Colonising the Slum: changing trajectories of state–market violence in Mumbai

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Significant continuities and critical shifts in the forms, intensity, sources and instruments of violence have taken place since the 1990s when a number of changes were brought about in land markets of Mumbai. This paper views the impact of these shifts and the violence/s embedded therein along the state–market axis. Intense, everyday violence enhances insecurity among residents, women and young girls, in particular, in highly complex ways. However, far from being passive victims of this violence/s they are engaged in highly creative struggles to confront the multi-institutional injustices experienced by them.

This paper chronicles the story of the slum in relation to the city of Mumbai. The story of slums represents the ups and downs in an ongoing struggle of the poor to assert their right to the city. It is a struggle characterised by violence in many forms: as development strategy by the state, as claim-making strategy by the poor and as both outcome and means of household coping, and all of these set in a context of larger structural violence that enhances the inequality among regions, the rural and the urban and among people. There are both significant continuities and critical shifts in the forms, intensity, sources and instruments of violence since the 1990s, when a number of changes were brought about in land markets in the city.

The article views the impact of these shifts and the violence embedded therein along the state–market axis. People in slums are engaged in the business of survival and consolidation of their lives in the city and often deploy violence as a strategy. Intense everyday violence enhances insecurity among residents, women and young girls, in particular, in highly complex ways. However, far from being passive victims of this violence they are engaged
in highly creative struggles to confront the multi-institutional injustices experienced by them.

The continuities and shifts in forms of violence are a subset of a more generic neo-liberal, communal and urban shift around the globe. Gandy (2006) understands the bio-political as ‘the gradual colonisation’ of ‘bare life’ by an increasingly elaborate skein of institutional structures and relationships which find their axiomatic expression in various forms of sovereign power. In this framework, the ‘slum’, initially constituted by people at the margins, would appear as a highly vulnerable and fragile space against the grain of the state and market which is treated as a ‘space of exception’ by the state – market alliance. In Mumbai, the ‘slum’ is now experienced as a deliberate strategy, a site of application of power by which the state generates opportunities for the real estate market in the name of ‘rehabilitation of the urban poor’ and creates formal-looking settlements with little consideration for conditions of life in them.

The site of this case study is Vashi Naka, a settlement or rather, a complex of several slum settlements along the hill slopes, located in the north-eastern suburb of M (East) ward. The settlement has been socio-spatially transformed through the advent of a freeway that connects the eastern suburbs to South Mumbai and a spate of resettlement projects linked to city infrastructure projects in the span of 10 years.

**Bio-power, bio-politics and the slum**

Foucault (2002: 137) uses the term biopower to describe an emergent form of power that was distinct from the sovereign power based on ‘the sovereign’s power to discipline based on anatomo-politics’. Biopower, on the other hand, is the ability to control and regulate subjects or the collective social body through optimisation of their productivity, that is, life itself.
Biopower takes, as its object, the ‘entire domain of human life’ working in a capillary, preventive mode with a multiplicity of aleatory and often unpredictable phenomena such as ‘problems of reproductive life,’ ‘problems of morbidity,’ ‘public hygiene’ and ‘old age’ (Rabinow and Nikolas 2006). It does not only work to discipline but also to create an overall equilibrium. It identifies ‘risk groups’ ‘abnormalities’ in order to prevent, contain and manage them. Thus, unlike sovereignty’s right (take life or let live), biopower aims to preserve a healthy society through multiple technologies of power.

Yet, biopower interplays with sovereignty as demonstrated by Agamben (1998). Agamben takes the Foucauldian power analysis which is seen to largely operate at the level of discourse to a material realm. He introduced the concept of ‘camp’ to describe spaces that open up when formal legal rights and protections are suspended and the state of exception as defined by the sovereign starts to become the rule. Camp is a space where, ultimately, life is exposed to conditions of death. While slums are not necessarily generated through a suspension of the rule of the sovereign and represent a form of agency by the poor; they are certainly “spaces of exception” where the rights of urban citizens are not seen to apply and the state denies the residents the agency to determine their well-being. The more conventional views of slum such as those propounded in Planet of Slums (Davis 2006) understand slums as problems of urban development that need to be tackled through a mix of short-term and long-term policies so that cities can first reduce existing slums and then ultimately be slum-free. They thus perpetuate the view that ultimately, slums do not belong in an urban landscape and create legitimacy for the state to intervene in these spaces at all times.

As Di Muzio (2008: 307) argues, “the true biopolitical model of modernity needs to be seen in these proliferating spaces where

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humanity is largely concentrated and its vitality threatened on a daily basis." Unlike the camp, where life is ultimately exposed to death, the contemporary state interventions in the slums in Mumbai are with a stated intent of “rehabilitation” that rescues people from the insecure tenure and inadequacies of slum life. The nature of these interventions is such that they embed direct and indirect violence/s by state–market agents and also enhance the everyday violence and insecurity in the lives of the inhabitants. There is thus a mix of coercion and co-option through which the tenuous claims of slum-dwellers to space in the city are being marginalised and the spaces themselves colonised.

Settlement in Vashi Naka

The story of the settlement in Vashi Naka began at the time when the Trombay Island was treated as a periphery where hazardous industries and uses could be located. Thus, the Burma Shell factory was set up here in the 1930s; a garbage dumping ground was set up at one end close to the marshy areas. Due to the hill that provided strategic security, a naval base was set up during the period of the World War II. It also became home to institutions (like the Bhabha Atomic Research Centre) and institutional populations (beggars’ home, women’s reception home, etc). Informal divisions of land and construction were initiated around the industries and in the gaothans².

The state has played a very active role in developing the M-ward as primarily a slum ward. The first Development Plan of the city, prepared in 1964, envisages the ward as a low human activity Ward, primarily to be used for locating hazardous industries and institutional populations for which large tracts of lands were acquired. The “fit” for institutional populations was extended to those considered “unfit” for habitation in the city. Thus, the then chief minister took a decision to clear several
pavement settlements in the city areas. Thus, houses of roughly 3,000 inhabitants from the island city were cleared and were given pitches in Janata Colony, an area that was close to the Trombay Hill, uninhabited and had a dense jungle. A similar drive in 1970 by the municipal corporation produced Shivaji Nagar, Lotus Colony and Baiganwadi, a huge resettlement colony that gave more planned layouts for the pitches. These resettlements were also followed by resettlement of the abattoir and the dumping ground to the ward. The shift of these people (primarily Muslims and Dalits), and activities to the Ward gave a foundational character to the Ward. It is these relocations which became the nuclei for further settlement in the areas. Interestingly, these relocations in the imagery of the state were merely a geographical shift of settlements from the inner city and thus have also been imagined as slums.

Vashi Naka is a settlement that grew along the hill slopes and the interstices of the industrial complex of high risk, polluting petrochemical and power industries in Chembur. This area, which was considered a “no residential zone” due to the presence of hazardous industries was transformed into a vibrant and expansive settlement by the 1980s through a continuous stream of Dalit migrants from different parts of Maharashtra.

In 1970, 580 households which were demolished in one part of the Ward were settled at the bottom of the hill and gradually, the settlement spread towards the higher parts of the hill. In the words of Srimati, an early resident, “there were only trees in the 1970s. We would go for a picnic with my school friends. But slowly people started settling and are still doing so on top of the hill.” Bijutai, another long-time resident, shifted to Vashi Naka when she got married as her aunt had a spare house. Ramatai came here from Marathwada in search of better prospects and got a rented house in Vashi Naka with help from a local bhai³ and

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some monetary help from her employers located in the nearby industry. The settlement expanded during the decade of the 1970s which saw successive years of drought in the state. Almost the entire Dalit population of Livdunk and Rakshi Bhavan villages from Beed district in Maharashtra shifted to Vashi Naka. People constructed houses of plastic and gunny bags. The settlement resembled a village with kith and kin forming the basis of neighbourhoods.

By 1980, Vashi Naka became a sprawling settlement with over 17 small slums that called themselves a nagar (layout). Each of these nagars represented a distinct mode of self-organisation and a process of identity creation. Some of them were named after geographical features (for example, Sahyadri Nagar was named after a mountain range in the state), personalities that were critical to the development of a Buddhist identity (Milind Nagar, Ashok Nagar, Rahul Nagar, Prabudha Nagar, Nagababa Nagar) or reflect the affiliation to a political leader or party (Indira Nagar, Kasturba Nagar). The original Dalit population gradually became more cosmopolitan with addition of migrants from Uttar Pradesh, Bihar and Karnataka. The settlements created vibrant life in the lands considered “unfit for residence” for the citizenry, embracing hazard and precarity and a constant threat of eviction by the state. As Neuwirth (2005) argues, these settlements thus represent a stake to life in the city that is governed by the principle of property.

The settlements organised themselves spatially, formed representative associations based on their localities such as resident associations and created structures such as Buddha Vihars which would enable them to interact and organise. The slum that thus began as a last option for people who were displaced from their rural roots became the beginning of a more urban mobilisation that took on several progressive tones
(literacy, anti-liquor, women empowerment) while retaining strong community values (often in conflict with these progressive ideas). The relationship with the state was mediated through karyakartas (activists) who in turn connected with formal political representatives to respond to needs of basic amenities.

The level of services was inadequate and unequal. Thus, settlements towards the top of the hill were generally those who were least served and poor. There was no motorable road and the path became narrow and difficult to navigate as one moved up the hill. The settlements towards the top had no electricity. Water was available for only two hours through public taps, provided by the municipality to an overhead tank system managed by a local association. Toilets were public and very few in relation to the population. The nearest schools were towards the main roads and children thus had to move down the hill to access the same. A municipal health centre was created in 1988, again near the main road. Overall, life was not easy but represented an ongoing struggle at the individual, collective levels to improve and to consolidate stakes in the city. Multiple local initiatives, festivals (traditional and new) and a vibrant community life were essential characteristics of life in Vashi Naka. It is this process that Simone (2003: 498) alludes to where people become co-producers of life in a city by “engaging complex combinations of objects, spaces, persons and practices.”

A 2011 survey (TISS 2014) of settlements in the Ward enumerated 12,204 households in Vashi Naka. Most of these are Dalits drawn from various parts of Maharashtra. More than half the households had stayed in the same locality for more than 50 years with most staying in the same house as well. A bulk (more than 50%) of the housing was pucca with household electricity metres and water taps. A striking development is that most children are enrolled in schools with over a quarter of the young

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population engaged in higher education. Yet, more than 60% of the earners are engaged in unskilled and casual employment. These facets of the settlement reveal both what the communities have been able to achieve and their vulnerabilities. Most of their gains were circumscribed by what can be understood through the lens of “politics of the governed” (Chatterjee 2004) which is based on humanistic claims but there is also a substantive and widening attempt to be part of “rights based claims.”

**Slums and policy: trajectory of change**

Slums first emerged in Mumbai just before independence but “unauthorised and insanitary hutments put up by the vagrant and the homeless” constituted only 1% of the 15 to 18% of the city’s population staying in slums (Bombay Municipal Corporation 1964). The rest were households living in obsolete or unsafe buildings or housing that had deteriorated. Over a period of time, the term “slum” in Mumbai became equated with squatter colonies alone. As Indorewala and Wagh (2016: 30) point out, by the time the first Slum Census was conducted in the city in 1976, “the slum was no longer a settlement condition to be addressed by municipal intervention—instead it was the mode of building, the type of dwelling and even the status of the dweller, that made dwellings unacceptable.” The 1976 Census enumerated 1,680 slum pockets, with 6,30,003 hutments and a population of 28,31,385 dwellers (Indorewala and Wagh 2016). The slum Census thus represented a turning point in the discourse over informal settlements.

All the households enumerated in 1976 were given photo-passes. These photo-passes entitled them to basic services and an alternate accommodation, in case of eviction. The Census also introduced the principle of “cut-off date” which excluded all households who came after 1976 from protection and alternate
accommodation. The cut-off date has been extended to 1985, then 1995 and subsequently, 2001.

By 1980, slums had become a seemingly intractable problem for policymakers and the market in the city of Mumbai. The policy of slum improvement that was initiated in 1976 meant that slums became tolerated structures and struggles of slum dwellers were becoming critical. The landlords who had perpetrated slums as a temporary solution to the threat of the Urban Land (Ceiling and Regulation) Act (Narayanan 2003) found it difficult to dispense with them due to the legal protection. The World Bank proposed the solution of slum upgradation (Panwalkar 1995) under which slum-dwellers would be organised into cooperative societies and given an official lease of occupied land which was found to be threatening as it would take the 8% land under slums permanently out of the land market. In 1991, the solution which was found to tackle this issue was that of the Slum Rehabilitation Scheme (henceforth the SRS) settle the horizontal slum into vertical buildings, release the remaining land (with additional incentive in the form of a development right or additional floor area ratio) into the market and thereby cross-subsidise the price of construction. The scheme gives every eligible slum-dwelling household a 225 sq feet house (now the entitlement has been increased to a 269 sq feet house) free of cost. Of a demarcated slum community, 70% has to give its consent to the proposal initiated by a developer which is then approved by the Slum Rehabilitation Authority (SRA). The developer is awarded an incentive floor space index (FSI) or transfer of development rights (TDR), dependent on location and land available to enable a profit that is enough to cover all rehabilitation housing costs and the payment of a premium to the state.

The ownership of the free tenement given to eligible slum-dwellers is transferred to them after 10 years. Eligibility covers all
slum-dwelling households that were in Mumbai prior to 2001 and in continued occupation of houses since then. The M (East) Ward was a peripheral ward in the city with some of the lowest land values when the SRS was introduced. It also had very large slums with over 70% of its population staying in slums, according to the 2001 Census. As a result, very few SRSs took off in the Ward. Till 2000, only three schemes were proposed in the Ward and only one of them was under implementation. Low land values meant that the progress of these schemes was highly protracted. All of this changed with the advent of the new millennium. This was a period that represented the launch of several infrastructure projects for a makeover of Mumbai (Bombay First 2003) As Banerjee-Guha (2009) points out, these infrastructure projects themselves were a part of a neo-liberal turn in Indian cities accompanied by several other changes such as close of manufacturing units, public–private partnerships, corporate participation in governance and a spatial restructuring. Infrastructure projects naturally imply displacement, considered to be a difficult proposition in Mumbai due to its spatial boundedness and hence the shortage of land in the city. The resettlement programme under Mumbai Urban Transport Project (MUTP) and Mumbai Urban Infrastructure Project (MUIP) utilised the SRS model for resettlement.

There are a few but critical differences between the SRS in operation in the rest of the city and its application to relocation under MUTP and MUIP. The authority for implementation is the Mumbai Metropolitan Region Development Authority (MMRDA) which created a special cell for the same. There was no question of consent of slum-dwellers, though there was an elaborate process of surveying, dissemination of information and prior organisation, in some cases, especially as part of the MUTP. These processes were mediated by selected non-governmental
organisations (NGOs). The plan was to create townships which would have several social amenities such as schools, markets, health centres, and play grounds. Over 13 resettlement colonies were constructed in the M(East) Ward for rehabilitation of households affected by infrastructure projects in the city. The resettlement programme, which ordinarily would have meant state investment of resources and land, was instead financed using incentive FSI in combination with TDR as a financial instrument. Thus, land on which these resettlement colonies were based was acquired using spatial incentives, the construction of apartment housing as rehabilitation tenements and the cost of actual shifting were all met, using a combination of these instruments. In case of lands that were already “encumbered,” SRS was implemented by developers in advance of the relocation programme. Most of the high land-value western suburbs in Mumbai are located towards the north of the M(East) Ward—a condition for applicability of TDR and thus, generation of TDR in such rehabilitation projects in M Ward and its use in the western suburbs found many takers. Nainan (2008) reports that over 64% of the slum TDR generated in the period between 1991 and 2005 was generated from M (East) Ward. Conversely, very little of this FSI has actually been used within the Ward. What is even more interesting is that the state became an entrepreneur that generated FSI and thus a party to the real estate market.

**Dramatic changes**

The impact of the resettlement programme on the slum dynamic in the ward has been dramatic. It has been able to penetrate the thick non-property market in slums and generated a renewed interest in SRA schemes in the ward. Currently, there are over 120 SRA projects proposed in the Ward, albeit along the major roads in the Ward. There has been a tremendous appreciation of prices
of slum housing in the Ward. However, the real impact of this tying of slums to the formal real estate market is seen in many other realms.

The term slum implies multiple things in Mumbai. Conditions of life in these settlements range from settlements whose residents do not see it as a “slum” anymore to areas which are struggling to get the status of a “recognised” slum. The application of the term by the state, including notions of legal and illegal, is seen as highly arbitrary while for the inhabitants who create this settlement, slum is an inevitable stage in their settlement process in a difficult terrain of the city, one that is associated with high levels of vulnerability and lack of basic services and one that they aspire to conquer. At a functional level, the state, market, communities are all intertwined in a system that creates settlements, services through a range of intermediaries. They produce a differentiated and diverse geography of settlements under the broad rubric of the term “slum” (Bhide 2015).

The Vashi Naka area has been completely transformed under the cumulative impact of infrastructure projects, SRS and resettlement buildings. The organic continuity of the settlement on all sides of the hill has been disturbed by its division by the construction of the Eastern freeway which connects the north-eastern part of the city to the southern city core. These infrastructure developments that have connected the city to its satellite city and made travel faster; have disconnected the varied parts of Vashi Naka, split it into two and restricted its connectivity to other parts of the Ward. There are very few, marginal kaccha housing structures left on the hill; 83 buildings of four to seven stories have replaced most of the former housing. These buildings house not just the erstwhile inhabitants of the settlements and PAPS (project affected persons) of the MUTP and MUJP projects in the city.
The names of nagars have given way to names that take after the developers or government authorities—Kukreja Compound, MMRDA Colony, Maharashtra Housing and Development Authority (MHADA) Complex, RNA Park, Rockline, and so on. Schools, Buddha vihars, exercise centres are owned and operated by political entrepreneurs; some of these have become vertical too. Open spaces have disappeared; public toilets, taps have disappeared; parking lots have appeared in their place.

**Exclusion, precarity and everyday violence**

The state, while undertaking the project of resettlement called it the “township model.” This was expected to not just “resettle project affected households and compensate them for the loss of their hutments but to rehabilitate them” (Bhide and Dabir 2008). Several NGOs joined this effort of the state to enable a new citizenship and secure housing to the slum-dwellers (Burra 2005), an act that was seen to advance the cause of deepening democracy (Appadurai 2002). What followed was a process where proving one’s eligibility to be part of the resettlement programme became necessary to avoid an active threat of displacement. New buildings were being built for the project affected people from other parts of the city; buildings were also built to clear erstwhile slums and to make space for the PAP buildings. There was a new urgency about this construction process, so varied tactics were used to “manufacture consent” among existing dwellers. A new governmentality was unleashed, where inhabitants were reduced from citizens to “beneficiaries” and where benefits were conduited through new intermediaries like the NGOs and developers. The karya- kartas who earlier helped them to access the elected representatives and the state now became agents of developers. Women are also part of the “gangs” hired to coerce...
households into signing consent forms for redevelopment. The entire process can be seen to be a mix of coercion and persuasion with an ever present threat of violence.

The population in the area has more than doubled with the PAPs being added to the original inhabitants. The life in the buildings gives an impression of “improvement” but a closer examination reveals that the changes are far more complex. The distance from the main markets and the limited connectivity of Vashi Naka poses a real barrier to any restoration of livelihoods of those who are resettled and has thus resulted in a large number of unemployed youth. There are also very few opportunities for home-based work. Limited earning in addition to the increased burden placed by costs of maintenance has meant that several households have opted to shift out and have rented out the tenements allocated to them (Bhide and Dabir 2008). A shadow rental market has emerged in the rehabilitated buildings of Vashi Naka. The state has restricted the sale of tenements in the open market for 10 years.

Several other modes of bypassing these restrictions and generating quasi-legal documentary evidence have proliferated with tenants having to shift house every 11 months. Allocation of tenements based on projects has meant that the buildings have people from multiple places and the sense of neighbourhood is completely lost. The conversion to property has also meant fragmentation of large families which occupied the expandable houses in slums. In several cases, only part structures were considered eligible for compensation and resulting in a much smaller living space for large families. This has created new conflicts and displacements of sections of families.

The condition of several buildings is pathetic with poor maintenance and leakages. The dense layout of the area has meant that open spaces have virtually disappeared.
buildings is less than 5 sq m. Sewage water flows between these spaces; they are also sites for accumulating garbage heaps. Residents pointed out that even when they first moved in, they faced inadequate and dirty water supply, lack of street lights and poor condition of buildings. The inadequacy of schools and health facilities is taking a toll on household expenditures.

The impact of the spatial transformation is not limited to the material realm but extends to the socio–politico–cultural realm. The relationship with the state has taken a more complex turn as well. Slums were previously seen as settlements of the poor that need to be tolerated and treated with a humane approach; service provision was a part of this orientation. Services were directly provided by the state and ranged from basic amenities to subsidised food, day care and nutrition centres, health centres, etc. The introduction of the SRS has meant that slums are today seen only as a housing problem, the other dimensions of services are either neglected (such as solid waste management in rehabilitation buildings), made more difficult (denial of water to post-1995 slums) or accountability shifted to intermediaries (toilets and solid waste to NGOs and community-based organisations or CBOs). This has enhanced the challenges of everyday life for slum-dwellers and those who have been shifted to rehabilitation buildings.

The assumption that inhabitants of slums can be smoothly shifted to a model of self-management of assets, that is, the buildings through formation of cooperative housing societies has proved to be problematic. On the one hand, the office-bearers of the society find it difficult to mobilise adequate amounts for maintenance and often get into an antagonistic relationship with the residents while on the other they are unable to get the promised services and amenities from the state. The so-called citizenship that was seen as the outcome of the
resettlement exercise is one that has changed its contours. It links the conferment of property rights to the payment for services, including water, electricity, regular maintenance and repairs of buildings, property tax and non-payment to withdrawal of the same. The municipal corporation and the MMRDA are locked in a struggle to decide responsibility for particular services and in the meantime, life in the buildings continues without adequate water supply, sewage, drainage and often, without operative lifts.

New marginalities have emerged. In Vashi Naka, the massive transformation of built environment has seen an expansion of settlement on the hilltop while the hill itself has undergone tunnelling, tall buildings on either side making it vulnerable to landslides. A landslide in 2014 flattened seven huts on the hill and resulted in the death of a young child sleeping in one of the huts. All these huts belonged to households considered ineligible for rehabilitation. The death of the child itself became a trigger for a re-examination of eligibility of those who stayed on the hill but did not cause any real change in the situation. Quite a few households continue to exist at this extremely high level of precarity and risk. They continue to exist in the hope of resettlement and are engaged in a constant process of generating proofs of eligibility for rehabilitation at great costs, working through a range of intermediaries and juggling their livelihoods with these negotiating processes.

The narrative of redevelopment intersects with that of masculinity to produce spaces that reify the presence of men while creating barriers for women in their everyday life. Vashi Naka was earlier a settlement along two slopes of a hill; it was settled as a series of villages with a spatial organisation in which movement was free and interspersed with several spaces that could be regarded as community spaces. Its geographical contiguity has been completely transformed by dividing it
into two parts—the part with resettlement and rehabilitation (R&R) colonies and the part not transformed with scattered SRA buildings. The spatial organisation of the erstwhile slum communities was one which was highly permeable and one could move from one lane to another with ease. Most lanes had houses on either side and thus, there was a presence of constant eyes on the street. Further, the community itself was largely composed of familiar and connected people.

Public spaces thus were also fairly secure due to the presence of the known and the familiar. The densification has brought in a lot of strangers into the area. Several unemployed youth hang around; the earlier sensibility of community has also changed. This also breeds confidence that acts of masculine bravado often go unpunished. The changed spatial organisation generates spaces that then become indefensible and hence insecure. Young girls and women often face harassment or are at an active risk of the same.

Several young girls reported an accentuated experience of harassment while pursuing their daily activities. A group discussion with young girls revealed the following features of the changes and the spaces that they found unsafe:

1) In the vicinity of gymnasiums: Gymnasiums have emerged as a new feature of the area. Several of these gymnasiums, which are frequented by males, are in the vicinity of schools and give an opportunity for youth to harass girls passing by.

2) Near rickshaw stand and taparis (small tea stalls on the road where men gather to talk about different issues) where unknown people gather: Vashi Naka has been highly densified in the last 10 years while public transport services have not been expanded proportionately. This has meant a rapid rise in rickshaws—a form of para-transit. Rickshaws have also become the mode of livelihood for the resettled population. The spots where rickshaw operators...
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have created their waiting spaces are also spots for small tea shops, paan vendors and thus, the new male gathering spots.

3) Near the parking areas, the new spatial organisation of Vashi Naka has generated several spaces that are defunct in terms of use and governance. Their designations such as parking areas are misnomers as they are largely unused places with little population movement and are seen as a source of active threat by women.

4) Near the basements/entrances of the rehabilitation buildings are spaces where bikes are parked by politically connected youth; they are also spaces where they place tables, play cards and even consume liquor at times.

5) The vicinity of the liquor bar located at the point of crossing over of a pedestrian bridge that connects the two divided parts of Vashi Naka creates insecurity and fear for women who are compelled to cross the bridge which is the only access for them to the other side which has schools, a market, etc.

All of these narratives are illustrative of the manner in which the erstwhile life in Vashi Naka has transformed and how exclusion, precarity and violence are now part of the everyday. These processes operate at multiple scales and have taken multiple and complex forms. On the one hand is the lack of options given by the state–market alliance represented by the SRS and the browbeating of the Vashi Naka inhabitants. The use of sovereignty accompanied by the implied threat of violence by the agents of the market and certain incentives of a better future are evident in this process. Everyday life has also become more uncertain, prone to conflicts and violence. While the actors in the expression of conflicts and violence seem to be the poor themselves; it is clear that this is because new intermediaries and processes have replaced the state and allowed it to escape the direct accountability and outcomes of its own actions.

Conversely, the new scenario is also producing newer modes of resistance. The societies in Vashi Naka area have joined together
to form a federation, which now attempts to engage the state in a new-found discourse of rights, based upon promises and agreements made prior to relocation. While the varied state (MMRDA, Municipal Corporation of Greater Mumbai (MCGM)) and non-state (developers, NGOs) institutions involved in the exercise are engaged in shifting responsibilities and accountabilities to each other for issues in the post-rehabilitation phase; it has created several difficulties for the MMRDA which finds itself unable to withdraw from the task of rehabilitation which was viewed as a one-time task. Women too have engaged in mapping of sites of violence, and have begun to access the police and exhort them to better planning of location of police stations, and patrolling routes. The involvement of the state in Vashi Naka has thus become more complex.

**Conclusions**

The proportion of Mumbai’s population that currently stays in slums is over 49%. This has meant that several slums of the city are not new migrant settlements but second and even third generation slums whose dynamics have considerably changed. Their relationship to the city has also transformed, as expressed both in changing politics and policy around slums and in terms of the mobilisations, aspirations and conditions of living in these settlements. We believe that the evolution of slums, the trajectory of policies that are deployed to deal with them and the ensuing experience of living in these settlements is highly diverse and hence, there is a need to contextualise these changes to broader politics of appropriation and exclusion particular to cities and the patterns of control by the state and access to city space. This story thus represents an ongoing struggle between the poor and excluded sections to expand claims using legal, extra-legal and sometimes illegal means and the state which seeks to
penetrate and expand its realm and control over these settlements that are illegible, partially visible and governed. The advent of property relations into this territory thus almost represents a process of colonisation, by a state that embeds market logic, operations and interests within itself. Its strategies appear inclusive at face value while its actual outcomes for the poor are violent and structurally invasive. The study of violence compels an examination of the relationship between the slum and the city. It begins to ask questions about the nature of the state, its relationship to populations at the margins, the modes of generating sovereignty and establishing power and instruments of the same such as law, planning, rights, entitlements and projects of inclusion/exclusion.

The ways in which the city is being socially and spatially transformed is critical to this study. These transformations have occurred at several different scales and the examination at the Ward level gives us an important entry point that introduces a distinct meso level scale in understanding these transformations. Large infrastructure projects like the freeway have altered the geography of the region. In many places the freeway has cut through communities, displacing many settlements, and creating a physical boundary. In addition to the freeway, the processes of redevelopment and resettlement, as discussed earlier, have also altered the landscape of the Ward. Another important transformation at the city level is the increasing formalisation of the labour force. Thus, while initially labour was required to fuel the many industries of the city, including its cotton mills and docks, most of the labour force now living in informal settlements provides goods and services within these settlements.

Slum settlements are no longer just labour camps but also production houses of the city. However, in a Ward like M (East) wherein the presence of industry has been minimal, livelihood opportunities have always been marginal; now they have become
Colonising the Slum: changing trajectories of state–market violence in Mumbai

precarious. The economic geography of the Ward as a periphery of the city has been scripted several times over and the emergence of the Ward as a home for households impacted by infrastructure projects is a rewriting of the same.

In all these city-scale developments, it seems that the state has tilted towards the market, especially the real estate market. It has moved to create new opportunities for the same and has imbibed several aspects of a market-like thinking into its own functioning. There is also significant withdrawal from the arena of basic services where new actors are being brought in as service providers. This significant tilt towards the market is in continuity with trends in the past where under a broad umbrella of intervening in the market for the benefit of the poor, the state actually neglected to provide for the poor and instead benefits were usurped by people close to power. While the role of the state and the market in transforming the city is often discussed, little attention has been paid to the transformation of these spaces by people themselves, in particular, through the auto-construction and occupation of previously uninhabitable and highly precarious land such as hill slopes, marshes, adjoining railway lines, pavements, etc.

Slums in M Ward initially emerged out of such a process. The tilt towards a real estate economy in slums has meant that the narrative of settlement has become increasingly more complex, controlled by a loose collusion between state and non-state actors using politics as their lubricant. Marginalised communities are utilised as pawns in the settlement process and are compelled to be part of it as there are no alternatives.

Redevelopment is not a single policy; it represents a regime—a collusion of actors and actions that produce particular kinds of dynamics. This regime is violent by its very nature and as seen in the study produces violent outcomes at multiple scales—at city

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level (peripheralisation, labelling of ward, changes in electoral geography that perpetuate this possibility of control and exclusion), settlement level (creation of differentiated terrain of services, providers, (in) securities and increased levels of control and surveillance by organised state–market forces) and at the level of people (struggles in everyday life, precarity and uncertainty as a characteristic of all spheres of life).

The slum of yesteryears was a settlement that gave some credence to community and self-organisation around the neighbourhood; it was a settlement that established its existence against the grain of the state and market in some ways. The contemporary slum has been established as a creation of state–market forces outside the realm of the formal state and interventions in it are shaped by the logic of the real estate market. Its ultimate production is that of a built environment like Vashi Naka where it has been given a facade of formality but disguises and enhances insecurities of the household and public realm. Further, state–market make inroads to such an extent that more than two-thirds of the land in the slum is given away for projects or for commercial use. This is akin to the logic of colonisation experienced in Bombay during the British rule. In that case, the colonial land regimes were extended and established over indigenous occupancies and claims by recognising and consolidating the rights of a few (those aligned to the colonial project such as Parsis for example). The colonisation of the slum in contemporary Mumbai uses the incentive of a free house that enables the state and market to convert the multiplicity of occupations and claims in the slums to that of ownership of a single tenement.

The violence unleashed by this colonisation of mind and body is multifaceted and represents the true “biopolitics” of the contemporary sovereign. Yet, it is the bodies themselves that also become the source and site of emergent resistance.
Notes:
The British laws attached several destitute groups with criminality and adopted a mode of confining these groups into institutions for their reformation.

Gaothans are residential lands of a village. As agricultural lands were acquired for urbanisation, these lands were left untouched; the city grew around them.

A bhai is part of a local land mafia who play an important role in developing the slum, disciplining the process and also offering protection in an insecure environment by building networks with external agencies. The “fee” for such protection was a matter of personal attribute could range from none to material and monetary exchanges and sometimes sexual favours.

References: