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I, Nishant Vishwa , hereby submit this original work as part of the requirements for the degree of Master of Science in Architecture in Architecture.

It is entitled:

Architecture of the Kinetic City

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ARCHITECTURE OF THE KINETIC CITY :

A case study of the heterogeneous space at Netaji Subhash Junction, Delhi, India

A thesis submitted to the Graduate School of the
University of Cincinnati
in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of

Master of Science in Architecture

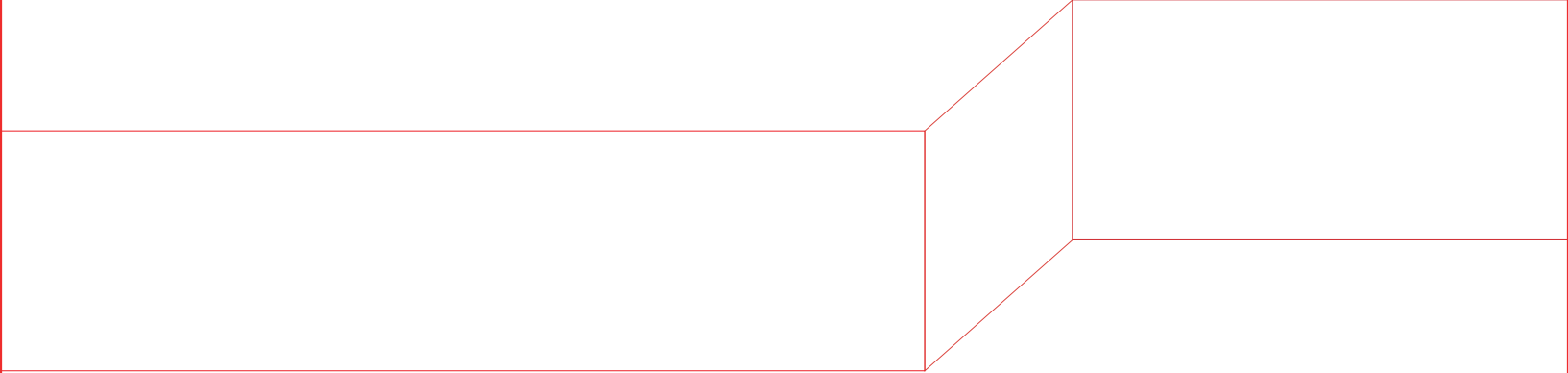
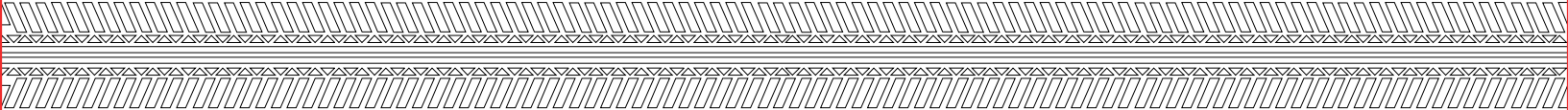
in the School of Architecture and Interior Design
of the
College of Design, Architecture, Art and Planning

by

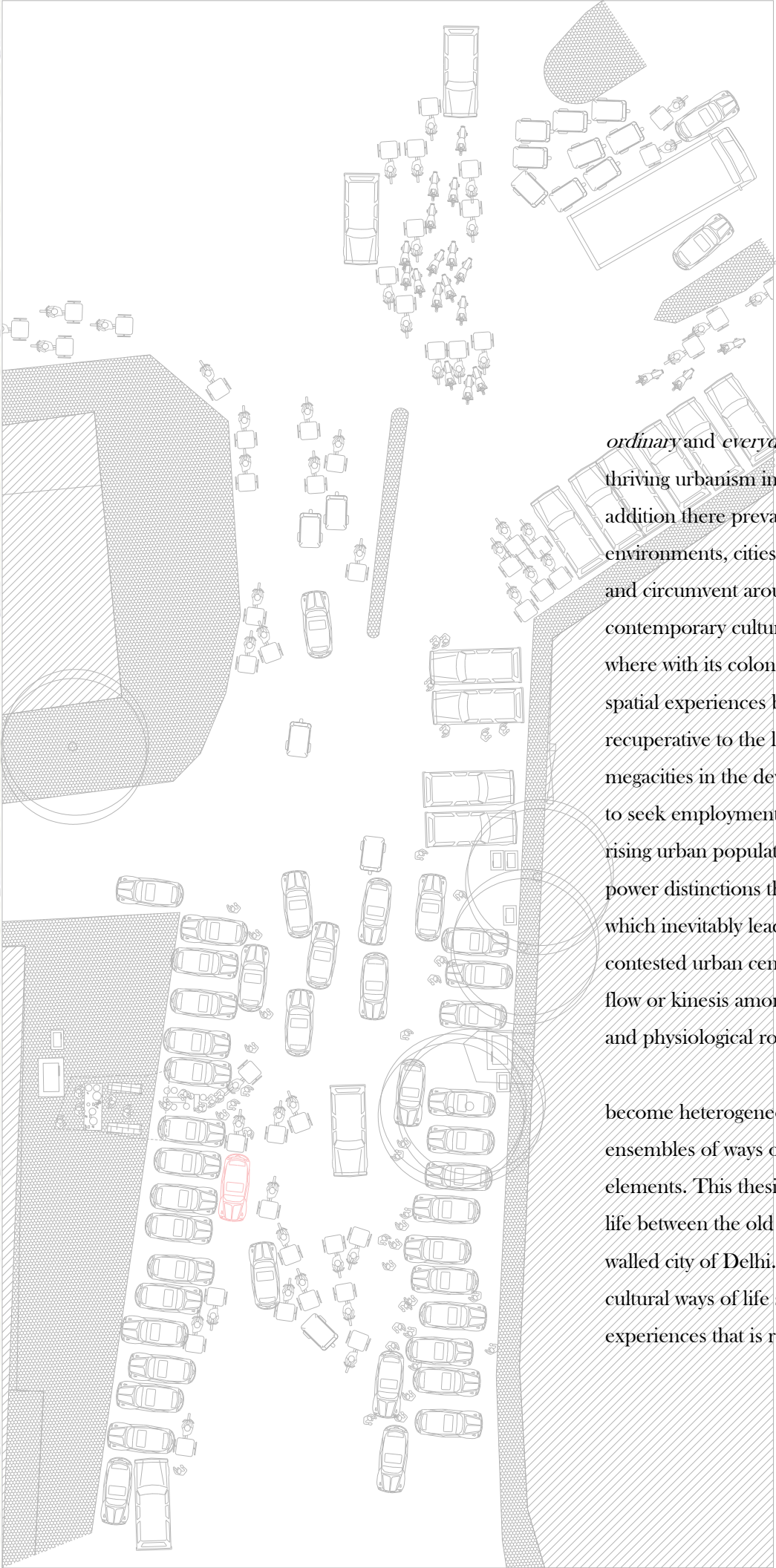
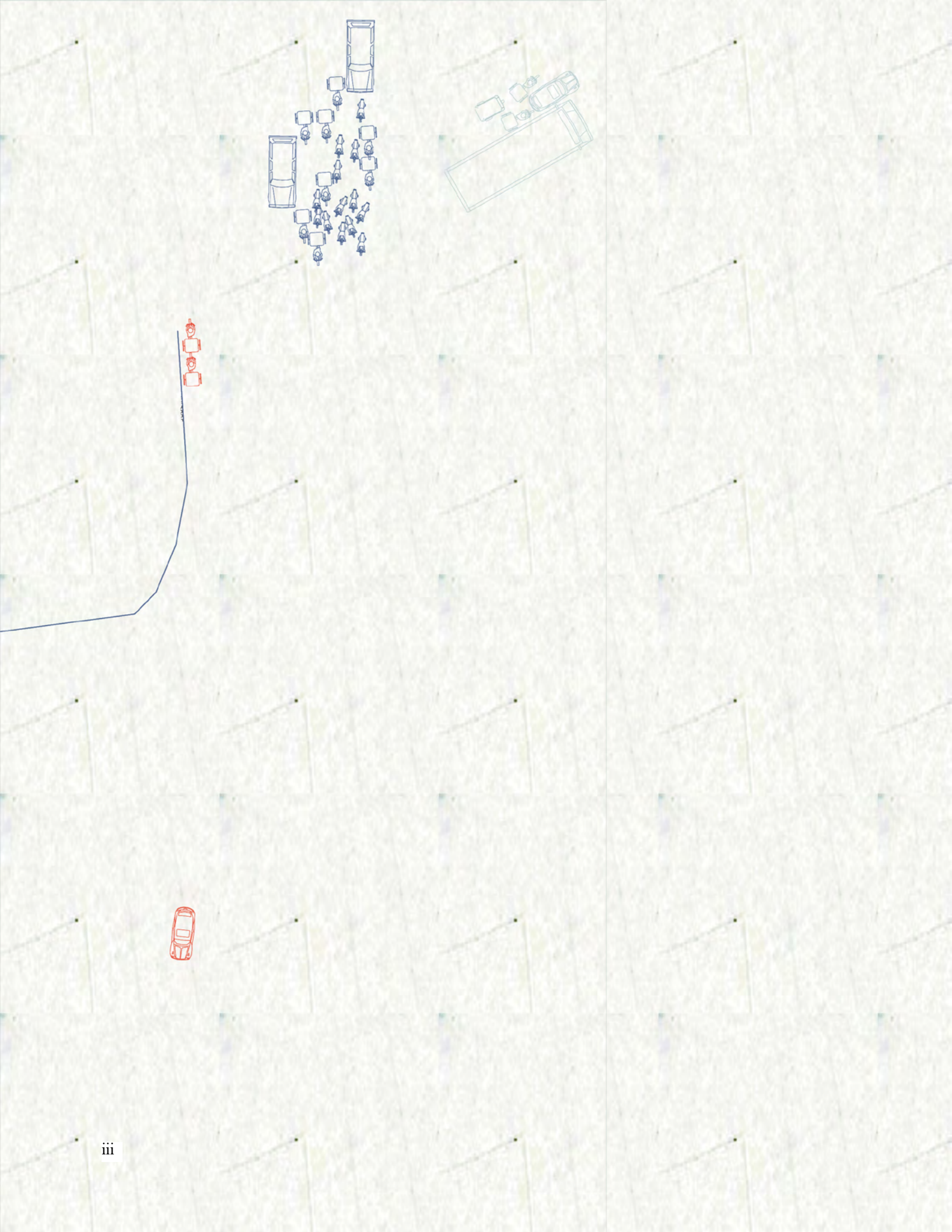
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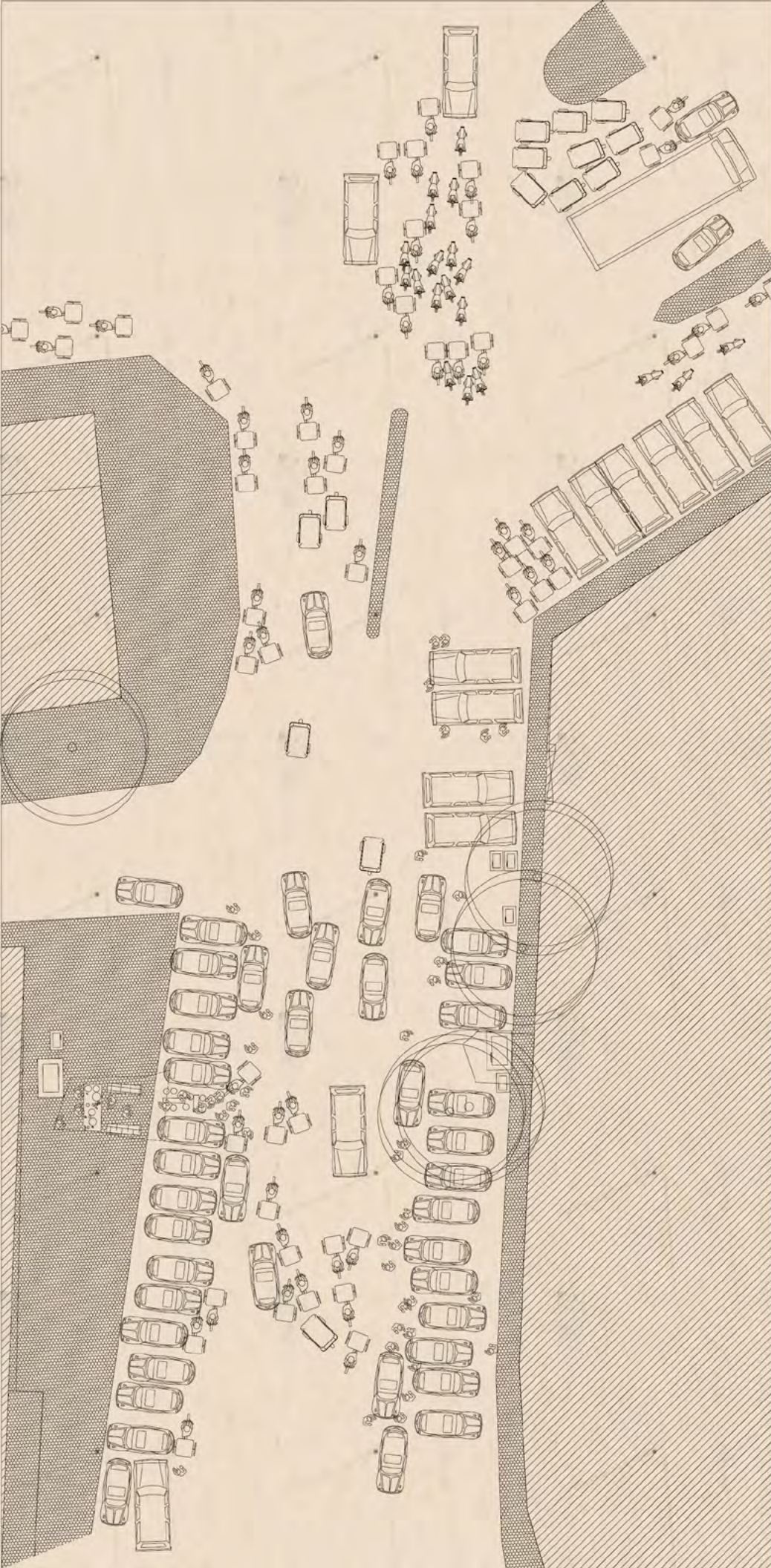
ARCHITECTURE OF THE KINETIC CITY :
A case study of the heterogeneous space at Netaji Subhash Junction, Delhi, India



ABSTRACT

Alternatives such as the *ordinary* and *everyday* have become an integral ingredient of thriving urbanism in megacities all around the world. In addition there prevails the involution of these pluralistic built environments, cities and new developments, that juxtapose and circumvent around historic cores where indigenous and contemporary cultures intersect. Delhi is one such place where with its colonial connotations the everyday lived life and spatial experiences become complex, integrative and recuperative to the lives of many urban dwellers. Like in many megacities in the developing world, people migrating to Delhi to seek employment and better life are among the causes of rising urban population. Concurrent social relations engender power distinctions that differentiate people along class lines which inevitably leads to contestation of space. In this socially contested urban center. There exists a conjunctive motion, flow or kinesis among different layers of histories, cultures, and physiological routines during the pursuit of everyday life.

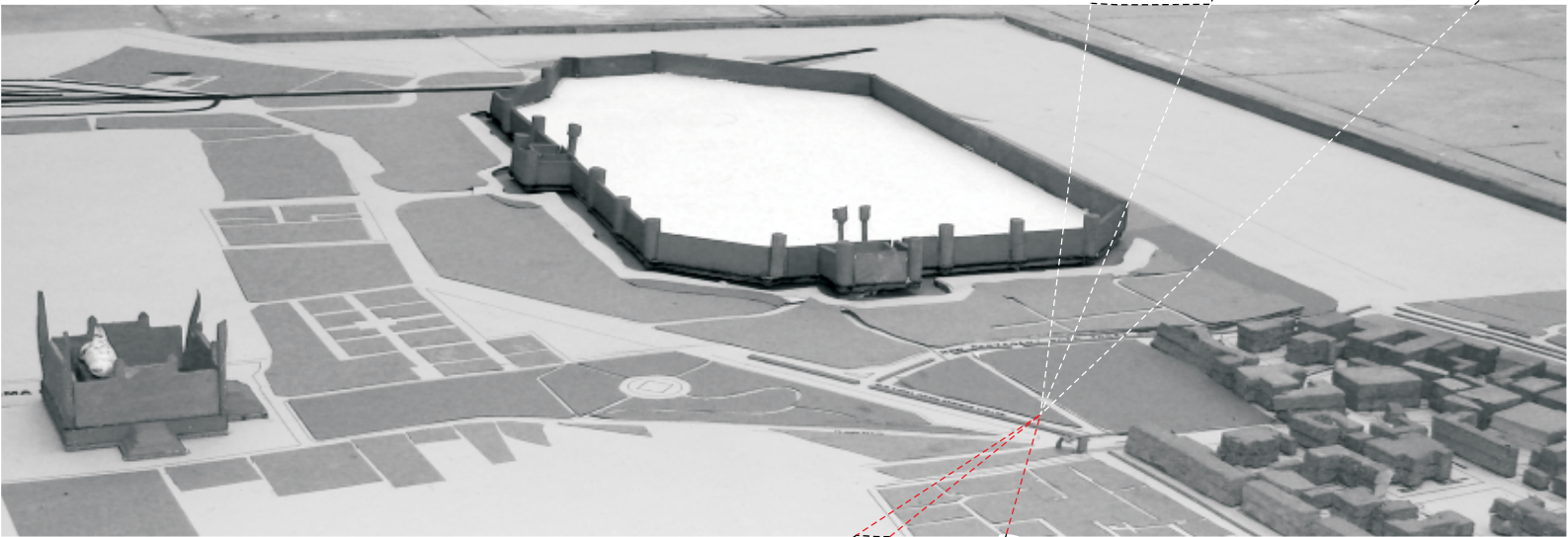
In this case streets and traffic junctions become heterogeneous public spaces that host syncretic ensembles of ways of life between preexisting and new urban elements. This thesis is a critical study of the syncretic ways of life between the old and new at a major street junction in walled city of Delhi. It observes how temporal, spatial and cultural ways of life simultaneously facilitate new urban experiences that is referred to in this study as the Kinetic City.



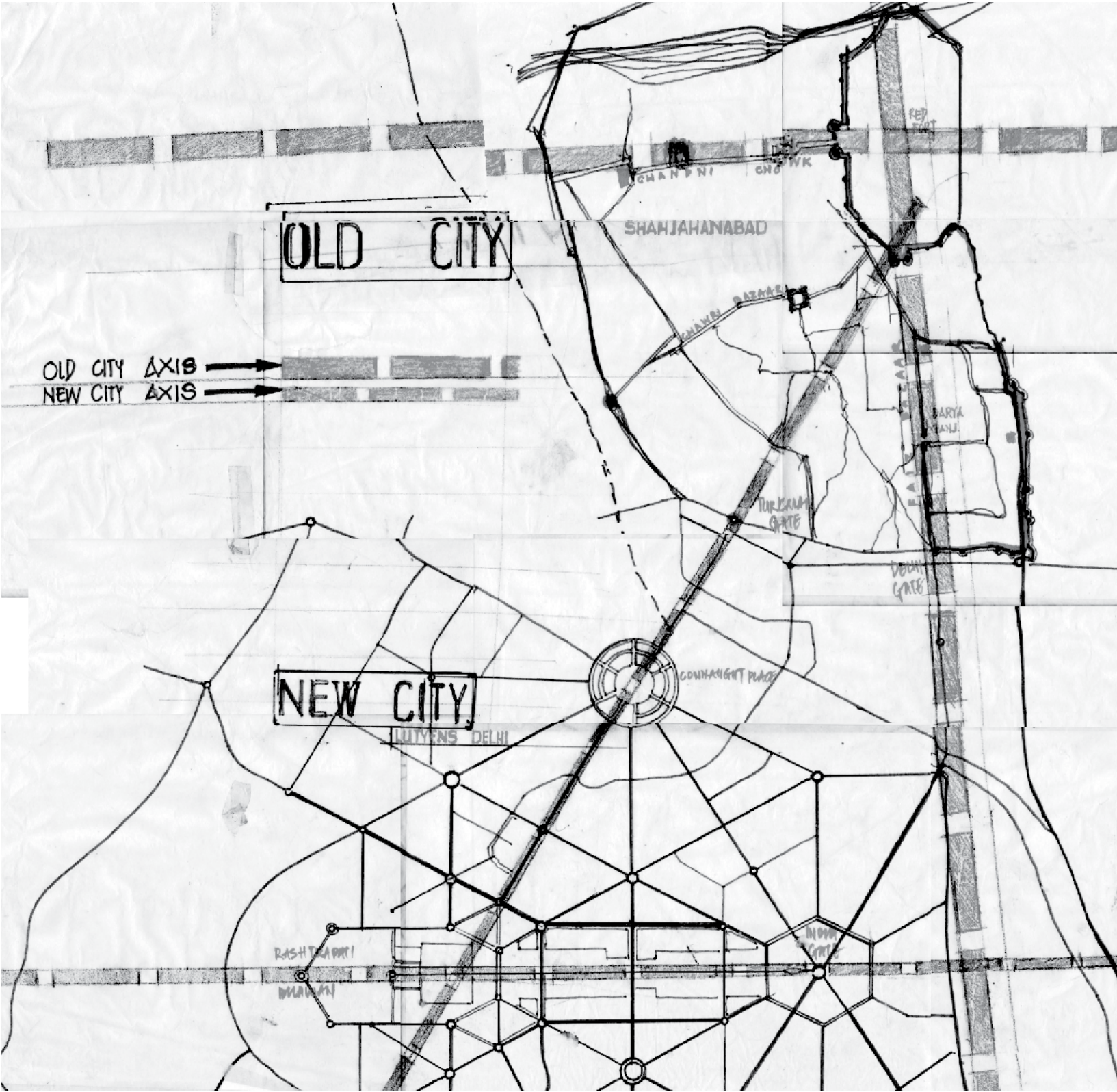
ABSTRACT THE CITY

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site model- NETAJI SUBHASH JUNCTION, the author.
left: Jama Masjid center: Red Fort
right: Daryaganj Area



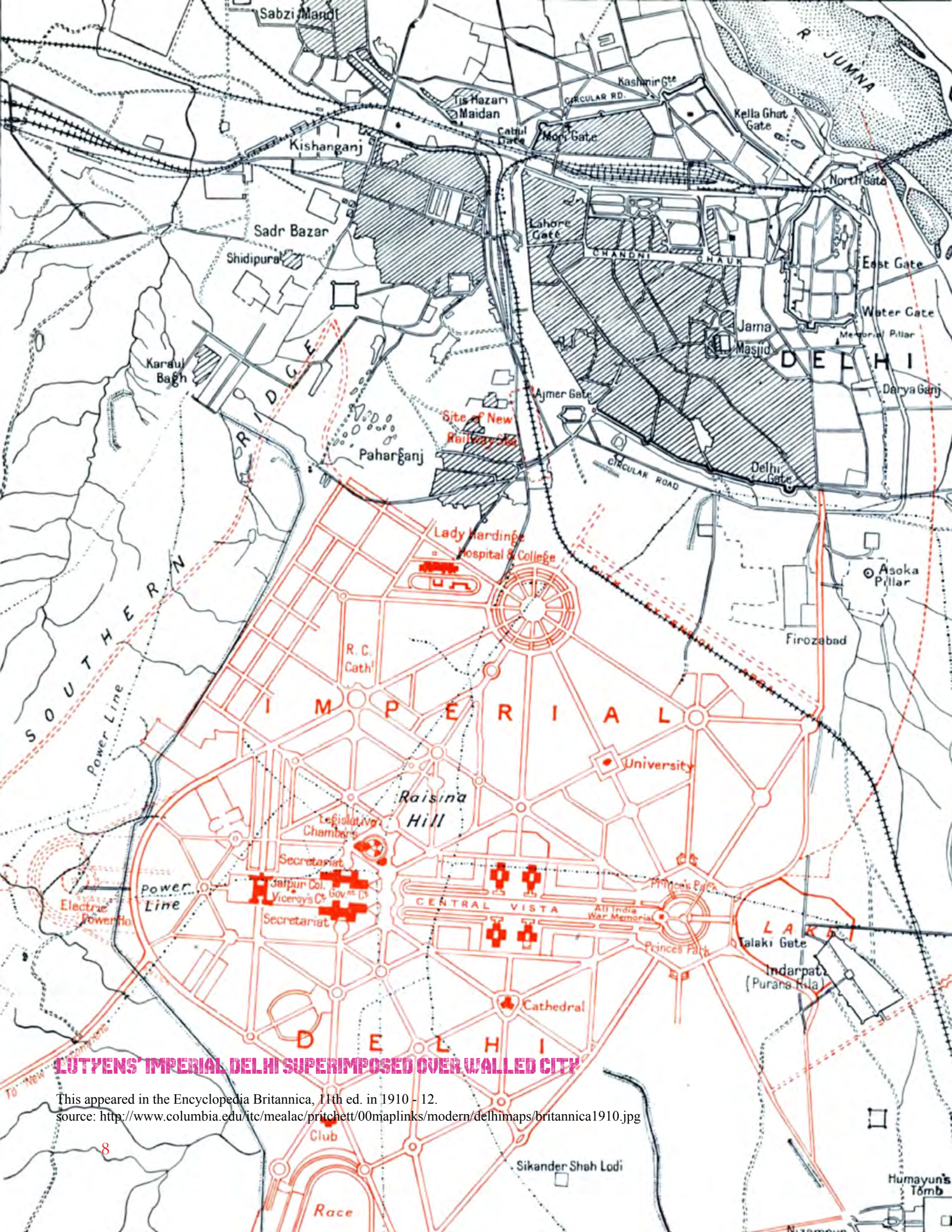


DARYAGANJ AREA IN SHAHJAHANABAD

NETAJI SUBHASH JUNCTION

TOWARDS NEW DELHI

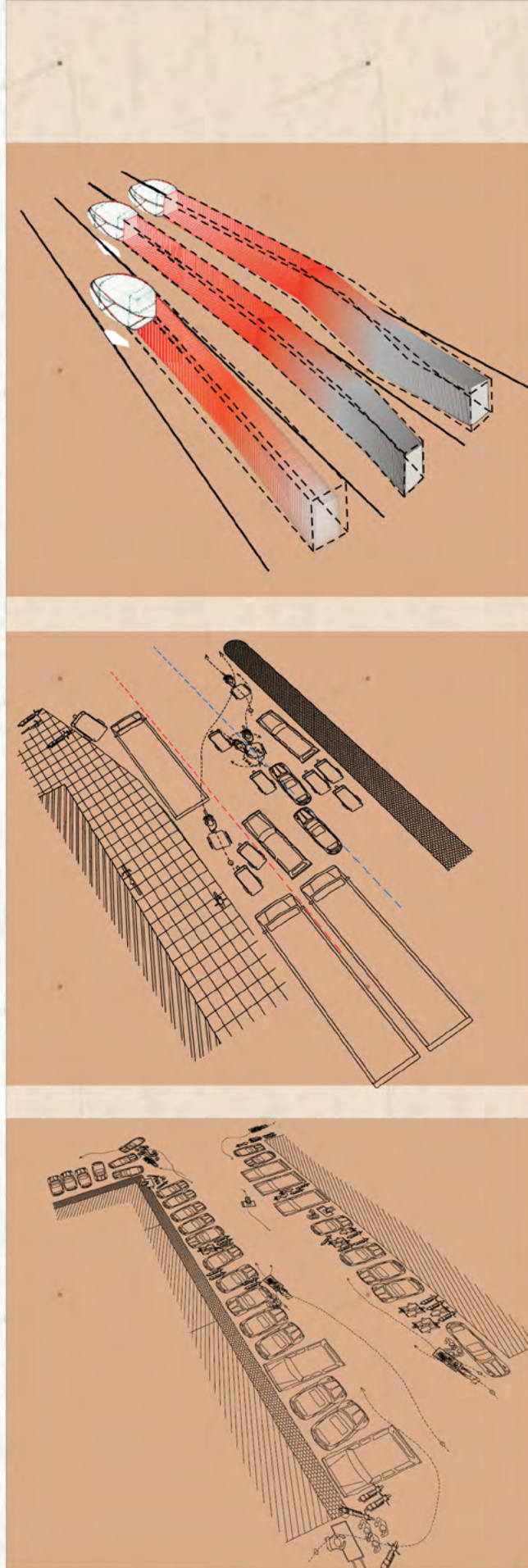
Daryaganj Area is in Shahjahanabad walled city in Delhi. This is an old part of Delhi but since 1960 the postal address for Daryaganj came under New Delhi, P.O. Box No. 110002.
Google Map edited by author.



This appeared in the Encyclopedia Britannica, 11th ed. in 1910 - 12.
 source: <http://www.columbia.edu/itc/mealac/pritchett/00maplinks/modern/delhimaps/britannica1910.jpg>

1. INTRODUCTION

For this study, I am seeking the concepts of “*ordinary*” and “*everyday*” experience in the kinetic city during the usage of public urban space in walled city Delhi. The study addresses the ephemeral qualities of street activities that take place with respect to eclectic influences that are modified by temporal and cultural norms. Observing these qualities in an urban setting is also compounded by the fact that people (bodies), move through urban spaces by traversing *static* objects. In the process of movements, kinesis, notions of power, class, technological infiltration and proliferation, localized colonialism and other almost blasé attributes are implicated and deciphered within the commonplace functions of street-vending and vehicular traffic. Secondly, what makes this thesis a study of kinetic city is, historically, Delhi is an agglomeration of towns that were built on top of each other in different eras, and with different cultural interactions long before the British colonized the country and founded New Delhi. In a way, the city has been in continuous temporal motion *temporally, spatially, culturally, and experientially*. The setting for the study is the “junction” between Old and New Delhi. The study of this “junction” is both ubiquitously metaphorical and at the same time real. The settings are like a transformable framework that could be applied to any physical road/ street junction in any town or megacity in India. It is metaphorical in the sense that “modern” and “contemporary” ways of life come together to facilitate urban living. Thus, as metaphorical space, it is mostly experiential and contextual; as it varies from place to place. Individuals, communities, and organizations



register its meanings differently. On the other hand the “junction” is real because the study is focused on a specific site - *NETAJI SUBHASH JUNCTION* - in Delhi.

It is the intersection of important historical streets that once were the foundation of the walled city. It also serves as a gateway to the colonial urban developments of New Delhi (1911), and other parts of present day Delhi.

WHAT IS KINETIC CITY

TEMPORAL The changing ‘*popular culture*’ prevalent in the street-scape at Netaji Subhash junction arising from the processes of everyday urban spatial usage is the underlying theme of analysis in this thesis. ‘*Urban spatial usage*’ refers to the movements of bodies (city users and other vehicles) in space; their (cyclic) actions and tendencies, the fashion in which people exercise their religious and cultural rights and rituals; users’ appropriation of space, and other chance gatherings that take place in the streets of the walled city and the new city. The temporal dimension of this study suggests that nothing remains fixed; and all elements and activities in the city are subjected to the coefficient of time. Users in a particular urban situation experience and are aware of their interactions with each other and with their surroundings. Therefore, this study deals with the aspects of vectors and movements that occur at this junction. Over time these movements become “events” of experiences of modernity that is a result of integration of new and old ways of doing things in the contexts of old and new infrastructures. And with our focus here on the streets, the ephemeral events are “in reality created by the kinetic fabric of people, temporary paraphernalia etc. that defines the ground reality” of urbanism prevalent at Netaji Subhash Junction and the “manner in which people experience this particular urban condition.”¹ This junction is an intersection of six streets in the walled city that marks the juncture or a kind of separation between the Old Delhi and the New Delhi. This 42 meters (137 ft.) wide road is designated as a vital heritage route and it is characterized by heavy vehicular traffic, major bus stops. It is extensively used as a transit node to and from the traditional walled city markets towards new residential, commercial and corporate districts in other parts of the city.

The keywords that convey the intentions of this study are presented as following.

CULTURAL The rich heritage and culture of this part of the city; the religious institutions, temples, mosques, gurudwaras (*place of worship for Sikhs*), bazaars, authentic street food culture and Mughal monuments of heroic scale and beauty in the vicinity draw over 10,000 or more tourists daily, apart from the local population.

SPATIAL

The urban agglomeration of Old Delhi, exhibiting mixed (multiple) land use with retail shops on the ground floor, traditional street bazaars, street kiosks, vendors (both mobile and immobile), eateries, temporary police surveillance booths, excessive on-street parking of cars, rickshaws (*local non-motor vehicle* [NMV's]) and other commercial vehicles characterize the diverse and complex land use of this city junction. The above is a brief account of what I would say, *urban elements* or *urban props* of 'everyday' Delhi that I would be working with.

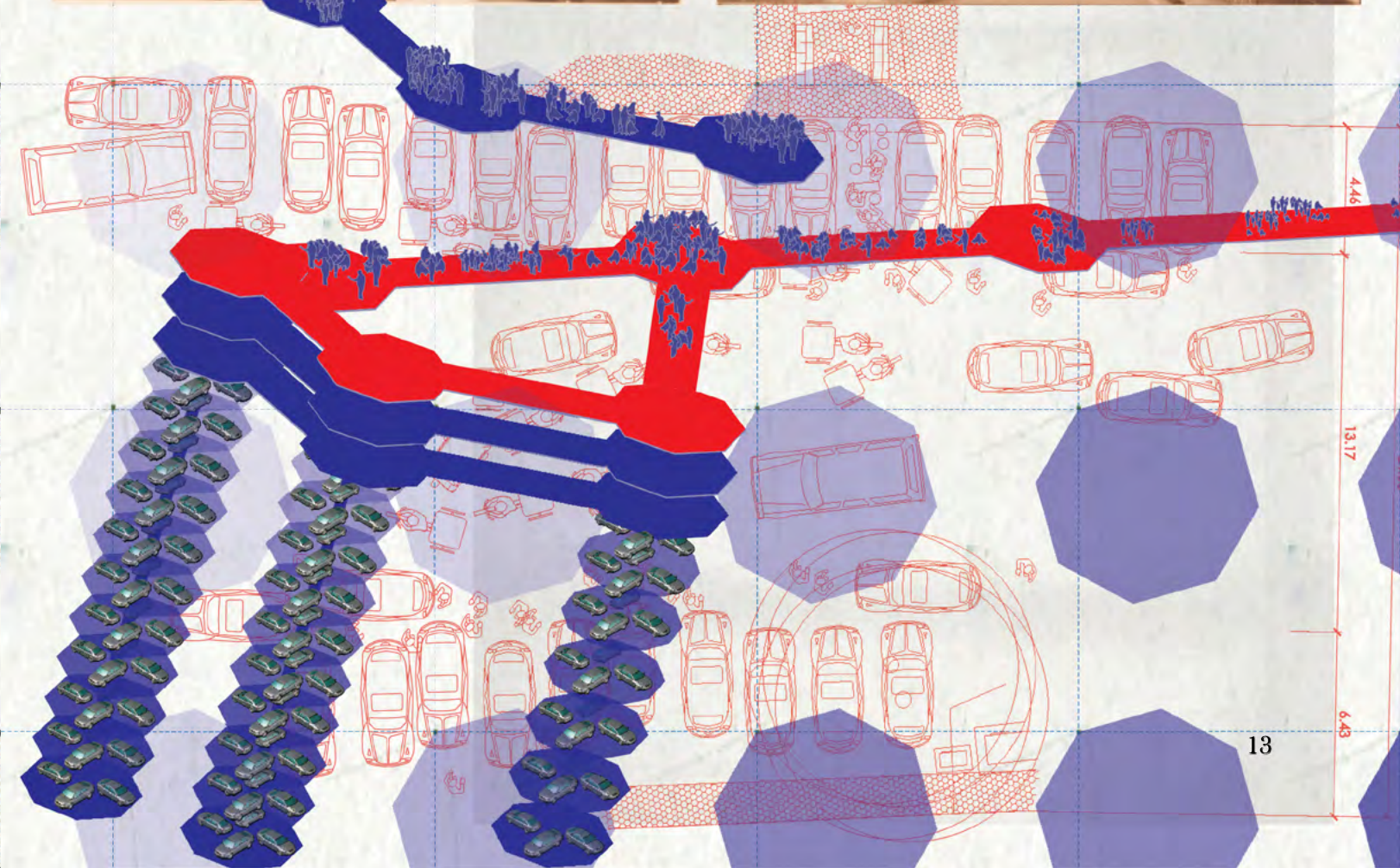
EXPERIENTIAL

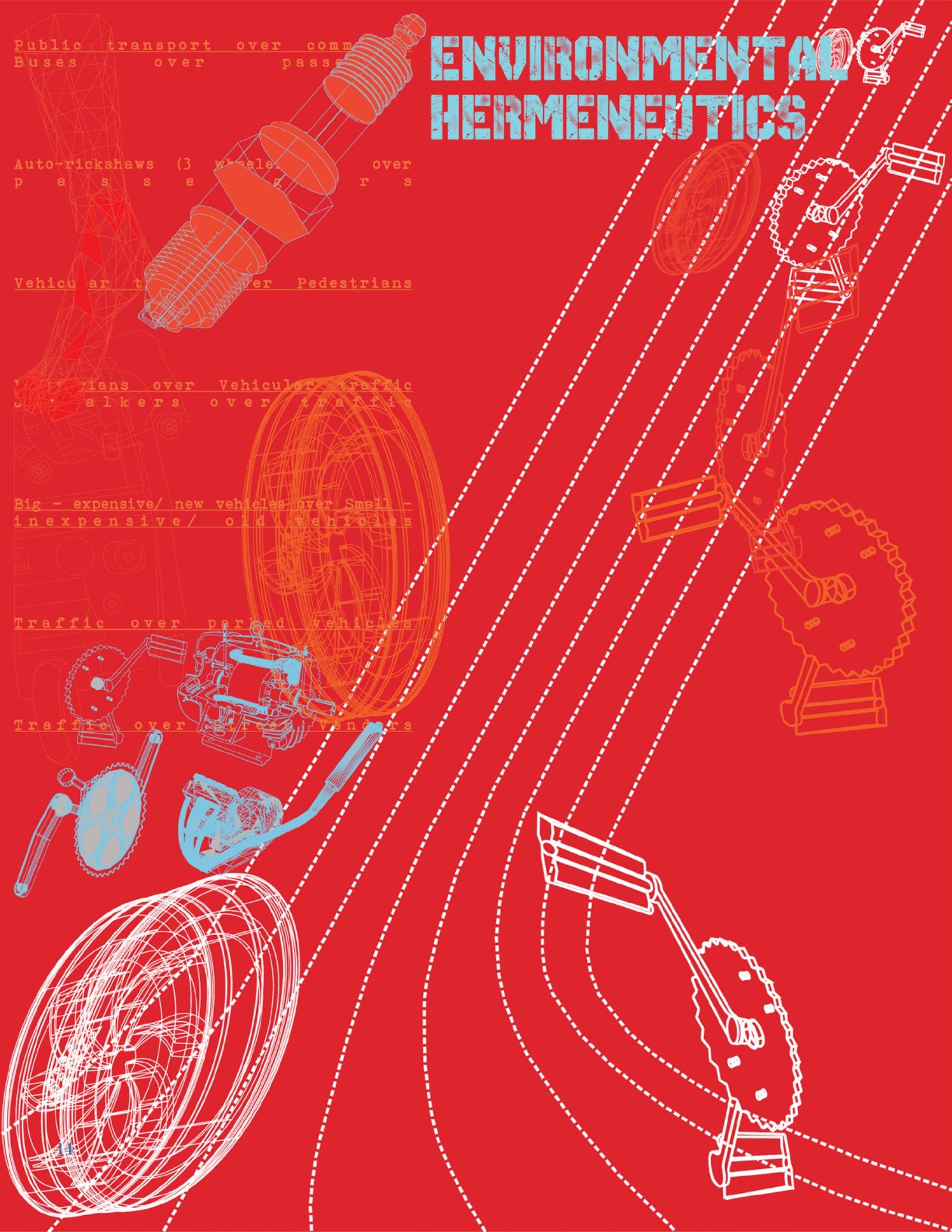
Shahjahanabad is a huge business hub for Delhi. City users move about, pass and transit through this junction to accomplish their everyday goals, establish and articulate social relations close to their businesses and workplaces. Street vendors strengthen their economic trust and stability in and around their self-proclaimed selling spots – all this takes place in compliance with the ongoing local administration, political terms and regulations of the municipality. People walk, drive or take the public transport and use other civic amenities to reach their destinations, experience different places and corners of this junction, do their daily shopping from vendors and so on. But, with this idea of movements of bodies in a city, or '*kinesis*'; comes the idea of studying the mechanics of these movements with reference to something stationary or *static*, so that the patterns (and deviations) in these movements can be ascertained. This phenomenon of static versus the kinetic can be understood as a simple distinction between the functions and experiences within a particular urban site. The objects or bodies that are restricted to a *proper* place (or designated to a fixed place) constitute the static city, whereas the objects and the subjects (people and activities) that keep changing their place or location constitute the kinetic city, and this kinesis has its own form of architecture. Therefore in the kinetic landscape of movements of people, automobiles, "temporal landscape of festivals, markets, cyclic and ephemeral events"² is always overlaid on the static city. The static city is mostly made of the physically manifested ensembles that depend on architecture for its representation and functions. It follows that static infrastructure include building edges, compound walls, shop frontages, sidewalks, bus stops, parking lots (and spots), and figuratively speaking everything that is not in motion. The temporal events of movement take place within this static context, and the interactions of the *kinetic* and *static* brings about the realization of '*urban spatial usage*' at Netaji Subhash Junction.

THESIS QUESTION

The central question in this thesis is to decipher whether or not, and how the kinetic objects – activities or spatial usages – comply and take place within the contexts of the architectural settings and urban design conditions and regulations of a particular site at Netaji Subhash junction. Speaking normatively, that is according to how most Indians would normally use the street fronts and public spaces before British colonial rule, and according to how people are still using the public spaces at Netaji Subhash junction; in which of these activities should be categorized as "formal" and which ones be designated as "informal" ?

KINETIC VS STATIC





ENVIRONMENTAL HERMENEUTICS

HYPOTHESIS

The proposition of this study is by addressing the questions raised in this thesis. It would be discovered that the concepts “formal” and the “informal” currently used by municipal authorities to designate, differentiate, and above all regulate activities in Indian cities is arbitrary and have no scientific basis when evaluated according to the normative ways people use spaces. Based on the existing building codes and urban design regulations in India, it is proposed here that the concepts of formal and informal activities are culturally normatively in binary opposition to each other. Culturally sensitive building codes should be implemented in order to develop functional and sustainable Indian cities and settlements. Building codes that are sensitive to the normative ways Indian people use private and public spaces can result in flexible settings described here as heterogeneous space.

The premise that I will be maintaining from here on is based upon my observations, past studies and the many interactions with everyday street life in Shahjahanabad.³ I believe that the very nature of the act of ‘street vending’ at Netaji Subhash junction confirms that “urban culture has not permeated our imagination, even though the urban environment is often a tangible reality in our lives.”⁴ More to say, before I present the case of how modern town planning principles continue to practice a hegemonic control over beautifying the city and evicting street vending and hawking, I would like to propose that despite the continuing eviction spree, policy-making and imposition of illegal status, street vending continues to prevail in Shahjahanabad, and that street vending ought to be reenacting a veracious-indigenous buying and selling practice. In other words, extensions and encroachments of shops on sidewalks and road edges, vendors operating from stalls and temporary paraphernalia; this all comes to the Indian shopkeeper as an indigenous or even congenital attitude towards using street space.

HETEROGENEOUS SPACE – STATIC VS KINETIC

The term ‘*kinetic city*’ was coined by Rahul Mehrotra, a Mumbai based architect as an alternative way to look at the informal cities that “coexist in the same space”⁵ as the static or the formal city. He sees the informal or the kinetic city as the “symbolic image and metaphor for the physical state”⁶ of contemporary urban landscapes of Latin America, Asia and Africa. For Mehrotra, “the processions, festivals, street vendors and dwellers, all result in an ever-transforming streetscape – a city in constant motion whose very physical fabric is characterized by this kinetic quality.”⁷ It will be further explained in the following chapters through case studies and analysis that this bazaar-like context present at Netaji Subhash Junction is the emerging Indian condition in other parts of Delhi; old, new and many other Indian cities alike.

The study focuses on the examination of mechanisms of the kinetic city, its complex consequences of interactions with, and how it contrasts from the static city, and its conspicuous and vehement presence in a South Asian context, such as this street junction between ‘New’ and ‘Old Delhi’. These mechanisms are not merely treated in the “empirical sense” of kinesis or motion, but also as “uneven terrain of the familiar

and the unperceived” spatial usage and processes involving how “unspectacular negotiations about questions of meaning and power can unfold.”⁸ And what better context than the streets of walled city of Shahjahanabad is appropriate for conducting such a study and deciphering different flavors, layers and their mechanisms at work in the processes of everyday urban spatial usage and dwelling. Netaji Subhash Junction is an important site in the walled city because it is a loci where the old and the new city of Delhi meet each other. It is an urban palimpsest, with layers of meandering alleyways before city the city grids were established, obliterated, and revamped a number of times. It is imbued with the characteristic of being the seat of a once prosperous Mughal empire, before it was transformed into a site of colonial annexation, and finally a fractured democratic republican capital of free India. These palimpsests have both literally and figuratively given rise to contested streetscapes and urban forms. It is the setting where we can observe how certain social practices which have roots in traditional rituals, for example, wedding processions acquire and claim public space. They gather other small scale businesses like street vendors, adjoining cheap food shacks for the workers, people and paraphernalia (*space*) managing car parking etc. The wedding becomes an ensemble; an event that bleeds activities on the adjoining streets. They acquire contemporary practices that cannot be completely described as entirely traditional. In the same vein, at this junction like most streets in Indian metropolis, certain contemporary and modern practices such as motorized vehicular traffic and other forms of commercial vending, which equally have long traditions in India, intersect in ways that cannot be exclusively described as modern or traditional city activities. Hence, an important characteristic of the usage of the term kinetic city in this study is the recognition that movements in activities are both spatial and experiential, historical and contemporary; modern and old, and any attempt to define one in the absence of the other singular that constitutes the binaries negates the kinetic characteristic of the space in time and experiences.

HYPOTHESIS The methodology that I am concerned with here can be compared with what Anthony King describes as “*environmental hermeneutics*,”⁹ which recognizes that the city is like an organism where subjects and objects are intricately and constantly interacting with each other, and one cannot observe one without the other. King writes:

It is about the social, political and geographical conditions under which meanings are invented, the places where this takes place, the material conditions which allow some meanings and interpretations to surface, be articulated, and circulate, while other meanings are forever silenced. What increasingly occurs in the public domain of architecture is that the meanings and interpretations of the powerful proliferate, meanings created not simply by those with economic and political power, but those of the managerial and professional elite, including the architect-planner....¹⁰

On observation of the streetscape in walled city of Delhi, one can almost decode the implicit meanings of power and proliferation not only between the elite and the poor, but also among different user subjects involved in everyday spatial experiences and activities. It involves the daily contest or struggle for street-space within moving traffic, along edges of sidewalks or at bus stops. May be an expensive, modern speeding car gets its way through traffic as it announces the status of the owner; or one can see the hustle bustle at bus stops when the bus driver and his conductor hurry to pick up as many passengers as possible and make many rounds to and from his normal routes. That is how one can see the different layers of thick, dense street bazaars where big shopkeepers lend space at their doorsteps, or entrance stairs to small shopkeepers so that customers remain attracted. Another layer is of the law enforcement or the police who keeps a check on illegal vendors, municipal police conducting evictions and raids. Non-motorized vehicles like rickshaw slow down the fast traffic on main roads which leads to congestion, honking, noise pollution and chaos. In the contestation of public space, there are always winners and losers in space and time when people go about their businesses in the city. In other words, there exists a haste of time and space; or appropriation of time and space, and all interactions (and confrontations) are driven by the excesses of continental, local, and regional capitalism, population increase, rural-urban migration and the prevalent political dynamics. Such clashes can be deciphered through urban mapping, examination of photographs and videos through graphical and pictorial analysis, photo montages and simple sketches.

“*Environmental hermeneutics*” will enable us to show that the kinetic realm is working in, and through different layers of built environment – through locomotory realm of roads and streets that are zones of vehicular movement, the ambulatory realm of pedestrians finding their way across crowded streets and through sidewalk bazaars – and the interaction of these moving mechanisms with static infrastructure that constitute the built environment. In my view such context – specific analysis will provide with the means to decode the otherwise overlooked and subtle cultural and symbolic dimensions of mental and statutory colonialism that has been localized in the post-colonial context of Delhi with the consequence of creating settings where the normative of how different groups in India use public space, and the envisioned modernity by the authorities regarding how people should use the public domain are always in perpetual collision. The neo-colonialism of urbanity occurs in India in the education and awareness of the inhabitants, the municipal bureaucracies, and in urban planning and architectural institutions. In a nutshell, this study analyses the architecture of the kinetic city which in its own erratic way binds and sublets these contested street space(s) among the users of the walled city of Delhi.

ORGANIZATION The thesis is organized as following: In Chapter 1, the abstract, framework, research question, hypothesis, method and background is delineated. The setting, Netaji Subhash Junction, features the interaction between static and kinetic elements. Chapter 2 looks into the activity of Street Vending or Hawking which has existed on Indian streets “since time immemorial”¹¹. Customers selecting articles from shop displays in a street bazaar, buying and selling from street vendors etc. involves a totality of

**RED FORT OR THE “LAL QUILA”,
ONCE THE MUGHAL CITADEL IS A
17TH CENTURY FORT COMPLEX
CONSTRUCTED BY THE MUGHAL
EMPEROR SHAHJAHAN IN THE
WALLED CITY OF OLD DELHI.**

**JAMA MASJID
THE CONGREGATIONAL AND
PRINCIPAL MOSQUE IN OLD
DELHI CONSTRUCTED BY THE
EMPEROR SHAHJAHAN.**

**SHAHJAHANABAD, OR THE
WALLED CITY OF DELHI FOUND--
ED BY THE INDIAN EMPEROR
SHAHJAHAN IN 1639 THAT
REMAINED THE CAPITAL OF MU--
GHALS UNTIL THE END OF MU--
GHAL DYNASTY.**

source: Jacobs, Allan B. Great Streets.
Cambridge: MIT Press, 1993
(edited by author)

top right: Red fort

center: Jama Masjid

rest: dense agglomeration of
colonies, markets and by-
lanes of what is commonly
known as old delhi.



NETAJI SUBHASH JUNCTION

experiences and how the component architectural settings facilitate the kinetic city and cannot be easily discussed alone. The specific aspects of the component whole ought to be adopted and studied in detail. Next, this chapter explains the activities as experiential phenomenon and different forms of conducting business through hawking and vending goods with images and examples from the chosen site. As the term ‘street vending’ suggests that this activity concerns with business (selling articles and/ or offering other services) conducted in a temporal manner, from a temporary site and not necessarily from a fixed established site of enterprise. In other words, they are the kinetic elements that are temporal and moving and their functioning adds to the kinetic quality of the streetscape. On close analysis of Netaji Subhash Junction , I will classify them as mobile or immobile vendors and any other type as they exist according to occupation of their activity such as food, fruits, clothing, hairdressers, automobile repair, newspapers etc. It is plausible and well known that such urban elements like vendors and hawkers have faced issues regarding obligations imposed by law or the formal normative framework, whether it is Delhi, Mumbai, New York, Southern California, Singapore and many other sites around the world. But as far as Netaji Subhash Junction and Shahjahanabad is concerned, I would like to talk about the issues of legality and illegality of these vendors in an Indian context, or more specifically if and how are they considered as formal or informal activities. If they are informal, then how and where do these activities occur? Who gives them the right to claim public space on streets, sidewalks, and specific spots for conducting their business? How different street spaces at Netaji Subhash Marg are allocated or subordinated to these vendors? These questions will further reveal different nuances of (in)formalities in usage of street space and to what extent do these street vending activities enhance or obstruct the kinetic quality of the street.

Chapter 3 looks into the activity of vehicular movements, traffic and pedestrians. Old Delhi (Shahjahanabad) is characteristic of “the particular quality of blurring between the domestic and the common” to the extent that “one never knows precisely where the street ends and private space begins.”¹² Something that historian Nikhil Rao describes as buildings “sweating” with life, and an image that captures well the way in which interior spills out into the street.¹³ This ‘sweating’ or bleeding out activities out onto the streets and right of way of vehicles disrupt each other in different manners and at all times. Where the spillage of functions largely hinder the circulation of vehicles and right of way (ROW) of pedestrians, the erratic automobile traffic equally disrupts the healthy functioning of street activities. As a result, even the most basic urban infrastructure on streets, like bus stops, car and rickshaw parking, designated traffic lanes lose their established or at least perceived sites or boundaries from where they function. In other words, the technical construction of the street in itself is contested. Street essentially is a shared space at sites like Netaji Subhash Junction where erratic road traffic, pedestrians walking on roadway with hawkers, vendors and shopkeepers’ encroaching footpaths blur all possibly defined normative street components like building frontages, sidewalks, road edges or medians. In this chapter I will explain with the help of various pictorial evidences that how something as trivial as erratic vehicle driving adds to other informalities existing in streets

of Shahjahanabad. Something to be noted at this point is that the street commerce, pedestrian traffic and vehicular traffic are all interlinked and are “part of a single transportation modality that consists of a variety of uses and populations.”¹⁴ The interaction of these functions generates what I call *kinesis* in the streetscape. It “produces visual confusion, but a functioning urban environment,”¹⁵ and therefore the chapter three on traffic movements should be read keeping in mind references from chapter two which deals with street commerce and vice versa.

Chapter 4 deals with cyclical events, public gatherings and some other activities and events that take place on the streets that involve ad-hoc and temporary architectural settings for their successful completion. Ad-hoc structures are constructed for many purposes; for yearly city-level festivals to small police check-points and traffic booths. The purpose of this chapter is to draw conclusions from all these temporality of architectural and cultural conditions, and try to learn more about Indian street architecture and infrastructure.

These events are the festivals, occasions, and important dates for the city and the community that are celebrated same time every year. These are accompanied by chance public gatherings like wedding processions, political gatherings and public protests. The main point underscored here is that these events in India largely demand to be part of the streets and other public spaces. Festivals are celebrated on the streets in a communal way, out in the open. Some are celebrated as holidays when the streets are empty, and some take place simultaneously with all the traffic and hustle-bustle of streets. Some end in a day, and some last long for many days and weeks and sometimes even a month. Festivals and temporal events are celebrated in different ways according to subsequent religious and cultural rituals and purposes. These events rope in with them other temporal activities that help in keeping upbeat the spirit and success of these celebrations and events. Therefore it is the phenomenon of ‘*temporary urbanism*’ that is associated with these festivals and chance gatherings. In this chapter we will see the different ways of approaching temporary urbanism, street culture that accompanies these events, and its effects and consequences on other aspects like vendors, traffic, commerce etc.

HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

Cities of the South Asian countries are a paradigm of complex social, economic, and cultural systems. Their own indigenous systems and lifestyles for numerous times have been overruled, and stacked upon by colonial rule which is further enhanced by the complacent imitations of western administrations and lifestyle. By the end of World War II and after fighting several wars of independence, most South Asian countries have emerged as young nations and democracies in the late twentieth century and are less than a century old if we view the length of time they have been in existence since the time they were independent. With the advent of globalization large parts of their mainland, and many of their cities have been exposed to western and developed models of governance, urbanization, technological advancement and novel cultures.



EIGHT CITIES OF DELHI

source: <http://www.columbia.edu/itc/mealac/pritchett/00maplinks/modern/delhimaps/murray1924.jpg>
 Accessed: Dec.2012
 This map from 'A Handbook for Travellers in India, Burma and Ceylon', 1924 by John Murray illustrates the city of Delhi and its environs. The sites of following eight cities of Delhi can be vividly seen here.

1. Lalkot, 11th century A.D.
2. Siri, 1303
3. Tughlakabad, 1320 – 1412
4. Jahanpanah
5. Ferozabad, 1351 – 1388
6. Purana – Quila and Dinpanah, 1538 – 1545
7. Shahjahanabad, 1638 – 1649
8. New Delhi, 1911



NEW DELHI UNDER CONSTRUCTION

source: Malvika Singh and Rudrabgshu Mukherjee.
 New Delhi: Making of a Capital. (Delhi, India: Roli Books Lustre Press, 2009)



CITY AND ENVIRONS OF DELHI

Jyoti Hosagrahar. Mansions to Margins: Modernity and the Domestic Landscapes of Historic Delhi, 1847-1910. Society of Architectural Historians, Vol. 60, No.1 (Mar., 2001), pp. 26-45 (Berkeley, USA: University of California Press, 2001) Figure 2

In fact, the event of colonization can also be seen as a process of worldwide dissemination and exchange of culture, trade, and information. As a result, South Asian cities have over time developed and are developing as collage cities. They have complex intermeshed history, heritage, culture and religions that the sensibilities and visualization becomes more and more hybrid until one can no longer find the pure. They flourish in the context of indigenous culture and values, colonial trends, contemporary and modern sensibilities and such are the influences that affect the architecture and built environment in these cities. Today most South Asian cities are characterized by high (and increasing) population, overcrowded milieu, and vibrant and congested streets. The multitudinous and differing ways in which the space(s) in these cities are used are teleological signifiers of different layers of civilization, urban culture, and contemporary references that have become an integral part of these cities.

The physical realization and representation of these cities have hitherto been a combination of old cities, monuments, heritage structures, and contemporary urban fabric. Delhi, the capital city of the Indian subcontinent is a paradigm example of such a context; a metropolitan – megacity perspective of a young democracy and a developing economy which has been the seat of the government, the colonizers, and the Mughal rulers since the 16th century.

A.G. Krishna Menon, in ‘*Imagining the Indian City*’; his very important paper which discusses the way town planners conceive Indian cities, succinctly speculates “cultural attitudes towards cities amongst Indians in general and town planners in particular.”¹⁶ He discusses the tendency of several cultures and local cultures in history that have shaped the organism the city is today. Namely the culture that on one hand conceived the “city as a den of evil, corrupting the positive spirit of man, weaning away from a simple, godly life close to nature, into snares of temptation.”¹⁷ The city can also be seen as a “parasitic growth on the rural countryside, siphoning away its surplus, draining its manpower, without recompense for the village.”¹⁸ Menon compares this attitude to what he broadly terms as “green” politics and finds its parallels in “Gandhian ideology”; one of “equity and long-term sustainability”¹⁹ which continues to resonate the Indian mindset and more specifically for our interest here, the traditional city of Shahjahanabad. On the other hand, other cultures glamorize the “city and placing it in sharp contrast to the ‘primitivism’ of villages.”²⁰ Shahjahanabad and other such precincts in India that were once prime colonial sites have drawn such an attitude since mid 18th and 19th century from the then industrial and post-industrial medieval cities in Europe which came to “symbolize their civilization: urban, capitalistic and technology-dependent.”²¹ Therefore, urbanity and urbaneness in Indian cities have been one under the questions of ambivalence. For Menon, “Indians by and large have been nature-oriented rather than city-oriented,” and “urbanity have generally been courtly virtues in the past and are not middle-class characteristics of contemporary urbanites.”²² This very resistance between the differing attitudes can be seen materializing in the streetscape of Indian city and especially in highly contested terrains such as Shahjahanabad walled city. More evidence finding leads one to

literary works like “*Politics of the Governed*” by postcolonial scholar Partha Chatterjee who finally wants to ask questions like – Are Indian Cities Becoming Bourgeois At Last?”²³

In the same vein the idea of accepting street vending and street vendors as an asset and an important part of streets, still risks being in the predicament of ambivalence among city users, and governing authorities. Where on one hand encroachments or extensions of registered and established shops (let alone street vendors and hawkers) on sidewalks and in most cases road edges for enhancing display and publicity, visual and physical accessibility, eateries spilling their serving areas; all this resonates with Mughal Delhi (Shahjahanabad) bazaars. But, simultaneously they are put under rigorous control and regulation by municipal workers and local police. Whether such a display and practice of selling food and articles adds to comfort and convenience of ‘customers on the move’, these encroachments and extensions of registered shops are equally considered informal as street vendors and hawkers.

THE PROBLEM OF THE THESIS Delhi in the past history remained under constant conquest and reigned by various emperors and dynasties, has a flashback and ruins of eight cities (of Delhi) over which the present day Delhi stands. [Figure 1.]

The walled city of Shahjahanabad and New Delhi, the seventh and, the eighth respectively are more visible than all the delhis built before it. Shahjahanabad (*built 1638-1649*) sits beside Sir Edwin Lutyen’s planned capital city of New Delhi (1911). This juxtaposition, together is a fascinating case of what I proposed earlier as a collage city. The old walled city of Delhi (*Shahjahanabad*), was an extensive communal neighborhood settlement with organic circulation patterns, interconnected and interwoven spaces, ruled by a larger ruler (*the Mughal emperor Shahjahan*) residing in fort (*the Red Fort*), and punctuated by lively market streets, gardens, mosques and connecting vistas. It contrasted sharply with the new spatial expression of the “bold, authoritarian, geometrical and elegant design of modern New Delhi.”²⁴ [Figure 2. and figure 3.]

The walled city comprised of numerous *havelis* or the mansions (*that were the primary unit of old Delhi city fabric*) that were large community (*group*) settlements with “interconnected apartments and courtyards”²⁵, organically located around meandering *kutch*a streets (*streets and lanes that take their form and texture from flattened, and dried, mud or soil*) that flanked with bazaars and trade activities, children playing, and as a place for interaction for people of this old city. On the other hand the colonial city of New Delhi housed the Viceroy’s Palace, wide tree-lined asphalt roads and colonnaded business centers and bungalows. This new city was built with manpower, and machines; the street section could accommodate pedestrians on sidewalks, royal carriages and later on automobiles on asphalt or *pucca* roads. These were two dichotomous urban fabrics of the ‘*old*’ and the ‘*new*’; representing entirely different ideas of settlements – one based on mutual or symbiotic sustenance, self-sufficient and stitched together under royal (*Mughal*) patronage and the other established essentially as a symbol of power, a demonstrative, “prerogative”, and a “prototypical ‘*modern*’ subject”²⁶. These two distinctive urban fabrics of Delhi have hitherto (*both before and after independence and in present day times*) been constantly and anachronistically exchanging social,

cultural and political values. This amalgamation and cross-fertilization of ideas and values have been extended and carried forward to a larger post-colonial metropolis as what we see today as present day megacity of Delhi. This exchange of ideas (*and here the British-India relationship in question*) applies to many fields, architecture being one of them”²⁷, and have been realized in incessant amounts of “writing on questions of colonial and especially post-colonial culture”²⁸ since about half a century now by “British, Danish or American scholars rather than by Indians.”²⁹

The reason I bring about the production of colonial and post-colonial writings on British-India relationships above, mostly by foreign scholars (and) or their “location and production in wealthier countries of the West” is to emphasize and reinstate Anthony King’s argument that this “overflow of studies on colonialism and post-colonialism” renders itself “increasingly counterproductive”. Anthony King in an epilogue titled “*Rethinking Colonialism*” to the literary text ‘*Forms of Dominance*’ attempts at examining the “constitutive elements of colonialism itself” and recognizing the now (displaced) meaning of the “very colonial, or neocolonial, term *post-colonial*”. It is important to unpack the meaning or the validity of the term ‘post-colonial’, since this study deals with the examination of built environment in a post-colonial context like Delhi. For King, the plausible definition of the term post-colonial corroborates the positioning of “the colonial as the central organizing experience for once-colonized cultures”. However, this holds true for the context of Delhi (and most cities in India), “it imposes an implied historical linearity or fixity (“pre-colonial”, “colonial”, “post-colonial”), temporarily and geographically. The colonial experience is the principle event, simultaneously privileging the political and social elite created by colonialism over the subaltern population, and displacing indigenous histories by those constructed by the metropolitan core.” In a similar vein, “all post-colonial discourse then must, *ipso facto*, be colonial in that it responds to the imperialism of the dominant center”, or “to cite another metaphor”, a case of the “dominance of the center over the periphery.”³⁰

In other words the present discourse on colonialism (and post-colonialism) suffers a stagnancy or fixity in terms of “trinity of periodizations”³¹ (*pre-colonial, colonial, post-colonial*) as explained above, and that such knowledge should peculiarly be “space and culture – specific.”³² What we lack today is theorization of a contextual extension of colonial and post-colonial influences, i.e. grounding them into a culture – specific. Secondly, the plethora of accumulated scholarship on colonial and post-colonial architecture and urbanism is limited to the themes of “*western* buildings or spaces documented by western scholars, westernization, modernization, and documentation of high culture.”³³

Notes

¹ Mehrotra, Rahul ed. Everyday Urbanism: Margaret Crawford vs. Michael Speaks – Michigan Debates on Urbanism Volume I. (Introduction by Rahul Mehrotra) Michigan: The University of Michigan, A. Alfred Taubman College of Architecture, Ann Arbor, Michigan, 2004. 12
² Ibid.

³ The author is an architect and has been residing in Shahjahanabad for 28 years. He has gathered hands on experience in arenas of urban redevelopment and case studies regarding past academic and professional projects in Shahjahanabad precinct, Delhi.
⁴ Menon, A.G.Krishna. Imagining the Indian City. Economic and Political Weekly, Vol.32, No.46 (Nov. 15-21, 1997), pp. 2932-2936
⁵ Allen, Lea. K, Felipe Hernandez, and Peter Kellett eds. Rethinking the Informal City. (Foreword by Rahul Mehrotra). New York: Berghahn Books, 2010. xi
⁶ Ibid.

⁷ Ibid.
⁸ Bandyopadhyay, Ritajyoti and Curt Gambetta. Streetscapes: a symposium on the future of the street (The Problem) http://www.india-seminar.com/2012/636/636_the_problem.htm Accessed Sept. 2012
⁹ Alsayyad, Nezar ed. Forms of Dominance. Aldershot: Ashgate Publishing House, 1992. 344
¹⁰ Ibid.

¹¹ Bhowmik, Sharit K. National Policy for Street Vendors. Economic and Political Weekly, Vol.38, No.16 (Apr. 19-25, 2003), pp. 1543-1546
¹² Bandyopadhyay, Ritajyoti and Curt Gambetta. Streetscapes: a symposium on the future of the street (The Problem) http://www.india-seminar.com/2012/636/636_the_problem.htm Accessed Sept. 2012
¹³ Rao, Nikhil. Street Scheming: The Street and Planning in Late Colonial Bombay. Paper presented at Streets: A Workshop, NIAS, Bangalore, 2010
¹⁴ Anjaria, J. Shapiro. Is there a culture of the Indian street? Paper presented at Streetscapes: a symposium on the future of the street http://www.india-seminar.com/2012/636/636_jonathan_s_anjaria.htm Accessed Sept. 2012

¹⁵ Ibid.
¹⁶ Menon, A.G.Krishna. Imagining the Indian City. Economic and Political Weekly, Vol.32, No.46 (Nov. 15-21, 1997), pp. 2932-2936
¹⁷ Morton and Lucian White, the Intellectual Versus the City, Harvard University Press, Cambridge, 1962. Thomas Jefferson looked upon the city as antithetical to democracy, while Emerson, Thoreau, Hawthorne, Melville, Henry Adams and Henry James regarded the urban centres as a violation of nature, a breeder of crime and disorder, and an affront to the dignity of man. These critics were heralds of an anti-urban attitude that has permeated political and social thought down to the present. See also, S C Dube, Indian Village, Harper Colophon Books, New York, 1967. “The village people have always idealized their traditional life-ways, and have shown mistakable suspicion for those of the city...”, p 231 (as cited in Menon, Imagining the Indian City, Economic and Political Weekly, 1997, p 2936)
¹⁸ Menon, A.G.Krishna. Imagining the Indian City. Economic and Political Weekly, Vol.32, No.46 (Nov. 15-21, 1997), pp. 2932-2936
¹⁹ Ibid.
²⁰ Cf the general tenor of Lewis Mumford, The City in History, Harcourt, Brace and World, New York, 1961 (Ibid., 2936)

²¹ Arnold Tynbee, Cities on the Move, Oxford University Press, New York, 1970
²² Menon, A.G.Krishna. Imagining the Indian City. Economic and Political Weekly, Vol.32, No.46 (Nov. 15-21, 1997), pp. 2932-2936
²³ Chatterjee, Partha. Politics of the Governed: Reflections on Popular Politics in Most of the World. New York: Columbia University Press, 2004. 131
²⁴ Jyoti Hosagrahar. Mansions to Margins: Modernity and the Domestic Landscapes of Historic Delhi, 1847-1910. Society of Architectural Historians, Vol. 60, No.1 (Mar., 2001), pp. 26-45 (Berkeley, USA: University of California Press, 2001)
²⁵ Ibid.
²⁶ Hosagrahar, Jyoti. Indigenous Modernities: Negotiating architecture and urbanism (Chapter 1: Becoming Modern) New York: Routledge, 2005. 1
²⁷ Desai, Madhavi., Miki Desai and John Lang. Architecture and Independence. (Chapter 1 – Architecture and Identity) Delhi: Oxford University Press, 1997. 1
²⁸ Alsayyad, Nezar ed. Forms of Dominance. Aldershot: Ashgate Publishing House, 1992. 340
²⁹ Ibid. 342
³⁰ Ibid.
³¹ Ibid. 340
³² Ibid. 341
³³ Ibid. 343

2. STREET VENDING

A street vendor, or a hawker, as is called in India, can broadly be defined as a person who offers goods or other services to public without having a permanent, built site of business or enterprise.¹ When observing hawkers in an Indian city such as Delhi, one will notice that the services are offered either from (a) a temporary static stall, (b) mobile stall or (c) the person carrying his goods as head load. I would like to add a fourth type – (d) a permanent stall vendor whose selling location and vending stall is mostly permanent as compared to other three forms mentioned above but shares similar challenges as far as their functioning in the streets are concerned. Let us take examples from Netaji Subhash junction and its immediate vicinity to ascertain the above forms of street vending. “Keeping space and its perception as the common factor, an experiential explanation and spatial analysis of these interrelationships” at Netaji Subhash Marg follows, along with notes on designation, subordination and contestation of street space.

TEMPORARY STATIC STALL

Temporary static stall is typically a light-weight impermanent structure or a kiosk set up which is either mobile or immobile, but is not intended to move from a specific location of operation due to incompatible nature of goods and service on sale, vested interests in a particular location (a spot) and context owing to increase in sale. Such vendors with their paraphernalia arrive at their specific location of operation in the morning or daytime and leave with their stall in evening depending on exhaustion or amounts of goods sold and time-bound relevance of saleability of their goods. Their operation timings are cyclic and



Temporary Static Stall



temporal in the sense that their window of business opportunity is time-bound and fixed. Some function from morning till afternoon, some from noon till evening, some function all through the day, while others function only at night. In some cases, the same spot or stall location is used by two or more different vendors at different times of the day. For example, a stall selling breakfast or lunch snack till noon will be replaced by a clothing vendor in the evening. The vendor here is selling a post breakfast or lunch snack near Netaji Subhash Junction, where he arrives at 10:30am – 11:00am in the morning and leaves by 3:00pm – 4:00pm when either his goods are exhausted or avenue (or scope) of his market is over.

Temporary static stalls are elaborate in construction. They mostly operate for a brief period of time in a day and the vendor wants to make most out of that, and hence an elaborate display or arrangement of goods helps with quick and efficient work. They require fairly large amounts of space for their functioning and mostly share space with automobile parking, or they have a specific location on a sidewalk (footpath) right in front of a shop, residential or commercial building where they completely block the right of way (ROW) of pedestrians. Otherwise they strategically locate themselves exactly at the edge of on-street parking and carriageway “out of pedestrians’ pathways, the shopkeepers”³ and vehicular circulation.

Suck kind of over-expectation from the road edge and sidewalk results in a congested and chaotic urban environment. Although it would be unfair to blame the street vendor for congestion. The positioning or location of the street vendor and its consequences hence cannot be read alone disregarding rest of the context that includes excessive, haphazard and overburdened parking on streets and even on sidewalks mostly in commercial interests, and erratic rash road traffic. These juxtaposition of activities and functions “crowd the experience of the street with images, transactions and physical objects,”⁴ and when such urban situations are tested or measured against “normative benchmarks of urban control,” the vendors are deemed as “non-conforming”⁵ with the supposed formal functions and components of street and hence designated as ‘informal’. People have a love-hate-relationship with these vendors: On the one hand, they like the convenience of finding what they need around them: on the other hand, they feel the vendors block their paths.⁶

This situation of formal and informal distinction stems from a long-standing “inscription of a binary relationship” from “histories of street life in Europe and the United States.”⁷ The hegemony of such inscription in colonial and postcolonial settings”⁸ such as Delhi (and other Indian cities) have poorly failed. Present municipal laws, the police drives and urban planning principles continue to follow nineteenth century colonial era improvement schemes; the schemes from which city planning and urban organization in India took birth in the first place. This formal-informal distinction “in India (and especially in historic precincts like Shahjahanabad) is the difference that lies in the spectre of what is perceived as the incomplete project of modernity in the city.”⁹ Now more than a century and a half of negotiations, on how Indian streets should look like, no doubt the “culture of Indian street is in relationship with the project of modernity.” They surely are not in consonance with each other; rather they share a “contested terrain that consists of

conflicts over how streets can be used.”¹⁰ I will talk about this contestation and conflicts towards the end of the chapter in “*Proximity of Bodies in space.*” Meanwhile it is important to underscore that the contests often marginalized the vendors who want to make a living with their wares. *The Independent*, a London based newspaper, reports that:

The women street vendors of Ahmedabad, India, have peddled their wares for generations, rising at dawn to buy flowers, fruit and vegetables from wholesalers in the markets before fanning out across the city. They frequently needed to borrow money, faced punitive rates of interest and were routinely harassed and evicted from their vending sites by local authorities. They were a typical example of disempowered women, prey to the evils of debt, loss of livelihood and ill health, until they campaigned to improve their status. With help from the Self-Employed Women's Association of India (Sewa), the vegetable sellers and growers set up their own wholesale vegetable shop, cutting out the middlemen who had exploited them. They also organized childcare, set up a bank for credit and petitioned for slum upgrading.¹¹

As the article in *The Independent* (London) demonstrates, in an irony, the legislations restraining the vendors has also empowered them to take their lives in their own hands and demand fair treatment from municipal authorities. Perhaps, the lesson here is the attempts to reform Indian cities in the image of the cities in England and the United States can be seen as culturally incongruent with the Indian ways of using public space, and subsequently, it is oppressive against small business owners, the vendors, and anti-democratic.

MOBILE STALLS AND VENDORS WITH HEAD LOAD

Vendors with mobile stalls mostly operate from push-carts, set ups that are temporary to the extent that they remain easily moveable and packable, or from a head load that is handy enough for the vendor to sell while on the move. Push carts are so popular and are recognized as essential part of commerce in India that it is spinning off a new type of technology for making light-weight plastic carts that are several times lighter than the wooden push carts.¹²

These vendors use various kinds of stalls, booths, cask, baskets or just sell their goods from a bicycle. Many just carry a spread or a plastic sheet and a shoulder bag full of goods, and can set up their display spot at an appropriate location in minutes or just move about the city on foot, local trains, and buses selling their articles. They are mostly newspaper, magazine and booksellers, fruit sellers, some sell tea or coffee at major streets and public spaces, quick snack preparations (that they already partly prepare at their households at night and mornings), readymade articles like chips, cheap chocolates, cigarettes, betel nut, household articles like hairclips, sunglasses, stones, socks, handkerchiefs, toys, wallets, belts and even



**Mobile Stalls
and Vendors with head load**

clothes. In fact there is a never ending list of articles that is impossible to mention here. The legal status of these vendors to be able to sell their articles is mostly distinguished by the carts they use. The ones that already have licenses from the municipality have marked carts, and ones plying illegally are unmarked. Most vendors conduct their business illegally at Netaji Subhash Marg (and other places in Delhi). Either they illegally rent out marked pushcarts from MCD (Municipal Corporation of Delhi) warehouses or they just operate from their hand stalls or baskets etc. The state and the municipal corporation issues limited licenses that are way lower than the actual number of vendors, and this too happens through a string of complicated and cumbersome processes which involves license fees that most vendors cannot afford. Other regulatory actions include segregation of hawking and non-hawking zones. “The official illegality of unlicensed vendors does not preclude other forms of recognition by the state.”¹³ As a result most hawkers operate through “unofficial recognition” which is mostly “established through ‘*hafta*’¹⁴ (or rent seeking – a euphemism for bribes or informal token of recognition and allowance to sell articles on a daily basis) “and long term personal interaction with various municipal workers”¹⁵ and police officials. “*The National Policy on Urban Vendors* was adopted in 2004” and was drafted by The Ministry of Urban Development and Poverty Alleviation to “regularize a major section of the self-employed.”¹⁶ Since then only seven states in India (not including Delhi) has partially or marginally adopted the policy in 2005. I will discuss the legalizing issues of street vendors and how they gain temporal permissions of hawking towards the end of this chapter.

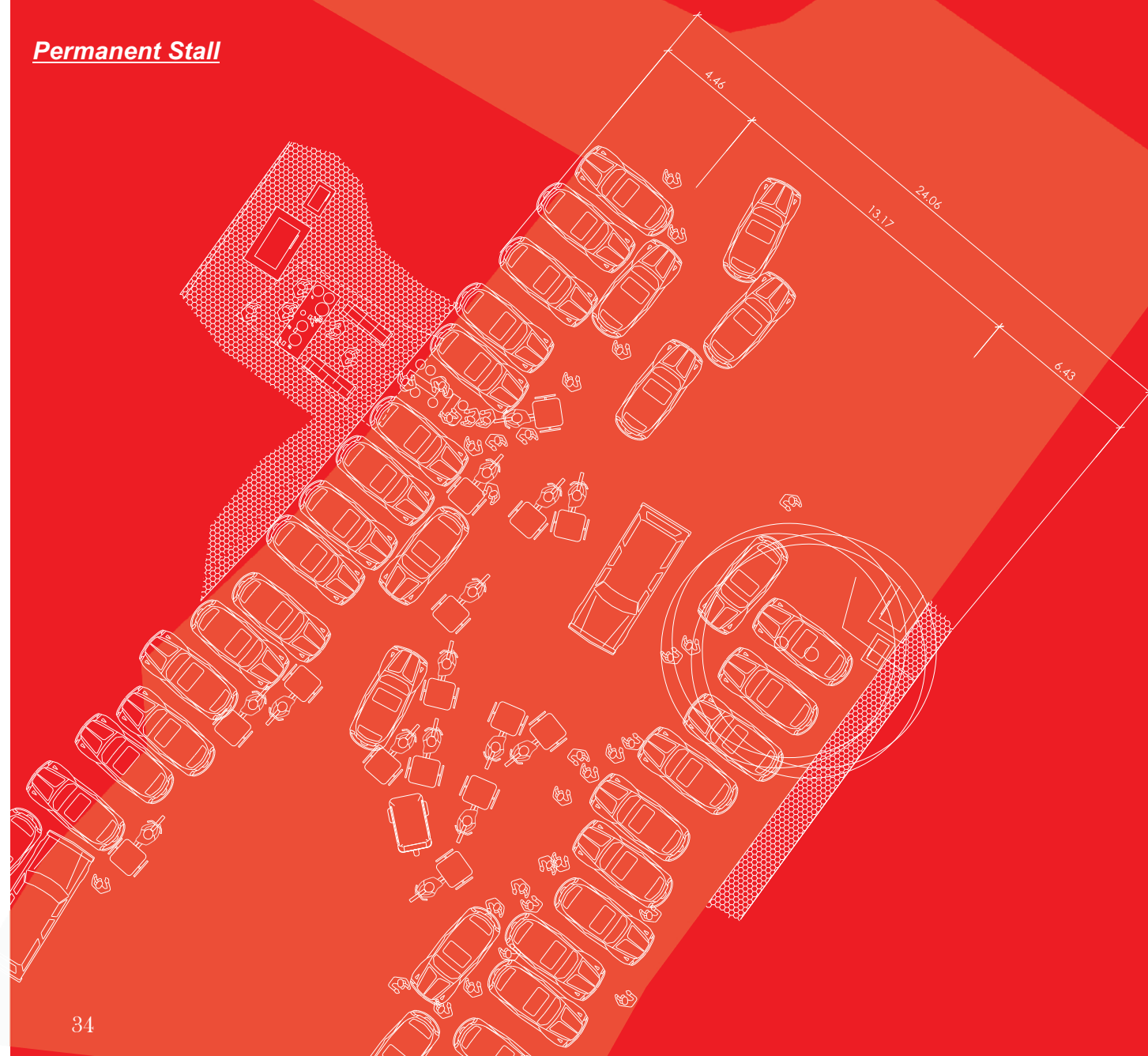
Mobile stall vendors (and vendors with head load) mostly do not have a permanent location. They temporally acquire permissions to sell (as explained above) and ply in their desired choice of streets where they usually find business. Push cart vendors ply along road edges, road edges, street junctions, at spots that are mostly not visible to municipal workers (MCD vans) and police. Most vendors have a long standing understanding with shop owners that let them hawk in front of their shops – on pediments, steps, or near sidewalks either partly or all through the day, or after the shops close. This mutual understanding happen both under the influence of monetary exchange or symbiotic sustenance. The issues of licensing or legalizing street vendors, and the subsequent subordination of space either by local police or shop owners do bring out implicit power relations prevalent at Netaji Subhash Junction.

PERMANENT STALL VENDORS

Permanent stall vendors operate from and treat their regular hawking spot in the city just like any other legal shop owner. This implies that they have been hawking at the same spot since many years and it becomes their permanent location in the eyes of the authorities and most importantly their customers. Paying off their weekly or monthly ‘*haftas*’ to the police have become a part of their daily earnings since years, and this habitual transaction makes both the exchange of money and the unlicensed vendor “legal” in each other’s eyes. They become a part of the social, cultural and economic milieu to the extent that they do not even pack their goods/ articles and other paraphernalia and take them back home. They leave their



Permanent Stall



belongings at the same spot – packed, collected together, many a times locked, protected from rain, heat, moisture, thieves and other vendors; as a sign of ownership so that no other vendor takes their spot the next day.

This last section of this chapter firstly discusses causes and relevance of the presence of street vendors. The focus here is the reasons for the very nature of vending (buying and selling goods) in a particular manner; viz. operating from temporary locations and paraphernalia and in the same vein discovering other forms of non-conforming state of vending and encroachments, or in other words appropriation and informalities. Secondly, it follows as to what norms are these street vending activities and informalities do not conform to, but still acquire temporal validity to function on the streets. Here, I will look into mechanisms through which vendors and hawkers are assigned (or allowed to dwell), and subordinated space by the concerned ‘keepers’ and authorities of space and popular culture or local doctrines at play regarding this ‘street space’ assignation. This will include the issue of legality or illegality of vendors, and a brief discussion of national policy of street vendors. Thirdly, I will discuss how different types of street vendors explained above function at Netaji Subhash Marg, and the mannerisms generated from their relationship with other user subjects like pedestrians and automobiles, and finally the spatial consequences that the proximity of these subjects bring about.

THE REASON A STUDY OF STREET VENDING IS IMPORTANT IN CONTEMPORARY INDIAN CITIES

Street Vending in India (and in Delhi) is mostly considered illegal. Despite the adoption of National Policy for Street Vendors (2004-2005) by only seven states in India (not including Delhi), the plight of street vendors is much more than it appears. A paper published on the draft of the policy in 2003 stated that around “205 per cent of the urban population is engaged in this occupation. The total number of street vendors in India (2003) is around 1 crore (10 million).”¹⁷ According to a study¹⁸ conducted in 2009 for National Association of Street Vendors in India (NASVI), 2.5 per cent of Delhi’s population (14 million) were vendors. These figures were recorded according to Supreme Court’s judgment in May 2007. This implies that there should be around 350,000 vendors in the city of Delhi by 2009. Other trade unions working with vendors estimated the figure to somewhere between 400,000 – 500,000. “As per the MCD officials the number of ‘legal’ vendors (vendors with licenses) in city is not more than 125,000 and they did not want to comment on the evidence of ‘illegal’ vendors.”¹⁹

Most metro cities in India such as Delhi, have “emerged with two primary characteristics: first a high density of population concentrated within a limited space and second a predominantly non-agricultural, particularly non-cultivating population.”²⁰ Since, the 1970’s there has been consistent “occupational shift out of agriculture, with the share of agriculture in employment declining and that of non-agriculture increasing.”²¹

As a result, due to poverty and lack of resourceful employment in smaller towns and particularly rural areas, a large number of people migrate to cities in search of work and livelihood. These migrants mostly lack skills and are highly undereducated to get jobs in the organized sector (or the establishments and businesses that are incorporated and registered). They have to settle to find work in the unorganized sector.”²² Moreover, it has been observed that “permanent protected jobs in the organized sector have been shrinking”²³ due to “closures, downsizing or mergers in the industries”²⁴ where a large number of these migrants used to work. With the advent of globalization and consequent market pressure in late twentieth century (1980’s) liberalization on most services sector industries in India saw privatization of services and that of public sectors and large scale manufacturing declining sharply. Although liberalization created a huge number of new jobs, but they always lacked social protection or on other cases the poor migrants were mostly unskilled for such positions. As a result this rural to urban migration has not only added to the ever rising urban population but also to overall unemployment in metro cities. In fact, these metro cities have now become mega cities with populations more than 10 million. According to a report by United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs (Population Division), Delhi was not even in the first ten most population mega cities by 1990’s. In sharp contrast to this, Delhi will be maintaining the position of the second most populous city in the world after Tokyo till 2025 with an estimated population of 32.9 million.²⁵ In such a condition, there will be seen an exorbitant rise in street vending, vehicles, pedestrians and holistically the overall urban traffic. These figures surely continue to ring an alarm in the minds of central government, city authorities, town planners and is already felt everyday among city inhabitants in the form of ever-brewing traffic, congestion and street appropriation. The question here arises that – Is there a means to regulate this explosion of urban areas? or Is ‘regulating’ or ‘controlling’ the right means to adopt against such a situation?

Looking into the population numbers above and congested urban situations as that of Netaji Subhash Junction and Shahjahanabad as a whole, in my view there should be no second thoughts with a general attitude of regulation or control. In fact, city and town planning policies and agendas since independence have always been headstrong with a caveat to regulate and control urban situations. Such regulation sensibilities are inevitable consequences that arose from the fact that town planners of the newly independent India have been blindly following town planning acts that were devised by the British officials. “Under these early acts, schemes could only be made for open suburban lands and not for built-up areas within the town. Ignoring the built-up areas within towns, and later dealing with them as exceptions to ‘norms’”²⁶ lead to the unavoidable situation of trying to control or regulate (and decongest) the already built areas that suffer from severe congestion. Therefore, urban planning, or town planning principles in Indian cities have always been practiced around the unselfconscious premise of ‘tabula rasa’. Planning strategies vis-à-vis the already existing areas are limited towards regulation-making or policy-making. “There are no serious studies of Indian cities based on conscious hypotheses. Under the circumstance, town planners have

no image of the city other than that derived from cultural, social and economic experiences different from theirs.”²⁷ These state of affairs renders the historic town as a mere dissociated realm, and the concepts of urban redevelopment, and regeneration are replaced frivolously with *control* and *regulation*.

Instead, the dissociated and congested street life in historic core of Shahjahanabad deserves reassessment; not only regulation wise or policy wise but also pertaining to everyday spatial experiences and usage of street space. Spatial analysis and spatial functioning of prime street nodes like Netaji Subhash Junction is as important as just regulating street life through policy making.

Let us consider the case of street vendors and understand the advantages and hazards of their functioning in street spaces. Firstly, street vendors and hawkers are a lot in number and they occupy every possible available space for hawking to earn their daily bread. It is almost impossible to maintain a head count on or keep a check on licensed or unlicensed vendors on a daily basis. It is mostly the local police and the municipal authorities and their patrol vans that keep a surprise check and raid vending sites on a regular basis. The vendors also keep a thorough check on the arrival timings, days, and even patterns of the raids by patrol vans. Every time the van comes, mobile street vendors quickly pack and conceal their goods or just vanish into the crowds. In these surprise visits by municipal workers, the most affected and harassed are the temporary static stall vendors and permanent vendors. One of the ways of legalizing street vendors is by issuing licenses. This way the municipal authorities would be able to keep a check on the number of vendors plying in each ward or part of the town/ city. “However, the experience with licensing has been very negative.”²⁸ As explained before, the process of licensing is very cumbersome and demands even the minutest of details about the vendors’ place of business, nature of business, description of goods sold etc.”²⁹ In some cases the vendors have to undergo this whole process every day to start their business. In most cases the licensing process is managed under the supervision of local MCD (Municipal Corporation of Delhi) authorities, with assistance from Delhi Police. Moreover the “numerical limits to such licenses” is limited and mostly kept way low than existing demand (or the number of vendors seeking licenses). These numerical limits are “justified on the argument that congestion in public places would thus be avoided.”³⁰

In actuality, the municipal authorities or the “local state’s power over hawkers does not come from acts of legalizing hawking, but from keeping their legal status in a constant state of flux,”³¹ and hence the cumbersome licensing formalities and limited numerical limits. By keeping the vendors’ status undecided, each of the ‘concerned’ authorities’ (municipal workers, local police, and licensing bodies) avenue for rent seeking (*haftas*) increases. A research study by Sharit K. Bhowmik provides with shocking evidence.

The police and municipal authorities extract rents for allowing them to operate. Studies on street vendors indicate that around 20 per cent of the meager earnings (Rs 40 – Rs 80 per day) of these people are paid as rents. It is estimated that rents collected from street vendors and cycle-rickshaw pullers in Delhi is a staggering Rs 50 crore daily (Rs 500 million). In Mumbai street vendors pay around Rs 400 crore as rents. At times of special

action by the municipal authorities on street vendors, rents increase 10-fold or more.
Vendors in these places were paying between Rs 50 and Rs 100 daily to municipal employees to warn them of an impending raid.³²

Referring to our earlier discussion on closure and downsizing of goods and industries, and keeping in mind the magnanimity of (illegal) revenue collected from street vendors, they certainly play an important role as dynamic and productive sector, attracting and sustaining labor in its own right.

This also opens up an alternative way of understanding street vending. “Although tempting, there is a great danger in applying a Foucauldian notion of ‘*governmental power*’³³ to understand the relationship between street vendors and state authorities. In other words, “the power of the state comes by the way of a very deliberate process of keeping hawkers perpetually in an uncertain state between legality and illegality.”³⁴ In fact the notion of governmentality and the subsequent power relations can be tracked back from the local police, to municipal workers, to the state and right back towards an “*obscurantist*”³⁵ center. The subordination of power from one authority to another eventually targeting street vendors and even the flow of rent seeking or bribes (haftas) are themselves kinetic in nature and they get materialized physically on the streets in the form of illegal subordination and designation of street space.

The shopkeepers extend shops and encroach sidewalks to enhance publicity and visibility of goods. In this context, the shopkeepers mostly maintain a monetary agreement with MCD workers and local police. In most cases, to cope up for their loss and many a times to further increase their clientele and lure more and more customers to their shops they sublet a part of the frontage of their shops or a portion of from sidewalk to known temporary and mobile vendors. In any case, vendors are bound to pay *haftas* to the local authorities. This way multiple parts of shop and building frontages, sidewalks, and road edges are disintegrated into smaller portions and designated to or claimed temporally by vendors. Once the police and municipal officials are gone after taking their part of the *dough*, the whole street (or street junction) transforms into a full-fledged market place. These police officials and municipal workers do succumb to such unethical deeds as demanding and accepting bribes, as they are themselves mostly under paid government employees.

The above explained scenario is a daily affair at Netaji Subhash Junction, surrounding areas, and most parts in Shahjahanabad. Apart from public places such as prime monuments or temples, these vendors hawk outside office buildings, busy streets, cycle rickshaw stands, car parking, outside hospitals, bus-stops and countless locations on street that is impossible to capture here.

It is indubitable that excessive street vending (particularly on sidewalks) deprives pedestrians of their space, hinders flow of vehicular traffic and cause traffic jams. These are the reasons that they have “come to be regarded as public nuisance by certain sections of urban population,”³⁶ which includes elite sections of society represented by residents’ associations (RWA’s – Resident Welfare Associations) and NGO’s. These hindrances or shortcomings act as a cue under the disguise of which municipal authorities too act promptly

to continue their malaise of eviction drills and extracting bribes. Ironically, as a matter of fact, it is not only the poorer section of societies that are benefitted from the services of vendors but also elites, and middle class families that pick up articles from them. Services like fruits, vegetables and even specialities in Indian snacks that are largely authentic street food of Delhi are easily available a one’s door step. In fact, a new classification among street vendors can be carried out on the basis of price ranges of their items and services. Vendors operating at sites that are located in elite and middle class colonies tend to be pricy than wholesale markets. They pay higher haftas and their remuneration is much higher than other vendors that mostly target poorer sections of society that include lower middle class families, rickshaw pullers, auto rickshaw and taxi drivers, tourists from villages and so on. At Netaji Subhash Junction, one can witness almost all forms of street vending due to vicinity of famous old Delhi markets, both a juncture and amalgamation of old and new residential areas, prime monuments, mosques and Mughal structures like Red Fort, Jama Masjid, local electronic markets, hindu and jain temples, about 10 to 12 government and private schools and an extensive mix of local and public transport ranging from rickshaws, auto-rickshaws, public and private carrier vans and buses.

But coming to our main concern, that street vendors not only provide easy accessibility to lower and upper income groups of society, but at the same time act as a sustainable model for recycling of goods and services, and reallocating employment in certain household and small scale industries. But it is unfortunate for the interests of vendors that their contribution to the society is “irrelevant to the municipal authorities” as well as to other elite, middle class and NGO groups that act as “self-proclaimed defenders of public space.”³⁷

According to a very significant judgement in a court case filed by a street vendor (operating at Janpath, Connaught Place, New Delhi) against MCD, claiming that the present laws against street vending “violated his fundamental rights, more specifically his right to carry on business or trade [Article 19(1)(g) of the Indian constitution],”³⁸ the Supreme Court ruled the following:

“if properly regulated according to the exigency of the circumstances, the small traders on sidewalks can considerable add to the comfort and convenience of the general public, by making available ordinary articles of everyday use for a comparatively lesser price. An ordinary person not very affluent, while hurrying towards his home after a day’s work can pick up these articles without going out of his way to find a regular market. The right to carry trade or business mentioned in Article 19(1)(g) of Constitution, on street pavements, if properly regulated cannot be denied on the ground that streets are meant exclusively for passing or re-passing and no other use.” (*Sodhan Singh vs NDMC, 1989*)

The above judgement by the Supreme Court is important because it highlights aspects of street vending and use of public space. The new ‘National Policy for Street Vendors’ follows the guidelines of the above Supreme Court judgement. The main objective of the policy is to: “provide and promote a supportive environment for earning livelihoods to the street vendors, as well as ensure absence of congestion and

maintenance of hygiene in public spaces and streets.”⁹⁰ [Nishant, please observe how the citation here is added to the sentence because it is less than 63 words. Very short citations are placed in quotes and are part of the sentence. Only long once, usually, about 63 words or longer, qualify to be indented. Please consult the Chicago manual of styles when in doubt.]

It states that, “if hawking is properly regulated and the right environment is created, it can certainly be a positive contribution to urban life, as the Supreme Court judgment notes. Moreover, urban development plans must take street vendors as part of planning process and only then can there be any semblance of order.”⁹⁰

The policy therefore stresses that “designation of vendors markets/ no-vending zones should not be left to the sole discretion of any civic or police authority but must be accomplished by a participatory process....no hawker/ street vendor should be arbitrarily evicted in the name of ‘beautification and clean up programmes undertaken by the states or towns should involve street vendors in a positive way as part of the beautification programme.”

In light of the above extracts from Supreme Court judgments and National Policy on Street Vendors, I would like to mention a recent disagreement that was published on November 5, 2012 in The Hindu (a local newspaper).⁴¹ According to this article after the adoption of National Policy of Street Vendors and the consequent Street Vendors’ Bill (Protection of Livelihood and Regulation of Street Vending Bill, 2012) introduced in Lok Sabha in the monsoon session has major shortcomings. NASVI (National Association of Street Vendors in India) national coordinator Arbind Singh expressed major objections on the concentration of power in the hands of local municipal bodies. The proposed bill disregarded the original draft of the policy which empowered Town Vending Committees (TVC’s) to have at least 40 per cent representation of street vendors as the final authority and decision making. This clearly unveils the absence of transparency, or a clear definition of the bill and once again puts street vendors’ rights at risk.

According to my research, the policy and the subsequent bill are the first and the only time when “the government has taken steps to regularize a major section of the self-employed.”⁴² But the reluctance and illegitimacy of the concerned authorities is vivid. There have been many proposals, and petitions filed in the past to restore the rights and dignity of street vendors but due to larger malaise afflicting the bureaucracy in general, all the action have always gone in vain. Instead, presently there exists a number of ordinances and amendments in the vending laws that add to the misery of this challenged sections of the street.

There is an inadequacy of research and potential analysis on the real need of the street and its capacity to accommodate those needs. Instead, “in step with the current focus of development discourse in India on urban infrastructure, the street is widely represented as a site of potential urban redevelopment.”⁴³ Also, “critical writing on street in India” and even research papers mentioned in this chapter “remains specialized and policy oriented, marginalizing the experience of everyday life.”⁴⁴

PROXIMITY OF BODIES IN SPACE I

EFFECTS OF STREET VENDING

Now when we have decided according to the present state of affairs at Netaji Subhash Junction that the main physical contents, functions or user subjects that we are focusing on are street commerce (i.e. the vendors), the locomotory realm (i.e. the vehicles) and the festivals and processions (i.e. cyclic events: weddings, processions etc.). It is clear that all these contents of streetscape are in a process of executing their actions/ functions; or they are performing some or the other kind of activity that leads to an event. In this chapter and for our own understanding and convenience I will refer to the happening or realization of the concerned activity or function (which is street vending in this particular section) as an event.

In this section for instance, we have covered a lot many number of events. For example, the event of ‘*selling*’ (goods) which not only concerns just street vendors, but also customers that stop by while they are on the move; or the event of ‘*designation*’, ‘*assignment*’ or ‘*subordination*’ of space to the vendors by shopkeepers or local police; or the event of vendors ‘*escaping*’ the MCD raids and so on. Hence, they all are kinetic events – either they involve movement, they are temporal or both. Vendors construct their own program for the event of selling. They orchestrate the available street space, and appropriate it to their own nature of work.

The coming together of vendors and their temporary paraphernalia (the stalls, baskets etc.), the customers (both on foot and on vehicles), their parked vehicles etc. generate activity pockets on the street. In this case (Illustration.....) the temporary stall vendor selling eatables gets surrounded by pedestrians, and other people who park their vehicles (two wheelers) right in front of the vendor so that they can take a pit stop for their snack and sit on their vehicles (or in a car in case the customer arrives in a car) and finish their food (or any other transaction with the vendor). This combinatorics of bodies, produces activity pockets or proximity relationships. This infers that the event of vending needs that amount of space so that the possible permutations and combinations of bodies conveniently fit to perform their actions. Some vending stalls need a large amount of space (10’by 6’ or 12’ by 8’) or some just need a footprint. It varies for different vending stalls according to occupation, types of goods, social relations and popularity of the vendor within the hawking location.

Due to the incessant amount of on-street parking the vendor is forced to squeeze in on a parking spot right at the edge of the carriageway. It should be noted that of the gross road width in this case 13 meters (40ft.), the road width left after parking is just 8 meters. This is the case when cars are parked normal to the flow of traffic or normal (perpendicular) to the length of the sidewalks and building frontages. After the street vending set up comes into play, the effective road width left for a two lane road is just 7 meters. As the radius of activity pocket or the proximity circle (or the area of the event) expands, it hinders the flow of traffic, and right of way (ROW) of pedestrians. At this point, it should be noted that the pedestrians themselves walk on the edge of the carriageway as there is hardly or no available space on sidewalks for



The combinatorics of the bodies involved in the event of vending (selling) produces activity pockets or proximity circles. It can be ascertained by the radius of these pockets and dynamics of proximity relationships about the amount of space needed for a hawker for a particular activity. Expansion of pocket or circle hinders the traffic flow, right of way of pedestrians. Many such events can be noted such as event of 'selling', event of 'designation' or 'subordination, event of 'escaping' of vendors from municipal raids and so on.

The issue of congestion at Netaji Subhash Junction (in this case due to street vendors cannot be alone seen as deviation from the modern paradigm, or merely as arenas for manifestations of power - rather it is a combination of both; a 'culturist' one with its own rhythm and logic. And this street section is an indigenous-modern section.

them to walk. At Netaji Subhash Junction, I want to establish the fact that there are hardly any sidewalks for pedestrians. This is not only the case with Shahjahanabad or Netaji Subhash Marg, but this is the case at most places in Delhi and NCR region. Sidewalks at many places are as narrow as 1.5' to 2', Most of them are not sturdy due to spurious job by MCD contractors. This is another major form of informality on the streets – the make, quality and durability of urban infrastructure provided by the government. Sidewalks that are 3' and wider are either taken up by vendors or shop encroachments at random places. Pedestrian movement is also hindered by absurd street furniture (or landscape elements) like bushes, tree surrounds, electrical or telephone service boxes, transformers etc. Most troublesome obstruction that prohibits pedestrians from using sidewalks are the never-ending stream of on-street car parking. There are so many sites at Netaji Subhash Marg where the cars are parked on the sidewalks along with two wheelers and bicycles. At a location like Netaji Subhash Junction where the land use is multi-diverse and the road width is less, on-street parking emerges as the biggest flaw on street. I will discuss the topic of vehicular parking in the next chapter on 'vehicles and traffic.'

Therefore, street vending results in the generation of activity pockets that in context of the above explained street menace hinders with the ROW of pedestrians and vehicles, Being a resident of Shahjahanabad, from my personal experiences in an around Netaji Subhash Marg (and Delhi in general) I am convinced that the underlying root of the issue of congestion does not lie alone in the fact that the assemblage of component street functions deviate from modern paradigm of a street section (i.e. "deviations from modern ideals"), nor can the street be seen alone as "manifestations of power, arenas on which forces of global capital and ideologies of neo-liberalism unfold."⁴⁵ Rather my perspective is an amalgamation of the two categories. It is a "culturist approach" with its own unique rhythms and logic of practice. To follow Jyoti Hosagrahar's concept, the street section at Netaji Subhash Junction is an indigenous-modern section. The street vending stalls and the resultant activity pockets can be seen as an archipelago of events in an ocean of dense urban traffic or vehicles and pedestrians. The assemblage floats with a kinetic motion of its own with irregular hindrances, ripples and resistance.

In any case, it is evident that we have landed with an irreversible modification to Netaji Subhash Marg. This old city junction is retrofitted by the Delhi town planner to represent the modern street section. As a result what we are left with is a negotiation – an incomplete project of modernity which is punctuated with indigenous forms of street commerce.

The most spectacular emerging urban condition out of this debate is that the kinetic city exhibits an elasticity to accommodate incremental fluctuations in the number of street vendors and vehicles. These become the 'improvised' events that reconfigure their program and production of space, as if "constructively working with disorder as in a transforming community."⁴⁶ Netaji Subhash Junction as of now stands firm for the concept of 'urban involution' coined by Clifford Geertz, understood as the endeavor in the total system to find a niche for everyone no matter how small it is. This implies that the condition of indigenous

modernity is in fact kinetic in nature. However, in the wake of population predictions and rising number of street vendors and vehicles, it is inevitable that this nature of elasticity will be lost; and the concept of involution will break down for the walled city of Shahjahanabad. We cannot afford to mishandle this special condition of ‘indigenous modernity’ that will fall at risk if stipulated to excessive pressure. In fact, a new classification of street vendors should be undertaken on the basis of the nature of their spatial practices, area required and probable sites of legal vending. Many of the vendors require water supplies, electricity connections and other paraphernalia that can be arranged for by the state or local authorities. As noted in nation policy for street vendors, the redevelopment process needs to be participatory rather than predatory. Street paces like sidewalks, road medians, and shop frontages needs to be rethought in terms of design and availability. Not to mention that this prescriptive commentary on the arrangements for street vending cannot be seen in isolation without corresponding prescriptions on erratic and overburdening vehicular traffic and parking problems. At the same time I believe that the issues discussed in this article regarding street vendors are descriptive yet succinct, and there always exists a risk wherein urban researchers romanticize the very agenda of legality, licensing and the number of street vendors. In other words, it is clear that the Indian urban condition is a slippery condition and one faces the predicament of striking a balance in the midst of the themes of binary distinctions – formal-informal, legal-illegal, organized-unorganized.

Notes

¹ The word hawker does not imply someone who engages in prostitution as is often the case in its usage in the American English.
² Bari, Abdul and Suryanarayana Murthy. Sense and the City: Dynamics of economy and culture in the historic cores of Hyderabad and Delhi. Dronah’s Context Journal, Vol. IX, Issue 2 (Autumn/ Winter) 2012, pp. 21-30.
³ Anjaria, J. Shapiro. Is there a culture of the Indian street? Paper presented at Streetscapes: a symposium on the future of the street http://www.india-seminar.com/2012/636/636_jonathan_s_anjaria.htm Accessed Sept. 2012
⁴ Bandyopadhyay, Ritajyoti and Curt Gambetta. The Problem. Paper presented at Streetscapes: a symposium on the future of the street http://www.india-seminar.com/2012/636/636_the_problem.htm Accessed Sept. 2012
⁵ Ibid.
⁶Soma Basu – Terra Viva, “India: Urban Planning Can Include Street Vendors—Activist,” *Global Information Network*, 05/10/2006, p. 1.

⁷ Bandyopadhyay, Ritajyoti and Curt Gambetta. The Problem. Paper presented at Streetscapes: a symposium on the future of the street. http://www.india-seminar.com/2012/636/636_the_problem.htm
⁸ Ibid.
⁹ Anjaria, J. Shapiro. Is there a culture of the Indian street? Paper presented at Streetscapes: a symposium on the future of the street. http://www.india-seminar.com/2012/636/636_jonathan_s_anjaria.htm Accessed Sept. 2012

¹⁰ Ibid.

¹¹ See *The Independent* (London), Friday, September 7, 2007, first edition. Advertising section, page 8.
[http://www.lexisnexis.com/hottopics/lnacademic/?verb=sr&csi=8200&sr=HLEAD\(The+women+street+vendors+of+Ahmedabad%2C+India%2C+have+peddled...\)+and+date+is+September](http://www.lexisnexis.com/hottopics/lnacademic/?verb=sr&csi=8200&sr=HLEAD(The+women+street+vendors+of+Ahmedabad%2C+India%2C+have+peddled...)+and+date+is+September). Accessed on 12 May 2013.
¹² Reinforced Plastics, ISSN 0034-3617, 1998, Volume 42, Issue 9, p. 6
¹³ Anjaria, Jonathan S. Street Hawkers and Public Space in Mumbai. Economic and Political Weekly, Vol.41, No.21 (May 27 – Jun 2, 2006), pp. 2140-2146
¹⁴ “*hafta*” or *rent seeking* is a euphemism for daily/ weekly bribes as informal token for permitting vending and hawking.
¹⁵ Chatterjee, Partha. Politics of the Governed: Reflections on Popular Politics in Most of the World. New Delhi: Permanent Black, 2004.
¹⁶ Bhowmik, Sharat K. National Policy for Street Vendors. Economic and Political Weekly, Vol.38. No.16 (Apr. 19-25, 2003), pp. 1543-1546
¹⁷ Ibid.
¹⁸ Bhowmik, Sharat K. and Debulal Saha. Street Vending in Ten Cities in India. June 2012 (for National Association of Street Vendors in India, Delhi) <http://www.streetnet.org.za/docs/research/2012/en/NASVIRreport-Survey.pdf> Accessed January 26, 2013
¹⁹ Ibid., 43
²⁰ Menon, A.G.Krishna. Imagining the Indian City. Economic and Political Weekly, Vol.32, No.46 (Nov. 15-21, 1997), pp. 2932-2936
²¹ Bhattacharya, Prabir. The Informal Sector and Rural-to-Urban Migration: Some Indian Evidence. Economic and Political Weekly, Vol.33, No. 21 (May 23-29, 1998), pp. 1255-1257 + 1259-1262
²² See, Prabir Bhattacharya, The Informal Sector and Rural-to-Urban Migration: Some Indian Evidence, Economic and Political Weekly, Vol.33, No. 21 (May 23-29, 1998). In India, NAS (National Accounts Statistics) that accounts for the occupational distribution throughout country “classifies the organization pattern of the economy under two headings” the organized and the unorganized sectors”, pp. 1255-1257 + 1259-1262
²³ Bhowmik, Sharat K. National Policy for Street Vendors. Economic and Political Weekly, Vol.38. No.16 (Apr. 19-25, 2003), pp. 1543-1546
²⁴ Bhowmik, Sharat K. and Debulal Saha. Street Vending in Ten Cities in India. June 2012 (for National Association of Street Vendors in India, Delhi) pg.6 <http://www.streetnet.org.za/docs/research/2012/en/NASVIRreport-Survey.pdf>
²⁵ United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs/ Population Division. World Urbanization Prospects: The 2011 Revision. pp. 6-7 http://esa.un.org/unup/pdf/WUP2011_Highlights.pdf
²⁶ Menon, A.G.Krishna. Imagining the Indian City. Economic and Political Weekly, Vol.32, No.46 (Nov. 15-21, 1997), pp. 2932-2936
²⁷ Ibid., 2934
²⁸ Bhowmik, Sharat K. National Policy for Street Vendors. Economic and Political Weekly, Vol.38. No.16 (Apr. 19-25, 2003), pp. 1543-1546
²⁹ Ibid.
³⁰ Ibid.
³¹ Anjaria, Jonathan S. Street Hawkers and Public Space in Mumbai. Economic and Political Weekly, Vol.41, No.21 (May 27 – Jun 2, 2006), pp. 2140-2146
³² Bhowmik, Sharat K. National Policy for Street Vendors. Economic and Political Weekly, Vol.38. No.16 (Apr. 19-25, 2003), pp. 1543-1546
³³ Anjaria, Jonathan S. Street Hawkers and Public Space in Mumbai. Economic and Political Weekly, Vol.41, No.21 (May 27 – Jun 2, 2006), pp. 2140-2146
³⁴ Ibid.
³⁵ Ananya Roy et al. “Worldling Cities: Asian Experiments and the Art of Being Global” (Chapter 10 - The Blockade of the World-Class City: Dialectical Images of Indian Urbanism *by Ananya Roy*) (West Sussex, UK: Blackwell Publishing Ltd. 2011), 262
Ananya Roy explains that these practices are an indication, and symbolic of not a weak, defunct or absent center or state but it is a restructuring of urban governance as “obscurantist democracy” of an “activist state.”
³⁶ Bhowmik, Sharat K. National Policy for Street Vendors. Economic and Political Weekly, Vol.38. No.16 (Apr. 19-25, 2003), pp. 1543-1546
³⁷ Ibid.
³⁸ Ibid.
³⁹ All above quotations are from the ‘Draft National Policy on Street Vendors’ prepared by the National Task Force on Street Vendors which was appointed by Ministry of Urban Development and Poverty Alleviation, Government of India. The surveys mentioned are: ‘Hawkers and the Urban Informal Sector: A Study conducted by Sharit K Bhawmik on behalf of National Alliance of Street Vendors of India (NASVI), 2001 (as cited in Bhowmik, Sharat K. National Policy for Street Vendors. Economic and Political Weekly, 2003)

⁴⁰ Bhowmik, Sharat K. National Policy for Street Vendors. Economic and Political Weekly, Vol.38. No.16 (Apr. 19-25, 2003), pp. 1543-1546

⁴¹ Article published in The Hindu on November 5, 2012. <http://www.thehindu.com/news/cities/Delhi/street-vendors-find-shortcomings-in-bill/article4066639.ece?css=print>

⁴² Bhowmik, Sharat K. National Policy for Street Vendors. Economic and Political Weekly, Vol.38. No.16 (Apr. 19-25, 2003), pp. 1543-1546

⁴³ Bandyopadhyay, Ritajyoti and Curt Gambetta. The Problem. Paper presented at Streetscapes: a symposium on the future of the street. 6/8

⁴⁴ Ibid.

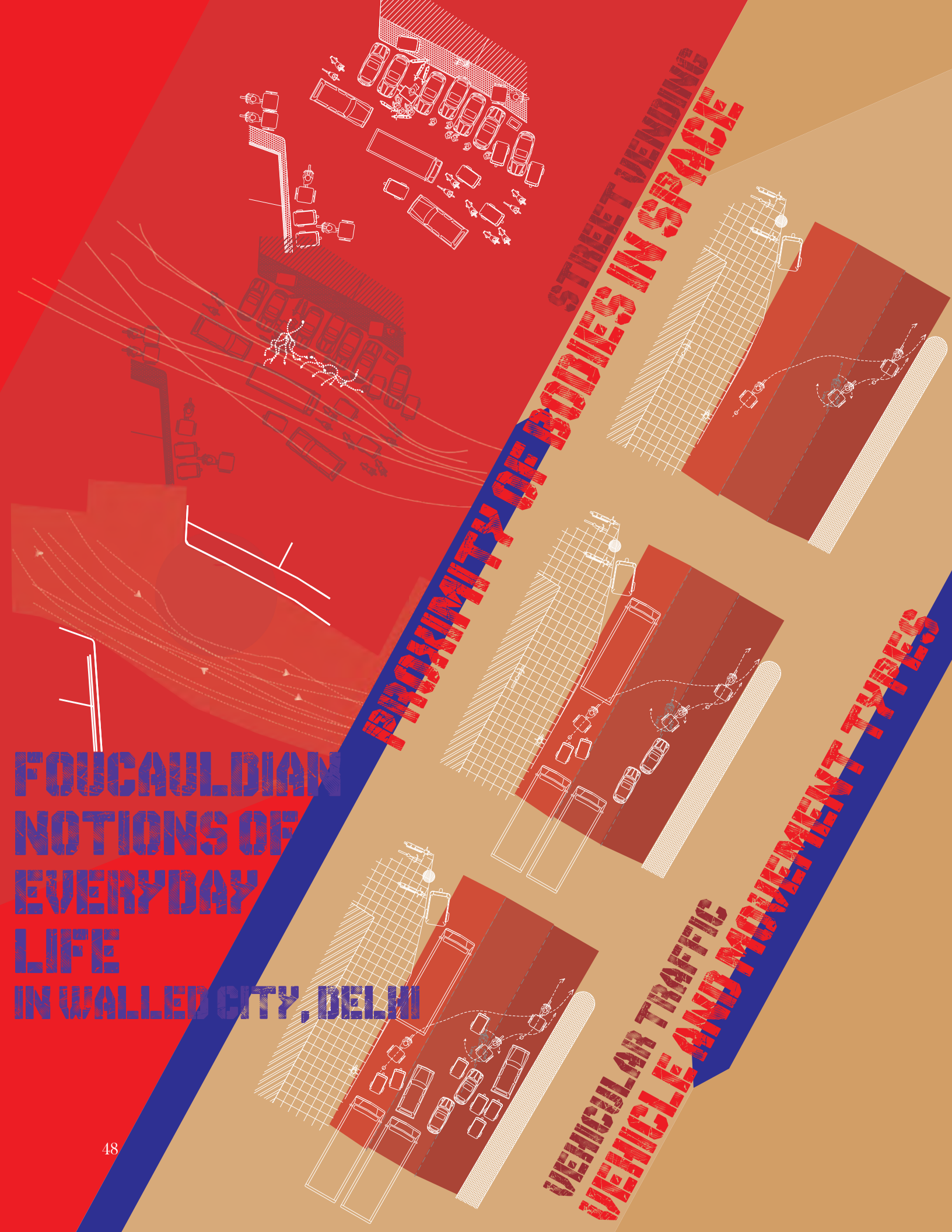
⁴⁵ Anjaria, J. Shapiro. Is there a culture of the Indian street? Paper presented at Streetscapes: a symposium on the future of the street

http://www.india-seminar.com/2012/636/636_jonathan_s_anjaria.htm Accessed Sept. 2012

⁴⁶ Dell, Christopher. Tacit Urbanism (Kolkata Case). Rotterdam” Post Editions, 2009. 40

3. VEHICULAR TRAFFIC

Vehicular traffic at Netaji Subhash Junction comes under the modality of ‘berserk control.’ A sense of order in a state of chaos; once again due to excessive number, multiple types of vehicles and modes of transport. In the early twenty first century, the idea of vehicular traffic as a means of “freedom of circulatory movement”⁴¹ and conveyance is reduced to a matter of attributive ‘*order*’ - a sense of negotiation for being mobile, or to move on foot and by private vehicles, or being served by public transport facilities. “The modern socio-technological phenomenon of traffic”; which has always been seen as “proper ordering”⁴² and disciplined flow of goods, people and commerce is actually contested. And this contestation can be seen in the form of excessive congestion, traffic jams, frequent altercations, accidents, unavailability of parking etc. Historically rooted and the primary reason for this disruption of traffic, which is also the premise of this chapter is that “in India modern motorized transport had to operate alongside earlier, seemingly ‘pre-modern’, modes of street life.”⁴³ This leads us to say that introduction of the machine (the automobile) that now functions alongside; rather proliferates over other long standing traditional ways and activities of street life in India such as street vending and extensive pedestrian movement. Hence, everyday technologies (everyday machines and automobiles) i.e. buses, cars, rickshaws, autorickshaws, bicycles etc. that are in question in this chapter bring with them and demand a sense of technological articulation or to become “the modern bodies of its subjects to conform to its dictates, to obey its steely governance.”⁴⁴ Having said this,



Netaji Subhash Junction becomes a perfect site for such an inspection where this juxtaposition is highly conspicuous and one can easily find the above said multiple users of the street (buses, cars, non-motor vehicles, pedestrians, vendors etc.). The main focus of this chapter is to analyze how present street life at Netaji Subhash Junction has assumed and receiving this juxtaposition of motorized traffic. The vital underpinning to this analysis upon which I will elaborate later in the chapter will be the implicit “bio-power”⁵ that automobiles assume which compels pedestrians, commuters (passengers) and other street users to adhere to an automobile-orchestrated environment. The environment that questions and contests the so called ‘everyday state’; where everyday technologies or keepers of technology that constitute traffic exercises (bio)power over commuters and passengers that use these vehicles and even those who own and drive (private) vehicles, and eventually become a part of vehicular traffic. Street space at Shahjahanabad is a paradigmatic demonstration of how old city streets were retrofitted for vehicular traffic along with other street activities. followed by “constraints of regulation and control,”⁶ and hence “foster the expansion of late colonial policing.”⁷ Vehicles and vehicular traffic was indeed “in part framed by colonial needs and preconceptions and by political imperatives and regulatory aspirations of the late-colonial state,”⁸ However I would like to mention as an early disclaimer that traffic as a late-colonial condition have since long transcended the colonial (and post-colonial) trends since the 1990’s when the “idea of new post-industrial globalized metropolis began to circulate in India.”⁹ The trends prevalent in Indian automotive industry as a result of “economic liberalization and pressure to connect with global economy”¹⁰ has eventually seen exponential increase in number of private vehicles on Indian roads. “This boom has been triggered primarily by two factors: the Indian Government’s liberalization measures and increase in disposable incomes and standards of living of middle class families”¹¹ – which further enhances a greater assertion of “the new global bourgeois vision of twenty-first century urbanity.”¹² This was the vision of unhindered access and movement of middle class citizens. These are some reasons that have recently been driving the soaring number of vehicles on Delhi roads and increasing need of parking space. This causes acute traffic jams and sometimes chronic congestion on major roads.

According to recent government statistics, a newspaper article stated that in 2012 there were 65 lakhs (6.5 million) vehicles in Delhi as compared to just 5.62 lakhs (562,000) in 1981. Other studies and articles indicate that there were already more than 75 lakh vehicles in Delhi in 2012. With Delhi now outgrown its existing size, it is getting connected with adjacent states of Haryana and Uttar Pradesh. In these conditions number of intra-city motorized trips are likely to increase by 80-160 lakhs by 2021. Total number of vehicles in Delhi is more than combined total vehicles in other metro cities of Mumbai, Chennai and Kolkata. On an average over 1000 vehicles are added to the city roads every day. About 11 per cent of total area in the city is being used as parking space.¹³



FOUCAULDIAN NOTIONS OF EVERYDAY VEHICULAR TRAFFIC IN WALLED CITY, DELHI

Some things to be noted at this point are that firstly, it is indubitable that the simplest way to curb acute traffic jams is to limit car production and even stringent licensing and ownership norms for private vehicles. Although such claims are easy to say, they require a much greater understanding of economic and political intricacies and global challenges faced by the Indian automotive industry – nor it is my main concern here. Secondly, there has been several ongoing debates in the last decade about adopting traffic restraint policies in Delhi as have been tried out in different countries. Policies like “cordon/ congestion pricing, parking policies, carrying capacity, pedestrian zones”¹⁴ etc. that have been implemented successfully in cities like Singapore, Hongkong and Chicago. Although a research paper on *forestalling transport chaos in Delhi* noted about a decade ago that such policies are only “partial answers to Delhi’s transportation problems. They deal only with an efficient and equitable use of limited resource,”¹⁵ and this is not the case as far as Delhi is concerned. However, these policies are vital part of the argument that I am going to present in this chapter. My main concern here is to decode the vehicular traffic movements/ patterns and some basic reasons for deliberate disruption of traffic, either by evading traffic rules or more appropriately habitually disrupting traffic. Traffic certainly has evolved as an ensemble of rules to which vehicles (and the drivers and passengers) adhere to. The whole notion of transit and mobility abides by the rules of the road. Our aim here is to understand the subtle deviations that occur not only due to vehicle interactions with other user subjects like street vendors, pedestrians etc., but also vehicular interactions and concatenations amongst vehicles themselves on the road. This will “illuminate the inner histories and local narratives”¹⁶ of this particular junction. In order to do so I will follow the regular course of classifying different user subjects of the street that constitute traffic and simultaneously decipher for each one of them as to how they disrupt orderly pace of traffic that is otherwise meant to be achieved. Once again these user subjects, namely buses, cars, auto rickshaws, cycle rickshaws, bicycles and lastly the pedestrians are supposedly the formal elements of the street that constitute the very formal function of vehicular traffic movement. Although the idea here is to identify how these formal entities eventually end up contributing informalities within the act of constituting traffic. Therefore, (modern) traffic in India can be understood as an “assemblage of many different but increasingly commonplace technologies operating together at street level – or not infrequently, colliding and coming into conflict with one another.”¹⁷ I will examine that, at Netaji Subhash Junction and its vicinity, the operation (use) of above mentioned vehicles and operators (users) of the same happen to indulge in an unselfconscious act of acquiring “perverse delight in disregarding all traffic rules,”¹⁸ for enhancement of “earning a living, for asserting authority (or proclaiming superiority over ‘other’ user subjects), for enhancing physical and social mobility, or for recreation and pleasure.”¹⁹ These erratic traffic movements are otherwise overlooked as habitual and banal traits. I am in consonance with the regulatory

and policy bindings that need to be devised and applied to vehicular production, vehicle ownership, and traffic. But looking into the already existing magnanimous number of vehicles in Delhi these policies and regulations will be well informed and will work efficiently only if public users and keepers of vehicles are educated and made aware of the informalities they tend to create. Hence, once again without romanticizing the agenda of unhindered access and thoroughfare, the regulatory policies need to be implemented in conjunction with educating the public, “perhaps to a remarkable extent, to recognize that certain measures or restrictions are ultimately in their own best interest” and that urban transport policy decisions cannot be “taken behind the scenes with no public awareness of these and no public involvement.”²⁰

Before starting with the classification exercise of different modes of street transport, it should be noted that with the increasing population of Delhi which is a whopping – more than 16 million (2011) people, there has been a constant increase in demand for urban transport. However, the increasing traffic and congestion problems lead the authorities to stop giving permits and licenses for new (privately owned) public transport vehicles like rickshaws, auto rickshaws and buses. The government owned DTC (Delhi Transport Corporation) buses however do not fall in this category since, a large population uses buses as the daily mode of transport and with such population numbers DTC buses always fall short in numbers. But coming back to the point of transportation authorities restricting number of permits and licensing (and for once overlooking the otherwise prevailing black marketing of permits, licenses and the involved bribery) seems to be a legitimate call. Firstly, because rickshaws and auto rickshaws that already bear the identity of falling into the category of unorganized (or informal) modes of transport, due to their form, size, increasing numbers, agility and their subsequent movement patterns in overall traffic prove to be erratic and disrupting. It is indubitable that rickshaws and auto rickshaws prove to be an asset to the citizens, providing mobility till one’s doorstep (especially for women and children). But on these basis the transport department cannot freely issue new permits over the counter. More to say, that the increasing demand needs to be catered by striking a holistic balance between number of DTC buses, private buses, auto rickshaws, and cycle rickshaws. It has been otherwise observed and something that has now been a trend on Delhi roads is that mostly passengers are unable to find the desired mode of transport or more specifically they find difficulty to choose the optimal means out of the available choices due to chaotic traffic, overcrowded buses, unavailability or scarce number of buses on specific routes, overcharging auto rickshaws and so on. It has been my personal experience where I have many a times struggled as to where exactly one should ‘look for’ or ‘wait’ for the desired transport means. In other words, there is an absolute absence of clarity (and in some cases even non-existence) regarding vehicle stops (i.e. passenger pick-up and drop off points), vehicle stands and parking spaces. Although DTC and subsequently the municipal planners have provided bus stops and bus stands at specific places, but due to overburdened and erratic traffic movements generated by other vehicles these DTC buses are hardly able to stop at specified locations. The private buses ply mostly under

the influence of fare-driven sensibilities and hence they drive rash and appropriate their stopping locations. In case of auto rickshaws and cycle rickshaws that practically do not possess any specific locations in the city as vehicle stops or parking spaces. They are expected to be “perpetually on the move, never once stopping to rest, pick up passengers, eat, or use the toilet.”²¹ My main point here is that before I go into the examination of vehicular movements leading to appropriation of street space and traffic, it should be clear that frivolously increasing number of vehicles is an inadequate solution towards meeting transport demands.

RICKSHAWS AND OTHER NON-MOTOR VEHICLES

Let us consider the case of rickshaws. Cycle rickshaws and auto-rickshaws are basically formulated from a tri-cycle design or a three wheeler design that were readapted from Japanese and Italian designs respectively. Cycle rickshaws are mechanically pulled by rickshaw pullers while auto-rickshaws are motorized. Both widely operate in most Indian cities. They have a carrying capacity of 2-3 passengers, and act as an excellent mode of intra-urban mobility bridging the gap between commuters’ points of departure and destinations to other transport means like buses and metro trains etc. Especially they play a big role in the mobility of women and children, and the elderly who are highly dependent on rickshaws for short, household and everyday trips to nearby markets, bazaars etc.

Immediate surroundings at Netaji Subhash Junction are characterized by around 15 to 20 small, mid-sized and higher secondary public and private schools. There is a huge network of cycle rickshaw pullers and auto-rickshaws that cater to these school-going children as pick up and drop off services. Morning hours of 7:00am to 8:30am and 12:30pm to 3:00pm in the afternoon, most arterial roads emanating from this junction are jampacked by cycle rickshaw traffic. These are the peak times, especially afternoons when school children are getting back home and the traffic situation is clogged and chaotic.

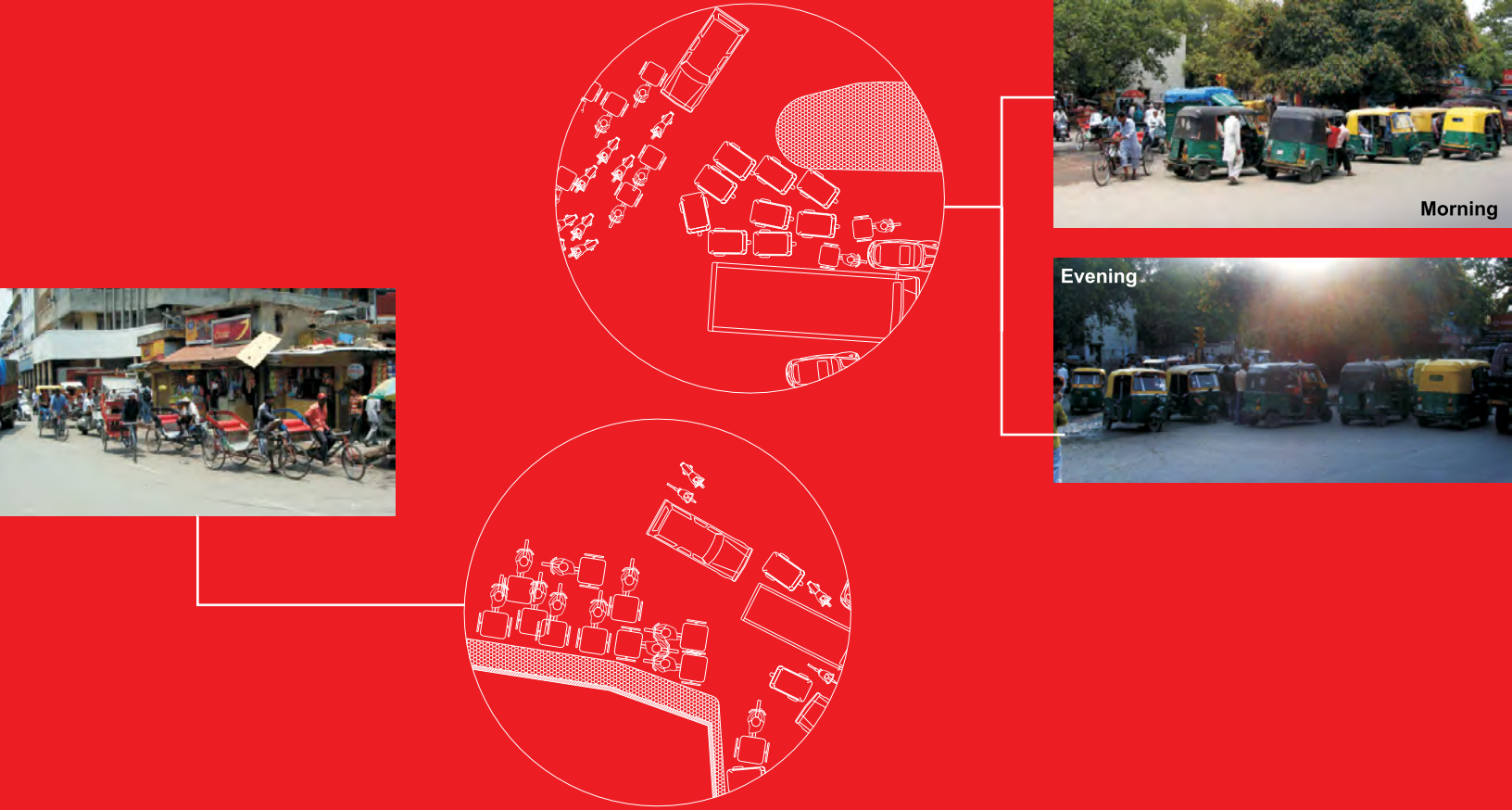
Netaji Subhash Junction being a juncture of five roads and an unavoidable point of concurrence for people and school children in transit is prone to congested traffic. Rickshaws are also used as goods carrier services for commercial purposes. As noted earlier, Netaji Subhash Junction and its vicinities are characterized by extensive local electronic retailers, spare part dealers of home appliances, automobile parts and a hub of publishing houses. These commercial establishments hire goods carrier services both in the form of cycle rickshaws and auto rickshaws. Cycle rickshaws prove to be cheaper as compared to the motorized ones. But due to heavy traffic, dense residential zones co-existing with commercial establishments, and the presence of large number of schools in this area, municipal authorities have put regulations on the transit of commercial vehicles. According to Masterplan Delhi – 2021, Shahjahanabad was delineated as ‘*special area*’ or special zone where no commercial vehicles were allowed to enter before 5:00pm in the evening and 6:00am in the morning, or were allowed only under the case of special permission. These regulations were imposed in the wake of increasing congestion on Shahjahanabad roads



due to diverse street life, extensive markets, prevailing informal sector, a large number of schools in the area, commercial warehouses and many more reasons. The main reason also being the fact that Netaji Subhash Marg and other arterial roads connecting it were the prime routes that lead to old city markets of Chandni Chowk area which is a traditional hub of paper and printing businesses, handicrafts, garments, book retailers, jewellery bazaars and much more. However, the restrictions on commercial vehicles entering Shahjahanabad have hardly been implemented. The entry or exit of these vehicles regulated by local police and traffic department have ever since been overlooked. It is rather converted into a money-making strategy wherein regular *haftas* (bribes) and fines are imposed on the drivers of such vehicles. I have been a personal witness of such a situation in the area of Daryaganj of whose one of the main entry points is Netaji Subhash Junction. This area is extensively populated by book publishing houses. Most arterial roads and even secondary and tertiary roads in Daryaganj get congested at regular occasions and not only at afternoon times when there is enormous school rush.

Therefore, the congestion at Netaji Subhash Junction is not just due to school rush or rickshaw traffic, but also because of other large number of commercial vehicles (like tempos, trucks and commercial rickshaws etc.) that share streetspace at all times. These are some challenges and basic schema of conditions under which the rickshaw sector at this junction operate. However, there can be identified other interrelationships of rickshaw pullers and drivers with other user subjects of the street that leads to a larger assembly of this sector and its contribution to informalities in the streetscape. “Besides a huge number of rickshaw pullers, various mistries (repairmen or cycle mechanics), local owners of fleets of cycle rickshaws, body makers, shopkeepers selling cycle parts and offering quick hand pumping facilities, tea stall owners and many others are involved in this rickshaw sector.”²² In other words they are a source of employment to a large number of informal workers.

The vocation of cycle rickshaw pulling and three wheeler (auto rickshaw) driving exhibits similar traits as that of street vending, discussed in the previous chapter. Increasing rural-to-urban migrants; “the poorest of the poor”²³ among them in search of livelihood for themselves and their families that they have left behind in villages compels them to enter “rickshaw pulling which is the best available option due to ease of entry.”²⁴ Estimating their number is not only a difficult task but an impossible one. “The availability of second-hand, locally made, repaired, and stolen machine parts”²⁵ have favored the mobilization of this sector and an eventual increase in their number. Many rickshaw pullers sublet or rent out their rickshaws to other pullers for a second shift; rickshaw pulling being highly tiring and labor intensive in nature. They live, sleep and eat in shanties. Rather, they do eat ‘from’ the shanties. They eat from street vendors (mostly permanent stalls) who sell cheap food on sidewalks. At Netaji Subhash Junction one can find many vending shacks that do come and go away with time, but they function mostly as mini-restaurant stalls for the poor. These street vending establishments create unhygienic conditions on the street, without proper electricity, water and drainage amenities. They cook out in the open, surrounded by stray animals, people tired of all day long



physical labor, homeless people and several other vandals and contemptible personalities. Such is the condition with many other cycle repair shops, cigarette-tobacco vendors etc. A considerable number of rickshaw pullers spend the night on city's footpaths, or on roadside edges sometimes sleeping on their own rickshaws. They mostly dwell in clusters on roadsides and sidewalks. These food kiosks, rickshaw clusters, the air in those street corners thickened by fumes from cheap food being cooked on sidewalks, indented with smoke from *beedis* (local Indian handmade cigarettes rolled out of leaves), coal, marijuana and noises of laughter, cursing, carousel and drunkenness – all these conditions construct a very ad hoc and unhygienic social construct of and for the poor. This is the main reason that the vending and rickshaw sector remain distinctly dissociated and looked down upon by other upper classes of the society. In other words, the rickshaw sector and its temporary architectural appearance, its subsequent functioning and operations prove to be a physical and visual misfit for a contemporary road section. By 'temporary architectural appearance', I refer to the impermanence of the ad hoc and makeshift structure of street vending spaces, cycle rickshaw dwellings and even parking spots.

The ad hoc face of this sector overpowers other advantages and their contribution to economy and urban mobility. "Everyday technologies"²⁶ like cycle rickshaws are used by all classes of society, from poor to lower and middle classes and mostly by the rich who are relentless to walk to or from their cars towards their shops and homes. Cycle rickshaws are a vital contribution and support intra-urban mobility; and they have to be in turn supported by other actors of this sector like sidewalk vendors selling affordable food. There has been absolute absence of any efforts whatsoever towards the upliftment of this sector of local urban transport. For example, a proposition that was experimented in Singapore in 1920's that although failed as a municipal effort at that time is mentioned by Brenda S. Yeoh in *Contesting space*, where hawker activity was recognized as "necessary or desirable". Hawker spaces on open streets were transplanted to "specially erected municipal shelters"²⁷ opened at strategic locations and most street spaces relieved of hawker congestion. Although Yeoh notes that in the coming year by late 1920's there were as much unlicensed hawkers plying on the streets of Singapore as licensed ones who were forced in the shelters. Yeoh describes the growth of hawker population as having "its own inexorable logic and every decrease in the number of licensed hawkers was counterbalanced by increase in the number of unlicensed hawkers."²⁸ In reference to this Sharit K. Bhowmik in a review on street vendors in Asia noted that Singapore "must be the only country in the world where all street vendors are licensed."²⁹ Most notable was a 1971 national program that aimed at building food centers and markets to resettle licensed street food hawkers. "The program provided basic stall facilities and services such as piped potable water, electricity, and garbage collection and disposal. It is the duty of the Hawkers' Department to check that there are no unlicensed hawkers and plays an active role in ensuring that the hawkers keep their environment clean and do not place constraints on pedestrians and even inspect all stalls and see that they abide by the Environmental Public Health Act of 1968."³⁰ By 1988, there were 184 such hawker centers and by 2003, 45 such centers were upgraded. Bhowmik notes that there



is an emergence of younger, better educated street vendors in Singapore and there is a noticeable change in the quality and contribution of this sector to local economy. In Delhi and most cities in India, and especially in a dense urban condition like Shahjahanabad the rickshaw sector along with street vending sector continues to be under bureaucratic clutches to be able to evolve as and seen as an integral part of urban design and urban planning strategies.

The motorized *auto-rickshaws* or commonly known as ‘auto’ or ‘a three wheeler’ in Delhi and other parts of India with little differences in name, color, shape, size also serve as an important part of transport infrastructure. Like the non-motorized cycle rickshaws, they not only function as an excellent mode of intra-urban mobility but they can also travel long distances. They act as an alternative for private transport for families who cannot afford (or do not own) private cars or two wheelers. They are an iconic mode of transport benefitting all sections of societies; women in particular, bridging the gap between other mean of transport. Despite all the advantages and contribution of this sector, “Delhi’s urban environment is set against the auto-rickshaw.”³¹ The auto-rickshaw sector follows suit the informal schema of disorganization like the street vendors and cycle-rickshaw pullers. Here too, “the issue is one of regulation and management, not mechanics and technology.”³² According to a report there were about 83,000 licensed auto-rickshaws in Delhi by 2010. The count of unlicensed auto-rickshaws remains indefinite. Many reports suggest that there were about 1 lakh (100,000) auto-rickshaws in Delhi by 2010. There are two kinds of auto-rickshaw drivers in Delhi: renter drivers and owner drivers. Owner drivers own the vehicle; they have permits (licenses) and manage the paperwork too. Rent drivers rent their vehicles from owner drivers or other parties for specific durations. Mostly 12 hour or 24 hour shifts. But there stands several hindrances for the drivers to own or rent an auto-rickshaw.

The auto-rickshaw sector in Delhi has a very bad reputation. “They are seen as rude, aggressive and greedy: never willing to run by government-approved fare meter; often asking for fifty to one hundred per cent above the meter fare.”³³ Research study by Simon Harding and Arshad Hussain puts forth some of the reasons as to why this sector and thus about 1 lakh (100,000) auto-rickshaw drivers behave in a faulty manner. Their paper unpacks several problems faced by auto-rickshaw drivers by conducting field interviews, trying to ascertain driver profiles, their problems and laying out key policies that have been undertaken in the past leading to increase in the cost of an auto-rickshaw or owning and renting one on road. Due to some litigations facilitated by numerous environmentalists and NGO’s, two policies were undertaken by the Supreme Court and subsequently by Delhi Government which increased the price of auto-rickshaws from ₹ 60,000 in the 1990’s to ₹ 400,000 and more at present. Both the policies; one in 1997 and the other in 1998 were aimed at modifying the fuel emission machinery in the auto-rickshaw. The first one required all auto-rickshaws to attach catalytic converters to their machinery while the latter required replacement of the entire fleet of 2 stroke – petrol run auto-rickshaws in Delhi with CNG (Compressed Natural Gas) run machines. This not only increased the on-road cost of machines but accentuated legal

formalities and monetary requirements to own or rent auto-rickshaws for the poor migrant drivers. Converting existing petrol-run machinery into CNG machines, renting out or buying the same from financiers on loans, procuring licenses and permits for commercial driving etc. are some of the many steps involved that require cumbersome pursue for owning or renting a machine. The increasing cost of the machines, black marketing of permits, involved bribery and painstaking legal procedures encumber the drivers in debts and traipse of the legal systems for this sector. I would not go into much detail about the legal problems and bureaucratic level hindrances faced by auto-rickshaw drivers which run parallel, along with those detailed out earlier in case of street vendors and non-motorized rickshaws.

Everyday technologies like cycle rickshaws continue to be trivial, “timeless and traditional hazards to motorized road-users” and government authorities. Let us consider bicycles and bicycle riders for instance. In the contemporary traffic situation, less has been achieved for their ease and thoroughfare, despite making arrangements like separate bicycle and pedestrian lanes. Two-wheeler traffic in Delhi pays no regard to these separate lanes. In dense situations and during peak hours, two-wheelers are often found racing over pedestrian pathways and bicycle lanes. This is not just the case at Netaji Subhash Junction, but even on wide modern avenues leading to India Gate (or the War Memorial Arch) in the city of New Delhi. Motorized, modern vehicles have taken over the road in Old Delhi and New Delhi alike. Their increasing numbers with every passing day results in urban congestions not only at peak hours of the day but panic and haste among Delhi vehicles in simple situations like rain. In the midst of all this squalor and chaos, humbler modes of transport like bicycles are marginalized and neglected. The contemporary road sections not only lack amenities for their ease and right of way, but in most cases it seems impossible to accommodate all kinds of vehicles. There is a “perceived indignity of the bicycle” on Delhi roads that has increasingly now been seen as a “subaltern mode of transport”³⁴ for those who cannot afford motorbikes or cars. They hardly have ever been able to be recognized by colonial and post-colonial regimes that “were rarely able (or disposed) or even interested to monopolize these simple machines for themselves and which passed with seeming rapidity and apparent ease into the work regimes, entrepreneurial enterprises, recreational activities, social lives, and cultural aspirations of a significant portion of colonial and post-colonial population. Therefore, the study of traffic and in this case the informalities to vehicular traffic contributed by non-motor vehicles like rickshaws should arguably be seen as a “study of social life and material culture, a user-based, people-oriented study rather than a state-driven, externally envisioned one.” Gregory Clancey points out vis-à-vis a present day perspective in Asia, that there seems to be “something of a disconnect” been the ‘classical’ history of technology in Asia, with its emphasis on grand colonial and national projects and “the present dense landscape of Asia-made and Asian-used devices, many of them personal, mobile, electronic, and lively, but indeterminate in their genealogies.”

In the same vein, there seems to be a lag wherein the cycle of evolution of simple, mechanical, non-motorized vehicles has been defunct in accordance with modernization quotient of Indian streets. It should

be noted that this not only refers to the evolution of cycle-rickshaws or non-motorized vehicle design, but it refers to the evolution of design-research of the entire rickshaw sector that also comprises urban actors like street vendors, vehicle repairmen etc. and their movement features within vehicular traffic and functioning in the streets.

MOTORIZED VEHICLES – PUBLIC AND PRIVATELY OWNED TWO AND FOUR WHEELERS

Motorized vehicles comprise of motorbikes, scooters, cars, trucks and buses. Indian street faces challenges to accommodate a large number of vehicles; especially the cars and two wheelers that have been increasing at an exponential rate in Delhi. Once again I could not escape but provide disclaimers and points to be noted before starting this section; something that needs to be considered as given for our site. The urban parameters that we are dealing with here in an Indian condition are highly dynamic. Each time we change our topic of discussion, “these parameters need refinement and up-gradation”³⁵ and sometimes revision. Studying vehicle movement types will establish a deeper understanding of the heterogeneity of present city center mechanisms prevalent in Indian metropolitan cities. The important urban node at Netaji Subhash junction is such a city center, not necessarily a physically manifested one (static); but a point of concurrence and a site for reconciling “a matrix of intervening interests.”³⁶ Delhi is characterized by such multi-nuclei, decentralized city center sites that act as important urban nodes where street components like vending, traffic, crowd etc. should be inspected, and regulated (read mobilized) from time to time. Metropolitan life in cities like Delhi and Mumbai are highly dependent on fast, adaptive, coherent and dense transport infrastructure. Business and revenue is generated at every possible corner of the city. From big corporate parks to your doorstep, there is some or the other, big or small kind of enterprise present. Home – to workplace – back to – home culture keeps the city busy and in a cyclic routine. Millions of people travel through various modes of transport to reach important places at intended times.

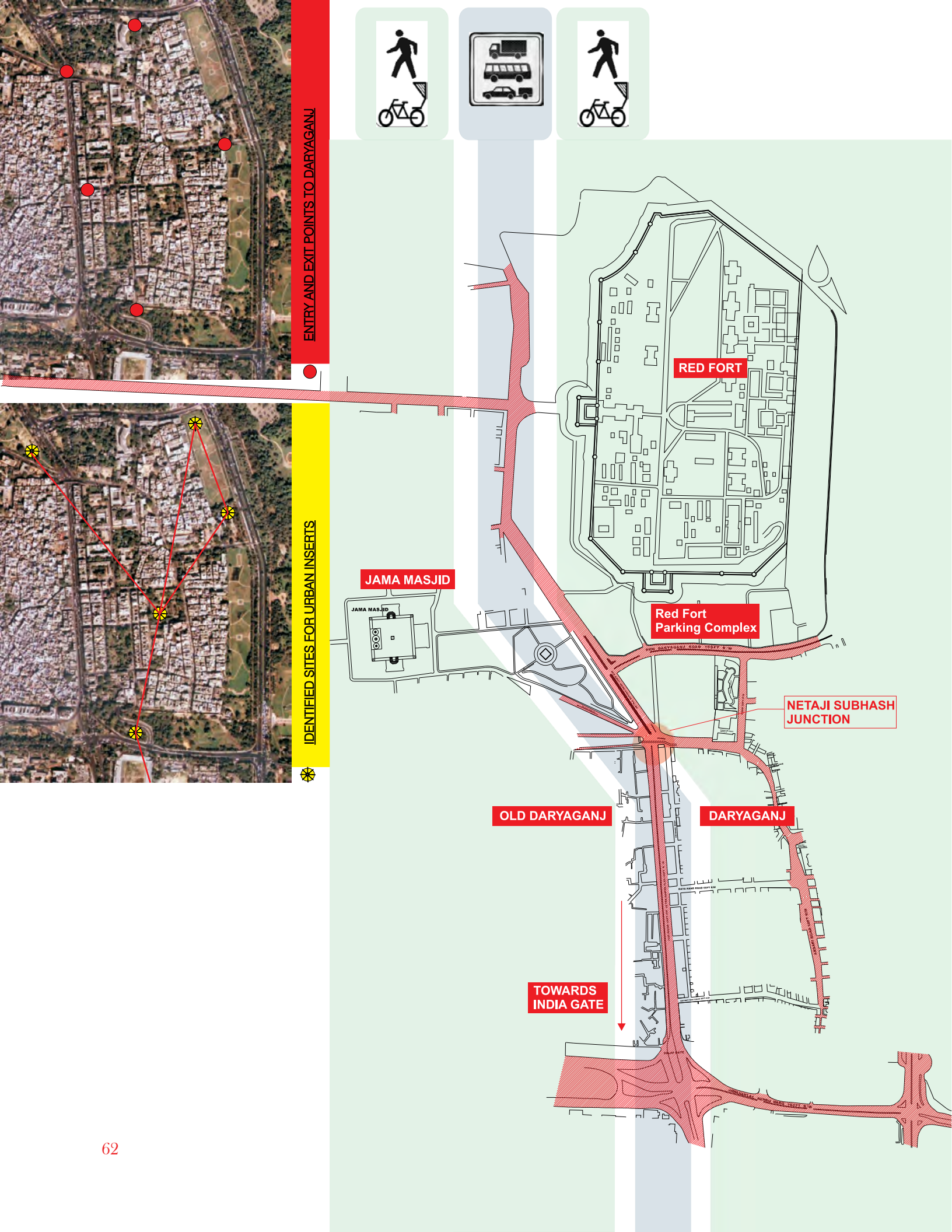
VEHICULAR TRAFFIC AND URBAN FORM

In this fast way of life, cars, buses and motorbikes constitute the superstructure of vehicular traffic in Delhi. They move between the speed range of 10 km/hr to 90 km/hr through various kinds of urban fabrics, shuttling on satellite city highways, through wide New Delhi roads, or through urban villages, or meshed fabric of Old and North-east Delhi. This motion of vehicles is something very hard to explain. Netaji Subhash junction bears a unique meshed street character. With winding roads, big junctions, surrounded by dense urban fabric, and agglomerate “peri-urban sites.”³⁷ The commercial edge or the commercial strip behaves like a bazaar form. Building facades of these peri-urban sites become part of the kinesis of road traffic. One thing to be noted at this point is the concept of *main road* (or the Indian version of primary

road). The scenes narrated (and depicted), through graphics and drawings in this thesis are so done, keeping in mind the dynamics of the main road or primary road of a district. Netaji Subhash junction is a major junction on such a main road of Shahjahanabad or Old Delhi. From the junction and the main road of our site emanates many secondary and tertiary roads. I do not think it is necessary at this time to bring up the shocking statistics for increasing number of vehicles on Delhi roads. Instead I would like to focus on two very important aspects that the use of private automobiles entail. *Lane* Driving and *Parking* Issues. The main road is the street type where once can at least identify or decipher the concept of *lane driving* embedded in the traffic. These main roads comprises of all the street components – heavy traffic, street vending, pedestrians, on-street parking, shops, bus stops, bazaars, malls, institutions etc. Mostly, the secondary and tertiary roads are more, or as busy as the main road. All the three types of roads, travel through Delhi’s dense fabric types where streets both wide and narrow are surrounded by peri-urban sites with minimum setbacks, common walls on three sides; where commercial sector or the commercial edge or strip behaves like a bazaar. The effective width of the road left after on-street car parking on both sides of the road is autogenously divided into fast traffic lanes. For busy street junctions like Netaji Subhash Marg, it is hard to say that a strict lane driving is followed.

TRAFFIC–RESTRAINT POLICIES

At this point I would like to bring up the discussion on “traffic-restraint policies”³⁸ as mentioned by Sanjay Mishra in a paper titled *Forestalling Transport Chaos in Delhi*. He explains the main purpose of these policies as means of discouraging the use of private automobiles. Firstly the policy of *Cordon/ congestion pricing* which involves the private automobiles entering a particular district to “pay a charge,”³⁹ which in a way means that if you use the road (city) infrastructure and, your private vehicle adds to the rush of vehicular traffic in and around a particular district like Shahjahanabad (or other CBD’s), you will need to pay a price for that to the city. Secondly, the *Parking policy* that can ne implemented in certain districts wherein the costs of parking your private vehicle is relatively high and they are “duration based instead of being levied at flat rates.”⁴⁰ Although this particular policy have already been implemented in many areas in Delhi. But it has failed miserably as people find alternative parking spots on-street instead of designated parking facilities which in spite of hiked prices remain fully occupied at peak hours. Thirdly, the policy of *Pedestrian zones* where the planning authorities designate particular districts, or even streets as automobile-free zones or pedestrian-zones. Mishra, provides several examples from cities like Chicago, Sweden and Singapore where the above explained policies have been implemented and subsequently traffic problems been curbed up to some extent. He offers an explanation as to why these policies are “partial answers to Delhi’s transportation problems,”⁴¹ and calls Delhi a “resource starved” city. Several bureaucratic and political issues have been delineated as the causes for the failure of these policies. In regard to traffic-restraint policies a study by RITES Limited⁴² (Delhi Vision 2010: 1997) had already identified location in Delhi and means to implement the above mentioned policies. RITES identified Chandni Chowk area (in



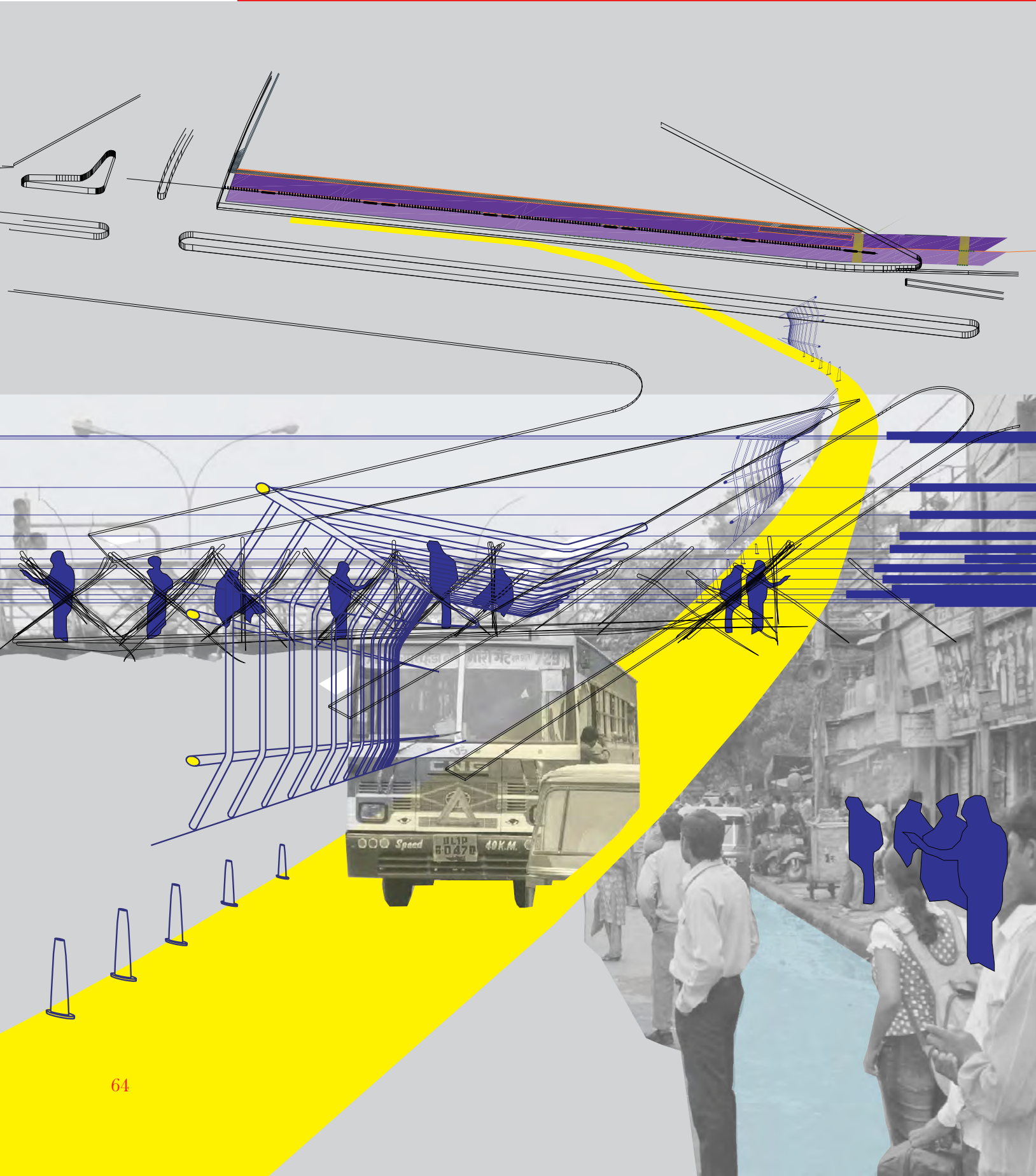
Shahjahanabad walled city area) among others in Delhi as locations that could be converted to pedestrian-zones that “could not only make them attractive to pedestrians but also serve as a strong disincentive to automobiles.”⁴³ In the same study, RITES (1997) suggested vast open spaces like India Gate area, Pragati Maidan and Red Fort complex in Shahjahanabad as prime sites for developing parking facilities. By 2007-2008, some of these propositions have in fact been executed. For example, the Red Fort complex now offers a 400 vehicle parking lot. But apparently the authorities wanted to limit the use of this facility for just tourists and visitors to the Red Fort and discouraged other regular visitors, shop owners and residents who reside in the vicinity or who want to go to other parts of walled city like Jama Masjid, Chandni Chowk, Daryaganj etc. It has been noticed that this parking facility at Red Fort is mostly underused. The maximum tourists visiting the Mughal monument do not own cars or other private vehicles. It is obvious that they are tourists and they mostly use public transport, private taxis or tourist buses. Most of them prefer touring Shahjahanabad, the Red Fort and other Mughal structures on foot owing to proximity of these heritage structures, intertwined bazaars and the ease with which a pedestrian gets experiential and visual pleasure.

In a nutshell, the planning authorities fail to identify, why and how to implement parking and pedestrian-zone policies. In a heterogeneous street space like Netaji Subhash junction which we earlier designated as “a matrix of intervening interests;”⁴⁴ a multi-diverse, mixed land use architectural situation, the Indian planner or urban designer tends to achieve a sense of order in a state of chaos. Something that Rahul Mehrotra defines as the “reorganizing” nature of Indian planner. In principle, the planner is trying to achieve; if not complete but partial separation of different activities, vehicle types, street elements and functions. Creating pedestrian zones and designated parking plots for specific district(s) allows a comfortable separation of pedestrians and non-motorized vehicles from the super structure of heavy-motorized vehicular traffic that plies on the main-road.

In the above example as illustrated at our site, Netaji Subhash junction separates (or acts as a transit point) the main-road (Netaji Subhash Marg) from the area of Daryaganj. Right near the junction lies the newly completed parking facility at Red Fort complex. The area of Daryaganj could have easily converted into a pedestrian-friendly zone; only allowing non-motorized cycle-rickshaws as intra-urban or (intra-district) mode of transport and limited number of private vehicles for the residents of Daryaganj. Excess private vehicles of the area and any visitor parking could have been accommodated in a MLUG (multi-level underground) parking facility at Red Fort. This would not only lighten the burden of traffic at Netaji Subhash junction, but also would have provided breathing space for street vending facilities, school rush and the cycle rickshaw sector in Daryaganj. But at the end of this proposition arises the question of being able to innovate, experiment and most importantly implement radical steps taken within the planning policies.

A proposition such as above should not necessarily be seen as admanacy of Indian planner to clean up or reorganize urban elements in street but as a radical preservationist or conservationist move to lessen

RECUPERATION OR DETOURNEMENT



the contestation of street space among different user subjects and further provide them with their own (designated) domains and sites (more space) to function efficiently

This particular scheme for a site like Netaji Subhash junction acts as a conservationist strategy because it opens up the possibilities to redevelop and revitalize this old city area not only for Delhiites, but also in the eyes of city authorities. Otherwise this dense historic core due to its complex urban conditions remain dissociated from the present city-vision planning and neglected by planning authorities, who remain busy in concentrating all efforts in the development of new areas of Delhi and forget about old historic cores. As a result these historic cores or “complexes defeat conventional notions of the city and are represented more accurately through ‘motion’ and mutation of urban space rather than conventional notions of the city as a largely ‘static’ and stable entity.”¹⁵

In the last chapter, as I will conclude this thesis I will consider more examples. More essentially, I will concentrate on the conditions and situations that arise when different vehicle types and movement patterns come in proximity of one another.

Notes

¹ Arnold, David. The problem of Traffic: The street-life of modernity in late-colonial India. Modern Asian Studies 46, 1 (2012) pp. 119-141. Cambridge University Press, 2011

² Ibid.

³ Ibid.

⁴ Arnold, David and Erich DeWald. Everyday Technology in South and Southeast Asia: An introduction. Modern Asian Studies 46, 1 (2012) pp. 1-17. Cambridge University Press, 2011

⁵ Foucault, M. La Volonte du savoir. Paris: Galliward, 1976.

Michel Foucault defines “power” as a range of mechanisms working to generate, incite, reinforce, control, monitor, optimize and organize the forces under it; “...as managers of life and survival, of bodies and the race...” See also, Paul Ranibow and Nikolas Rose, Biopower Today, BioSocieties, London School of Economics and Political Science, London, 2006, 1, 195-217. Luther, H Martin, Huck Gutman and Patrick H. Hutton. Technologies of the Self: A seminar with Michel Foucault. Later at a lecture at Vermont University (Oct, 1982), Foucault defined “technologies of the self” as technologies which permit individuals to effect by their own means or with the help of others a certain number of operations on their bodies and souls, thoughts, conduct, and a way of being so as to transform themselves in order to attain a certain state of happiness, purity, wisdom, perfection or immortality.

⁶ For a post-colonial reading of traffic see Parama Roy, Indian Traffic: Identities in Question in Colonial and Post-colonial India. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1998.

⁷ Arnold, David. The problem of Traffic: The street-life of modernity in late-colonial India. Modern Asian Studies 46, 1 (2012) pp. 119-141. Cambridge University Press, 2011

⁸ Ibid.

⁹ Chatterjee, Partha. Politics of the Governed: Reflections on Popular Politics in Most of the World. New York: Columbia University Press, 2004. 143

¹⁰ Ibid. 144

¹¹ Vishwanathan Krishnan. University of Texas, Austin ?????

¹² Chatterjee, Partha. Politics of the Governed: Reflections on Popular Politics in Most of the World. New York: Columbia University Press, 2004. 144

¹³ Article published in The Economic Times on September 5, 2012

Delhi government mulls measures to check vehicle growth

http://articles.economictimes.indiatimes.com/2012-09-02/news/33548677_1_introduction-of-congestion-charge-first-generation-car-restraint-generation-car-restraint-measures

¹⁴ Mishra, Sanjay. Forestalling Transport Chaos in Delhi. Economic and Political Weekly, Vol.35, No. 24 (Jun. 10-16, 2000), pp. 2061-2065

¹⁵ Ibid.

¹⁶ Arnold, David and Erich DeWald. Everyday Technology in South and Southeast Asia: An introduction. Modern Asian Studies 46, 1 (2012) pp. 1-17. Cambridge University Press, 2011

¹⁷ Ibid.

¹⁶ Arnold, David and Erich DeWald. Everyday Technology in South and Southeast Asia: An introduction. Modern Asian Studies 46, 1 (2012) pp. 1-17. Cambridge University Press, 2011

¹⁷ Ibid.

¹⁸ See for example, Police Traffic Signals: To be Used by the Police and Drivers of Vehicles. Calcutta: Bengal Secretariat Book Depot, 1906

¹⁹ Arnold, David and Erich DeWald. Everyday Technology in South and Southeast Asia: An introduction. Modern Asian Studies 46, 1 (2012) pp. 1-17. Cambridge University Press, 2011

²⁰ Patel, Shirish B. Transport Planning for Indian Cities. Economic and Political Weekly, Vol.4, No.28/30 (July 1969), pp. 1203-1208

²¹ Harding, Simon and Arshad Hussain. On the road to nowhere? – Auto-rickshaws in Delhi: The System, Problems and Recommendations. A report by Simon Harding and Arshad Hussain. Part of the Informal Labor portfolio at the AMAN Public Charitable Trust, New Delhi.

²²²² Samanta, Gopa. Urban mobilities and the cycle rickshaw. Paper presented at Streetscapes: a symposium on the future of the street http://www.india-seminar.com/2012/636/636_gopa_samanta.htm Accessed Sept. 2012

²³ Ibid.

²⁴ Madhu Purnima Kishwar, ‘Urban Informal Sector: The Need for a Bottom-up Agenda of Economic Reforms – Case Study of Cycle Rickshaw and Street Vendors in Delhi’, *Urban Poverty Report*, Oxford University Press New Delhi, 2009.

²⁵ Arnold, David. The problem of Traffic: The street-life of modernity in late-colonial India. Modern Asian Studies 46, 1 (2012) pp. 119-141. Cambridge University Press, 2011

²⁶ Arnold, David and Erich DeWald. Everyday Technology in South and Southeast Asia: An introduction. Modern Asian Studies 46, 1 (2012) pp. 1-17. Cambridge University Press, 2011

²⁷ Yeoh, Brenda S. A. Contesting Space: Power Relations and the Urban Built Environment in Colonial Singapore. New York: Oxford University Press, 1996, 264.

²⁸ Ibid. 266

²⁹ Bhowmik Sharit K. Street Vendors in Asia: A Review. Economic and Political Weekly, Vol. 40, No. 22/23 (May 28 – Jun. 10, 2005), pp. 2256-2264.

³⁰ Yeoh, Brenda S. A. Contesting Space: Power Relations and the Urban Built Environment in Colonial Singapore. New York: Oxford University Press, 1996, 266.

³¹ Harding, Simon and Arshad Hussain. On the road to nowhere? – Auto-rickshaws in Delhi: The System, Problems and Recommendations. A report by Simon Harding and Arshad Hussain. Part of the Informal Labor portfolio at the AMAN Public Charitable Trust, New Delhi.

³² Harding, Simon and Arshad Hussain. On the road to nowhere? – Auto-rickshaws in Delhi: The System, Problems and Recommendations.

³³ Ibid.

³⁴ Arnold, David. The problem of Traffic: The street-life of modernity in late-colonial India. Modern Asian Studies 46, 1 (2012) pp. 119-141. Cambridge University Press, 2011

³⁵ Haddad, Elie ed. Contemporary Discourses in Architecture: Symposium Proceedings. (Upadhyaya, Deb. Reality of Paradigm Shifts – a New Approach Towards City Center Development) Beirut, Lebanon: Lebanese American University, 2004. 181

³⁶ Ibid. 180

³⁷ In Wallpaper Journal, London 2009 Anagram Architects- a Delhi based architecture firm describes “peri-urban Delhi as a place of zero planning, high densities and highly variable quality of life.

³⁸ Mishra, Sanjay. Forestalling Transport Chaos in Delhi. Economic and Political Weekly, Vol.35, No. 24 (Jun. 10-16, 2000), pp. 2061-2065

³⁹ Ibid.

⁴⁰ Ibid.

⁴¹ Ibid.

⁴² RITES Limited is a Government of India company which specializes in infrastructure, planning and consulting series that has executed projects in about 30 countries worldwide. Their expertise includes projects like airports, highways, ports, urban planning etc.

⁴³ Mishra, Sanjay. Forestalling Transport Chaos in Delhi. Economic and Political Weekly, Vol.35, No. 24 (Jun. 10-16, 2000), pp. 2061-2065

⁴⁴ Haddad, Elie ed. Contemporary Discourses in Architecture: Symposium Proceedings. (Upadhyaya, Deb. Reality of Paradigm Shifts – a New Approach Towards City Center Development) Beirut, Lebanon: Lebanese American University, 2004. 180

⁴⁵ Ibid. 169

4. CONCLUSIONS

PROXIMITY OF BODIES IN SPACE II

The combinatorics of different vehicles driven by different drivers in the same street space definitely 'bears eclectic notions of Indian behavior, habits and the resulting urban condition. Although, it is impossible to clearly explain and isolate various shades of these behavior types (or movement types); but I will try to undertake this task as a means of bridging the gap between the underpinnings of present discourse on colonialism to those that apply to this case-study thesis. The prior rigid in terms of “trinity of periodizations”² (pre-colonial, colonial, post-colonial) and the latter space and culture specific. More to say, this analysis is to find out what attributes do apply to present day street life as a result of these periods. An extension of colonial and post-colonial influences which can be seen in the present behavior of people with each other on the streets of Delhi.

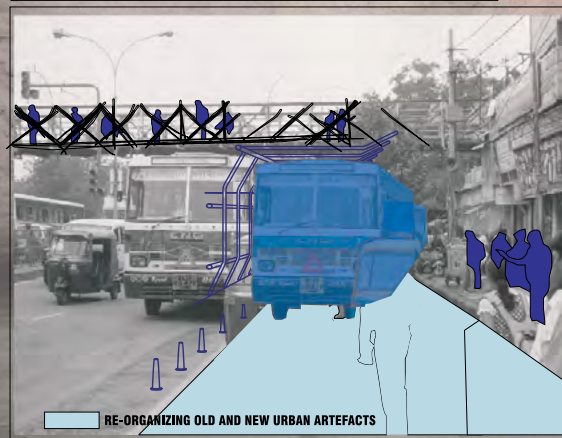
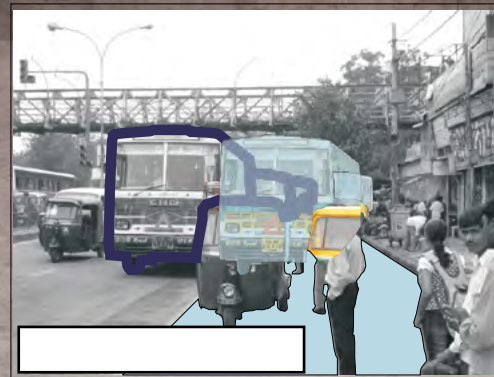
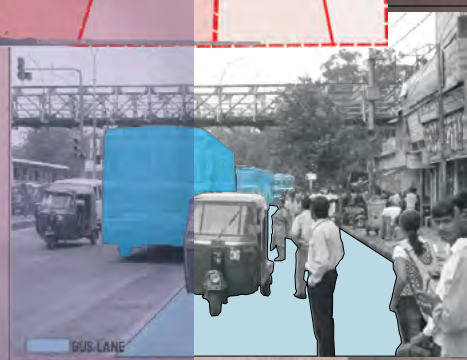
It is about how Delhiites treat each other while they are on the streets – walking, driving cars, two-wheelers, buses etc. It is about competition between indigenous and contemporary technologies, between man and machine, between a bigger entity and a smaller one, and so on. It has been noticed that the one who is superior will always look down upon the other. That is the implicit *bio-power* that entities assume over one another, and the power keeps on shifting resulting in very dynamic situations.

–WAITING– AND –STOPPING–

Stopping locations (hiring passengers and drop-off locations/ stops) of different modes of transport (like buses and auto-rickshaws), and the stops where passengers wait, are highly attributive and predicative over one another. One changes as the other changes. There are no traffic rules or neatly demarcated stop or



DE-LAYERING



waiting locations at the bus-stops at Netaji Subhash junction. Waiting and negotiations between passengers and auto-rickshaws keep on happening on a long-stretch of the road near the bus stop. Passengers wait in clusters on the sidewalks and swarm way over on the carriageway waving hands at buses and rickshaws to stop. Pedestrians jaywalking, buses stopping erratically in the midst of traffic, cars and rickshaws honking behind one other; all this really creates danger and congestion. Traffic rules and general concepts of lane-driving are reduced to some local recursive rules. Bus drivers show less regard for the passengers to get on and off the buses. There is a constant haste of get-going and move faster than one another. Similarly there is constant jumping on and off the bus by passengers pushing each other and stuffing inside overcrowded buses. ROW (right of way) and speed of cars is constantly obstructed by this erratic bus and auto-rickshaw driving. Slow moving man-powered cycle-rickshaws that are also allowed to ply on most main-roads have their own typical fashion of moving along the traffic. They stop, park or wait in clusters at junctions and turnings and stop-lights; sometimes slowly taking turns and changing lanes, the rickshaw cyclist provides sudden power-pedaling, jerks and swirl their handle bars to turn. It all works, but vehicle movements are definitely not of a fast-moving traffic. Vehicles zoom past and brush their own way through multiple lanes and the traffic has its own flow and logic of hiccups and moving in some kind of unpredictable fashion. There is constant honking and drivers in fast moving cars are regularly irritated by slow moving rickshaws and pedestrians crossing roads at random locations.

And then there are frequent exchange of words, light fights, and sometimes altercations between drivers. The road has its own set of rules. One can identify subtle nuances of superiority complexities and implicit power relations – power of buses and auto-rickshaws over passengers, vehicular traffic over pedestrians, jaywalkers over traffic, motorized vehicles over non-motorized, big and expensive cars over small and old vehicles, traffic over parked vehicles and street vendors and so on goes the chain of interrelationships. This self-proclamation of superiority is indeed very dramatic; and it turns the whole concept of traffic into a negotiation.

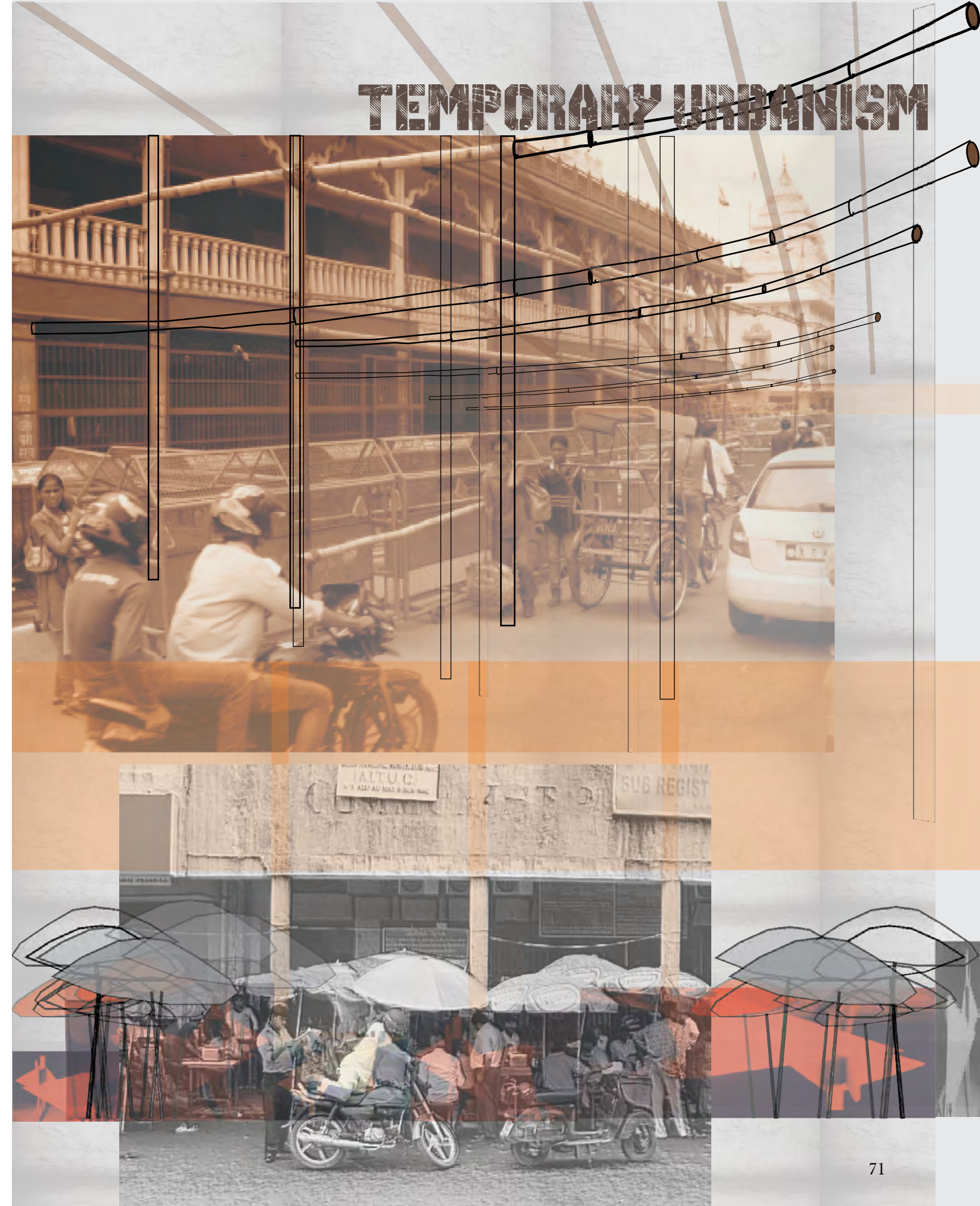
Here some consideration should be given to the hybrid and pluralist nature of Indian urbanism. Especially a site like Netaji Subhash junction which is surely a heterogeneous construct of both pre-colonial, colonial and post-colonial practices. Class structure and distinctions were always there since pre-colonial times. The bigger you are if you have better property, more cattle; the more powerful one becomes and your presence is felt more in society. Colonial connotations accentuated those distinctions and created a permanent gap between classes with the rise of elites. Car owners were rare and were seen with pride and respect. Automobiles, large scale transport like railways and buses were introduced and were indeed a colonial legacy. Independent India saw cross-breeding between the Old and New Delhi giving birth to hybrid urban fabrics and street sections. Delhi a city where old and new cities, their activities and even their street urbanisms were kept segregated today has amalgamated and retrofitted old and new urbanisms into each other. Today there is a competition of owning a bigger, better, faster and more comfortable vehicle

while there are families who cannot own a car or even a two wheeler. Alternative modes of transport slow down the traffic. Many vehicle types and incessant increase in their numbers causes constant contestation of space and right of way. Different layers of traffic develop a strange, harsh stimulus and resistance for each other. They rush through narrow and encroached street sections overloaded with on-street parking and (or) vendors. That is why sometimes separation of functions and subletting domains to different movement types seems a legitimate step. Grade separated solutions and lane driving concepts like BRT Corridor (Bus Rapid Transit Corridor) were implemented in Delhi. Although they proved to be less helpful due to poor implementation of infrastructural projects and their directions or rules of use by the people. I will talk about rules and implementation of rules (or laws) in the last chapter. But, here we learn from this discussion that there exists a haste of time and space among everybody. And within this urgency and fast pace of life inhabitants of a colonial city indulge in something that Michel de Certeau explains as “minor”³ practices. The practice of disregarding or developing a disliking towards *the other* on the road. People, vehicles and informal traders start marking their boundaries, parking spots and appropriating street space trying to camouflage within the “foregrounded procedures... and practices organizing its normative institutions and of innumerable other practices that remain minor.”⁴ In other words it is much similar to planning the unplanned; where “urban infrastructures were subject to heretical uses, with multiplication of sites of non-legal production and innovative recombinations.”⁵ Michel de Certeau approached the “everyday less from the standpoint of popular culture but from a certain gesture to the Other.”⁶ For him the everyday is the “cultural activity of the non-producers of culture, an activity that is unsigned, unreadable and unsymbolized.”⁷

In a nutshell, present post-colonial era in Delhi has seen “new productive sites and crisscrossing networks emerged, along with a vast economy of small and minor practices.”⁸ The architecture of the Kinetic City (minor practices) has “opened up a discursive space away from classic political acts occupation of space or older notions of resistance.”⁹ De Certeau’s distinctions between the “minor” and “foregrounded”, “strategy” and “tactic”, or our hypotheses of static vs kinetic “needs a post-colonial revision” and reflect the trend since 1970’s to become a “post-utopian even post-political in the traditional sense.” Walled of Shahjahanabad becomes a “pirate city, where the older infrastructure was either poached upon or incrementally built up by urban populations long abandoned by urban planning.”

CONCLUSIONS

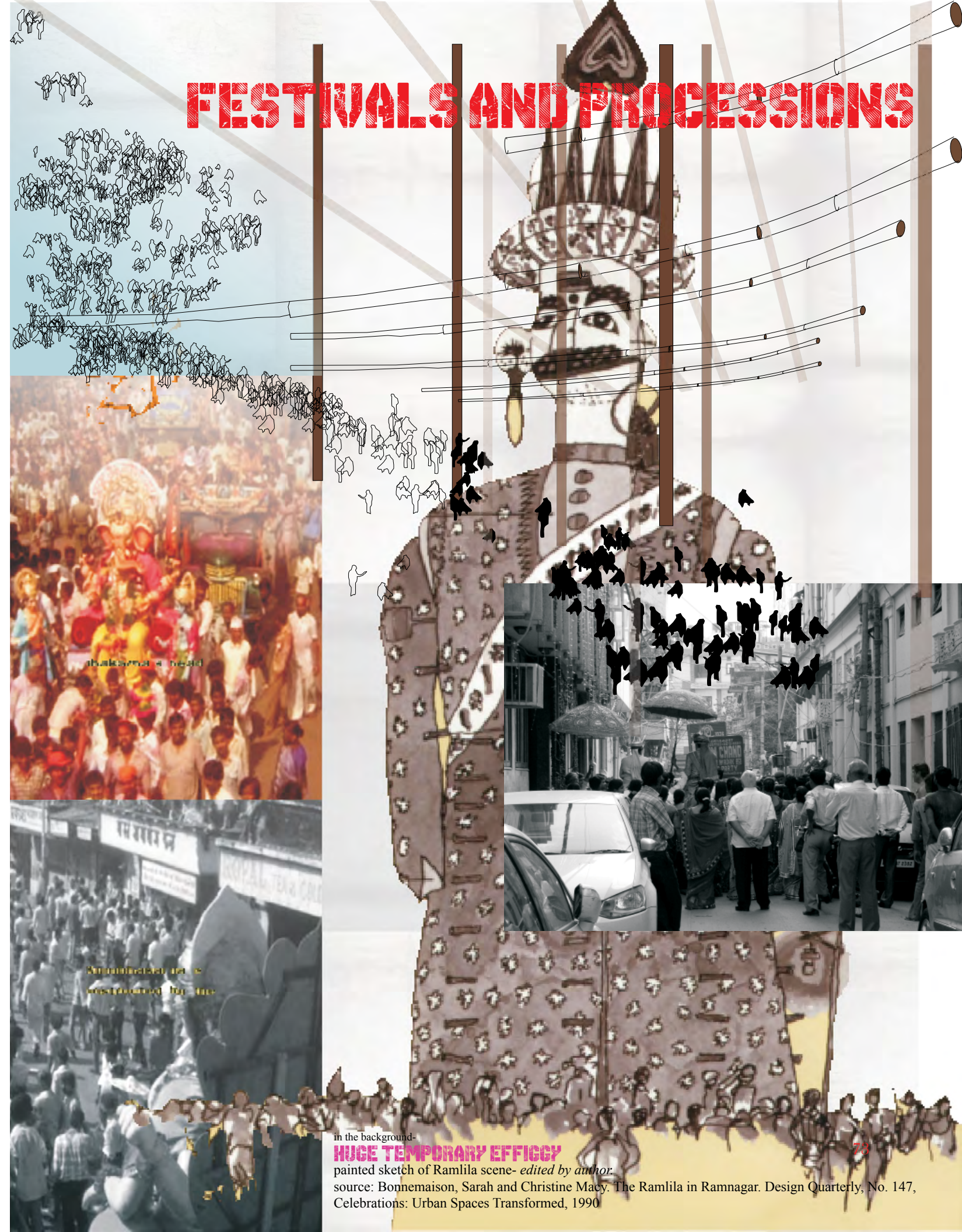
I was finding it difficult to find an appropriate way of concluding this thesis. I have been trying to describe here is the genius-loci of a major crossroads in old Delhi. Attempting to capture animated clippings of trade and traffic movements and the space involved. It implicates that it is a spatial analysis mostly identifying “urban informality and policy responses to informality”. Informality as “a state of exception from



the formal order of urbanizations.”¹⁰ It is a behavioural, political and social study of vulnerable subjects like questioning the legality or relevance of things and people and how they use the street.

Therefore to end this, I pose a question, that if dealing with informality requires recognizing the “right to the city”¹¹ then the city must be preparing at some level to remunerate those claims in some or the other way. In my view, those very acts of preparation of the city is what involves the production of architecture of the kinetic city. I wanted to try seeking more examples of architecture from everyday situations as predictable as yearly festivals, or as unpredictable as wedding processions, a movement or a riot. Vending and traffic movements were spontaneous, short-lived and fast movements. Our thinking of regulating (controlling) them has been bordered by obsolete policies. On the other hand something like festivals are cyclic and they are celebrated every year at large scales in a particular fashion all across India. There are many gala festivals like *Dussehra- Ramlila*, *Ganesh Chaturthi*¹² “(and there are far too many to mention here) are successful and appear to grow in size every year. They also tend to become increasingly commercialized.”¹³ Milfred S. Friedman while editing a *Design Quarterly* (1990) points out in Sarah Bonnemaison’s article on *City Policies and Cyclical Events*, that “the problem is not how to popularize such events, but how to maintain the precarious balance between success and the spirit that must be at the core of such activities.”¹⁴ Friedman points put that “non-western cultures have a different way of approaching ‘temporary urbanism’ with the long-standing traditions that are based in religious or cultural values.”¹⁵

Festivals like *Ramlila* and *Ramazaan* etc etc. are celebrated over a period of month. Huge temporary structures made of bamboo scaffolding and covering them with cloth are installed in public parks and grounds in Shahjahanabad. There are defined routes, embellished with bamboo gateways marking the entry to the convention grounds. Such festivals are known to gather 50,000 to 100,000 and more people a night during the festival. This part of the “town acquires temporary restaurants. Parking lots appear with special bus services. A layer of temporary urban fabric is overlaid annually on the permanent structure of the town.”¹⁶ During festivals of Ganesh Chaturthi and Durga Puja, idols of lord Ganesha and Durga are carried in processions on busy roads with daily traffic. There is dancing, playing with colors, beating of drums and singing. The whole city of Mumbai during this time of the year (September) is converted into a city-wide “*mela*” – or “fair” in hindi. There is increase in the number of street vendors both in conventions and streets. “Lightweight, temporary structures house stalls for food vendors, flowers etc. Portions of these grounds are transformed for “spectacular staging” for “reenactment” of religious stories and feelings.¹⁷ Certain portions are made “theatrical enough to adapt to performances.”¹⁸ For festivals that long for months and weeks, certain traffic rule are amended. There is immense crowd in places like Old Delhi. Netaji Subhash junction is mobilized in full swing. IN such situations people and traffic assume a kind of regard for each other. There are still arguments and altercations for ROW, but there seems to be a mutual understanding for the motion and the show to must go on. The kinetic city disassembles the dualism of formal and informal or in other words deterritorializes the function of streets and a new temporary



assemblage is constructed. I think this temporary urbanism is the phenomenon where the future of architecture of the informal trade sector lies.

I would not like to go deep into the designing of such spaces or schemes but the research in temporary structures with materials like bamboo, cloth or simple small scale architectural interventions like bus stops and passenger queues, traffic police booths, bus corridors etc. are important. The main point to be understood is to not only identify informalities but also conceptualize situations where a possible intervention can improve the present state of deviations.

It has been pointed out before that the most critical writings on streets and planning old Indian cities are mostly policy oriented. Nor “any architectural theorist of the everyday, give adequate attention to the physicality of everyday life or to the materiality of Architecture.”¹⁹ We totally negate the aspects of everydayness and the potential of formal and informal dualism as “an important epistemology for planning.”²⁰

Ananya Roy while talking about Urban Informality specifically uses the term “*epistemology*” to indicate that policy approaches are not only techniques of implementation but also way of knowing. Such forms of knowledge are a crucial ingredient of the diagnosis and solution calculus of policymaking.”²¹ Situations such as festivals and processions, or something like a movement or riot; something which is either cyclic or that is brewing since long and we know it is coming. In these conditions the city also gears up and performs connive preparations as it invites all bodies in space to rejoice and celebrate. This thesis study calls for the development of such theoretical and design research that has the ability to combine facets of street-scale transport infrastructure projects, commercial settings for trade and bazaars etc. Where the projects have some sort of permanence, flexibility and transformability. Simple ad-hoc structures like police booths provide an urban set-up or a situation demanding intervention. Checking of vehicles entering and exiting the area of Daryaganj, and these police booths have become permanent activities at our junction since 6-7 years now. Providing for permanent cabins for policemen at this transit junction might be one such situation. Although urban designers and architects interested in these kind of street projects be very careful while identifying sites for intervention. As Guy Debord suggests that “the breaking up of the dialectic of the human milieu in favor of automobiles masks its irrationality under pseudopractical justifications. But it is practically necessary only in the context of a specific social set up. Those who believe that the particulars of a problem are permanent want in fact to believe in the permanence of the present society.”²²

An article published on December 11, 2011 in *Sunday Times Of India* newspaper titled “Delhi’s Date with Dissent” identifies itself as an article on people and power. It suggests that “from demonstration against British draconian laws to candlelight vigils for Jessica Lal, protesters in Delhi have had many reasons to take to the streets in the last hundred years.”²³ Author Kim Arora points out sites like India Gate in New Delhi or Ramlila Maidan in Shahjahanabad among others as popular choice of locations for political protests and demonstrations. “Being the center of power for a century now, Delhi has seen more than its fair



DELHI'S DATE WITH DISSENT

source: Arora, Kim. Delhi's Date with Dissent. Sunday Times Of India, Dec 11, 2011, pg. 14



share of protests from all over the country.”²⁴ Jessica Lal murder case if mentioned in the sub-heading that involved the involved marching and leaceful demonstrations by candlelight vigils towards Indian Gate protesting against a critical court case of political discrimination and nepotism. The case turned hostile in favor of an elite accuse. These are all cases of chance gatherings that happen and are kept under control by police and security. Mostly these demonstrations are inevitable owing to political pursuits in Delhi. The city prepares for such times in emergency conditions. Arrangements like police security and other combat measures that can control and keep demonstrations from becoming agitations. Under such militarization, mostly rules are followed and peace and order is maintained. This especially applies to traffic rules and jaywalking pedestrians that if rules can be followed under emergency conditions and festival times then why cannot everyday treated as a special condition. Strict lane-driving was followed in Delhi doe more than a fortnight when one fast lane from specific main roads of the city was cordoned off and reserved for CWG 2010 vehicles (Commonwealth Games 2010) for speedy transit of athletes and other important tourists. It was the time when the whole city prepared itself in every way to hold an international convention and invite people from all around the world. Major roads followed strict lane driving of cars, multiple and short stop lights were installed at regular intervals pushed the rest of the traffic slowly but steadily in batches. Rickshaws were removed from specific routes. The homeless were accommodated on peripheries of the city. I gathered from CWG 2010, Delhi that apart from the immense and shameful bureaucratic corruption and scandals, the test of Delhi traffic turned out to have satisfactorily preformed. In other words there is a possibility of separating functions and make people follow rules if dire need occurs. Or alternatively, a heterogeneous space may be defined as consisting of both rules and “enfolding of a more diverse space of opportunity within contemporary architectural design and theory.”²⁵

Architecture(s) of the kinetic city is like the “minor architectures”²⁶ constructed within a major architecture of a city. Jill Stoner draws on literary theory of Gilles Deleuze and Felix Guattari to suggest that minor architecture escapes and eludes from rules and disassembles binary oppositions. Like Kafka’s intensely complex theoretical constructions to capture the ephemeral quality of space and events through “minor literature” within “major language.”²⁷ In the same vein kinetic city uses the paraphernalia from the static city to construct its own space and program, and the resultant space is both “recuperative” and a “detournement.”²⁸

Notes

² Alsayyad, Nezar ed. Forms of Dominance. Aldershot: Ashgate Publishing House, 1992. 340
³ Certeau, Michel de. The Practice of Everyday Life. trans. Steven F. Rendall. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1984
⁴ Ibid.
⁵ Simone, AbdouMaliq. Pirate Towns: Reworking Social and Symbolic Infrastructures in Johannesburg and Douala. Urban Studies 43.2, 2006, 357-370.

⁶ Sundaram, Ravi. Imaging Urban Breakdown: Delhi in the 1990's in Noir Urbanisms, Gyan Prakash, eds. New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 2010, 250.

⁷ Ibid.

⁸ Sundaram, Ravi. Imaging Urban Breakdown: Delhi in the 1990's in Noir Urbanisms, Gyan Prakash, eds. New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 2010, 249.

⁹ Ibid.

¹⁰ Roy, Ananya. Urban Informality: Toward an Epistemology of Planning, Journal of the American Planning Association 2005, 71:2, 147-158

¹¹ Lefebvre, H., 1968: Le droit a la ville. Anthopos, Paris.

¹² Dussehra and Ganesh Chaturthi are traditional festivals celebrated in the months of October and September respectively. Dussehra celebrations involves a 30 day theatrical enactment of the story of Lord Ram. There are many such conventions holding these theatre acts all around Delhi assisted by the City for services, administration and security. Festivals like Ganesh Chaturthi and Durga Puja involves processions on streets carrying huge idols of God and their immersion in sea water.

¹³ Friedman, Milfred S. Celebrations: Urban Spaces Transformed. Design Quarterly, No. 147, 1990.

¹⁴ Ibid.

¹⁵ Ibid.

¹⁶ Bonnemaison, Sarah and Christine Macy. The Ramlila in Ramnagar. Design Quarterly, No. 147, Celebrations: Urban Spaces Transformed, 1990, pp. 2-23.

¹⁷ Ibid.

¹⁸ Ibid.

¹⁹ Upton, Dell. Architecture in Everyday Life. New Literary History, Vol. 33, No. 4, Everyday Life (Autumn, 2002), pp. 707-7023.

²⁰ Roy, Ananya. Urban Informality: Toward an Epistemology of Planning, Journal of the American Planning Association 2005, 71:2, 147-158

²¹ Ibid.

²² Debord, Guy. Essay- Situationist These on Traffic. International Situationniste #3, 1959. <http://library.nothingness.org/articles/SI/en/display/316> Accessed July, 2013.

²³ Arora, Kim. Delhi's Date with Dissent. Published Dec. 11, 2011 in Sunday Times Of India, pg. 14. <http://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/home/specials/delhis-century/top-stories/Delhis-date-with-dissent/articleshow/11068067.cms?> Accessed July, 2013.

²⁴ Ibid.

²⁵ Hensel, Michael, Christopher Hight and Achim Menges. Hensel eds. En route: Towards a Discourse on Heterogeneous Space beyond Modernist Space- Time and Post-Modernist Social Geography in Space Reader: Heterogeneous Space in Architecture. West Sussex, UK: John Wiley & Sons Ltd., 2009, 11.

²⁶ Stoner, Jill. Towards a Minor Architecture. Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2012.

²⁷ Ibid.

²⁸ *Recuperate* as in recover. *Detournement* is a concept of re-using existing to create a new ensemble. Both the terms “recuperate” and “detournement” were ideas developed by the Letterist or Situationist International. International Situationniste #1, #3.

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