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Greenfield Development as *Tabula Rasa*

Rescaling, Speculation and Governance on India's Urban Frontier

LORAIN KENNEDY, ASHIMA SOOD

Greenfield urban development can be seen as an enduring idiom of politics in India, with state initiative from precolonial times to the present day responsible for establishing iconic capital cities such as Jaipur, Kolkata, or Chandigarh. However, a renewed interest in building new cities, variously labelled “smart,” “green” or “integrated,” is now accompanied by an increasing tendency to instrumentalise the urban in pursuit of economic growth and a competitive drive to attract global financial flows. Situated at the intersection of several recent literatures from speculative urbanism to theorisations of rescaling and bypass, the papers in this special issue foreground the struggles over land that animate debates about these greenfield sites while looking beyond these concerns to question the urban futures they presage. Synthesising the insights from these papers, this essay flags critical issues for the politics of urban development and sketches pathways for future research.

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1 Introduction

Perhaps the most emblematic image of urban transformation in contemporary India is that of the high-rise gated community, mounted aloft a thousand billboards across the gleaming expressways and bypasses of new India's metropolitan centres. Promising high quality infrastructure and “amenities,” aspirational lifestyles and sanitised vistas of work and leisure, the high-rise gated community appears to be premised on a decisive break from older ways of living in the Indian city (Dupont forthcoming). Indeed, this discontinuity is embodied in the geographic location of the gated community itself; with exceptions such as the reconfiguration of Mumbai's mill lands, such high-rises are largely a feature of the peri-urban and greenfield frontier—the Gurgaons and Greater Noidas, Navi Mumbai, Rajarhats, Whitefields and Cyberabads.

Unpacking the symbolism of the high-rise gated community in the Indian city makes clear a second feature: the gated community often appears as a visible motif for underlying economic and structural transformations, led by new real estate dynamics produced by the “unlocking” of land markets as much as by policy-promoted growth of information technology and high-end services sectors. It is at the intersection of these phenomena, where policy and private agendas come together, that the genesis of this special issue of the Review of Urban Affairs (RUA) lies.

2 Naming the Phenomenon

Our interest in the spatiality of this new “urban frontier” and the constellations of public–private interests underpinning it derives from two observations: first, a renewed interest in building new cities, variously labelled “smart,” “green” or “integrated,” and second, a growing tendency to instrumentalise the urban in pursuit of economic growth. A brief discussion of both will help situate the papers in this issue and explain why we have chosen to bring together two usually distinct policy and research areas, planned urban development (Wang et al 2010; Sood 2013) and strategic planning for economic growth (Kennedy and Zérah 2008; Kennedy 2014).

India is not unused to building new cities, with state initiative from precolonial to colonial and postcolonial times responsible for establishing iconic capital cities such as Jaipur, Kolkata, or Chandigarh. In recent times, the formation of new states has initiated proposals for new capital cities like Naya Raipur and now Amaravati. Linking past and present, city building can thus be seen as an enduring idiom of politics in India. Political leaders strive to leave their mark in space, a legacy

carved in stone; meanwhile, in current permutations, new city building creates opportunities for substantial pecuniary gain for ruling parties through real estate development and speculation. Notwithstanding, greenfield urbanisation takes diverse forms and responds to different imperatives. Bold policies announcing “100 new cities” or today “100 smart cities” offer planned solutions to rapid urban growth and to the presumed demands of the global economy.

The second phenomenon, urban development in relation to strategic planning for growth, also manifests itself in various ways. On the one hand, there is an increasing tendency for policy-makers to position the city as a “growth engine,” giving rise to urban restructuring projects (Kennedy and Zérah 2008). On the other, industrial policies increasingly emphasise development of new urban hubs to attract investment (Kennedy 2014; Sood 2015). Since the 1990s, many states have begun to rescale economic development policies in favour of those regions most equipped to engage with global flows, starting with the largest city regions. As competition to attract mobile capital became stronger, they began to leverage their fixed assets, namely land resources in peri-urban areas. The constitution of land banks, through eminent domain and enclosure processes, is central to the pursuit of these policies. Common patterns of greenfield urban development include industrial parks and townships built through public–private partnerships on the urban peripheries, for example, Sri City near Chennai, Manesar Integrated Model Township near Delhi, Hitec City/Cyberabad on Hyderabad’s western edge. In the case of interstate industrial corridors, strategic urban “nodes” constitute critical components of the overall policy design.

Both types of state strategies, planned urban development and strategic planning for growth, have in common their tendency to put in place special regulatory frameworks, ad hoc rules and regulations, to facilitate or expedite policy goals and to insulate the newly created spaces, such as new towns, industrial enclaves, corridors, special development areas, from “interference” from social and political realities. Whether the motivation for such frameworks is to bypass laws and regulations perceived as too restrictive or rather to put in place “privatised” forms of urban governance and planning, such efforts amount to a disavowal of existing forms of regulation. They can be seen to arise from a common fantasy, which is to start from a clean slate or *tabula rasa*.¹

The *tabula rasa* fantasy links the various manifestations of greenfield urbanisation analysed in the papers of this special issue, namely new city-building (Dholera, Amaravati), integrated townships (Rajarhat New Town, Bengaluru’s Electronics City) and city-centric industrial growth strategies (Chennai IT Corridor, Delhi–Mumbai Industrial Corridor (DMIC), Sriperumbudur–Orgadam manufacturing hub).

As this list suggests, the papers cover a wide range of urban forms and engage with a variety of issues raised by greenfield urban development. These include, for instance, the process of assembling land for the establishment of new cities, the modes of governance that are emerging in integrated townships, and the social and economic impacts of various greenfield projects.

Several papers focus on the actors of the urban frontier, including both those in charge of implementing greenfield agendas, state agencies or private real estate firms seizing opportunities opened up by policy, and those resisting those policies by refusing to part with their land or give up their livelihoods. Other papers undertake to analyse the spatial and social fragmentation produced through privatised governance, bypass techniques, and differential service delivery. Lending weight to the importance of greenfield urbanisation on the national scale, the evidence brought to bear in this set of papers has broad geographical scope: Andhra Pradesh, Gujarat, West Bengal, two case studies from Tamil Nadu and the DMIC, which traverses six states.

A few caveats are in order before proceeding further. The first is conceptual: to speak of a “*terra nullius*” is a claim of considerable hubris against the backdrop of the long-standing and variegated forms of human habitation in the Indian subcontinent. It is worth considering, for instance, that the span of the DMIC, one of the most ambitious projects of greenfield urbanisation in contemporary India could well encompass the terrain of the Indus Valley civilisation.² That these complex histories of occupation should engender protracted and irreconcilable patterns of contestations over land is no surprise.

The second is methodological: all of the papers in this issue are based on primary data collection, which allows the authors to enrich their analyses and engagement with larger theoretical and policy issues with first-hand observations. It gives a voice to the respondents, actors in the processes under study. Fieldwork-based research, however, also throws up methodological challenges. In some instances, the papers published here provide the very first, preliminary, analyses of their specific cases. In one or two cases, the absence of published official data (either too recent or too sensitive) and the unwillingness of government officials to provide information did not allow the author to cross-check the data or take account of opposing sides of the issue. Nonetheless, the situated research presented is grounded in lived experience, and provides an opportunity for informing critical public debate on the urban frontier.

3 Confronting Theory and Empirical Research

Our aim in putting together this issue was to spark a conversation between literatures that do not always speak to each other across geographic and disciplinary boundaries. Nonetheless, it is possible to glean common ground in the concerns of debates ranging from rescaling to speculative urbanism to theorisations of bypass as they come to be empirically “fleshed out” in our papers. In analysing the fantasy of the *tabula rasa* as it plays out in the Indian context, the papers in this issue

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engage with a number of interrelated bodies of literature, discussed in the following sections.

State Spatial Rescaling and the Entrepreneurial State

One body of literature, which proceeds from an essentially macro-structuralist perspective, links the evolution of global capitalism to current patterns of urban governance. In a now classical text, David Harvey (1989) posits the shift in European cities from managerial to entrepreneurial urbanism as a response to the crisis of the Fordist–Keynesian accumulation regime and the rise of international finance capital. As national welfare-states came under economic (and ideological) pressure and urban spaces emerged as preferred sites for “flexible accumulation,” economic development functions were more or less explicitly delegated to city governments.

The theory of state rescaling has been elaborated to interpret this shift (Swyngedouw 1996; Brenner 1998; Jessop 2002). Referring to a state’s efforts to adapt its internal scalar architecture to the changing institutional conditions that undergird the global economy, state rescaling is used to refer to a whole range of state policies and regulations which seek to reshape geographies of economic activities or reorganise social and economic relations (Brenner et al 2003). Various strands of this literature converge to assert the strategic role of cities in the contemporary processes of remaking of political-economic spaces across geographical scales (Brenner and Theodore 2002).

Despite India’s distinct political economic history and relatively limited engagement with global capitalism until the 1990s, state rescaling theory offers a useful framework for interpreting institutional and scalar changes in state action. In India, rescaling is associated with the restructuring of a state-led model of economic development and, of critical importance, with a period of stronger growth, in contrast with the European context where it is largely conceived as a defensive strategy (Kennedy 2014). Occurring at both national and sub-national scales in India, state restructuring processes are reconfiguring the “intermediary architectures” between local and supra-local economic processes, including for instance investment procedures, infrastructure supply and local regulatory frameworks. State governments have become more significant than in the past in shaping the conditions for capital accumulation and circulation, for instance by leveraging their constitutional control over land (Gupta and Sivaramakrishnan 2011; Ren and Weinstein 2013; Kennedy 2014).

However, in a significant departure from rescaling theory, India’s municipal governments have not experienced a significant enhancement of their mandates, which remain restricted to managing basic services.³ State governments have effectively resisted initiatives to empower the local scale, especially the 74th constitutional amendment. This helps explain why state governments are the dominant *urban* actors in India’s largest cities, adopting entrepreneurial postures, for instance by promoting large-scale infrastructure and mixed-use projects in the peripheries of their large cities (Kennedy 2007; Kennedy and Zerah 2008; Ren and Weinstein 2013). Such projects

require land, and many state governments are racing to identify and acquire “available” land, which includes various categories of “government land” and village commons, as well as privately owned land, located in strategic areas. Equally important are efforts to “normalise” land and real estate markets in urban India, thereby facilitating the entry of foreign firms and capital (Joshi 2009; Denis 2011; Halbert and Rouanet 2013; Searle 2014).

It is important to recall that rescaling does not involve a zero-sum game; greater scalar significance of India’s states does not imply a lesser role for the national state. Scale-making is always an unfinished, contested process (Brenner 2004). As both the United Progressive Alliance (UPA) and the current United Democratic Alliance (NDA) regimes have demonstrated, the national state is equally entrepreneurial, continually asserting its will to drive industrial policy and to pressure states to comply, for example, Special Economic Zones (SEZs), National Investment and Manufacturing Zones (NIMZs), Make in India, etc.

The greenfield projects discussed in this issue are compelling illustrations of rescaling strategies. Two papers deal with the DMIC, a colossal project that aims to promote both industrial and urban development in the form of 24 manufacturing cities, several logistics hubs, and residential townships. The DMIC expresses the intention of the central state to influence the geographies of socio-economic activities within the country, to regulate and reorganise social and economic relations within this massive area spanning six states, and also to redefine geographies of statehood within the federal framework. The manner in which it is being implemented effectively rescales “state space” by creating ad hoc institutions at various levels (special purpose vehicles, state-level corporations) and outsourcing project planning and management to private consultants, who work within specific frameworks. It also shapes state space by curtailing the constitution of democratically elected local bodies through the now notorious “industrial township” “loophole clause” (Article 243Q of the 74th Constitutional Amendment Act) (Sivaramakrishnan 2011: 169; also Sood 2015). In this way, the DMIC project gives expression to the logic of “exception,” in Aihwa Ong’s (2006: 5) sense, an “extraordinary departure in policy that can be deployed to include as well as exclude” and to the fantasy of *tabula rasa*. Yet, as the recent SEZ policy has shown (Jenkins et al 2014), any attempt to impose a uniform framework is bound to be contested by other actors—state governments or mobilised social groups—who can make claims to control local space. The slate is never clean; existing patterns of sociopolitical relations and legacies of mobilisation shape the reception of top-down directives.

An illustration of contested scale-making within the DMIC is the assertion by the Gujarat government of its prerogative over the territory within its state borders, and its success in negotiating with the central government to replace the initially planned nodes (Bharuch–Dahej and Vadodara–Ankleshwar) with one of its own choice, Dholera. Sampat’s paper in this issue explicitly focuses on this greenfield city-making project, designed in its current avatar as a “smart” city. It is being developed as a “Special Investment Region” (SIR) under the

Gujarat SIR Act 2009, and will be managed by “Regional Development Authorities” appointed by and responsible to the state government, instruments that embody state space. As Anand and Sami state in this issue:

Dholera is setting an important precedent for the establishment of new cities under the DMIC framework, creating spaces of exception in governance terms that will exist and function outside the purview of current urban government frameworks.

Mega-projects and Speculative Urbanisms

This RUA issue engages with another significant body of literature that examines urban mega-projects, a category that includes for instance riverfront redevelopment projects, industrial parks or corridors, and integrated townships, which combine in one large-scale layout economic, residential and commercial functions (Shatkin 2011). Although on a larger scale, greenfield cities like Dholera in Gujarat and Amaravati in Andhra Pradesh, both discussed in this issue, are conceived by policymakers as integrated townships with planning and management design contracted to private firms.

Although not a recent phenomenon, urban mega-projects⁴ are currently receiving renewed attention in academic circles as manifestations of city marketing (Kennedy 2015) or “worlding projects” (Ong 2011). Mega-projects are promoted by entrepreneurial states to position their large cities nationally or on a global scale. In that respect, they represent a quintessential rescaling strategy, the aim of which is to restructure the urban economy, compete for investment, and also generate returns to both state agencies and private property owners/developers. In many instances, these projects aim to create new urban landscapes and lifestyles, imagined through iconic buildings and mixed-use entertainment/leisure centres. Figuring prominently in many Indian states’ growth strategies in the post-reform period (Kennedy 2007, 2009), mega-projects reflect the changing role of infrastructure “from being a simple precondition for production and consumption to being at the very core of these activities” (Flyvbjerg et al 2003: 2). In rapidly growing cities, mega-projects are also a means to scale-up urban infrastructure to meet basic needs such as housing and transport infrastructure, to enhance economic “viability,” the rationale behind the Jawaharlal Nehru National Urban Renewal Mission (JNNURM). Yet they are also associated across the world with increasing social and environmental risks by feeding land speculation, exacerbating urban sprawl, displacing local populations and livelihoods, including through gentrification processes (Gellert and Lynch 2003; Barthel 2010). Examining mega-project development in Asia, Shatkin points out that another new aspect is “their explicitly profit-oriented and commodified nature, and the powerful role of the corporate sector in their conceptualization, planning, development, and governance” (2011: 80).

Although a “new paradigm” of mega-project development has been postulated, mainly on the basis of North American and European examples (Díaz and Fainstein 2008), recent research has questioned its relevance for cities in India, and in the developing world more generally, highlighting rather

continuity in many aspects of the “politics” and governance (Flores and Davis 2013; Kennedy 2015). Indian cases have underscored continued reliance on top-down expert-driven knowledge in planning and implementation (Bon 2015; Follmann 2015) and large-scale evictions, for instance in the Sabarmati Riverfront Development project (Desai 2012), undertaken, as Mathur argues, in pursuit of the fantasy of a “clean slate” (2012: 74).

Of particular interest, compared to both western and east and south-east Asian cases, new city and mega-project development in India still tends to be largely state-initiated and state-funded,⁵ although private planners and management consultants play an increasingly important role in state-led initiatives. Even so, as many authors have pointed out, state actors increasingly operate on behalf of private interests, or in ways that benefit capital (Goldman 2011; Benjamin 2000). An analysis of the income and employment linkage effects of the IT corridor in Chennai, a mega-project largely created through public infrastructure investments,⁶ shows indirect gains accruing to capital owners, for instance, through the provision of housing to IT employees (see Vijayabaskar and Suresh Babu in this issue).

Yet, situations vary significantly across the country as recent studies show, making it critical to situate each mega-project in its distinct setting, historically grounded configurations of state power and contingencies of citizen resistance and mobilisation. Failed projects too offer hints for understanding local power configurations and patterns of influence, like the Dharavi Redevelopment Plan (Ren and Weinstein 2013), and are reminders of the open-ended nature of urban politics (Shatkin 2011).⁷ Although often schematically framed as a contest between occupancy urbanism (Benjamin 2008) and an elite-driven agenda for urban transformation, the issues are often more complex as the articles on Dholera and Amaravati in this issue show. In both cases, fear of losing livelihood, deep attachment to the use value of land and distrust of promises of future gain motivate villagers to resist, belying state claims of “consensual” or “voluntary” land pooling. Echoing Shatkin’s “landscape of anticipation” (2011: 88), Sampat describes how existing agrarian relations in Dholera are destroyed as landowners, property developers, and state agencies all wait in anticipation for rents generated by the future smart city. In Amaravati, Ramachandraiah argues that in addition to coercive tactics on the part of state agents, the prospect of farmers becoming “stakeholders/partners” has enabled a “regime of co-option,” with many landowners aligning with the ruling party on the basis of caste, speculating on future appreciation of land and developed plots. Likewise, in Tamil Nadu, Raman documents the difficulties faced by many corporate developer working on the “urban frontier,” along the industrial corridors of Sriperumbudur–Oragadam, who sink into debt waiting for expected returns to materialise.

By dissecting the “micropolitics of transformations,” and the ways in which it plays out in the socially embedded local economy, these accounts help advance the recent literature on the real estate dynamics and forces of rent-seeking and

financial speculation that shape the landscape of metropolitan India (Searle 2010; Rouanet and Halbert 2015; Goldman 2011).⁸ Highlighting the role of local actors on the ground, outside the circuits of global capital flows and state agencies, they deepen and complicate Goldman's (2011: 247) prediction that local actors "must become speculators of one sort or another, taking extreme risks, and must gamble on when government agents or land brokers will tag their possessions next for acquisition, and act before it is too late."

Spatial Inequalities: Bypass, Splintering or Urban Club?

Much of the urban frontier along the DMIC, and at sites such as Dholera and Amaravati remains under construction or on the planning board. It is no surprise then that studies of these sites have focused on the struggles around land and the public-private nexuses that have shaped their rise.

Yet, what if any evidence can we marshal to anticipate or plan for future trajectories of these sites? Indeed, it is arguable that the long and rich history of greenfield urbanisation in India—planned state capitals, satellite cities and others—offers enough empirical grounding to allow scholars, planners and policymakers to make several informed prognoses.

One of these empirical regularities deserves special mention because it seems to recur with such frequency that it can even be called a law of master-planned development in India: the emergence of the unplanned housing and informal economies alongside the planned city. To take but one example, drawing from her magisterial study of Navi Mumbai, Shaw (2003) noted that, in 2000, "unauthorised settlements" evidently comprised well over a third of the population of the satellite town. This informal economy included a variety of population segments from temporary migrants in the construction industry, living in hastily put together shanties, to domestic and service workers, self-employed or employed in service and industry establishments, as well as villagers displaced by the making of Navi Mumbai.

Bhattacharya and Sanyal (2011: 45) theorise the resilience and growth of this "need economy," consisting of the subsistence-oriented self-employed and a "survival circuit" of low wage service workers in Marxian terms as an "eviction, bypass and encroachment" loop that characterises the capitalist "accumulation economy" of new town developments.

The accumulation economy tries to bypass the dirty subsistence economy by building dedicated and exclusive corridors of transport, enclaves of business and gated communities. Each new enclave eventually faces the informal labour force as it inevitably crawls towards and encroaches on the newly carved out space, forcing the accumulation economy to construct new zones of exclusivity. In this game, it is often difficult to ascertain who chases whom, who retreats and who advances, who succumbs and who wins.

Three of the papers in this issue—Kundu on Rajarhat New Town, Idiculla on the Electronics City in Bengaluru and Vijayabaskar and Suresh Babu on Chennai's IT Corridor—engage substantively with the aftermath of large-scale urban development. Deploying very different conceptual/theoretical and methodological tools, they all suggest that patterns

of urban dualism are the sine qua non of urban development in this mode. In Vijayabaskar's and Suresh Babu's analysis of employment creation in Chennai's IT Corridor, for example, segmented labour markets with highly polarised wage levels and work conditions are "spatially manifested" through segmented housing markets, with high-end apartment complexes and gated communities alongside slums. These authors' findings also connect with other studies in the same geographical space that have highlighted the informal service economy linkages between Chennai's new economy and workers in the slum resettlement colony of Kannagi Nagar (Coelho et al 2012).

Positioned in a different disciplinary framing and literature, Kundu's exploration of place-making in Rajarhat New Town near Kolkata is particularly striking for the portrait it draws of the complex relationship between the urban village and gated community, as both sets of residents are "unsettled by processes of urbanisation." In this portrait, "villages and gated communities are not bounded spatial entities," but "fluid and dynamic places, imbued with heterogeneity and inherent conflicts" over claims to "housing and infrastructure" as well as "incremental... investments in a collective associational life." Concerned with the co-production of spaces and their "fluidity and heterogeneity," Kundu's work can be situated in an incipient literature on the spatial practices and politics that constitute the new peri-urban landscape of gated communities and private townships.⁹ Much of this literature—Goldstein (2016), Cowan (2015), and Srivastava (2014)—is located around Gurgaon in particular, highlighting once again the ways in which specific settings have become emblematic of specific thematics, much as Chennai's IT economy has been the site of studies focused on formal/informal linkages. Transposing themes and analytical lenses emerging in particular setting into new study locales, as Kundu does in Rajarhat, is part of the agenda for this issue.

The salience of splintering in access to "basic infrastructure such as transport, water, electricity and garbage collection" is the underlying motif that links peri-urban place-making in Rajarhat with the new privatised forms of governance being applied in places like Bangalore's Electronics City, the subject of Idiculla's paper in this issue. The residential settings in Rajarhat would appear to have little in common with the avowedly non-residential jurisdiction of the Electronics City Industrial Township Authority (ELCITA), but the fragmentation in basic services and infrastructures is an unmistakable feature of these and other greenfield sites in India. Although Kundu's allusion is more indirect, Idiculla directly invokes Graham and Marvin's (2001) influential conceptualisation of splintering urbanism, first formulated against the backdrop of newly built fibre optic telecommunications infrastructures in the West. Idiculla shows that these processes are especially evident with respect to infrastructures such as piped water networks—the Bangalore Water Supply and Sewerage Board supplies to ELCITA but not surrounding areas—as well as an elevated expressway that connects ELCITA to Bengaluru city.

As other authors have argued in the context of other IT-led transformations of the peri-urban frontier in Hyderabad's Hitec City and Cyberabad developments (Das 2010; Kennedy 2007, 2014), ELICITA appears to represent a "premium networked space," an island of global connectivity that sought to bypass a sea of "non-valued" users in "network ghettos" (Graham 1999, 2002). Mechanisms of bypass, whether in the domain of infrastructure networks (Graham and Marvin 2001) or labour and settlement patterns (Bhattacharya and Sanyal 2011), would thus appear to be a uniting feature of new urban frontier.

As much as identifying patterns of bypass and spatial inequality, it is also critically important to question the theoretical and empirical paradigms that have been used to understand greenfield urban development in India. Thus Vijayabaskar and Suresh Babu's analysis of linkages in the local economy of Chennai's IT Corridor must be read against a growing literature in economics that seeks to assess the impacts of "big push" policies that favour concentrated investments in chosen spatial locations, especially through instruments such as industrial clusters and SEZs (Moretti 2014; Wang 2013; Chaurey 2013; Sridhar 2006). While much of this literature, in India and elsewhere, has focused on macroeconomic aggregates such as employment and output, Vijayabaskar and Suresh Babu's intervention goes to highlight the relevance of locally mediated cross-sectoral linkages in any reckoning of the impacts of such space-based policies.

Similarly, Kundu's examination of place-making in Rajarhat is informed by and can be juxtaposed against Dey et al's (2013) extended and richly detailed Marxian analysis of the same transforming terrain. In the case of ELICITA, Idiculla appeals to the "urban clubs" framework to characterise the nature of the privatised regimes of urban governance it represents. It is worth comparing the literature of urban clubs, which emerges from a long-standing lineage in public economics, to the "premium networked spaces" and splintering urbanism frame because although they originate at very different starting points, both paradigms reach similar predictions about the future course of spatially differentiated provisioning of public goods and infrastructures around emergent centres of urbanism in India.

In particular, while the theory of local public goods, that is, public goods that are located in physical space (and hence prone to congestion), and club goods dates back to the work of Tiebout (1956) and Buchanan (1965), its application to gated communities owes much to the work of Webster (2001), Glasze (2005) (also see Webster and Glasze 2006). In applying this framework to the Indian case in policy innovations such as the SEZ and the NIMZs as well as industrial townships more broadly, Sood (2015: 3) has argued that urban clubs transfer key functions of local government such as executive and representative functions, infrastructure and services provision, urban planning, and security to "private governments." It is the range of such public goods and amenities assigned to such private governments—from open and recreational spaces to roads, power supply, solid waste management and water

supply sources, and social infrastructures—that raise concerns about their spatial equity effects.

While the splintering urbanism framework offers a largely deterministic framework for diagnosing patterns of spatial inequality, the urban clubs model provides a more open-ended analytical frame for tracing the impacts of a particular constellation of (policy/governance) conditions. In other words, in this framework, the effects of spatially targeted public services are an empirical proposition rather than a defining feature, without a predetermined direction for change. Thus, the model makes no presumptions regarding pre-existing forms of network infrastructure provision—"monopolistic, integrated and standardized" (Coutard 2008); nor does it assume a "modern infrastructure ideal" (Coutard 2008; Zerah 2008) with near-universal access to basic services. All of these assumptions have come under critique in the Indian context (Kennedy 2007; Zerah 2008), underscoring the need to distinguish between policy effects, in terms of differentiation/segregation, and "deeper" causes, located in social norms and practices as well as the political institutions that give expression to them (Lorain 2005). Second, this model foregrounds the role of governance regimes in mediating the effects of spatially differentiated infrastructure provision, as Sood has argued in the context of contestations around municipal status for Jamshedpur (2015). From a policy perspective, it provides a more value neutral model for tracing the impacts of these sites.

4 Uniting Themes

The papers in this issue cover a large terrain, geographically, methodologically and thematically, even as they highlight the disparate imperatives that drive new city making in India. Thus, one might ask what unites the experience of land pooling in Amaravati, with that of Dholera. Or what similarities the IT Corridor in Chennai shares with the ostensibly administrative rationales driving the building of the new Andhra Pradesh capital Amaravati.

This issue asks and answers the question: can cases speak to each other? This issue aims to offer a space for such conversation to take place. What refrains then recur across these case studies? And what directions do they suggest for future research?

A key theme running through this collection of articles is the increasing tendency for state actors to rely on "extraordinary departures from policy" (Ong 2006) to expedite policy goals and insulate newly created spaces from "interference" from, or in other words, to bypass social and political realities. As we have argued, these strategies of "bypass" and "exception" have been central to realising the policymakers' vision of the tabula rasa. Indeed, the bypass of street politics, in Bhattacharya and Sanyal's sense, depends critically on creating exceptions to the democratic forces unleashed at the local scale by the 73rd and 74th Constitutional Amendments. In this issue, Anand and Sami highlight the deployment of the Regional Development Authority in the DMIC as a way to bypass municipal governance. Yet, we can also see the central Land Ordinance and its use in facilitating land pooling in

Amaravati and Dholera as part of the same phenomenon (Ramachandraiah and Sampat this issue), as much as the use of “exemption” as a tool of flexible planning in the making of Gurgaon (Gururani 2013). Thus the studies in this issue cast useful light on the deployment of exception as a feature of the workings of the entrepreneurial state (Ong 2006), as much as they highlight the speculative urbanism that characterises the assembly of land for sites of greenfield urbanisation, whether in Sriperumbudur–Oragadam, Amaravati or along the DMIC.

Indeed when it comes to understanding the entrepreneurial state, the work of Sampat, Raman and Anand and Sami take forward the agenda of the rescaling literature in unpacking the monoliths of the state and the private sector. If the case of Sriperumbudur–Oragadam highlights the competing agendas and micropolitics of diverse real estate actors, the case of the DMIC alerts us to the complex intercourse between private and state actors as well as state actors at different scales that characterises projects of greenfield urbanisation in contemporary India. Sampat’s study of village communities in Dholera relates in vivid detail how such rescaling strategies, as they seek to reshape India’s economic geography, reconfigure social and economic relations at the local scale through “rent-driven urbanisation.”

Yet, in putting together this issue, our aim was also to look beyond current struggles over land that animate debates over these new greenfield sites to the urban futures they presage. Although planners and policymakers sometimes contend that the future lives of these new cities-in-the-making cannot be predicted, it is arguable that India’s long-standing history with greenfield urbanisation, whether at sites such as Jamshedpur or Chandigarh or Navi Mumbai offers a rich empirical base to test broader generalisations about patterns of urban growth in India. Indeed, the evidence suggests that the rise of unplanned city is a reliable correlate of the building of the planned city. Thus, the “dynamics of dualization” seen in the growth of the informal economy as well as bastis and informal settlements deserve more attention. More important, the emphasis on spatially targeted provision of infrastructure that is at the heart of competitive cities policies (Kennedy 2014; Goldman 2011) creates patterns of fragmentation and splintering by fostering an urban club approach to public goods provision.

Underexplored Themes

In looking to directions for future research, several underexplored themes stand out. First, a large literature around and beyond the speculative urbanism thesis has flagged patterns of policy mobility and inter-referencing that characterise urban policy and planning processes in Asia (Roy and Ong 2011; Hogan et al 2012). What are the nexuses and agendas—for instance the rise of multinational consulting agencies—that have shaped private sector involvement in the urban policy arena, particularly with reference to the development of greenfield cities and new urban nodes? While the role played by global finance capital (Halbert and Rouanet 2013) and private real estate actors is receiving increasing attention

(Goldman 2011; Searle 2010, 2014; Rouanet and Halbert 2015), the construction of a “global architecture of expertise” (Goldman 2011: 232) and the role of these experts in the public–private nexuses that defines their mandates need more extended exploration (Bunnell and Das 2010).

Second, although the meme of city as growth engine underlies policy frameworks such as SEZs and NMIZs as well as state-level policies (Sood 2015), it has received relatively little empirical vetting especially when it comes to local economy linkages. Research is starting to question which types of infrastructure really matter for growth (Misra 2015). Motivated by paradigms of investment-led growth and structural transformation, the policy models facilitating privatised forms of urban development often completely overlook the spatial growth patterns they engender. Indeed, recent work, for instance around Chennai’s IT Corridor (Coelho et al 2012) and small-town Ambur (Coelho and Vijayabaskar 2014), suggests that development and employment growth around “formal,” globally connected sectors tends to remain “disconnected” and fragmented. Vijayabaskar and Suresh Babu in this issue partially address this gap, but a conceptually richer framework drawing on a diversity of sites and geographic settings can go a long way to informing policymakers. Likewise, the social impacts of space-based policies, which social groups find employment in which types of jobs, need to be more explicitly addressed in policy design.

Third, the privatised forms of governance in the urban clubs have been likened in the literature to “private... governments” and “shareholder democracies” (Glasze 2005), that do not grant representation and voice to all residents. On similar lines, SEZs and industrial township authorities largely comprise nominated members from bureaucracy and management, leaving residents without elected representation (Sood 2015). Under these conditions, what kinds of institutional mechanisms exist to mediate between the competing interests of residents/non-residents, workers/management, public/private bodies and others? Where do these mechanisms fall short?

Fourth, ranging from cantonments to campuses to public sector housing colonies, India has witnessed a diverse lineage of enclaves. What can we learn from this experience? How do the patterns of exclusion and segregation built into new forms of private urban development, whether gated communities or industrial townships, mould the experience of the urban for residents and non-residents? What kinds of disruptions, fragmentations and unexpected encounters do they produce? Kundu’s richly textured ethnography suggests some of the ways this agenda can be advanced.

A significant literature has traced the trajectories of the old “new cities,” whether the planned capitals or satellite towns and industrial townships (Shaw 2004; Kalia 1994, 1999, 2004; P Datta 2012; Dossal 2010; Dey et al 2013; Sivaramakrishnan 1978; Parry and Strümpell 2008; Sood 2015). Likewise, important insights can be gained from situating India’s experience of private and enclave urbanisms within Asia more broadly (Paling 2012; Percival and Waley 2012; Hogan et al 2012; Roy and Ong 2011).

The task of connecting the lessons from this experience to the contemporary policy emphasis on greenfield urbanisation in India remains vital and urgent. In India, the policy slogan of a hundred new cities, first floated in the last decade (EPW 2010), has shown surprising resilience appearing in its most recent incarnation as the dream of the smart city (Datta 2015; Mukhopadhyay

2015). Even as this fantasy of the tabula rasa continues to compel policymakers, its implications for the struggle for equality and the practice of democracy in India remain unclear. It is to this agenda of examining how the right to the city comes to be (un)realised on India's urban frontier that this issue makes a contribution and suggests paths going forward.

NOTES

- 1 This representation is inspired from Jonathan Bach's work on the economic zone as a modernist urban fantasy (2011).
- 2 We are grateful to George Jose for this insight.
- 3 Even there, basic services like water supply often come under the purview of state government agencies.
- 4 We use a loose definition of the term mega-project, following Susan Fainstein: "(e)ssentially it involves a costly scheme for development of a contiguous area, requiring new construction and/or substantial rehabilitation. Implementation may take a number of years and may be the responsibility of a single or multiple developers. Mega-projects always include a transformation of land uses" (2008: 768).
- 5 Notable exceptions are the private-led development of "new Gurgaon" (Gururani 2013; Cowan 2015) and Lavasa (A Datta 2012).
- 6 On the IT Corridor in Chennai, see Kennedy et al (2014).
- 7 This corroborates Altshuler and Luberoff's assertion that "efforts to realise large-scale investment projects often provide an unusually revealing window on patterns of influence in urban development politics. Such projects involve huge commitments of public resources and often entail significant threats to some interests and values even as they promise great benefits to others" (2003: 4).
- 8 Goldman (2011: 230) characterises speculative urbanism as a set of worlding practices—the "imperative to speculate" as part of a "globalised" and entrepreneurial project of world-city making.
- 9 An older literature, partially included in a special issue of *Cities* journal, took a broader view of the contestations that characterise urban peripheries in Indian cities. See Dupont (2007).

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