

PETER MÖRTENBÖCK, HELGE MOOSHAMMER,
TEDDY CRUZ, FONNA FORMAN

INFORMAL MARKET WORLDS

READER

THE
ARCHITECTURE
OF
ECONOMIC
PRESSURE

NAI010 PUBLISHERS

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The 65 years of communist China's history can be divided in two phases — the revolutionary phase and the reformist phase. In the former phase, all national resources were highly centralized, whereas in the latter phase they were redistributed throughout society. Every period of such redistribution — of land, housing, revenues and nationally owned resources — has proven to be a stimulus for reform in a serious historical crisis. The revolution that centralized power and turned private ownership into public ownership took place from above and very rapidly, whereas the reverse transformation that is turning public ownership into private is occurring only slowly. However, just as the former movement would not have found popular support without an authoritative revolutionary leader, the latter transformation could also collapse without strong reformers. The incremental progress of reform from Deng to Xi is both a democratic transition driven by strongmen and a complement to the strategy of fostering autonomous development.

15 years after joining the WTO, China is now close to qualifying for full market economy status. To achieve this end, China needs to complete its process of self-adjustment, which includes restructuring its economy and legal system. This process is being pushed by external forces, but it is also a result of improvements in the country's superstructure being driven by its rapidly developing economic base. In 2006, the government officially changed the term *Five Year Plan* to *Five Year Planning*. This one-word difference is indicative of the decision taken by the Chinese government to reposition itself within the market economy and to transform its quantitative control of the national market into a strategy of dynamic adjustment combining strategic deployment and macro-control as a means of adapting to a mutually inclusive global political and economic environment. At the same time, China's GDP has become the second-highest in the world, and the sense the country now has of its own strength is seeing the focus of government expanding beyond the national economy to include social, ecological and cultural issues. In the cases of ecology and social policy, a more active form of government is required, while the fields of the economy and culture would seem to require more passive government. How China manages to balance these seemingly contradictory demands will become evident over the coming decade.

FROM INFORMALITY TO PARAMETRICISM AND BACK AGAIN

Vijayanthi Rao and Vineet Diwadkar¹

Since being coined in the 1970s by anthropologist Keith Hart,² the concept of informality has referred to a diverse set of phenomena and practices operating at different scales. It has been used by scholars and institutions alike to characterize a range of heterogeneous practices. In fact, the distinction between "formal" and "informal" practices may be largely conceptual and impossible to identify empirically with any degree of precision. To invoke a metaphor from linguistic anthropology, the concept of informality is a shifter or a deictic category, highly mobile and applicable to a practice by means of locating it within a particular time-space configuration, simultaneously demarcating and locating the formal by contrast.

As a number of scholars have observed, so-called informal practices can be comprehensive, use institutions and rely upon non-state norms for regulation, implementation and valorization. This contradiction is specifically present in the idea of informal markets. Markets, by their very nature, presume the institutionalization of relations of trust required to complete market exchanges and transactions in the absence of contractual relations governed by judicial institutions. In the Indian context, the bazaar signifies such a pre-modern site of personalized exchange. A significant body of scholarly literature on the bazaar emphasizes kinship, caste, ethnic and religious community as dominant idioms of market organization. This historical and anthropological literature focuses on elaborating the textures of meanings that constitute market practices in order to discover organizational protocols rather than privileging the functional role of rational calculation by abstract, rights-bearing subjects engaging in exchange.³

Early use of the concept of informality such as in Hart's work on Ghana contrasts pre-colonial forms of organization and labour with emergent forms of governance in the post-colonial period of former colonial societies. In this context, informal activity exists in a continuum with post-colonial migrations of "traditional" populations into modernizing cities in Asia, Latin America and Africa. Informality thus also signifies pre-colonial cultural practices that continue to operate in modern urban centres. These cultural protocols and meanings are given form in spatial practices at odds with modern planning norms seeking to sanitize and cordon off space for specific uses. As a result, the proliferation of street vending and similar forms of occupation of public spaces, which are ubiquitous in most postcolonial cities, constitute concrete sites where "informal" practices become visible and targets for intervention by state authorities and other regulatory agents.

Work on markets as concrete sites and built environments has largely remained the domain of architects, for whom markets are directly connected to consumption

and the consummation of various forms of exchange and circulation, both material/tangible and abstract/intangible.⁴ Architectural writers provide the most powerful and direct descriptions of what architecture does. As urban design and architectural critic Michael Sorkin puts it, "All architecture distributes: mass, space, materials, privilege, access, meaning, shelter, rights."⁵ Thus, physical sites where markets are performed are themselves forms of media, like money, through which exchange is possible at least as a quasi-public act, with or without the sanction of the state. Confronted with the abstraction of physical territory from analyses of government and discipline and the emergence of abstractions like economy and society as an object of governmentality, architectural discourses enter a contradictory terrain of analysis when attempting to connect the physical to the political directly.

We suggest that the contemporary discourse on informality, as distinct from earlier, postcolonial and culturally inflected understandings of informality, can be located within this complex relation between the governance of populations and that of territory. In addition, we suggest that the problem of locating informal practices precisely is an artefact of dominant discourses of government and we ask if an alternative, structural understanding of informality itself is possible. Here, we are interested in moving beyond reifying informality as a "logic" that informs other spheres such as practices of governing and planning. Instead, we are focusing on the logic by which a set of practices is identified as informal and problematized. This logic, we believe, is connected to the naturalization of the market as the dominant mechanism for organizing governance and to the corresponding rise of uncertainty as a problem for governance.

In her book on market expansion in Egypt, anthropologist Julia Elychar explains how neoliberal governance offers micro-enterprise projects as solutions to intractable problems of poverty as the state withdraws from welfare provision.⁶ Under the tutelage and advocacy of international organizations, micro-enterprises, deploying existing networks amongst Egyptian craftsmen as "social capital", attempt to transform the small-scale enterprises of traditional communities into new instruments of debt and capital generation. The analysis of this type of "formalization" represents an important step in the development of our understanding of how informality comes to be treated as a "problem" for governance in the contemporary world. Following Elychar, it can be argued that such poverty-alleviation projects, which build on the social and cultural networks of the poor, are one strategy for identifying and "formalizing" networks otherwise outside the purview of the state in order to create and circulate new forms of debt-based capital. Based on this example, we argue that informality does not exist a priori as a logic to be discovered and codified by scholarship but rather emerges as networks, structures and institutions whose relationship to the state is an uncertain one — outside of existing laws of enterprise-formation, taxation and spatial practice are "formalized" through a variety of interventions. In turn, the logic of formalization, within which "informality" is identified and applied to a variety of structures, spaces, networks and institutions, is intimately connected to the rise of market paradigms and uncertainty in the practice of governance. Thus, in contemporary discourse — in particular in relation to the question whether informality is treated as an instrument for the expansion of micro-enterprises and a

locus of debt formation or as an aesthetic problem — informal worlds are precisely those sites that demand intervention and ordering since they pose the threat of uncertainty to market-based governance. A key feature of such governance, in turn, is the existence of a knowable and governable "public" whose transactions can be measured and rewarded or punished as the case may be.⁷

The focus on informality, we argue, has shifted from identifying practices within a moral framework of modernization to identifying practices that threaten order and governability because they cannot be accurately measured and thus not valued according to standardized regimes of value associated with state-governed markets. Ambiguous notions of value in turn pose a threat to measured order and rules of valuation. In the physical space of informal markets dominated by consumers who are typically priced out of such state-governed and taxed markets, such practices range from the occupation of spaces reserved for other uses — such as pavements and bridges — to the sale of pirated or counterfeit goods and the proliferation of betting and gambling activities that often take place on the margins of these markets.

Sympathetic understandings of informal practices involving, for instance, land settlement, infrastructure provision, or the distribution of resources position these practices as filling gaps in availability by repurposing common resources, commandeering underutilized private resources or creating new methods of exchange.⁸ Such practices then encounter regulatory and governmental interventions in a variety of ways.

In this essay, we focus on two major forms of intervention — representational interventions and regulatory interventions. Representational interventions are ones that posit these practices as disorderly, chaotic, anarchic, unruly and ungovernable. Corresponding to these representations are forms of governable subjectivity made possible by imagining society as a public collective of exchanging, contracting actors and a private sphere within which differences of belief and practice are contained. A second form of intervention involves bringing to bear new forms of regulation that price and fix the values of these practices within state-governed regimes of value and taxation. Both forms of intervention rely on aesthetic judgements about desirable order and desiring subjects. But the very need for such interventions on a global scale is itself tied to the emergence of the market as an abstract, ethico-political space and its ascendance as a natural mechanism for organizing governance in the post-World War II period.⁹ In other words, regulatory interventions — whether spatio-legal regulation or regulations of abstract rights tied to the products of human labour — are themselves an artefact of the rise of the market as a mechanism for organizing governance.

In practical terms, some of the most visible interventions involve the production of desirable order and desirable forms of subjectivity through the design of space and commodities, largely based on the belief in the capacity of forms to determine systemic organization and behaviour.¹⁰ Physical market sites — where the design of both commodities and space is highly visible and communicative — are therefore sites of intense contestation.

Crucially, formalizing processes that intervene in spaces and practices permissible within demarcated limits depend on the idea that informal practices are those that *cause* turbulence and volatility and introduce uncertainty within orderly spaces or



A LABOURER SORTS THROUGH WASTE IN THE DRAINED, CONCRETE-WALLED 'RIVERBED' OF THE SABARMATI RIVERFRONT DEVELOPMENT PROJECT, AHMEDABAD, JANUARY 2014.



within systems of value-generation such as self-regulating markets driven by predictable processes of demand and supply. This representation of causality in turn has a genealogy related to the simultaneous emergence of the concepts of informality and the market as the natural site for organizing governance on a global scale. In his lectures at the College de France in the 1970s, Michel Foucault traces the rise of self-regulating markets as the natural site for organizing governance in his remarks on the Chicago School of Economics.¹¹ This form of governance in turn depended on gauging and valuing the uncertainty inherent in large, contract-based modern societies in terms of the rationality of the demands of heterogeneous populations with their own private beliefs and freedoms.

Thus, the rise of what we commonly understand as neoliberalism as a form of government has depended on constantly *regarding as suspicious* the practices of what Partha Chatterjee terms the “governed” and on the concurrent development of technologies for gauging different regimes of value and putting them in place through regulation and governance. Formal and informal then are the recto and verso of processes of governing value through a focus on eliminating uncertainty — the informal is not so much the *cause* of uncertainty in contemporary practices of democratic governance as a sign of anxiety about the unknown and the uncertain, about that which is absent, that which cannot be gauged, and a space for cultivating technologies for dealing with unknowability. Perhaps for this reason, informality is being applied to an ever-expanding and shifting universe of practices.

Our argument here is based on ethnographic research conducted in two cities in western India — Ahmedabad and Mumbai — where we have observed processes of urban spatial and social transformation over nearly a decade. While our research was focused broadly on the development, production and understandings of infrastructure, it included specific engagement with the development of trading infrastructure in cities marked by the violent and forced displacement of large numbers of vulnerable citizens and spatial redevelopment to accommodate real estate investment and new forms of urban organization. Our vantage point offers us a unique understanding of the ways in which processes are marked as “informal” and eliminated through displacement and enclosure into parametrically ordered spaces. New forms of enclosure and space-making are increasingly being guided by parametric logics and design practices the politics of which are complex and emergent.²² Our use of “parametric” is specific, as is evident in our case studies. For us, parametric architecture refers to forms of architecture generated by algorithms and formulae that optimize the interaction between given and imposed parameters — such as the eviction and resettlement of residents from historically occupied settlements and the denomination of new forms of exchange value for land.

Ahmedabad

The Sabarmati riverbed has functioned as a civic and ecological *maidan*¹³ commons throughout Ahmedabad’s history, supporting the livelihoods of many launderers, cloth washers, dyers and printers, petty traders, carpenters and farmers.¹⁴ Three generations ago, many poor families residing along the river grew melons and pumpkins there to sell in Ahmedabad’s produce markets. However, by 2004, 18 highly polluting

industries had made the river ecologically incapable of supporting crops.¹⁵ Other labourers borrowed from low-interest banks to buy donkeys, seeking economic subsistence in the river’s sand, which they would carry to nearby construction sites.¹⁶ Access to this resource has since been cut off by the damming and flooding of the nine-kilometre stretch of the Sabarmati River that runs through Ahmedabad. Furthermore, the closing of the city’s 64 textile mills resulted in lay-offs for the majority of Ahmedabad’s workforce. It is estimated that 75–80 per cent of the city’s working population, many of them women, depend on open markets and street vending as major sources of sustenance.¹⁷ Many of Ahmedabad’s poor have also settled along the river as a result of state-sponsored evictions and the subsequent denial of access to rehabilitation and relocation processes mandated by law.

The history of Ahmedabad’s Gujarati Bazaar includes many years of use of the riverbed as a commons, dispossession by the recent Sabarmati Riverfront Development Project (SRFDP) and the struggle of bazaar traders to participate in Ahmedabad’s urban transformations. Founded by Ahmed Shah three years following the city’s establishment in 1414 C.E., this lively market developed into a self-governed space for the weekly exchange of primary products among low-income residents in the region. Having first used the *maidan* in front of Bhadra Gate, the traders’ association began leasing 2,600 square yards (2,170 square metres) of *maidan* on the Sabarmati River in 1954 for a mere 151 rupees per year.¹⁸ The market was legendary for its capacity to furnish an entire lower-income family’s home in just one visit. Up to 200,000 customers and 2,400 traders¹⁹ met on any given Sunday, buying and selling, among other things, cooking utensils, clothes, furniture, books, hardware, electronics, antiques and handcarts. With women making up 40 per cent of traders, and another 40 per cent self-identifying as Dalit, the Gujarati Bazaar has been representative of socially and economically progressive attitudes in Ahmedabad.²⁰

Traders’ co-dependence has provided stability throughout the city’s history of communal riots. While Ahmed Shah originally organized the market to operate in accordance with the weekly call to prayer at the Jama Masjid, the traders’ decision in 1944 to regulate themselves through the Ahmedabad Gujarati Association prioritized economic over communal affiliation. The 600-year history of trader solidarity and cooperative dependence on customers and weekly access to the Sabarmati riverbed highlights the efficacy of this socio-spatial structure. With such relationships of material exchange, which were previously based in the city’s commons, now being reconfigured as competitive binaries between communities — be they elite/poor, with/without land tenure, upper-caste/Dalit or Hindu/Muslim — the tipping points and consequences of social and economic exclusion are becoming increasingly violent.

A second strength of the Gujarati Bazaar’s socio-spatial structure was its openness: it could accommodate more than 1,000 ad-hoc traders each week, who set up in drier areas on wet days or sited themselves around other channels in the riverbed to provide seamless functionality within a monsoon-fed river landscape. By enclosing, policing and charging high rents for a section of the waterfront, the SRFDP abrogated the market’s flexibility. The project’s designers have expressed interest in replacing the self-organized petty trade of the Gujarati Bazaar with a “world-class” conference



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AHMEDABAD, GUJARI BAZAAR

01 Henri Cartier-Bresson captured indigo dyers drying cotton in the Sabarmati riverbed in 1966.

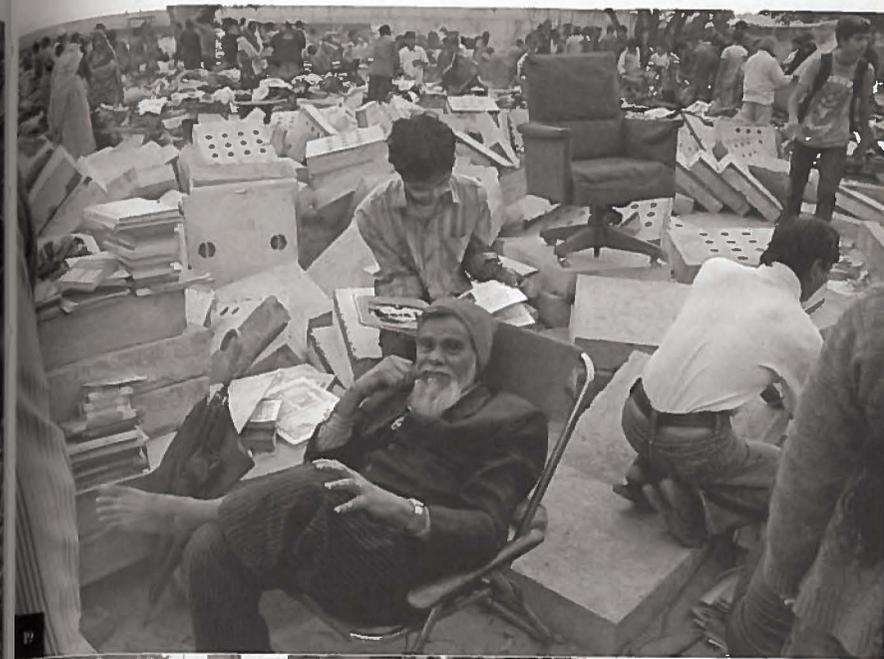
02 A wooden utensils trader sets up between Ellis Bridge and Victoria Garden.

05 Men gather under the canopy of a sanctified tree, surrounded by idols and a plinth, below Ellis Bridge. The Gujari Bazaar extends along the bridge's shade to the riverbed below.

04 Remains of the Gujari Bazaar in January 2014 following years of illegal demolitions by the Ahmedabad Corporation and the dumping of debris from the adjacent Sabarmati Riverfront Development Project. Trading continues despite dramatic topographical changes, a reduction by half in the occupiable area and the lack of a rehabilitation plan.

05-07 A boy sells roosters on the edge of the bazaar. Such illicit traders are not members of the traders' association and depend on access to the margins of exchange sites.

08 Families of hardware and knife traders have been associated with the Gujari Bazaar over multiple generations, living bearers of the city's 600-year old cultural heritage.



09-13 During construction activity connected with the Sabarmati Riverfront Development Project, materials were deliberately deposited and debris dumped on the site of the Gujarati Bazaar to conform with an image that suggested the creation of a "world-class" urban environment. Prior to occupying the new market, which was only attained as a result of public interest litigation, traders continued to meet amidst ongoing construction activity.

14-17 High modernist design characterizes the construction of a convention centre and parking lots on the market site, rationalizing the riverbed and the governance of exchange activity occurring there.

18 The new site for the Gujarati Bazaar during completion of construction in January 2013.

19-22 Traders organize on and around construction materials, selling durable and second-hand goods, books, clothing and tools to mostly working poor customers.

23, 24 Traders allot selling areas beneath Ellis Bridge during construction activity. Following completion of the Sabarmati Riverfront Development Project, they will not have access to the riverbed or its banks.

centre and antiques trade in a sanitized market in line with the self-image of those aspiring to be part of a world-class city.

Ahmedabad's administrators have interpreted informal uses of the commons as transgressive of their totalizing authority, confirming sociologist Amita Baviskar and geographer Vinay Gidwani's claim that the "destruction of common resources and the communities that depend on them is a long-standing outcome (some would argue prerequisite) of capitalist expansion" in India.²¹ While this commodification of common resources is lauded as emancipatory for the imagined beneficiaries, this erasure of the commons devastates urban populations living with thin survival margins. The Sabarmati riverbed, along with Ahmedabad's streets, garbage dumps, open markets and other sites liminal to authority, has become an ecological and civic commons occupied by the working poor in resistance to their own dispossession.

The liberalization of India's economic policies that began in 1991 has seen Indian architects become central players in the homogenization of urban form as a means of projecting efficiency and competence in order to appeal to the investment of what architect Rahul Mehrotra describes as "impatient capital".²⁰ Economic liberalization has also catalyzed Ahmedabad's shift towards entrepreneurial urban governance,²³ giving rise to city imagineering practices including city branding, the staging of mega-events, and the construction of flagship urban projects to move discourse away from the blatant anti-Muslim rhetoric and violence of Hindutva politics and towards reassuring images of the state as generative of economic and developmental progress.²⁴ Implementation of these projects through the Jawaharlal Nehru National Urban Renewal Mission has encouraged Ahmedabad's administrators to evict slum dwellers in order to open up riverfront land to gentrification and associated speculation.²⁵ Through the seemingly irrefutable rhetoric of the sanitary, predictable and efficient modernization of Ahmedabad, a nexus of landowners, builders, designers and city administrators has profited tremendously while the non-compliant urban poor have been criminalized for pursuing survival practices in the face of state-imposed restrictions.²⁶ The spatial products of this gentrification mirror one another: on the one hand, they include infrastructure-intensive, gated enclaves with public spaces programmed for leisure and consumption and, on the other, peripheral relocation sites with minimal infrastructural services and lack of access to previous livelihood and community networks.²⁷ This trend toward entrepreneurial governance and its associated spatial products can be seen extending to other places in Gujarat as well as across metropolitan India.²⁸

In 2010, the Ahmedabad Municipal Corporation began the illegal demolition of the Gujarati Bazaar without providing notice or rehabilitation plans to the 1,400-strong traders' association, 1,000 ad-hoc traders, or the extended livelihood networks of craftsmen, daily-wage supply chain labourers and their collective family dependents. The traders' association responded by initiating the design of a rehabilitation plan for the market and drew on the support of faculty members, students and researchers from the Indian Institute of Management and National Institute of Design to present this community-based design process before the Gujarat High Court in order to demonstrate the feasibility of their inclusion in the design process and a technologically modernized form of trading activity. As a result, the association

was able to halt demolition until the SRFDP design team could provide an in-situ rehabilitation plan. However, since the completion of construction and the recent occupancy of the modernized Gujarati Bazaar in 2014, preliminary observations suggest that power within the traders association has been consolidated and that the organization of the market is also being shaped by the presence of several wholesale traders operating from the new market site. Those traders not absorbed by the new site and consolidated leadership still meet to sell their goods at the previous Ellis Bridge site, just north of the new parking lot planned for a new convention centre. For the traders at this ghost market, it is still an open question whether they will subject themselves to the terms of the shifts within the traders association, relocate elsewhere, or adopt other livelihoods altogether.

Mumbai

In sea-locked Mumbai, urban renewal policies²⁹ provide legal grounds for opening up land to different uses. In this process, it is people who form the currency of exchange as they are displaced from desired to less desired land, which results in a range of outcomes and experiences. A second form of exchange incentivizes actors with large amounts of capital at their disposal to take advantage of this transformation of land: the government-sanctioned transfer of development rights to profitable northern suburbs has generated a shadow economy around transfer certificates, in which powerbrokers such as politicians, real estate developers and criminals — who are often the same person — have the direct power of disposal over this transformative potential. In this pixelated economy of new buildings and internal spaces, the state and its big-capital beneficiaries utilize these land policies to employ spatial allotments as a means of dispossessing the poor of land, claiming it for other profit-seeking uses and forcing the poor into state-regulated "relocation and rehabilitation" housing.

Housing advocates lament the rationed and poor structural quality of such accommodation, which ranges from 225 to 270 square feet (21 to 25 square metres) in size. However substandard their previous living conditions were, people were able to incrementally extend their floor areas vertically to support livelihood and community-related activities and production. The administered parametricism of "rehabilitation" architecture dislocates people's autonomy with regard to their economies of space, replacing it with tenuous footholds in the city's administered classifications.

These spatial parametrics also scale upwards and outwards: from the 225-square-foot room into a double-loaded corridor with eleven units on each side, to a ground-plus-seven-storey building, to a parcel of land packed with buildings separated by 20-foot buffers. The provision of daylight, air circulation, and areas for play spaces, markets, and gatherings do not figure directly in policy algorithms. Residents now employ a different calculus, absorbing a range of activities into one 225-square-foot room, renting additional 225-square-foot rooms from others at market rates, re-appropriating ground plans in this new vertical geography, or seeking other means by which to fulfil their needs and desires. These emergent practices create infrastructures for living and market exchange in much the same way that such infrastructure is created in the slums of Mumbai. In our images, we document and explain some of these emergent practices that are attempting to subvert the totalitarian underpinnings



LALIUBHAI COMPOUND, MUMBAI, JULY 2015.





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MUMBAI, LALLUBHAI AND PANJRAPOLE

STRUCTURES & DRAINAGE

25 Residents in Lallubhai Compound use concrete stepping stones to bridge street-side water pooling between dirt entry alleys and higher elevation sections of the asphalt street.

26 Residents in Panjrapole Settlement use blue tarpaulin as barriers to prevent water from entering under doorways.

27 Residents relocated from Panjrapole settlement to Lallubhai Compound modify their 225-square-foot allotments with a marine plywood partition wall.

28, 30 Exterior curbs and raised plinths divert monsoon rains downslope to maintain dry interior spaces.

29 Mobile petroleum powered water pumping units with hoses drain water away from building entryways in Lallubhai Compound.

WATER SUPPLY

31, 33, 34 Residents of the Rafinagar and Panjrapole settlements gather water barrels for filling during irregular visits by private tankers. Tarpaulins hung from roofs also harvest rainwater during monsoon months.

32, 35 The ad-hoc above ground bundling of 50 mm water pipes acts as a form of collective infrastructural planning. Traders and pedestrians treat this surface as part of a continuous terrain.

36, 37 Private water tankers fill above ground cisterns and collected barrels. Residents use hoses and jugs to distribute water through the Rafinagar and Panjrapole settlements.



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MARKET ACTIVITY
58 Without adequate space for trading activity, carts, coolers, crates and tarpaulin fill Lallubhai Compound's streets with produce, clothing and fish sellers.

59 Beach umbrellas both shade Sathenagar's vendors and advertise logos for real estate and cellular services.

60-61 Traders in a Chandivali SRA project use building foundations as trading surfaces.

62-63 Everyday markets for produce and tea stalls line Lallubhai Compound's 20-foot-wide access lanes.

MARKET ACTIVITY
64-65, 62 Without adequate space for trading activity, carts, coolers, crates and tarpaulin fill Lallubhai Compound's streets for produce, clothing and fish sellers.

65 A small general supplies store and a flour mill are situated beneath the entry ramp to the elite residences within the Imperial Towers, India's tallest residential buildings. The stores serve residents in the SRA component of the project who were relocated into adjacent 225 square foot allotments.

66-67 Some stalls and platforms are elevated above the level of monsoon flooding in the Lallubhai Compound.

67-70 Residents in a Chandivali SRA site construct stationary plywood and sheet metal trading stalls. These attach to existing buildings for storing and trading; others fit the depth of existing gutters and sidewalks. Some of these include real estate brokerages in addition to produce, clothing, hardware and stalls that provide a range of other services.

of these parametric architectures. New marketplaces occupy territories reserved for circulation and trade in everyday as well as “forbidden” goods — numerous real estate brokers’ offices signify a vibrant marketplace for these “free” spatial allotments, which residents are legally prohibited from selling in the “free” market.

On a recent field trip, we interviewed traders occupying the main thoroughfare of the Lallubhai Compound in northeast Mumbai, where most of the images used in this essay were shot. Additional fieldwork was conducted in a settlement in northwest Mumbai. In our photo essay, we contrast conditions in the Lallubhai Resettlement Compound with those in Panjrapole, a typical “informal” settlement that was partially demolished to make way for the Eastern Freeway connecting northeast Mumbai with south Mumbai. Most residents from Panjrapole were moved to Lallubhai, which also houses many thousands of residents displaced from other parts of Mumbai after being evicted from sites taken over for transport projects by the Mumbai Metropolitan Region Development Authority (MMRDA). Lallubhai is one of several resettlement sites scattered across the city’s northern suburbs and mainly constructed on the brownfield sites of former factory complexes such as the Lallubhai Aminchand industrial complex.

In Lallubhai, a daily vegetable and fish market is held on the edge of a street where it runs into a less developed tract that leads to a large slum settlement. On this edge, the liminal space where the road tapers off, vendors set up their stalls in the afternoons when parents typically go out to pick up their children from school. Many of the vendors come from outside the settlement and are prepared to move in and out as quickly as possible in order to give way to other uses of the space. Vendors pay off organizers who live in the settlement and the local police to maintain their spaces. Stalls are made of very light, generally plywood planks set up on plastic cans or four-wheeled hand carts, which allow for a hasty retreat from the street should the police show up. One visually striking element are the beach umbrellas used for shade from the unrelenting autumn sun. This already indicates a degree of confidence in the security of this spatial occupation, and the umbrellas feature logos of popular consumer brands and advertise services from real estate brokerage to mobile phone recharging.

Vendors’ use of this street and some of the other wide-access streets within the Lallubhai Compound — streets that offer transport access and therefore attract a lot of foot traffic — has coded the space with a degree of predictability, since the markets are set up and dismantled in a fairly regular rhythm. More than a physical site, the market is a set of operations that captures potentials in space, not only for trade and commerce but also other activities. For example, one recent September afternoon, just before the state assembly elections, vendors packed up their stalls early to make way for a political rally. Moreover, a few days prior to this, the ad-hoc market site was doubling as a gathering place for public celebrations of major Hindu and Muslim religious festivals. However, interviews revealed the still ephemeral nature of relations between vendors, who are only tied together by their autonomous mobilization of contacts and networks from previous worlds. Unlike Gujari Bazaar, there is an impermanence to these non-contractual and ad-hoc market gatherings, where vendors may tacitly support each other against outside authority yet are not knitted together in the forms of association that one finds in large markets like

Gujari Bazaar, which cater to a large and heterogeneous group of consumers and where creating and maintaining the infrastructure for the market itself produces durable networks of solidarity.

Here, in the resettlement colonies, markets are fulfilling local needs while also functioning as points of convergence of the thin lines of attenuated networks that the displaced populations bring with them. Over time, as the density of adjacencies increases and changes, these tenuous markets may gain heft and become more permanently established. For now, their principal activity is to give form to exchanges that are not accounted for within the parameters of resettlement. For the residents who now find themselves on an urban periphery, cut off from transportation, the former lack of even basic market structures represented a significant deficit, one that completed their isolation.

Thus, in an ironic twist, spaces created to control informal development are proliferating market forms that trade on the uncertainties saturating these new forms — from uncertainties regarding the provision of goods not accounted for in planning to uncertainties about the fitness of residents to maintain and uphold these architectural forms.

Conclusion

Space and the forms used to shape it are inescapable — after all, the dimensions and desires of the body have a spatial character. “Informality” aspires to an infinitely flexible form that twins the affordances of the existing “ecology of the city”³⁰ with affordability in a highly unequal market economy. Such twinning has produced a stunning archive of forms, which are visible across the cities of India in which dispossessed communities have actualized occupation in places where there are explicit sanctions against human presence. Along the sides of major roadways, drainage canals, garbage dumps, dry riverbeds and hillsides new forms of occupation have proliferated throughout postcolonial India’s urban history. With the emergence of market governance and the commodification of previously common resources for private use, a variety of strategies have emerged for dealing with this ecology of forms. We chose a comparative format, studying developments in two closely related cities specifically in order to highlight the diversity and historical specificity of “informal” situations and their transformations.

In a volume about informal markets, we chose to focus on how informality is brought into the world as a calculus for charting and dealing with uncertainty in the face of the rise of market governance. This calculus is formally played out at the many physical market sites explored in the *Informal Market Worlds* publications.³¹ Numerous scholars are examining the emergence of new forms of selfhood developing at these sites where ambiguous legalities and hegemonic capital intersect and demand different kinds of performances from itinerant sellers and consumers.³² If markets are fundamentally sites where economy and law intersect to iterate public and shared meanings, then we would suggest that they are also sites where the meaningful spatial practices and cultural performances of actors developed to establish concrete relationships to the abstractions of law and economy are *suspected* of exceeding and moving beyond these regulated iterations. In this dialectic of

performance and suspicion, the logic of uncertainty that drives the market-based governance of publics as consumers becomes ever more acute.

Our essay focuses primarily on the parametrically embodied intentions of designers who have intervened in spaces deemed to be outcomes of informal and decentralized methods of infrastructure-making. These projects take highly diverse and contested “urban design ecologies”³³ as their ground zero and sanitize them through a seemingly irrefutable logic of necessity into a predictable set of forms that mirror similar attempts elsewhere. The geographies and ecologies that are being acted upon are themselves speculative ventures, combining elements with untapped potential to create unexpected connections with hegemonic forms of practice. They anticipate but also restlessly attempt to move beyond enumerated and monitored outcomes. In this type of speculative practice lies their potential threat to the purported hegemony of markets which rule and thrive by managing the potential uncertainty of practice. For progressive spatial practice, the “informal” is at best an impotent bridge from the primacy of material to that of exchange. What even progressive practice cannot capture is the ever-present generative potential of even pre-determined forms that arises fundamentally from exchange. Nowhere is this movement more sharply visible than in the formalizing markets of the post-colonial world.

- 1 This essay is based on collaborative visual and ethnographic investigations conducted by the two authors. Its theoretical framing draws on Vyjayanthi Rao's work on *The Speculative City*, a book manuscript that explores speculative spatial practices in the context of Mumbai's rapidly transforming and turbulent economic, policy and natural landscapes. The book frames speculation as a key analytic in understanding the ways in which people cultivate new forms of life, practice and selfhood to respond to the legal and economic regulations of late liberal market governance, which opens the space of the city to unpredictable and turbulent flows of investment, information and objects. Primary fieldwork in Mumbai was conducted by Rao between 2006 and 2012, and in 2013–14 visual research was conducted in collaboration with Vineet Diwadkar. Vineet Diwadkar's work as a designer and researcher in Ahmedabad forms the basis of our reading of the ways in which traders, city officials and technical design contractors participated in the eviction, contestation and eventual absorption of the Gujarati Bazaar into the Sabarmati Riverfront Development Project. Primary fieldwork in Ahmedabad was conducted by Diwadkar between 2009 and 2014, during which time the city was dramatically transformed through large hydrological infrastructure and speculative real estate development projects.
- 2 Keith Hart, “Informal Income Opportunities and Urban Employment in Ghana,” in *Third World Employment—Problems and Strategy: Selected Readings*, ed. Richard Jolly, Emanuel de Kadt, Hans Singer and Fiona Wilson (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1973).
- 3 In her pioneering historical work on law, culture and market governance in colonial India, Ritu Birla summarizes this literature locating the bazaar within the formation of colonial knowledge about India. See Ritu Birla, *Stages of Capital: Law Culture and Market Governance in Late Colonial India* (Durham, NC and London: Duke University Press, 2009).
- 4 Despite the widely accepted “spatial turn” in the social sciences, the relationship between government and physical space specifically has a complex genealogy. For a detailed analysis of this genealogy, see Andrew Barry's essay “Lines of Communication

- and Spaces of Rule.” In it, he outlines Foucault's account of the emergence of forms of the modern State at the end of the eighteenth century. There was, according to Foucault, a break between a form of police state whose political rationality operated through architecture and new forms of political rationality whose concern was not territory but society. Barry writes: “At the centre of the concerns of the forms of political rationality that developed in the nineteenth century was not the city or the territory but *society*. The governmental State was no longer defined in relation to its physical territory, its surface area, but in relation to its social geography, its population and its economy.” Andrew Barry, “Lines of Communication and Spaces of Rule,” in *Foucault and Political Reason: Liberalism, neo liberalism and rationalities of government*, ed. Andrew Barry, Thomas Osborne and Nikolas Rose (Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press, 1996), 126.
- 5 Michael Sorkin, “Afterword: Architecture Without Capitalism,” in *Architecture and Capitalism: 1845 to the Present*, ed. Peggy Deamer (New York: Routledge, 2014), 217.
- 6 Julia Elyachar, *Markets of Dispossession: NGOs, Economic Development, and the State in Cairo* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2005).
- 7 Birla, *Stages of Capital*.
- 8 See Asef Bayat, *Life as Politics: How Ordinary People Change the Middle East* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2010) and Ravi Sundaram, *Pirate Modernity: Delhi's Media Urbanism* (London and New York: Routledge, 2010).
- 9 See especially Timothy Mitchell's essay, “The Properties of Markets.” Mitchell explores the boundary between formal and informal through an analysis of the boundary between activities that appear to exist outside the market. He writes: “The idea persists that capitalism has a boundary. There appears to be a limit, not just to particular markets but to the market in general. This limit is particularly significant in countries beyond the West, where large areas of material activity and resources seem to exist outside the formal boundaries of capitalism. The idea of a boundary between the capitalist and non-capitalist provides a common way not just to think about these kinds of countries but to diagnose their problems and design remedies.” It is this

- relationship between the formal and informal as separate but interactive spheres that informs the rationality of contemporary capitalism, as actors seek to both expand the sphere of the market while also maintaining a zone outside it as a potential lever for the reproduction of capital. Timothy Mitchell, “The Properties of Markets”, in *Do Economists Make Markets?: On the Performativity of Economics*, ed. Donald MacKenzie, Fabian Muniesa and Lucis Siu (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2007), 244–275.
- 10 As an aside on the relation of form to process, we would point to an argument made by architectural critic Sanford Kwinter in an essay on architecture as a technique of formalization. Kwinter writes: “Our environment is being reworked in depth, no one denies this. Buildings, however, are not oases from history (unless explicitly and brutally organized to be so, and then at best only incompletely) but rather relays in a comprehensive cultural system of management, administration, and engineering of human affect and historical unfolding. Like the coils of an anaconda, loop after loop of the soft infrastructural mesh is drawn daily around us, not to crush, but merely to restrict expansion in unsanctioned directions, to guide movements subtly but uncompromisingly towards other ends.” We bring this up here because our focus is on markets as built environments and thus on building as a technique of formalization.
- 11 Michel Foucault, *The Birth of Biopolitics: Lectures at the Collège de France 1978–1979* (New York: Picador, 2008) and *Security, Territory, Population: Lectures at the Collège de France 1977–1978* (New York: Picador, 2009).
- 12 See Keller Easterling, *Extrastatecraft: The Power of Infrastructure Space* (London and New York: Verso, 2014).
- 13 Landscape architect Anuradha Mathur characterizes the *maidan* as an accommodating grounds that is nomadic, collective and supporting of indeterminacy. See Anuradha Mathur, “Neither Wilderness nor Home: The Indian Maidan,” in *Recovering Landscape: Essays in Contemporary Landscape Architecture*, ed. James Corner (New York: Princeton Architectural Press, 1999).
- 14 Achyut Yagnik and Suchitra Sheth, *Ahmedabad: From Royal City to Megacity* (New Delhi and New York: Penguin Books, 2011), 300.
- 15 United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), *Human Development Report 2004* (New York: UNDP, 2004).
- 16 Ela Ramesh Bhatt, *We Are Poor but So Many: The Story of Self-employed Women in India* (Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 2006), 114.
- 17 Navdeep Mathur, “On the Sabarmati Riverfront: Urban Planning as Totalitarian Governance in Ahmedabad,” *Economic & Political Weekly* 47, no. 47–48 (2012): 65.
- 18 Shonali Vakil, *Gujari: A Concept of Contemporaneity* (thesis, Ahmedabad: National Institute of Design, 1995), 11.
- 19 The Ahmedabad Gujarati Association has 1,400 member-traders, who were joined by between 1,000 and 1,200 ad-hoc traders each Sunday.
- 20 See Navdeep Mathur and Arpita Joshi, dir., *Global Sites, Local Lives* (film, Indian Institute of Management-Ahmedabad, 2009). Selling stainless steel cooking utensils and second-hand clothes, a number of women members of *sewa* rely on the market as a vehicle of economic independence. See Vakil, *Gujari*.
- 21 Vinay Gidwani and Amita Baviskar, “Urban Commons,” *Economic & Political Weekly* 46, no. 50 (2011): 43.
- 22 Rahul Mehrotra, *Architecture in India since 1990* (Mumbai: Pictor; Ostfildern: Hatje Cantz, 2011), 49.
- 23 Renu Desai, “Entrepreneurial Urbanism in the Time of Hindutva: City Imagineering, Place Marketing, and Citizenship in Ahmedabad,” in *Urbanizing Citizenship: Contested Spaces in Indian Cities*, ed. Renu Desai and Romola Sanyal (Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage, 2012).

- 24 This strategy has continued in the wake of the 2002 riots, as indicated by Chief Minister Narendra Modi's statement on the *Vibrant Gujarat* website that the state is safe for investment and “with its all inclusive, sustainable and rapid growth, is emerging as a globally preferred place to live in and to do business.” See Narendra Modi, *Vibrant Gujarat Summit 2013*, <http://www.vibrantgujarat.com>.
- 25 Renu Desai, “Governing the Urban Poor: Riverfront Development, Slum Resettlement and the Politics of Inclusion in Ahmedabad,” *Economic & Political Weekly* 42, no. 2 (2012): 52.
- 26 Amita Baviskar, “What the Eye Does Not See: The Yamuna in the Imagination of Delhi,” *Economic & Political Weekly* 46, no. 50 (2011): 53. Bimal Patel, director of the *SREDFP*, confirmed this nexus during a recorded public discussion, recognizing the design team's use of participatory rhetoric to obfuscate a refusal of actual participatory processes. See Bimal Patel, Navdeep Mathur and First Saturdays Meeting Group, “Dark Side of Planning: Riverfront Development of Ahmedabad,” public discussion at First Saturday Meetings, St. Xavier's Social Service Society, Ahmedabad, India (January 2012) and Vineet Diwadkar, “Entrepreneurial Governance and the Ahmedabad Gujarati Bazaar: Erasure of the Sabarmati River as Commons,” *Revista Materia Arquitectura* 7 (2013): 69–79, 110–115.
- 27 Mathur, “On the Sabarmati Riverfront,” 69.
- 28 See Charul Bharwada, and Vinay Mahajan, “Gujarat: Quiet Transfer of Commons,” *Economic & Political Weekly* 41, no. 4 (2006): 313. Gujarat's drive to modernize its wastelands has resulted in the transfer of wasteland commons — used for sustenance by the state's large nomadic population — to larger corporate enterprises, which will lease the land at prices beyond the nomads' reach.
- 29 Urban renewal policies include post-1991 Development Control Regulations, specifically DCR 33(7), DCR 33(9), DCR 33(10), DCR 33(11) and DCR 58.
- 30 Ecosystem scientist Stewart Pickett argues that designers need to understand the ecology of the city rather than ecology in the city as a basis for developing models and prototypes. He develops the idea from Aldo Rossi's call for a turn from investigating architecture in the city to investigating the architecture of the city. Stewart T. A. Pickett “Ecology of the City: A Perspective from Science,” in *Urban Design Ecologies*, AD Reader, ed. Brian McGrath (Chichester: John Wiley & Sons, 2013).
- 31 See also the sister volume of this publication: Peter Mörtenböck and Helge Mooshammer, eds., *Informal Market Worlds Atlas* (Rotterdam: nai010 Publishers, 2015).
- 32 In an unpublished paper, sociologist Carlos Forment, writing about the Feria la Salada in Buenos Aires, remarks that participation in the market offered the residents of this impoverished neighbourhood the opportunity to cultivate the new forms of selfhood encouraged by neoliberal governmentality. He also remarks how, “in the course of negotiating with public officials, local residents gained for the first time in their lives a practical understanding of the way interpretive conflicts among groups in daily life, to borrow from Robert Cover, are constitutive of the ‘Rule of Law.’” Carlos Forment, “Plebeian Neoliberalism and the Political Practices of the Ungoverned: Buenos Aires's La Salada and Emergent Forms of Subaltern Democratic Life,” (paper presented at the Wenner Gren Foundation for Anthropological Research Symposium 2013), 26. Similarly, Jordanna Matlon captures the emerging relationship between capital and masculinity in the practices of male street vendors in Abijan with the term “complicit masculinity”, which entails specifically deploying practices of bypassing the state and its rule of law (see <http://jordannamatlon.com/publications/> for her publications on the subject).
- 33 Brian McGrath, ed., *Urban Design Ecologies*, AD Reader (Chichester: John Wiley & Sons, 2013).