrative to further divide the property into more independent houses to accommodate their growing family. Therefore, they decided to enter into a joint venture with a real estate developer to materialize the project. He explains: "In a joint venture we give land, builder builds. He gives us 50% of constructed area and he keeps 50% of constructed area." In exchange for 50% of the constructed area, the builder takes responsibility for the entire construction. Upon completion, each person who had a share in the property would have ownership over a certain number of units. He adds: "Bungalow model has changed. Now it is apartment model. Land cost is high and in [an] apartment we can share a lot of amenities. We have a swimming pool and party hall. This is not possible in bungalow. Apartment is safe because of common security."

Gopal's explanation stands out for its practical approach to changes in the price of land in Bengaluru and changes in lifestyle (for example the need for: party halls and private swimming pools). There were other explanations for this change in the neighborhood. Many residents in Basavanagudi, who are entering into similar real estate ventures, shared their views about the process – some of them said that the younger, more able-bodied members of their families had migrated to other countries and it was impossible for the elderly residents to serve as caretakers of such large properties. In fact, it was rumored that real estate sharks hounded, bullied and even threatened elderly residents into giving their properties up for joint ventures. As a result, many residents in the neighborhood are now giving up their properties for joint ventures, which appear as the most lucrative and safe option. However, they worry that joint ventures and the emergence of apartment complexes mean that the homogeneous, "high"-caste-ness of the neighborhood will

eventually dissolve. Due to this, brahmin households entering into joint ventures adamantly maintain that they will only accept tenants who are vegetarian (vegetarianism is encoded with caste implications. In this case it is code for brahmins and sometimes Marwari Jains from Rajasthan. However, many brahmins fear that Jains are taking over what used to be their territory and often hesitate to sell houses to them. The explanation is that Jains will purchase the property and will bring more people from their community into the neighborhood).

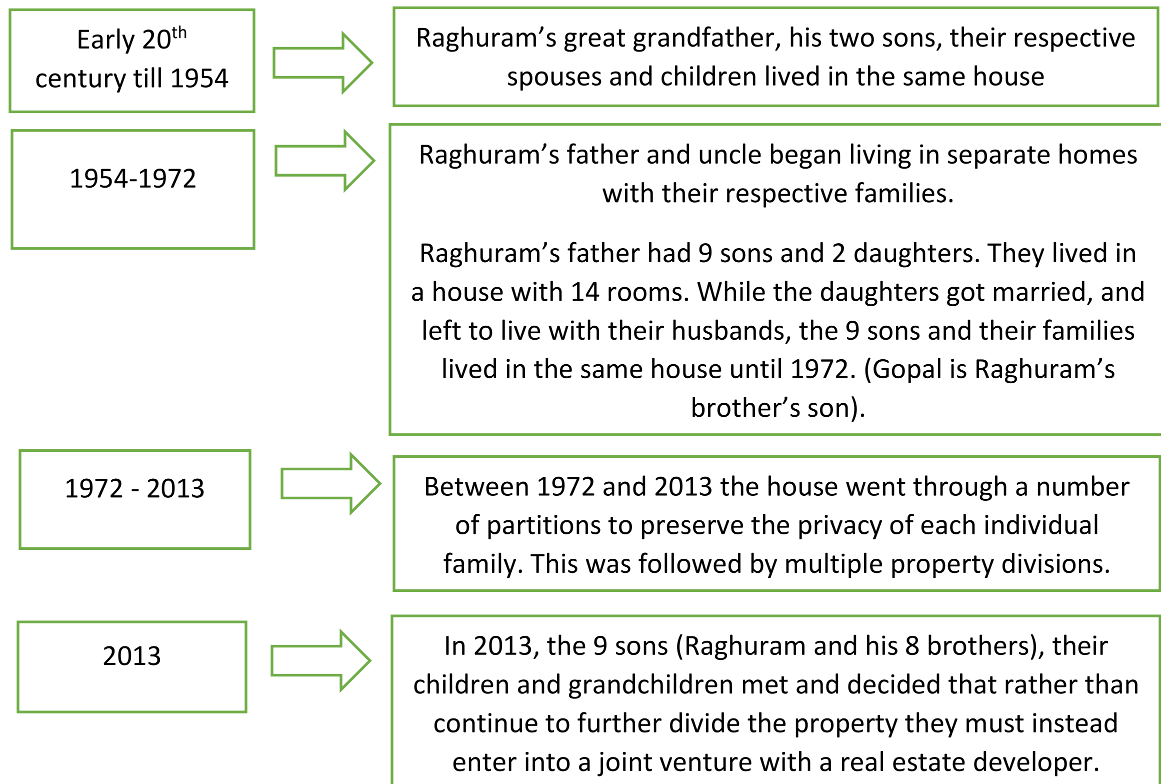

Figure 44: The history of Raghuram's family property

b. Raghavendra

In a similar vein, Raghavendra a senior resident of Basavanagudi narrated his family's experiences with transport, in terms of its relationship with housing. I was introduced to Raghavendra during a heritage walk in Basavanagudi. His home was part of the heritage walk because it was one of the oldest homes in the neighborhood. A vintage, Standard car stands out

in the front of the large, early 20th century mansion. Raghavendra is 75 years old. He is in a starched, white, collared-shirt with stripes. His thin hair is almost completely grey and is neatly parted on one side.

His house was built in 1906. This plot of land, which measures 19,300 square feet (he shows me the original purchase receipt) was purchased by his grandfather when the layout of the neighborhood was just being planned. This was among the first few houses built in Basavanagudi. It is more than 100 years old now. Raghavendra inherited the house from his father, who had inherited it from his father. Raghavendra's grandfather was an official working for the Mysore Maharaja. He worked closely with the then Finance Minister Sir M N Krishna Rao. As a result, he was one of the privileged few who were allotted property in Basavanagudi (for which he paid a sum of Rupees 430).

While Raghavendra and his wife do not have children of their own, they were part of a large joint family. "There were too many people. About 35 to 40 people used to take meals every day. It is a joint family. They did not have much space so they added upstairs [to the single storeyed house]. Except for an attached bathroom which was added in 1954 nothing has been changed" he informs me. At present, his brother's family lives upstairs.

Raghavendra notes that while in the past, cars were highly valued and reinstated the socio-economic value of potential owners, the increase in manufacture of the automobile has reduced its potential to serve as a status symbol. Raghavendra has vivid memories of knowing and experiencing the city through different forms of transport including horse-drawn carts, British-manufactured cars, and bicycles. Being the wealthy, brahmin family that they were, he tells me that in his grandfather's time car manufacturers would bring their latest cars to the homes of the wealthy, in anticipation that the potential customers would buy the latest model.

Often drivers who were employed in the homes of the wealthy would recommend their employers to manufacturers, in the hopes of getting a commission if a sale was made. Competition among manufacturers was high because of the paucity of potential buyers. "Now [it is] the other way around. If you have Rupees 5000, they will dump you in a vehicle," he says with disdain. Hinting at the inflated petrol costs today he continues to reminisce:

> In 1948 we used to fill petrol in our car here near the metro. In those days it was road facing… They would place a cylinder and pump. When they pumped, one gallon used to come out and then they used to put another cylinder… [although the bunk still exists] it is modernized. There was an Iyengar [brahmin], he used to pump for 14 annas per gallon. That is less than a rupee!

When I inquire about the vintage car parked in their garage, he replies:

> After 1900 only cars and everything came. My father and my grandfather had a coach. He used to travel by a horse-driven coach to the office. He had horses opposite [to their house]. My uncle got that place. Now it is all sold. They had a stable also. In 1918 he purchased car. Fiat car or something. That is my grandfather. Afterwards every year or 2 years he was changing and after retirement the last car a Standard was purchased. We still have it. My grandfather used it. My father did not use it much. My uncle used it. He was the Chief Justice… he even has a road named after him. My grandfather's son in law as well as his sister's son used the old car. We take it out once a week now. My brother's son takes it for a big round [drive] once a week. In 50's there were not many vehicles. There were maybe… 200 cars. Not many scooters were there. In 1965… I used to come across only 3 scooters and 1 or 2 cars at the most. There

> were not many vehicles. Now there are 70,00,000 vehicles in Bangalore. 1000, 2000 vehicles are added every day. That is why we are heading for a major calamity…

When asked about the transformation in real estate trends in the neighborhood, he informed me that many real estate properties in the neighborhood, after multiple divisions over the years are being transformed into apartment complexes. He personally disapproves of such willingness to give one's property away in the interest of money.

> If you have three or four brothers or sisters the property is divided and some one person has to keep it. The other people may not be interested. If you cannot give money to acquire and keep the property, you have to sell it and divide. Or you have to give it to a developer and each will get a flat and some money. This house was divided before the advent of all these multi-storeyed buildings. In 1971 Land Ceiling Act came. You cannot have land more than certain area. So my mother said that we will split the house. We had about 19000 sq ft. The restriction was 16000 or something. Both the sites on either side were empty. My mother offered: 'Whoever wants to keep the site can keep it otherwise they can take the house.' Both my brothers said 'we cannot keep the house. We cannot maintain it.' Then they took the sites. I said 'if they don't want it I will keep it. I will keep it as long as I live afterwards whatever happens I am not responsible.'

Much like Raghuram, Raghavendra also echoes similar sentiments about how access to transport was very much through being part of wealthy families, living in the same home and having affluent kin. Cars and carriages were shared among members of the large joint family. Even if not owned by the individual, the ability to access such means of transport through kin

was a matter of great pride and it blurred the language around ownership. However, over time, with corresponding shifts in the car manufacturing industry in India, he remarks on the increase in the number of cars in the city. With respect to real estate, as family structures transform, he points out that people prefer assets that generate revenue through rent, rather than taking responsibility to maintain large properties while residing in them. Many other interlocutors mirrored these sentiments. A number of them indicated that as more nuclear families emerged, the younger generations got far more mobile and preferred to settle overseas or in other parts of India, leaving older family members to maintain large, unwieldy properties. In many of these cases, the consensus over time has been to shift from the "bungalow model" to the "apartment model." This allowed younger family members who were away, to monetize on their share of the property by renting their share of houses in the apartment complexes to tenants. While the practicalities of the bungalow model require the physical presence of owners, the apartment model allows owners to profit from it from afar. While bungalow ownership in the past was an indicator of status and enabled access to cars and other forms of transport through kin, the lack of feasibility of ownership of large bungalows, because of changing family structures, is changing what property and car ownership now means.

iii. Historical perspective on the car industry

Changes in access to cars as my interlocutors indicate, is closely tied to family and housing structures. Nevertheless, larger structural shifts in the manufacturing industry have also played a huge role in determining the availability and the social value of cars in India.

The history of the automotive industry in India, which explains the growth of the car industry and the increase in demand for passenger cars is typically broken down into three phases. The first phase, which was between 1950 and 1980, was characterized by the

Government of India deciding to allow only those companies to operate that had phased manufacturing programs, subsequently leading General Motors and Ford to leave the country because they focused more on assembly rather than manufacture. Although one would assume that Indian manufacturers like Hindustan Motors, Premier Automobile Limited, and Standard Motor Product of India Limited might have taken the reins in car manufacturing in India, they were unable to make an impact. This is because the prices were too high, numbers manufactured were low, and they were technologically not as advanced as international manufacturers.

The second phase (1980-1990) is supposed to have had the greatest impact on the passenger car industry in India. Until this point in time, the government of India had only viewed cars as "luxury" goods, thus placing the industry on the back stand. However, during this period, the Congress government, which came to power in the Center, decided to seek out measures to encourage individual mobility among middle-income households. They turned the defunct Maruti Limited, which was earlier privately owned, into a public sector company called Maruti Udyog Limited. The Japanese company, Suzuki entered into a partnership here and was a significant stakeholder. This boosted the manufacture of affordable, friendly cars that were more amenable to the middle-income Indian and raised the bar with respect to technological innovation. This led to a cascading modernization effect on the car industry in India, where other domestic manufacturers began to improve their technological standards.

The third phase, from 1990-2000 saw the Government relaxing several regulations on manufacturing, including the phased manufacturing program, thus presenting a fertile consumer base and ground for manufacturing to multinational companies. This period saw the proliferation in the varieties of cars, as a consequence of the entry of several global players into the market. The increase in manufacture was met with adequate demand. This increase in demand was

attributed to the increased availability of financing, which helped domestic demand to grow. In the following decade, the growth of the services sector, the growing middle-class, the poor state of public transit infrastructure among other reasons fueled the Indian car industry, and led to the increase in the demand and purchase of passenger cars in the country (Chattopadhyay 2013). Bengaluru city alone has seen a dramatic rise in car ownership in the last two decades from 1,98,004 registered cars in the year 2000 (Aundhe 2001) to 15,41,017 in 2019 (Government of Karnataka 2019, 37).

The ethnographic evidence discussed in this section leads to the following conclusions:

Firstly, that Kinship and joint families (facilitated by large bungalows) in the past, played an extremely important role in enculturating people into discourses of valuing transport, especially, cars.

Secondly, that residents of Basavanagudi rationalize the radical shift from living in large ancestral properties and consequently having access to elite forms of transport, to the transformation of ancestral properties into residential complexes, and the subsequent proliferation of privately owned automobiles, through the lens of kinship. As Jessica Cattelino writes about the Florida Everglades, where growers were willing to take land out of production in exchange for money from the selfsame agencies that they opposed, although culturally scandalous, this practice allowed them to hold on to the land while releasing those family members who did not want to be in the business anymore. She writes, that kinship is a "force both of production and of splintering" (Cattelino 2015). While she argues that paying attention to kinship allows one to gauge the ways in which nature's cultural as well as economic value is "made palatable and possible in contemporary capitalism," in this case, the joint venture

becomes a way to maintain a balance between the value of kinship (especially joint families), the exponential increase in the value of land and the relative affordability of cars.

I assert that the narrative from the "bungalow model to the apartment model" allows insight into middle-class, "upper" caste anxieties about urban change and subsequent shifts in family structures. While Camille Frazier points out that nostalgia for independent homes and gardens among Bengaluru's middle classes is "is linked with a larger feeling of loss related to urban middle-class life and the changes wrought by the "new" middle-class of IT professionals" (2019: 452), I argue that the narrative illuminates the ways in which middle-class "upper" caste families navigate the changing value of land and cars while maintaining their commitment to kinship as joint families. I assert the need to use kinship as an important analytical lens in studying the urban.

Conclusion

In Bengaluru, world-class city-making has come to define the relationship between transport and marketplaces.

The first vignette illuminates the violence that transport infrastructures motivated by aspirations for world-class city-making inflict on "informal" street vendors and pre-existing linkages between transport and "informal" retail, consequently reinforcing the idea that the global city is one where "informal" retail is seen as antithetical to the vision of world-class.

The second vignette on the other hand unpacks the ideas of respectability and caste-neutrality associated with auto rickshaw driving in Bengaluru to argue that these ideologies are used to frame the operational practices of rickshaw drivers in critical opposition to the algorithm-based models used by cab aggregators. Although the technological advancement of cab aggregators works in tandem with the ideology of global city-making, rickshaw drivers explain

how their need to be masters of their own time and will serves to meet the unique and diverse mobility needs of many, whose interests are not represented by the information-based economy.

The third section of this chapter unpacks the narrative from "bungalow model to apartment model." While transit-oriented-development narratives and real estate developers privilege housing trends such as apartment complexes and their proximity to the metro line, this narrative, I argue is a middle-class, "upper" caste critique of such urban change. I argue that this narrative and the trend of joint ventures, by sewing together shifts in the car industry with changes in housing trends and family structures, expresses a middle-class, "upper" caste attempt at balancing shifting values of land and transport (cars) in tandem with the value that they accord to joint family kinship structures.

CHAPTER 4

Negotiating Sustainability and Urban Development: Bicycle Infrastructures in Bengaluru

The bicycle has been entangled in global circuits and power relations in unique ways. The bicycle began arriving in India through colonial circuits in the 1890s. Although it was a modern technology that arrived though colonial circuits, "Colonial regimes were unable to monopolize or disinclined to control these, and they passed with relative ease into the work-regimes, recreational activities, social life, and cultural aspirations of colonized and postcolonial populations" (Arnold and De Wald 2011, 972). By virtue of this, the bicycle enables insight into the coming together of local and global "processes of modernity formation" as it became increasingly available and entangled in local forms of meaning-making in India (Arnold and De Wald 2011, 973).

The entanglement of the bicycle in global circuits has once again gained visibility. This time around, the bicycle is entangled in global discourses of sustainable development because of its environment-friendliness, global reach and relative affordability. However, what is intriguing about current demands for increased bicycling in many cities across the world, is the accompanying demand for bicycle *infrastructures*. This demand for bicycle infrastructures is posited as beneficial for the collective both in terms of its capacity to provide road safety to bicyclists, and because it encourages bicycling and thus paves the way for a more sustainable future. Focusing on Bengaluru city, a former colony and current Information Technology front runner in India, I examine mobilization for bicycle infrastructures and sustainable development by citizens, to understand how the global discourse surrounding sustainable development intersects with local, middle-class concerns surrounding transportation, urbanization and sustainability.

In this chapter, I examine the "Cycle Day" event, which is organized to create awareness around bicycling and sustainability and to mobilize demand for bicycle infrastructures such as bicycle lanes in Bengaluru. Cycle Day is unique in its approach. Unlike other expressions of middle- and upper middle-class citizen discontentment with the trajectory of Bengaluru's urban transformation, like the #SteelFlyoverBeda and mobilizing around tree-cutting for the Namma Metro project, which have all assumed the form of protests against the state, Cycle Day is a form of claims-making through community-building and collaboration with state agencies.

Paying close ethnographic attention to Cycle Day, I focus on narratives of revivalism, community and scale. I found that these narratives are commonly used by Cycle Day participants, and more broadly by middle-class residents of Bengaluru, to describe their experience of Bengaluru's trajectory of urban transformation and their aspirations for the city's future. I ask: Why does demand for bicycling infrastructures take the form of community building activities such Cycle Day, rather than protests? What kinds of social formations arise around claims-making for bicycle infrastructures? What do these narratives tell us about middle-class experiences of urban change in Bengaluru?

I unpack how the shifts in Bengaluru's urban form, in combination with the changing symbolism of the bicycle – which is one that now meets the state's vision of world-class by indexing the global discourse on sustainable development while meeting middle-class definitions of a greener city – makes demands for bicycle infrastructures assume unique forms that involve citizen-government collaborations.

I go on to examine middle-class claims that the practice of bicycling is "extinct" in Bengaluru due to the trajectory that urban development has taken in the city. The city is no longer considered safe for middle-class bicyclists. I proceed to illustrate the ways in which Cycle

Day is seen a way of reviving not only the practice of bicycling, but also corresponding elements of city life including increased green cover and an erstwhile sense of community.

I also explore narratives of scale that are common among the city's middle-class. I point out that this narrative, in highlighting how travel time has increased although the city is said to have "developed," is in fact a critique of the state's billion-dollar investment in transport infrastructures, which are instituted with the intention of creating world-class, high-speed connection.

Highlighting the fact that the experience of bicycling is highly differentiated, I also foreground stories from communities who rely on bicycling for work and other utilitarian purposes. I argue based on these ethnographic insights that that mobilization for bicycle infrastructures in Bengaluru is built on middle-class desire for recreational bicycling and aspirations for sustainability and community (that emerge from nostalgic visions of erstwhile Bengaluru).

Cycle Day: Engagement before infrastructure

While citizen-state relations pertaining to big-ticket infrastructures in Bengaluru have unfolded in a contentious manner, mobilization around demands for bicycle infrastructures such as the Cycle Day event have been more collaborative "citizen-government" initiatives. To further unpack why demands for bicycling infrastructures through events such as Cycle Day are organized on a collaborative logic, I first provide context to the Cycle Day event to explain the motivations for collaboration. Following this, I discuss the broader shifts in urban development in Bengaluru and its implications for cycling. Finally, I examine the symbolic value of the bicycle and its ability to facilitate community-building around the practice of riding a bicycle, while also meeting the existing criteria for urban development in Bengaluru.

i. Motivations for citizen-state collaboration

In the last decade, plans by the Karnataka State Government for urbanization in Bengaluru through investment in big-ticket infrastructures has been heavily contested by the city's middle-class citizens. Notable examples of these contestations include protests against tree-cutting for the Namma Metro project (Krishna 2019; The New Indian Express 2020), the #SteelFlyoverBeda campaign in 2016-17 (Alavilli 2020), and the elevated corridor project (The Economic Times 2019). All of these projects were contested because they threatened the city's green cover by proposing to cut several trees (up to several hundred in the case of some projects). In all these instances, there is a marked resemblance to what Amita Baviskar calls "bourgeois environmentalism," "the (mainly) middle-class pursuit of order, hygiene, safety and ecological conservation, through the public sphere" (2011, 392). These demands for a greener Bengalury articulate "citizenship" and "public interest" in a way that excludes the city's poor.

Camille Frazier in her article on prevailing narratives on weather among Bengaluru's middle-classes, explains that the narrative of "rising temperatures" among the city's long-term middle-class, serves to critique the nature of rapid urban growth that has characterized Bengaluru's urban form over the last three decades. Their discontent lies with the idea that Bengaluru's transition from "garden city" to "IT capital" is the reason for its environmental degradation and rise in temperatures. By invoking nostalgic descriptions of the city's green past, the narrative articulates a relationship with the city that is unique to its long-term middle-class residents. It thus makes a distinction between the long-term middle-class residents and middle-class IT employees who have migrated to the city (2019). Sustainability in these narratives is based on the nostalgic image of "garden city" and through scientific discourses of "liveability," which predict that the existing trajectory of urbanization will lead to a grim future for the city.

These arguments are used by the city's middle-classes to dissuade the government from cutting trees down for the purpose of urbanization, while simultaneously distinguishing the long-term middle-classes from those who have migrated to the city.

Cycle Day, also a form of bourgeois environmentalism, is a collaborative event that brings together state agencies, citizen activist groups and middle and upper middle-class citizens. Moreover, the event serves to create demand for bicycle infrastructures while simultaneously engaging middle-class sentiment for a greener Bengaluru by enculturating middle-class residents into valuing the bicycle as a sustainable form of transport, and building community around the practice of bicycling and sustainable mobility. No doubt, as Frazier argues, these articulations of sustainability distinguish the city's long-term middle-classes from those who have migrated here to work in the IT industry.

In 2012, bicycling *infrastructures* were introduced in Bengaluru. In order to encourage sustainable mobility and transportation, and following a plan commissioned by the Directorate for Urban Land Transport (DULT), the Bruhat Bengaluru Mahanagara Palike (BBMP) or the Bengaluru city municipality created bicycle-friendly streets in Jayanagar, an upscale neighborhood in Bengaluru. The municipality it seems "misinterpreted" the plans and put in place unsegregated bicycle lanes, which were then conveniently used by local people to park their cars and motorcycles. Consequently, the intended target users, children from nearby schools, were left with no room for bicycling in these lanes (Jagini 2013).

Following this incident, the DULT along with citizen groups ESAF Liveable Cities India and Praja RAAG (now collectively referred to a BCOS – Bengaluru Coalition for Open Streets) – decided to adopt a different strategy. It was agreed upon that creating bicycle friendly infrastructures alone would not work unless people were taught to appreciate the infrastructure and

to use it well and correctly. Therefore, following in the footsteps of Ciclovia (Bogota) and CicLAvia (Los Angeles), the members of BCOS decided that they would first need to bring people together in this effort to promote cycling. The intention was to gradually spread awareness and change people's transport behavior. However, in order to change transport behavior, people had to first be made more aware of the importance of bicycling for sustainability, and encouraged to participate in mobilizing for bicycle-friendly infrastructures through what a young DULT member referred to as "E before I," that is, engagement before infrastructure. This led to the emergence of "Cycle Day," a social event designed to promote awareness about bicycling and its benefits both for individual health and the environment, and simultaneously to mobilize demand for bicycle infrastructures.

In their attempt to transform transport behavior, through Cycle Day, DULT and its collaborators (BCOS) also hope to create awareness and sensitivity among drivers of motorized automobiles, in terms of their attitude to bicyclists. As one planner informed me: "Do not honk, give them space. It is not just about shifting people to cycling, but also to make people sensitive to cyclists. At least the cyclist is not polluting unlike you, so give him some amount of respect." Such expectations, particularly the emphasis on not honking and giving cyclists space indicate not only efforts at ensuring safety, but they also indicate an aspirational vision of transport behavior which is modelled on transport practices in western contexts.

Bicycle infrastructures in Bengaluru have been mobilized by the efforts of the DULT along with citizen groups. As the planners from the DULT put it, it is a "citizen-government initiative." The DULT is a line agency. Their mandate is planning and funding. They do not own lands or assets (ownership is typically the prerogative of corporations or development authorities); as a result, they do not engage in implementation. They were set up in 2007 by the state government

soon after the National Urban Transport Policy (NUTP) was drafted in 2006. The DULT website announces that "For the first time qualified personnel trained in urban transport planning were introduced into the government system." The DULT administers the Sustainable Urban Transport Funds (SUTF) and these funds can only be used for sustainable initiatives. The SUTF is from cesses – fuel cess, road tax, etc. The DULT therefore uses these funds to augment public transport in smaller cities or towns, or for smaller initiatives like cycle tracks or pedestrian footpaths (sidewalks). As a state agency, they also prepare the comprehensive mobility plans for cities across Karnataka. The DULT, has even received a grant from the World Bank's Global Environment Facility, which is currently being used to implement a Public Bike Sharing System (PBS) in Mysuru (DULT 2016).

In sum, I suggest that the goal of sustainability, which is central to the DULT's agenda for urban transport, combines with the environmentalist ethic (albeit bourgeois) of Bengaluru's long-term middle-class, thus serving to successfully bring together the state as well as citizens in the attempt to change transport behavior to suit sustainable infrastructures such as bicycle lanes. Cycle Day serves as the platform through which to create awareness, and enculturate citizens into valuing bicycling as a sustainable practice, while simultaneously mobilizing demand for bicycle infrastructures. I also want to emphasize that while this articulation of environmentalism emerges from a nostalgia for Bengaluru's past, thereby distinguishing Bengaluru's long-term middle-classes from those who have migrated to the city to be employed in IT, it is also oriented towards a future that mimics transport practices in the West. Given that Cycle Day is organized based on international models for mobilization around bicycling and many organizers and participants have lived overseas, and often narrate their experiences of mobility practices in other countries as a point of comparison, Cycle day is an articulation of creating infrastructures that bring together

nostalgia for Bengaluru's past with the desire for experiencing world-classness through infrastructures.

ii. Broader shifts in the urban landscape and its implications for bicycling

There have been phases in Bengaluru's history when bicycle use was quite dominant. The form of urban transformation in Bengaluru has played an important role in shaping the practice of bicycling as well as perceptions of the bicycle as a form of transport.

Janaki Nair, in her comprehensive history of Bengaluru (2005) writes that the industrial trajectory of the city has three phases. "Each of these phases also corresponds to the significance of the state as the prime mobilizer and distributor of resources, as the increasing command of the market eclipses the developmentalist state and its apparatuses" (Nair 2005, 81).

The first phase is characterized by textile production industries (in the first part of the twentieth century). The second phase was marked by the blossoming of the public sector (beginning in the 40s and 50s). Wide open spaces were typical of Bengaluru during this time, and horticulture is said to have been well embedded within the city's landscape. By the 1980s several public sector and key private sector industries (such as AMCO batteries, Kirloskar, etc.) had emerged within the city. Many of these public sector industries ran buses for their employees. As a result, the dominant forms of mobility in the city included public transit buses, public sector industry buses for employees, bicycling and walking. Around 1975, bicycles constituted "71 percent of passenger carrying vehicles, and hence 'design of a set of cycle tracks was found necessary' (though never implemented)" (Nair 2005, 100). However, the increase in population led to an exponential increase (by 222 percent) of motorized forms of transport on Bengaluru's streets by the early 1980s. This led to planners seeking out ways to prioritize the mobility of private, motorized forms of transport while simultaneously removing non-motorized forms of

transport from the streets. By the 2000s, slow-moving, non-motorized forms of transport were in fact banned from certain roads in the city (for e.g., the ban on bicycling on MG road (Nair 2005)). This shows how the increase in and prioritization of motorized forms of transport by planners gradually led to the sidelining of the bicycle in the city. It is from the late 1980s that one sees the beginning of the third phase of industrial development, characterized by the growth of the IT industry leading to the overshadowing of the public sector by private firms.

In its third industrial phase, Bengaluru witnessed the exponential growth of the IT sector. During this phase, like many other societies of the Global South, Bengaluru also experienced the intervention of international agencies (for example the World Bank and ADB) in the "'management' of cities," consequently "reducing the role of the state to the status of organized and well managed service providers" (Nair 2005, 116). This period is also characterized by the emergence of civil society groups such the Bangalore Agenda Task Force (BATF) and Political Action Committee (PAC) that attempt to use corporate governance methodologies for the "management of the city" (ibid 118). In the process they bring together public and private, and citizens with elected representatives. Through these transformations, the term stakeholder, although by default referring to the middle-classes gradually replaces the idea of the citizen (a subject with rights to the city), to mean "one who enjoys *an ownership of rights to the city*" (italics in original text) (ibid 116). Urban renewal in this context is marked by major freeway and other infrastructural projects, where the projects are instituted with the speculative intent of engendering urban growth (Nair 2015) rather than facilitate the circulation of goods and commodities to service it.

In this context of urban development, citizens are stakeholders, infrastructures are instituted with speculative intent, and there is the active involvement of private sector actors

(such as NICE, OLA and Yolo (see The Economic Times 2019 for private actors and bike-sharing infrastructures)) who show an interest in the manufacturing and maintenance of infrastructures. Under these conditions, demands for bicycle infrastructures and the emergence of bicycle clubs, etc. not only articulate a middle-class, high caste, ownership over the rights to the city, but they also reinvest the bicycle – which had been cast out of elite urban spaces and largely consigned to being the poor man's vehicle – with a new social vigor and symbolic value (Anantharaman 2017). Claims-making around bicycle infrastructures are more collaborative because they are in keeping with the interests of the state, private actors and citizens.

iii. Symbolic value of the bicycle

The symbolic value of the bicycle as representative of *sustainable development* at the global level makes possible this collaboration of state and middle-class citizenry. In order to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) for 2030, the World Bank has initiated the Global Mobility Report (GMR) (2017), a "first-ever attempt to examine performance of the transport sector globally, and its capacity to support the mobility of goods and people, in a sustainable way" (2017, 6). As part of the goals, which include "universal access," "efficiency," "safety," and "green mobility" the initiative seeks to promote sustainable forms of mobility such as bicycling and walking.

The report emphasizes the importance of bicycling infrastructures in creating safe zones for bicyclists. The implication is that the *form* of the bicycle makes riders especially vulnerable to injury. Bicycle infrastructures are thus stated as being a necessity since they will protect those engaged in ethical and sustainable practices such as bicycling. The report emphasizes the need for well-designed multi-modal transport systems. A well-designed system that facilitates multi-modal transport (by linking public transportation with bicycling and walking facilities) is likely to not

only reduce emissions, it can also reduce the incidence of road accidents (which are highly prevalent when there is heavy private automobile use, especially 2-wheeled automobiles). While a poorly designed multi-modal system might reduce emissions, it is unlikely to reduce road accidents. "For cyclists, major roads are more hazardous than minor roads, and the presence of bicycle facilities—on-road bike routes, on-road marked bike lanes, and off-road bike paths—are associated with the lowest risk." (GMR 2017, 34).

While the GMR emphasizes the salience of bicycling infrastructures in creating and maintaining road safety for bicyclists, a working paper published by the World Resources Institute and the Financing Sustainable Cities Initiative (Moon-Miklaucic et al. 2019) sheds light on the fact that the growing number of stakeholders in urban development have played a huge role in transforming the urban landscape. These demands for bicycle infrastructures are yet another instance of the role of public-private partnerships and diverse stakeholders in shaping urban spaces and urban mobility practices. The paper informs us that: "Recent technological transformations and innovations are dramatically reshaping our cities and increasing their options to introduce and manage bike-sharing services as a new mode of transport" (Ibid: 1). The global proliferation of bike-sharing technologies and infrastructures in the last decade, the paper observes, is because of rapid technological transformation, and the increased involvement of the private sector in urban development.

The discourse of sustainable development uses the *form* of the bicycle to justify claims for bicycle infrastructures as a safety measure to protect cyclists. It predicates the safety and efficient mobility of bicyclists on bicycle-friendly infrastructures, and public-private partnerships for *manufacturing, funding and maintaining* these technologies and infrastructures. Streets no longer facilitate the free passage of bicycles because they are shared by motorized, private transport

systems, private stakeholders, the state and other actors. The bicycle therefore needs segregated lanes for its safe and efficient mobility. The discourse of sustainable development thus effectively creates a certain dependency between bicycling for sustainability and bicycle infrastructures.

This particular global discourse of sustainable development effectively makes a link between bicycling for sustainability and bicycle infrastructures. This resonates with notions of sustainability among the middle-class citizenry in Bengaluru, while also simultaneously appealing to the state's aspirations for a world-class city since it indexes a certain global standard of city-making. By satiating the aspirations of middle-class citizenry and the state for the city's future, both of which have been at loggerheads with respect to past big-ticket infrastructural projects, plans for bicycle infrastructures facilitates a more collaborative relationship.

I have thus far outlined the key factors which have led to a collaboration between the state and citizens on the question of bicycle infrastructures. I have argued that Cycle Day engages the middle-class, bourgeois environmentalist sentiment for a greener Bengaluru (which stems from nostalgia for Bengaluru's past and a desire to experience world-classness in Bengaluru), as well as state interests in sustainability. Moreover, Cycle Day and the emergence of bicycling clubs, etc., by demanding for infrastructures, successfully resignify the bicycle as an elite form of transport. The demand for infrastructures appeal to the state, private actors and others, relationships between whom dictate the form of urban development in contemporary Bengaluru. Finally, I assert that the global discourse on sustainability successfully links bicycling for sustainability with the need for bicycle infrastructures. In Bengaluru, demands for bicycle infrastructures enable collaborative relationships between citizens and the state because they index a global idea of development, thus satisfying the state's aspirations for making Bengaluru world-class. They also emphasize sustainability, which simultaneously engages citizen aspirations for a green future for Bengaluru.

While previous big-ticket infrastructural propositions by the Karnataka government have resulted in protests by citizens, the discourse of sustainable development resolves some of these tensions, allowing for a more collaborative relationship between citizen and state.

Revival and community

I have argued that plans for bicycle infrastructures enables citizen-government collaborations, because urban development in Bengaluru now involves the participation of multiple stakeholders including private corporations who stand to profit from these infrastructures, and the fact that the symbolic value of the bicycle is not merely indicative of status (especially low status), but in fact it indexes a more global identity.

Through close ethnographic attention to a Cycle Day event, I proceed to highlight emerging narratives of revival and community that are ubiquitous among participants. Unpacking these narratives further, I assert that they stem from middle-class nostalgia, and moreover, they reveal the ways in which the urban form is experienced and understood through an object such as the bicycle.

The Government of Karnataka's Directorate for Urban Land Transport (DULT) webpage declares that:

> "Cycle Day" is a campaign to promote cycling as a mainstream mode of transport, and in affect [sic] bring about an increase in the usage of cycling for short to mid commutes, local shopping runs, first and last mile connectivity as well as leisure runs to just feel our still green city.[20]

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[20] Source: http://urbantransport.kar.gov.in/out.html

I am in a cab driving to Richmond Town road early on a Sunday morning in June. Richmond Town is an upscale neighborhood in Bengaluru. It is in close proximity to the commercial hubs of Bengaluru, namely, MG Road and Commercial Street. The weather is clement, and my cab speeds through the sleepy city streets. It is a little past 7.00 am. My cab has to stop at the entrance to the event, because the road is cordoned off with yellow metal dividers. A uniformed traffic policeman is stationed by the divider (see figure 45).

Figure 45: Yellow metal dividers blocking the entrance to the road where the event is being held

A little ahead is a large group of people. As I walk through the opening between dividers, and into the designated area, I am met with the sight of a make-shift stage with large black speakers on either side, and people squatting on the road, drawing squares with colorful chalk for games like snakes and ladders and hop-scotch (see figures 46 and 47). The street has been occupied by bicyclists and pedestrians, and parked cars (belonging to the people living on the street) flank the two sides of the wide street. At the far end is a large truck with bicycles for hire.

Figure 46: Colorful chalk squares for games like snakes and ladders and hop-scotch

Figure 47: Make-shift stage with large black speakers

I make my way to the small group of individuals from BCOS (a mixed group consisting of planners from the DULT and citizen-activists from Praja and ESAF) who invited me to the event. All of a sudden, there is a lot of clapping and cheering, the dividers are moved to the side and a crowd of almost 150 bicyclists of all ages, cycle through triumphantly (see figure 48). One of the event organizers, and planner for the DULT explains to me that the bicyclists follow a designated route, and the traffic police are informed and accordingly stationed on that route to ensure their safety. The road that we are on, which marks the starting and ending point of the cycling track is completely blocked off for all automobile traffic until the end of the event. As for the rest of the cycling route from which the bicyclists are returning, there are traffic police

stationed along the length of the route to make sure to block the roads as and when the bicyclists pass through.

Figure 48: A crowd of almost 150 cyclists of all ages emerge through the dividers

This particular Cycle Day event was co-organized both by BCOS and the local Residents Welfare Association (RWA). The local RWA had the resources to sponsor the stage, the speakers, the Yoga and Zumba lessons (to be held at the end of the event), and arrange to have representatives from organizations promoting small-scale sustainability initiatives such as composting and rainwater harvesting. BCOS, on the other hand handled the larger administrative side of the event, and the DULT, made arrangements for lending bicycles to participants without charging a fee.

The BCOS members and I decide to head over to the nearby local restaurant for a quick cup of coffee. As we walk on, an announcement is made through the public address system, addressing the bicyclists as they prepare to set out on round two. The announcement states the rules that all the bicyclists must follow. Thomas, a middle aged, pony-tailed man in trendy eyeglasses, is in charge of leading the group on the designated route. He announces authoritatively into the microphone: there must be “no overtaking” each other during the ride; and the participants must not ride their bicycles in the middle of the road. Amid a lot of cheering,

the bicyclists set out on yet another round. In order to ensure the safety of the participants, rules must be adhered to stringently. The bicyclists are mainly residents of the neighborhood. They are by and large upper-middle and upper-class and caste. Many have on helmets, knee pads, and other safety and athletic gear, which are rather atypical of the average bicyclist in Indian cities and clearly indicate a certain elite, class sensibility (Anantharaman 2017). While many of the participants are children accompanied by adults, others include teenagers, fitness conscious adults and some elderly enthuiasts.

Over coffee, I am informed by representatives from BCOS that Cycle Day is a "citizen-government initiative," which has been taking place since 2013 in Bengaluru. The Cycle Day event is based on an "E before I" principle which refers to "engagement before infrastructure." This event is structured such that it spreads awareness about the importance of sustainability and bicycle infrastructures, and encourages local communities to engage in the use of sustainable forms of transport such as the bicycle. The explanation follows that engagement from "citizens" will place a demand on the state to create more bicycle-friendly infrastructures such as bicycle lanes and bike-share docking centers to support sustainable mobility and transportation.

Cycle Day has continued successfully for the last three years. Initially, Cycle Day was only held on the last Sunday of every month. However, I am told that that has changed considerably in the last 3 years. Many RWAs and citizens groups were drawn to the idea of Cycle Day and approached BCOS to run it in their neighborhoods. Now it is organized every Sunday in a different part of the city. For example, today, the event is simultaneously being held in two other localities in addition to Richmond Town. Additionally, over 30 neighborhoods have now officially affiliated themselves with the Cycle Day event.

I am informed that Cycle Day has no religious or political affiliations. In fact, the members of BCOS go to the designated events every Sunday to make sure that local organizers and participants adhere to their clauses. Moreover, Cycle Day is not enforced on neighborhoods. BCOS only works with local communities that show interest in the event. This is because interest on the part of the participating communities is an indicator that they are more likely to take initiative and sustain the event over time. After a number of Cycle Day events are organized by a particular community of organizers, they will be given a set of plans for sustainable infrastructure as a form of commemoration of the community/neighborhood's participation in Cycle Day and supporting the cause of sustainability. This is to encourage them to make demands on the state in order to have them implemented.

Cycle Day is not uncontested. I am informed by one of the young planners and members of BCOS, that there are moments of resistance against such a movement since it is assumed that bicycle lanes will reduce the amount of carriageway available to cars. The most important resource needed for promoting bicycling is land for bicycle lanes. Among transport systems in the city, the "car lobby"[21] is very powerful when it comes to transport infrastructure. Making bicycle lanes means taking space away from carriageway and parking spots for car drivers. This movement for bicycle infrastructures is therefore not uncontested. In some cases, it is met with backlash from residents in areas where bike lanes have been proposed. The DULT is trying to acquire space for bicycle lanes on arterial roads as well, and other NGOs and cycling clubs are also collectively creating demand for bicycle lanes in the city.

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[21] I am informed that car manufacturers push for more cars on the city's streets, and they play an indirect role in lobbying for more space for private modes of transport.

Narratives promoting Cycle Day are built around the logic of the collective benefits that sustainable mobility can yield. I am told that promoting cycling with the goal of sustainability is beneficial *for all* in terms of health and environment. Moreover, the green spaces in Bengaluru and the pleasant weather make it more conducive for an event like Cycle Day and to promote cycling, when compared to many other Indian cities. That Bengaluru is somehow more conducive for bicycling.

After our chat, we decide to head back to the event. It appears that the rounds of bicycling have concluded and participants are preparing for Zumba and Yoga. The Yoga instructor, a woman in a white T-Shirt and a black vest is assisted by four young ladies in pink T-shirts and black track pants. The stage is set under a large banyan tree which provides an expansive circumference of shade. The ladies in pink accompany the instructor on stage and demonstrate postures as she gives verbal instructions to the crowd of about 40 young children. Yoga is followed by Zumba, which sees a lot of participation from older women and children (see figure 49).

Figure 49: Zumba class

Middle and upper middle-class narratives surrounding bicycling assert that bicycling is "extinct" because of the exponential growth in private automobiles in Bengaluru city, which has

reduced road space for bicycling in Bengaluru. Additionally, a lack of bicycle infrastructure and safety measures (Menezes 2019) and the perception that bicycles are "uncool" and low-status (Verma et al. 2016) are said to be among factors dissuading people from bicycling in Bengaluru. These narratives of alarm and extinction form the foundation for claims for bicycle infrastructures in Bengaluru.

Senior RWA representatives echo these sentiments of revival. Mrs. Chaitra Suresh, a sixty-five-year-old RWA representative informs me:

"You know, I have lived in this locality for the last 35 years and for the last 22 years I have been an active community participant." The Richmond Town RWA was initially dealing with garbage segregation issues and also engaged in a lot of community help where there was no assistance from the government or the municipality (Bruhat Bengaluru Mahanagara Palike – BBMP). As they were dealing with these problems, they heard of the DULT through a neighboring RWA and this prompted them to contact members of DULT. She firmly believes that through this event they are able to promote the increased use of bicycles and encourage interaction within the community. She continues:

> Nuclear families are very common these days and people are so busy they don't know even their neighbors any more. They don't have the time to get to know each other. People have become alienated and do not know their neighbors. One needs to know one's neighbors because it is important for safety and friendship. Additionally, in such a highly digitized age, when everyone is addicted to their phones, children will miss out on social interactions and one cannot expect them to be interactive in the future. If you have to go out urgently and want to leave your child with your neighbor, you need to have good neighbors and friends. If

> your friend is not available during an emergency, then your neighbor is your closest help. Earlier people lived in joint families and there was always someone to take care of the children, but now with nuclear families, good friends and neighbors are very important.

She believes that Cycle Day effectively brings people together. "It is very hard to motivate people but now the response is good" she concludes, before turning away to others who are waiting to have a word with her. Chaitra's narrative reproduces an often-heard middle-class lament that urban transformation has been paralleled by shifting family structures (see chapter 3). Cycle Day for her is a way to build community that attempts to recreate Bengaluru of the past. Another representative, an elderly gentleman, Mr. Taylor said:

> Cycling is an old mode of transport and there is no space for it in the present atmosphere with all the traffic. We do not want it to get extinct and therefore we are promoting it. I used to cycle from Ulsoor to Josephs Indian high school. This was 45 years ago. The city is not friendly for cycling now, it is only friendly for two wheelers [scooters and motorcycles] and four wheelers [cars]. Footpaths [sidewalks] have also been taken over by two-wheelers because people drive on them and park erratically on footpaths. These days if one wants to [ride a] [bi]cycle, then you have to go to grounds [common local parks and playgrounds which are themselves slowly shrinking].

Many participants at the event echoed the same sentiments about bicycling as "extinct" because the proliferation of motorized forms of transport has made the streets bicycle-unfriendly. They were drawn to the event either through social media, posters in the neighborhood, or by having attended other Cycle Day events in the city. Their goal was to introduce their children to

bicycling and to participate in creating an environment conducive to bicycling, an activity that was an integral part of their own childhoods.

These middle-class narratives assert that in the past (up until the 1980s), the lack of motorized forms of private transportation made the city's streets conducive for bicycling and even bicycling long distances. In the present, the large number of automobiles have made the city's street extremely *unsafe* for cycling. Cycling has become "extinct" (especially among the middle and upper classes). These narratives justify the need for segregated bicycle infrastructures to enable the middle and upper class to revive the "extinct" activity. This need for revival is motivated not only by their desire for a greener city, but also to give their children an experience of bicycling, which is perceived to be an essential part of growing up.

The Cycle Day event, by cordoning off streets, blocking motorized automobiles and putting in place strict rules to be followed during the ride, not only make sure that participant safety is ensured, but they also reproduce the middle-class narrative that bicycling is a vulnerable activity and requires additional road safety measures.

The desire for recreational bicycling is thus used as a way to revive the activity itself, while simultaneously using it as a critique of existing forms of urban transformation in Bengaluru (especially the exponential growth in private forms of automobiles). The revival is thus meant to revive both the activity as well as the "garden city" Bengaluru, which lives on in middle-class nostalgia as the ideal version of the city (Frazier 2019). Over and above this, as Chaitra Ramesh points out, this activity also attempts to build community around and through the practice of riding bicycles, especially since erstwhile family structures have broken down with urban change and elderly residents of the city have perceived these shifts in dramatic ways. In many ways, this commentary on bicycles also reveals insight on middle-class narratives on the

relationship between urbanization and family structures (which I discuss in greater detail in chapter 3).

Scale and the city

Having examined the ways in which narratives of revival and community that are woven into the mission of the Cycle Day event reveal how the bicycle is entangled in aspirations for the city's future, I proceed to examine narratives of scale and the city.

Narratives of scale and urban transformation as experienced through the practice of bicycling were common among my middle-class interlocutors. Further unpacking this narrative and contrasting it with the experience of groups of people whose interests are not represented in these debates, I examine the implications of these narratives for their quintessential middle-class experience of urban change.

i. Critique of urban development

During fieldwork, I met Raghavendra, a 75-year-old resident of Basavanagudi. He reminisced about the experience of riding a bicycle in Bengaluru in the 1960s and 70s when I visited his house for an interview.

> I still have a bicycle, bought in 1960. We used to go to college by cycle. As long as we were in school we walked. After I joined diploma my father bought me a [bi]cycle in 1960.… In the 1950's there were not many vehicles. There were maybe 200 cars. Not many scooters were there. In 1965… I used to go by cycle [to work]. My house to Ulsoor is about 8 km. I used to come across only three scooters and one or two cars at the most. There were not many vehicles. Now

there are 70,00,000 vehicles in Bangalore. 1000-2000 vehicles are added every day.

Speaking of taxes levied on bicycles up until the late 1960s, he continues, “We had to pay a rupee or two every year.” He leads me through the spacious living room of his house, which has a high ceiling and red oxide floors, into the dining area. The house retains much of the early 1900s architecture including the window frames, grills, the flooring, and high ceilings. Upon turning left in the dining area, we arrive in the large area which is more or less used as a store room. A string runs from one wall to another, supporting some clothes that have been hung to dry. His bicycle stands under it. “1960 Raleigh. I paid around Rs 250/- for the cycle. That was a big amount then,” Mr. Raghavendra announces. It has clearly been lying unused for a very long time. It has a gray seat and is covered in dust. Mr. Raghavendra reaches for an old rag and begins to dust the cycle so that I can take a photograph. The room is dimly lit and I cannot see the imprint acknowledging the payment of tax on the metal plate, which is fixed beneath the seat. Mr. Raghavendra reaches for a flashlight, while I continue dusting away with the rag. He points the flashlight at the aluminum plate bearing the recognition of tax payment by the BCC, which stood for the then municipal authority, the Bangalore City Council.

“They [the municipal authorities] used to punch it. We had to change it once a year. In March we had to buy the license. They [the police] would check. If we did not have it, they would fine us.” Mr. Raghavendra says. I point out that the date on the metal plate says 31/3/68 and 1/4/68. Mr. Raghavendra replies: “That was the last [tax payment]. After that they cancelled it... They would just punch the expiry date when you made the payment.”

Figure 50: “1960 Raleigh. I paid around Rs 250/- for the cycle. That was a big amount then”

Figure 51: BCC stands for the Bangalore City Council, which was the then municipality. The last stamped date on the plate is “1-4-68”

From Raghavendra’s account I wish to highlight two points. First, the refrain that it was possible to cover even up to 8 km or more by bicycle up until the 1980s, when the city was sparsely populated, and industries, horticulture and open spaces co-existed within the city’s

limits. Contrary to recent claims of high-speed connection through big-ticket transport infrastructures by the state, middle-class narratives of scale indicate that the experience of 8 km by bicycle, which was reasonable prior to the 1980s, in the current scenario poses health and safety risks. It is a hazard. This narrative of scale thus serves as a critique of the nature of urban development, which has unfolded in Bengaluru in the recent couple of decades.

Second, the interview with Raghavendra revealed the changing relationship between the bicycle and the state. From an object regulated by the state through taxation up until the late 1960s or so, the bicycle occupied a space outside of such state control until recently, when the discourse of global sustainable development has reframed the relationship between the bicycle, the citizen and the state. The bicycle thus serves to reveal insights into shifts in the relationship between urban space, citizenship and the state.

ii. Bicycle infrastructures and democratic space

Claims-making around bicycle infrastructures in Bengaluru are built around specific, class-based articulations of sustainability, scale, community, safety and urban revival. Nevertheless, the experience of bicycling in the city are heavily differentiated. To illustrate these differences, I examine narratives of bicycling from people who self-identify as low-income to foreground other experiences of bicycling in the city.

I provide an excerpt from my interactions with Vajra Vel. I am introduced to Vajra Vel by his daughter, Manjula. Dressed in a bright white vest and a lungi, Mr. Vajra Vel is filling water from the sump in the slum rehabilitation housing on Central Road, when I first meet him. He has a remarkably youthful face, and short salt and pepper hair.

His spotless bicycle is standing by the staircase opposite his house. I am crouched on the stairs and he is seated on a plastic chair across from me. Children from neighboring homes are

running around us. He works as a security guard in a company near the police camp. His current job as a security guard requires that he work one week as day security, and the alternate week as night security. Night security requires that he walk around all night with a *lathi* and torch.

I ask: aren't you scared? He replies, "Of course there will be some fear, but you just have to do it. Sometimes there is no power and you have to walk in the dark, but you just do it." His total salary is Rs. 12000 (USD 166). Out of that, they deduct Rs. 1500 per month for provident fund. Once he gets to his place of work, there is a place to change into his uniform and then he immediately starts work. They have provided the guards a table and some chairs to sit on. When he works as day security, he has to monitor the guest/book which needs to be signed by visitors. But doing rounds is a nightly thing, and mosquitoes are a huge problem.

His timings are 8:00 am till 8:00 pm or 8:00 pm till 8:00 am if he is doing night duty. He rides his bicycle to work. It takes him about 10 minutes each way. When I ask him about his experience of bicycling and about safety on the main roads, he shrugs, as if to say that there is nothing in particular that bothers him, or constitutes a significant part of his commute.

I ask: Isn't it difficult to ride the bicycle on the roads? What about the traffic? "There are no problems along the way while I cycle" he responds. If it is raining, he takes an umbrella with him, alternatively, he wears his jerkin. If it is raining, he gets a bit delayed. They gave him a jerkin at work for rainy days and nights. If it is raining, then he and his colleagues don't do rounds at night. They sit in the shelter.

He does not remember the year when he was born. He thinks he must be 56 years old. Mr. Vajra Vel grew up in a small hamlet near Tiruvannamalai in Tamil Nadu state. His parents worked as wage laborers on the fields owned by Gounders, and other higher caste groups in the village.

He used to help out on the fields as a child, and in his late teens he started to sell "ice kucchi" (ice-cream sticks) in Ariyur.

He remembers hiring a bicycle every day from a nearby shop and cycling from the "ice factory," where he procured his wares, to the bus stop where private buses travelling the Ariyur line were aplenty. He would place his bicycle, and the large ice cream box on the roof of the bus until it reached Ariyur. Upon reaching Ariyur, which was 30-40 km away from his village, he would bind the box with the ice cream sticks to the back of the bicycle with a rope, and cycle all day in the small villages around the area and sell ice cream sticks to children. He recollects that "in those days if people knew that you were SC, they would not sit beside you on the bus. They would get up and move away. People from your village would know that you were from the 'colony' [SC colony] and they would recognize you on the bus. But in the city people do not know that about you." He firmly believes that back in his village, things have improved now. He moved to Bengaluru when he was 25 years old. In Bengaluru he never faced such discrimination, he says.

Children from the villages would approach him to buy ice cream sticks. In those days each stick would only cost 5 or 10 Paise. The children would also bring him bits of plastic and metal that would be lying around the fields. While he would hand the money from the sales over to the ice cream factory owner, he would sell the scraps and recyclables and keep the money for himself. One kilo of scrap would earn him 50 Paise. In a month he would earn between Rupees 150 and 200 from selling ice cream and the scrap. The rent for the bicycle would cost Rupees 1.25 per day. He would return it in the evening and go back to hire the bicycle again the next morning for yet another day of selling ice cream.

When he first moved to Bengaluru, there were not as many buses in the city, there were much fewer KSRTC buses, but there were "Periyar" buses, he remembers with great pride. He

prefers to call the green, tinny, Tamil Nadu State Transport Corporation buses by their erstwhile name – the Thanthai Periyar Tansport Corporation bus.

After moving to Bangalore, he worked in the "fruit cutting" business around KR Market. He sat on the pavement and sold cut fruits to passers-by. A few years ago, he was evicted from the line where he was vending because of the Bengaluru Metro phase I construction. Following that he moved to Central road with his family because they were in financial trouble due to his unemployment, and upon finding out that the rent in these slum rehabilitation dwellings was lower than anywhere else in the city, he decided to move here. To commute from Central road to KR Market was extremely difficult because of the long distance, and high bus fares. Going back to vending fruits therefore, was not a feasible option. After almost a year of unemployment, he found work as a security guard for a nearby corporate company. He purchased a secondhand bicycle and now he cycles to work every day. His bicycle is parked outside the door of his house in the slum rehabilitation dwelling. It is tall, with a green seat, and looks shiny, clean, well-oiled and very well cared for.

Suseela: Suseela is Vajra Vel's wife. She is a short and thin woman. She is wearing her usual grey and white polyester saree. Her greying hair is parted down the center and tied into a bun at the back of her head. She is still sitting outside her home, in the common space, where she normally sits in order to sell fruit. But there is nothing out there today. She is sitting with an elderly woman, a neighbor. They are eating savory condiments out of a plastic packet. Exchanging greetings, I join the two of them and sit on the chipped concrete floor. Suseela dusts the food in her palm into the palms of my hand. "Eat it. It is spicy mixture" she points to the plastic packet, as I empty the contents into my mouth.

She was born in a village in Tamil Nadu and migrated to Bengaluru with her husband shortly after they got married. She must have been 15 or 16 when they came here. She cannot remember when she was born and speculates that she must be 50 years old.

Riding bicycles was a male activity. Growing up, while she never bicycled, her brother did. “Everybody used to ride bicycles in those days because there were no buses.” After she got married, she reminisces about riding pillion on the bicycle while her husband pedaled. “He would [ride the] [bi]cycle, I would sit,” she smiles. “I would sit with my legs on one side. We would go to the bus stop, even go watch picture [feature films], MGR [MG Ramachandran a famous Tamil actor] picture. The tickets used to be only Rupees 2 in the village. Initially it used to be 50 paisa, then it increased to Rupees 2. Now it is Rupees 30.”

Now, her daughter Manjula tries to take her around on her scooter. “I am scared. If I fall, I might die.” In fact, she tells me that just last week she rode pillion on the bicycle with her husband. They had gone to the hospital at night for her insulin injection (she is diabetic). “On the way back we went over a pothole and I slipped and fell. My husband lifted me and made me stand. We waited a while then came back home” now she feels disinclined to travel by bicycle.

Thus far I have illustrated that middle-class narratives emphasize the importance of the bicycle for a greener Bengaluru, for critiquing the trajectory of urban development in Bengaluru and also to make demands for infrastructures that support sustainability and revive a lost sense of community. These middle-class demands are built on the desire to bicycle primarily for recreation. The use of the bicycle among middle-classes for long-distance cycling within the city for purposes other than recreation, as Raghavendra and Mr. Taylor’s narratives reveal are now in the past.

Vajra Vel's point of view provides a very different perspective on the matter. As someone who has bicycled most of his life, his narrative blurs the lines between bicycling for recreation and work. Suseela's stories of riding pillion with her husband reinforce their dependence on the bicycle for domestic, health-related, work-related and other utilitarian purposes – including riding to the cinema for recreation.

The stark contrast provided by Vajra Vel and Suseela's narratives makes apparent the ways in which narratives of scale, community, safety and revival, that are ever so common among the middle-classes in Bengaluru are unique to the middle-class experience of urban transformation in Bengaluru. Moreover, middle-class mobilization for bicycle infrastructures emerges from a desire for *recreational* bicycling. As participants at Cycle Day pointed out, they believed that bicycling was a key experience in their childhood and they wanted their children to be able to experience it as well. Middle-class bicycling emphasizes recreation, since many of these participants rely on cars and other private forms of automobiles for commuting in the city. As Amita Baviskar points out, bourgeois environmentalism is paradoxical because it articulates the middle-class desire for green cities, even as they continue to be a significant part of the population that consumes and uses private automobiles (2011).

Conclusion

In this chapter, I have paid close attention to middle-class narratives surrounding bicycling and claims-making for bicycle infrastructures.

Based on demands that stem from middle-class desire for recreational cycling, events like Cycle Day seek to recreate experiences of Bengaluru's urban form that were characteristic of its past image as "garden city." They also distinguish the long-term middle-classes from those who have migrated to the city to work in its IT industry. These events and narratives of sustainability

bring together a nostalgia for Bengaluru's past with desires for experiencing world-classness in the city. These efforts for segregated bicycle lanes and bike docking stations work to mitigate middle-class anxieties about urban space.

Ethnographic methods have allowed insights that highlight the ways in which bicycle infrastructures, which are perceived as having the potential to create sustainable cities, perpetuate middle-class aspirations for the city. As efforts to transform the city's landscape through bicycle infrastructures concentrate on more upscale parts of the city, subsequently catering to the needs and aspirations of the state and the middle-class, the question remains, how can we imagine democratic urban space through the bicycle? What would it look like?

Anthropologist Adonia Lugo, in her article on the role of cultural practices and social networks, what she refers to as "human infrastructure," in supporting bicycling for transport rather than just recreation, writes that "A qualitative analysis of urban transport cycling should acknowledge that the practice does not necessarily carry a stable meaning shared by all street users" (2013, 17). In that vein, by contrasting narratives of bicycling for pleasure and bicycling for basic needs, I have tried to reinforce the idea that the experience of riding bicycles in Bengaluru is by no means universal. It is highly differentiated.

CONCLUSION

In my dissertation, "Window Seats," I share stories of moving around Bengaluru as a way to argue that transport is not just about mobility but about social worlds. Even as top-down visions of world-class city-making dominate the transport landscape in Bengaluru, a city where roads seldom intersect at right angles, I show how people move in ways that are locally meaningful.

In my dissertation I focus on the following themes: efficient "connection" and how the state, business elite and corporations use this rhetoric to make Bengaluru world-class through transport infrastructures. The second theme that I focus on is that of mobility and access. I also examine how transport access is tied to aspirations for social mobility and the future. The third and final theme that I examine is how narratives and practices of mobility reveal people's experiences and anxieties about urbanization.

Efficient "connection"

In Bengaluru, the state, corporate and business elites' ambitions of world-class city-making infuse the city's transport landscape with high-end, billion-dollar transport infrastructures like the city's metro, freeways and corridors. The city's traffic congestion is often used as justification for these projects, all of which are seen as solutions for the urban fragmentation and disconnection produced by the congestion. Many of these projects therefore are location specific. For example, they attempt to connect specific parts of the city or try to "decongest" specific locations. This narrative of connection does not see the city as a whole, nor does it validate the effort and ingenuity that goes into making everyday access (to transport) for many, as part of the ideal of connection. This vision of world-class city-making and connection make mobility an end goal in itself.

In my dissertation, I resist this ideal of connection by foregrounding the myriad ways in which people make locally meaningful connection through transport and mobility. I assert that the analytic pairs that emerge from my interlocutors' experience, such as transport and urbanization, transport and housing, transport and markets, transport and education, transport and kinship and transport and industry constitute and argument in and of themselves. My dissertation argues that a study of transport must focus on the embodied uses of transport in contexts that are meaningful for users.

Transport and access

My dissertation gives detailed descriptions of the impact of world-class "connection" on the lives of many who depend on public transport for their basic everyday needs. First and foremost, my dissertation suggests that access must be understood by paying attention to how larger power structures such as the state and corporations, caste, class, and gender intersect to shape people's access to transport.

By closely examining people's access to transport, I assert that transport, like many other infrastructures, has the potential to disenfranchise. Using ethnographic accounts from women residents of a low-income resettlement facility in peripheral Bengaluru, I show how a lack of access to transport can exacerbate not only class inequalities, by preventing people from being able to access suitable and preferred livelihood opportunities, but it can also exacerbate gender inequalities by placing excessive domestic and work burdens on women. Moreover, it can worsen existing caste inequalities by restricting livelihood opportunities to menial jobs that are strongly associated with caste identity. With this in mind, I show the painstaking efforts people undertake to overcome these challenges. For example, women from the resettlement facility had

left their children with relatives in the city so as not to allow the paucity of access to transport to disrupt the child's education. They believed that education was the most important avenue that the child had to exit the caste-based limitations that would otherwise determine their access to employment. In other words, they did not want their child to be in low-wage labor like "coolie work," garments factory work, domestic work, etc. that they themselves were in.

In addition to emphasizing transport's potential to disenfranchise, studying transport access as embedded in power relations reveals insight into the ways in which social mobility and empowerment mean different things to different people. Narratives from agencies like the World Bank emphasize "universal access" to transport to empower vulnerable communities, especially women by enabling them increased access to livelihood, thereby empowering them as economic agents. In such narratives, social mobility and empowerment are equated with economic agency. However, I problematize such constructions by showing that for my women interlocutors, increased transport access would not have resulted in dramatic economic agency because of the ways in which caste binds them to certain forms of labor. Moreover, economic agency alone would not suffice to fulfill their visions of social mobility. Educating their children is of utmost importance to these women since they see education as the key driver to emancipation. By examining narratives of transport access in order for children to be able to access schools, I assert that transport needs to be studied in the context of social categories such as caste, class and gender.

I also argue that studying transport as embroiled in power relations, caste, class and gender allows insight in to how it produces different kinds of gendered everydayness. Transport infrastructures in Bengaluru valorize the modern IT professional. The BMTC's expensive, airconditioned buses, tolled expressways leading to IT hubs and the metro are testament to this.

The experience of the IT company employee is characterized by long waits in traffic, anxieties about lost and wasted time on the one hand and the cultural capital of being an IT worker (by virtue of getting to use airconditioned buses, company shuttles, buses that ply on IT corridors, traveling on infrastructures meant for IT), on the other. Share-auto rickshaws and auto-rickshaws more broadly speaking reinforce local discourse of masculinity that is anchored in social class and caste. The rickshaw, by enabling a certain flexibility in the commute reinforces the working-class femininity of women street vendors, etc.

Transport and urban transformation

In my dissertation, I see transport as a site through which experiences about urban transformation are expressed. I draw attention to "informal" ride-share systems (the share-auto rickshaw system) that has emerged in peripheral Bengaluru to show how local drivers, who are from previously land-owning families, use their identity as "local" drivers to distinguish their work from that of outsiders and to successfully keep outsiders away. I argue that local is a discursive strategy since it is indexed to ideas of agrarian selfhood, moral conduct and affective ties to land, that are anchored in particularities of place, and it serves to assert the right of the local drivers. Local drivers assert that their work mimics the expectations of orderliness from "formal" work, thereby distinguishing it from the work of outsiders. In other words, even as the language and ideology of world-class city-making seeks to alienate "informal" work from the city, these rickshaw drivers assert their belonging by repurposing the formal-informal binary and showing that their work has the characteristics required to persist in a world-class city.

In Chapter 3, I unpack the often-heard phrase among long-term, native middle-class residents of Basavanagudi, "from bungalow model to apartment model." This phrase is often used to describe

the shifts in their access to cars, housing and their kinship structures since the mid-twentieth century. Having lived in colonial bungalows and coping with the transformation of these bungalows to apartments, so that their nuclearizing family can maintain access to their property without having to physically live in it, I argue that this narrative reflects the anxieties that these elderly, long-time residents have about urban transformation. They believe that the exponential increase in the value of land and the ubiquitous availability of cars has seen the concomitant fracturing of joint families to nuclear families. Therefore, while joint ventures allow them to keep up with these changes, they also help them maintain a sense of the joint family sentiment. Not only does this narrative reveal the ways in which kinship is entangled with transport and housing, but it reflects the complex shift in the urban landscape, as they experience it.

Chapter 4 pays close attention to narratives of extinction and revival that accompany middle-class mobilization around bicycling in Bengaluru. By encouraging social mobilization through bicycling, I argue that middle-class participants seek to recreate a sense of community that they believe prevailed in the erstwhile "garden city." I thus show how transport becomes a site for exploring experiences and anxieties surrounding urban transformation.

Based on my findings, my dissertation distinguishes transport as unique infrastructure because of its capacity to allow individual social mobility, and to reveal the ways in which the city is encountered in social institutions like family. Moreover, transport makes visible the ways in which different industries shape the city's landscape, and how middle-class, heteronormative ideas of gender intersect with industry gender-norms and are reconfigured in public spaces.

Ethnographic insight has much to offer in an exploration of the relationship between transport and the city. Through ethnographic engagement, my dissertation foregrounds emic

perspectives on access and socio-spatial mobility. It makes visible the unprecedented ways in which transport is entangled in social life (including family, industry, aspirations for social mobility, etc.). Ethnographic engagement allows my dissertation to provoke questions that hold value both for theoretical as well as practical inquiry such as: what would the city look like if share-auto rickshaws were normalized? What would Bengaluru look like if the public bus system received more funding from the state? What if bicycle infrastructures did not only cater to middle-class recreational desires but attended to the combination of utilitarian as well as recreational needs of many? What kind of city would these changes produce?

Even as the COVID-19 lockdown was announced in India, and millions of migrant laborers in Indian cities began their perilous journeys back to their villages by foot, reports emerged of hundreds of deaths from road accidents, starvation and exhaustion (Banerjee 2020). It was evident that state agencies and planners fundamentally misread the migrant situation and had no plans in place. I believe that this shows the pressing need for more research on transport inequality. Insight on this issue can prepare governments and policymakers for times of crises when the consequences of transport in-access are magnified. While there are relatively more established protocols for what governments can do in food emergencies, and some expectation that the government has a role in ameliorating starvation deaths exists, the same is not true of transportation emergencies. I believe that my dissertation points to the need to attend to the everyday transport needs of people, as well as the need to prepare for disruptive events like COVID-19.

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APPENDICES

Questionnaire

Occupation:

Age:

Gender:

1. a. How long have you and/or your family lived in Bangalore?
   b. How long have you lived in this locality?

2. a. How many members in your household?
   b. Please list them out in order of age.

3. a. How do you travel to your place of work? Tell me all the steps involved in your commute.
   b. Why do you go to your place of work using this mode of transport?
   c. How far away is your place of work from your residence?
   d. How frequently do you travel to your place of work?
   e. How much do you spend on commuting to work in a month?

4. What are some locations in Bengaluru that you visit frequently?

5. a. How do you commute for grocery shopping? Please provide all the steps involved in your commute.
   b. Why do you use this mode of transport?
   c. How far away is it from your residence?
   d. How frequently do you go?

6. a. How do your children go to school/ college? Please provide all the steps involved in the commute.
   b. Why do your children use this mode of transport?
   c. What is the distance of the school/ college from the residence?
   d. How frequently do your children have to travel to their school/ college?
   e. What is the monthly cost of the commute?

7. a. How do you travel to social events within the city, and how frequently?
   b. Why do you use this more of transport?
   c. What are the locations likely to be?

8. a. How do you travel for family outings and how frequently?
   b. How far do you usually travel?
   c. Why do you use this mode of transport?

9. a. On what occasions do you and members of your family use public transport?
   b. What kind of public transport would you use? Why?

10. a. What form of transport would you most prefer to use while traveling within the city?
    b. Why?

11. Which of the following vehicles does your family own/use? If more than one, please specify.

    Bicycle ____

    Two-wheeler ____

    Car ____

    Other ____
    (Please specify) ____

12. Please list the different kinds of travel for which each privately owned vehicle is used by you and members of your family.

13. Please give the following details for each private vehicle that you use:

Vehicle type	Please specify the make	Model and year of manufacture	Year of purchase	Used or new (at the time of purchase)

Lakshmi

Lakshmi is 36 years old, is married, and has two children. Her husband drives an auto rickshaw and she works in a garment factory, where she sews cuffs on men's shirts. "Clothes trap a lot of heat and the rooms are not well ventilated" she says in Tamil as she sets the milk on the stove for coffee. I lay out some cream biscuits on a stainless-steel plate as she whispers "I have not been able to go to work regularly because of piles. The heat aggravates the piles". She is looking out for other jobs in the area. She looks uncomfortable at the thought of working as either a cook or house keeper in one of the new apartment complexes nearby. "Venda da… they are all Hindi people" (I don't want those jobs they are all Hindi speaking employers, implying that she may not know much about their food and housekeeping practices and might find herself being chided) she says. She wants the kind of work place where people speak "softly", a word she often uses to mean politeness. Unfortunately, the only other option available to her is working in garment factories.

It is early afternoon on a Sunday. The television is running and a Tamil film is in progress. Her husband and their two school-going children – a girl and a boy – are seated on the cot in the small living area in their home. Lakshmi and I are in the narrow space partitioned off as the kitchen. We are seated on the spotless concrete floor as we speak about her plans.

Her husband and children are in the shadow of the television, and Lakshmi whispers to me to ensure that her husband cannot overhear:

> He did not even tell me! He hit a pedestrian while driving his auto. I had to take a loan… I had to pay Rs. 25,000 for the victim's treatment. He was injured on the head. Thankfully, he did not make it a court-case issue. We did not have the money to pay the dues to the moneylenders who loaned us money to buy his [her

> husband's] auto rickshaw. We are afraid now that they might seize his auto, so we have hidden it in an acquaintance's garage. Now I have to pay interest on all these loans. Since all this happened he [her husband] has just been sitting at home and not working.

At this point we are interrupted by a young neighbor who walks into Lakshmi's house with her infant. All attention is now on the infant but the television continues to roar.

Lakshmi and her family live in a government slum rehabilitation dwelling in the periphery of Bengaluru city. Most households in the rehabilitation dwelling are inhabited by people from Dalit (scheduled caste) and Muslim communities. A majority of the families here were forcibly evicted from their homes in centrally located slums in the city and were relocated to this government slum rehabilitation dwelling/ the slum quarters as it is more popularly known. However, because of the distance of the facility from their previous places of residence and consequently work, schools, social networks, etc. Some people, rather than move to the facility, prefer to rent it out to tenants (this of course is unauthorized by the state), while they find other places for themselves to live within the city. Lakshmi's family was not among those forcibly evicted from the city. Rather, given the low rate of rents in the slum rehabilitation facility, her family willingly migrated here to live as "unauthorized tenants". Their previous neighborhood was an industrial area and her place of work, a garment factory was hardly five minutes away from their settlement by foot. She did not have to pay any transport costs while they lived there. However, after moving to the slum rehabilitation facility, access to affordable and frequent travel options and conducive livelihood opportunities have been more complicated and expensive. Like many other women in the slum rehabilitation dwelling/ slum quarters, she is extremely time-poor because of domestic as well as work-related demands. To support her family, she works full-time

in a nearby garment company for a meagre Rs 6,000 (approximately 83 US dollars) a month. She spends approximately 1/6th (over Rs. 1000) of her monthly income on work-related transportation. If she were to take the state-run bus, her transport costs alone would increase to Rs. 1620 per month.

The road on which the slum rehabilitation dwelling is located is starved of state-run public transport options. “There may be one or two buses at unpredictable times on this road”, she tells me. “Who is going to wait around for these buses, we have so much on our hands already”. The women from the slum rehabilitation dwelling, as they rush to work as domestic help, cooks, garment factory laborers and house keepers have to negotiate various challenges including a lack of access to frequent and affordable public transport, the risk of sexual assault and also road safety. Women like Lakshmi are thus forced to walk long distances, rely on the “share auto” system (an “informal” auto rickshaw system run by the local men, which flouts road transport rules set by the government to provide comparatively subsidized transport options to commuters in the neighborhood), or use private outstation buses that on their way into the city bus stand pick up local passengers for a subsidized fee. Often private buses and walking come with heavy road safety and sexual assault risks.

On a busy, weekday morning I accompany Lakshmi to work. As instructed, I arrive at her home by 7.45 am. Her children and husband are away at a relative’s home, they have school holidays, and she is very efficiently running through her morning chores. She dots her face with some “snow” (face cream), while chatting with me. In the middle of it all she surprises me with a cup of hot tea. She is in an orange synthetic saree and her long hair is neatly braided.

Figures 52 and 53 (above): Setting out with Lakshmi

Figure 54: The BMTC bus going in the opposite direction

We set out at 8.00 am and as we exit the slum quarters, the 8.00 am BMTC bus passes us by. “It is going in the opposite direction, we have to go the other way to get to my factory” (see Figures 52, 53 and 54) she says, tugging at my wrist. We board a share-auto across the road

from the slum quarters. She makes a phone call to her friend, instructing her on our whereabouts. Lakshmi almost always travels with her co-workers. A few minutes later, her friend boards the share auto rickshaw. When we get to the bus stand on the main road, we board a private inter-state bus. In order to save money Lakshmi and her friends often take "civil" or private buses from the nearby hub to get to work because these buses charge a highly subsidized fare when compared to the BMTC's rates. While BMTC non-AC buses would cost Rs. 12 for the same distance, the private buses only charge Rs. 5. These buses are run by private companies to ferry people between states. However, since these buses are not closely monitored the drivers often take on "unauthorized" passengers for short distances within the city in order to make some extra money. They charge a much lower fare than BMTC buses and are very popular among people who cannot afford BMTC fares (see Figures 55, 56, 57, 58).

Figures 55 and 56 (above): In a share auto; Lakshmi's friend walking towards our auto rickshaw as we wait for her.

Figures 57 and 58 (above): Crossing the main road to get to the bus stop; Boarding the "civil" (privately run inter-state) bus

Figure 59: The inside of the inter-state bus, crowded and narrow, with velvet curtains

The inside of this particular private bus has cushioned seats, velvet curtains, a very narrow aisle, and two television sets at the front, which screen vernacular films for passengers undertaking long overnight interstate journeys (see Figure 59). They do not have gender-segregated seats and many women that I talked to conveyed that they felt unsafe on these buses because if there is an "incident" (of physical assault) there is no visible authority figure that they can approach for help or hold accountable.

This bus is painfully crowded and slow. A young, thin lad accompanying the driver swings out of the doorway whenever we pass by a cluster of people to announce the general direction in which the bus is going. "Market, Market, Market, Market, Market…" he shouts. When the bus stops for a red light at a traffic signal, a number of us alight in the middle of the road. The ladies are in a mad rush to get to work on time or there will be consequences. So, we run. Running through the tiny spaces between automobiles – many of them cars waiting for the

signal to turn green – we try to get to the islands that divide lanes from each other. A quick pause to check for oncoming traffic and then we jump the iron railing and dart across the next lane. This is a very broad four-lane road and Lakshmi struggles to jump over the metal bars in her saree. Once we are safely at the street leading to her factory, Lakshmi remarks that she hates crossing every morning. Once she even saw a man get hit by a speeding automobile after he jumped over the divider. "He died on the spot" she says (see Figures 60, 61, 62, 63, 64, 65, 66, 67, 68, 69).

Figures 60 and 61 (above): Four lane road; alighting from the bus at a traffic light

Figures 62 and 63 (above): crossing each lane by running between automobiles waiting at a red light

Figures 64 and 65 (above): Lakshmi struggles to cross the metal grill of the divider in her saree

Figures 66 and 67 (above): Looking for a break in the yellow metal divider to be able to get to the factory

Figures 68 and 69 (below): Crossing the barrier; walking a few yards to the factory

June 2017

It is a Sunday afternoon in June 2017. Lakshmi has not sent her children to school in the last two days. I am troubled to hear this since I know that she values education a great deal. Week after week she has asked for my help in tutoring her children, and on several occasions she has asked me to teach her sums and concepts from their school textbooks so that she can teach her

children when I am not around. “Why have they not been going to school?” I ask. “The teachers made my children sweep the school grounds because we have not paid the school fees yet” she replies, looking wounded. The school (run by a Christian NGO) had sustained itself through charitable donations from overseas. A sudden cessation of funding resulted in administration placing the burden of fee payment on the parents of the students. Lakshmi shows me a handwritten note sent by school authorities (see Figure 71). Payment for uniforms, books, shoes and fees, which were provided by the school earlier, have to now be undertaken by parents:

Figures 70 and 71: Sunday afternoon doing assignments with Lakshmi and her children; the handwritten note from school

“When the kids tried to explain that their father is just an auto driver, a teacher from the school management replied, I have auto drivers in my family and I know how much they are capable of earning in a month.” Lakshmi was upset by that kind of “rude” speech. She was deeply hurt by the humiliation that her children had to face. Her piles has been acting up and she had to quit her garments factory job because of the physical discomfort. She is still trying to find a suitable job, one that is not too humiliating but also does not impact her health negatively. With only one source of sporadic income (her husband), and the additional financial burden of school fee payment, Lakshmi tells me she is very distressed.

When she and her family lived in the city, men from low income households could get painting, plumbing, auto driving, and lots of other jobs. After they moved (willingly - Lakshmi is among those people who moved to this housing facility because the rent is cheap) to this neighborhood, the men are only able to find security guard, or coolie jobs.

Although there are several condominiums and other construction projects that are underway in the neighborhood, the contractors on those projects only employ contract workers. As result, all the opportunities go to people from Assam, and Bihar who have migrated to Bengaluru in search of employment and work on a contract basis mediated by middle men. The work opportunities therefore remain inaccessible to men from families like hers. “The contract workers try to prolong the duration of the contract, but they ask for less per day, so they make more money. But people like my husband ask for more money on a daily basis, but take less time to finish.” That is why they find it harder to get employment because the migrant workers give the appearance that their wage rate is lower.

When I ask Lakshmi what safety means to her, she replies:

> The iron door here is what represents safety for us. This area is not safe. We had a 2 wheeler [scooter]. It was my husband’s cousin’s vehicle. He had taken it when we came to this part of the city. It was under repair for a long time. Eventually my husband got it repaired and immediately after, it got stolen.” Similarly, with her husband’s auto rickshaw, the front tyre was stolen and a stone was left holding the auto rickshaw in place. “At 7.00 am it was still there, when they went at 8.00 am, it was gone. Now my husband parks the auto in the parking lot near Regal Mall because we know the owner of the parking space. My husband transports small goods for them some times.

> My children are very well behaved. They never leave the house. I don't let them step out to play with other kids because the other kids here are not okay. They are very rowdy. My son anyway does not step out even otherwise. He only stays in the house.

She proceeds to tell me that the ladies in the family across her house are very "vulgar". They speak disrespectfully in front of elders and even the men in their family the men in their family are still quite tame and docile compared to these women who are loud and vulgar. They say cheap things and they are loud.

"It is safe when people are okay. It is fine. Here the biggest problem are the gangs of boys. Four buildings support the gangs." Recently she got into a quarrel with some boys for speaking in a "vulgar" way about her husband. "Some of the girls here are also not alright". She continues "16, 17, 18 year old girls sit outside and they don't behave modestly, the way women should they sit inappropriately and are inviting trouble. "if we behave properly, then even gents will behave properly".

She thinks that "there are too many automobiles on the street, the traffic is scary and there are a lot of jams. It is not okay for ladies to be out too late, but there are many women in the quarters who come back late at night after having done housekeeping work in apartments."

She has studied till 9th and her husband till 7th. She was very good at studying. She and her husband believe that education is extremely important. Her daughter wants to be a doctor. She wants her children to be doctors and engineers. She was not able to make her dreams come true, but she hopes that her children will become successful. Her husband was not academically inclined, and as one out of nine children in his family, he did not take school seriously. He got

into rowdyism and the “wrong” sort of company. He is very particular that his children get the right sort of education.

She spends hours training her son. He seems to have fallen in performance over the last year. But her daughter is getting increasingly better. She believes that her son must work extra hard because there are more pressures on him as a boy.

Lakshmi’s family lived in a slum in the city before they found accommodation here as “unauthorized” tenants.

> There was no current [electricity] there. We lived without electricity for the entire five years that we lived there. There were high tension wires running very close to the settlement, so we could not be provided electricity by the government. The people there just took land, and therefore, there was no rent to pay. What that means is that families would just go there, and if they found a small piece of unused land, they would just grab it… occupy it. We managed by using kerosene lamps, solar, etc. It was a very hard life, and when we would visit relatives, my children would see the fans and television sets in their homes and make demands for those. Not having to pay a rent helped us to save money for the children.
>
> Here at least we have the privacy of our own house. In the old house there were no toilets or bathrooms. People had to relieve themselves outdoors. So I built a shed by the house both for bath purposes and one for toilet purposes. There was also no place to dispose off garbage. The BBMP van comes here to pick up the trash, but there people threw garbage all around.

The owners of this house live near Madivala, near the market. They run a small hotel in the market. For proximity and convenience related reasons, they live near the market. When they

were evicted, they decided it was not good for their business in the market if they moved so far away from the city. That is why they decided to let the house out for rent. Lakshmi is very satisfied with her landlords. They seem very understanding and are not at all demanding. “One time, the government officials came checking but I lied and told them that I was the owner’s sister’s daughter. Technically, we are living here illegally. Such tenancy is prohibited. Only the owners of the flats are allowed to live here.” She wants to stay in this house for as long as possible till her children settle. It is extremely important to her that her children study well and do well in life. She was not able to come up in life although she was an excellent student. But she wants her children to do exceedingly well for themselves.