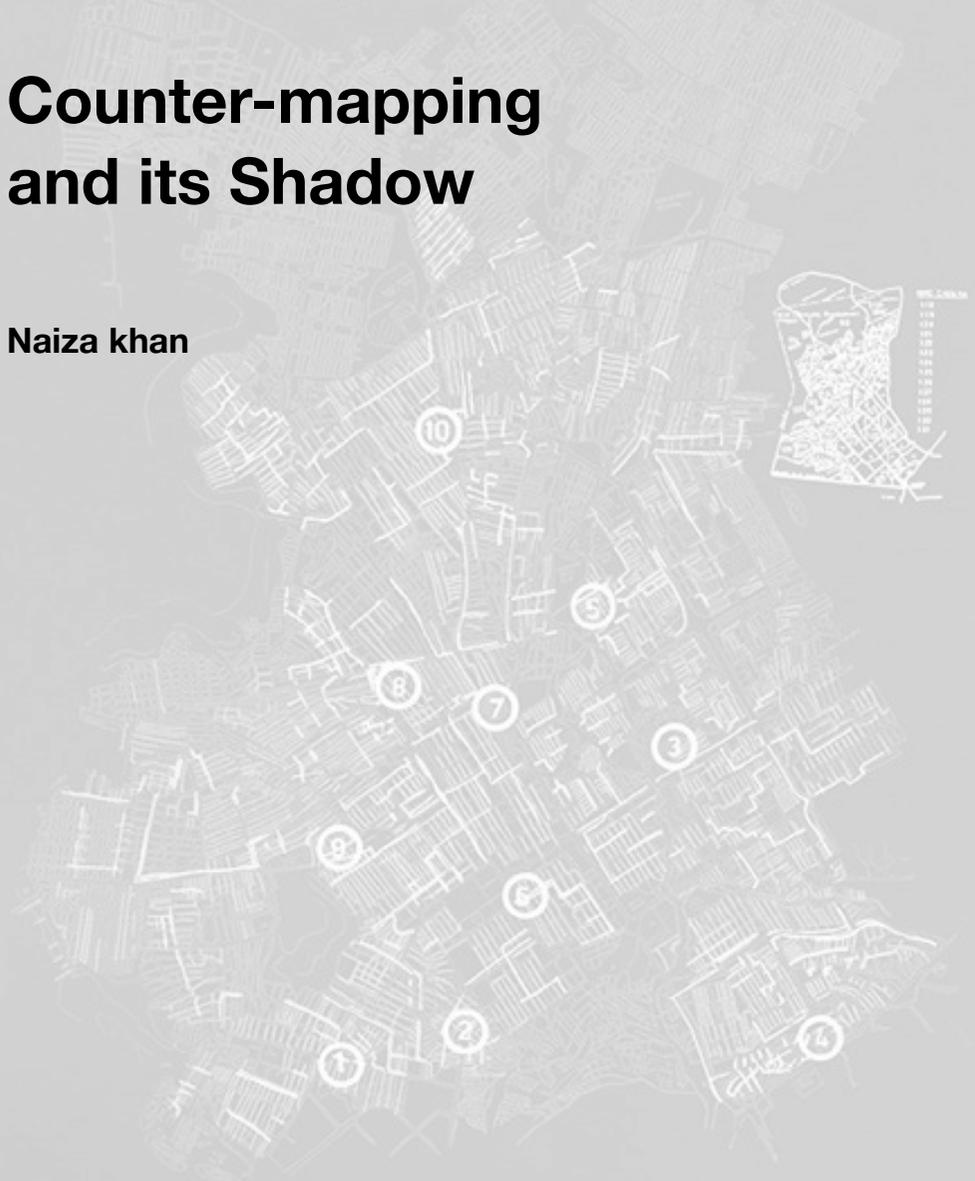


# 6. MAPS AND PLANS

Map of Orangi showing location of case study areas.

## Counter-mapping and its Shadow

Naiza Khan



CONSTRUCTION OF UNDERGROUND SEWERAGE LINES IN ORANGI-OPP ASOP AREA. DUE TO INDIAN MAP-SHIFT, SHOWS DISCREPANCY OF AREAS BETWEEN OPP AND THE OTHER REGULATORS. SINCE JAWBI OPP HAS TAKEN UP WORK IN THE CDP AREA ALSO.

STATISTICAL DATA - DEC 87

	OPP	CDP	OTHER	
A				
1	NO OF DWELLING	64	44	118
	NO OF LANE'S	3232	2915	6147
	NO OF HOUSES	47233	43136	90369
B				
1	LANES WITH SEWERAGE	2171	682	2853
	LINE SUPERVISED	928	92	1020
	BY OPP	1251	555	1806
	BY SELF			
	OTHERS (C.D.P)		25	25
C				
1	SECONDARY DRAINS	179	32	215
	OPP SUPERVISED	58	11	69
	SELF	41	21	62
	KMC (BY SUPERVISED)	21		21



**ORANGI**  
Karachi  
overlay of Aerial photograph  
SHOWING THE EXTENT OF SEWERAGE IN OPP'S PROJECT AREA & CDP'S PROJECT AREA  
Scale 1:4000  
ORANGI PILOT PROJECT  
1986

# 6. MAPS AND PLANS

Map of Orangi showing location of case study areas.



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## Acknowledgements

I would like to thank all the people who have patiently answered my questions over the course of my interviews and conversation: Arif Hasan, Asiya Christophe Polack, Noman Ahmed, Afiya Zia.

Thank you to the interlocutors in my pilot project, Walking inCommon, for their time and commitment: Amina Yaqin, Mahim Meher, Saba Khan, Christopher Cozier and Asiya Sadiq Polack.

My peers at the Centre for Research Architecture, to Ifor Duncan and to Lorenzo Pezzani and Susan Schuppli who have been so supportive through this time.

# Introduction

13th March 2013: Perween Rahman a social activist, architect, urban planner, writer and Director of the Orangi Pilot Project (OPP) was shot down by four gunmen near her office. At the heart of this killing is the question of land security and belonging - a basic human need.

My research is situated in the specific spatial and political geography of the Orangi Pilot Project (OPP)<sup>1</sup>. Orangi is situated in the periphery of Karachi; it is a cluster of 113 low income settlements with a population of 1.5 million. Its success was initiated by implementing five basic programs of low-cost sanitation, housing, health, education and credit for micro enterprise.

Rahman's work is positioned at the intersection of multiple forces; of postcolonial feminist and environmental justice struggles. And so, I use her life and the work of OPP, to raise a set of questions and open a dialogue with other transnational discourses which are crucially linked to social justice and indigenous political organizing and resistance within the Global South. It is also relevant to place her activism within the struggle of contemporary ecofeminist literature and scholarship.

The framework of environmental justice does not sit comfortably with the nature of the dense urban settlements of Karachi. So, this is an enquiry which threads its way through the text, and I attempt to unpack this notion (chapter 1) in relation to the organic nature of the city, its ecosystem of relations and its topography<sup>2</sup>. I place this case study within the legacy of colonialism which continues to permeate facets of governance structures and attitudes between state and stakeholders.

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<sup>1</sup> Hasan, Arif. "What Has Emerged From 30 Years of the Orangi Pilot Project." In *Oxford Research Encyclopedia of Global Public Health*. 2020.

<sup>2</sup> Conversation with Riccardo Badano

In chapter two, I use the life and pedagogic learning of Rahman and the practice-based production of maps that she and others before her have initiated in the OPP. I examine how political agency and urban resilience is shaped by the spatial politics of these settlements through the form of a counter-mapping.

In chapter three, I use the lessons of the 'walking-map'<sup>3</sup>, as a way to think about the role of situated knowledge and epistemologies from the ground. It is this mode of practice that I adopt in my reach methodology, through a series of interviews and testimonies from her peers and students.

*To understand the fluidity and flexibility with which situatedness is constituted by the processes of working the world, the transformative work that individuals do; so that the situation is not something that is fixed. It is itself in flux and therefore situated knowledges are knowledges which are not built from some fixed standpoint but are integrated into the processes which are structuring and restructuring the world.*<sup>4</sup>

'By making visible microspaces of interaction and encounter within geographies' this research aims to look at how it is possible to engage with place and new forms of learning beyond national discourses to find submerged perspectives.<sup>5</sup>

I extend the ideas of pedagogic learning within the OPP model, (chapter 4) and reflect on Rahman's position in the wider discourse of feminist activism. Here, the work of Argentinian philosopher and activist, Maria Lugones whose work on collaborative emancipatory practice is useful to consider as well as her reflections within experiential social learning<sup>6</sup>

This research has been a catalyst in my own visual praxis and the basis for a pilot project, *Walking inCommon*<sup>7</sup> - as a spatialisation of my research through series of creative collaborations.

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<sup>3</sup> See technical Appendix 02 for a transcription of Rahman's last speech at ACHR, 2013

<sup>4</sup> D. Harvey and D. Haraway, "Nature, politics, and possibilities: a debate and discussion with David Harvey and Donna Haraway," *Environ. Plan. D Abstr.*, vol. 13, no. 5, pp. 507-527, 1995.

<sup>5</sup> Gómez-Barris, Macarena. *The extractive zone: Social ecologies and decolonial perspectives*. Duke University Press, 2017.

<sup>6</sup> Lugones, María. *Pilgrimages/peregrinajes: Theorizing coalition against multiple oppressions*. Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, 2003.

<sup>7</sup> See Appendix 4

## Glossary

The spatial dimension of this project is in part created from within the cosmologies of language that were mobilised by Rahman and OPP as theoretical and field-work observations. Language has helped to orientate the research within its context and offers a consideration of the role of translation (and its misuse) as a conceptual device. I unpack the language rather than transposing knowledge / language from elsewhere as seemingly universal. This introduces new understandings of how terms are operative in different locations and scales and allows expansion of the term as well as subaltern subjectivities to emerge, with relevance to the project.

I use the meaning of the word along two registers.

Formed: the standard definition of a word or term

Formative: The conceptual and poetic implications behind a word and/or concept

## Archive

During the Covid-19 pandemic, my field work had to be conducted as a series of virtual interviews from the 'field'.

I have structured the research Archive against the material archive I was able to find during this time. I interviewed a number of people who were in close contact with Perween Rahman, and could give me first-hand observations of my case study. In this way, the Research Archive becomes a form of witnessing, a testimony and as a form of active inheritance.

## Note

In this paper, I have focused on the position of Perween Rahman, but would like to acknowledge the work of Dr Akhtar Hameed Khan, the founder of OPP and Arif Hasan, Chairman of the OPP-RTI who has been a mentor to generations of architects in Pakistan for the last 5 decades.

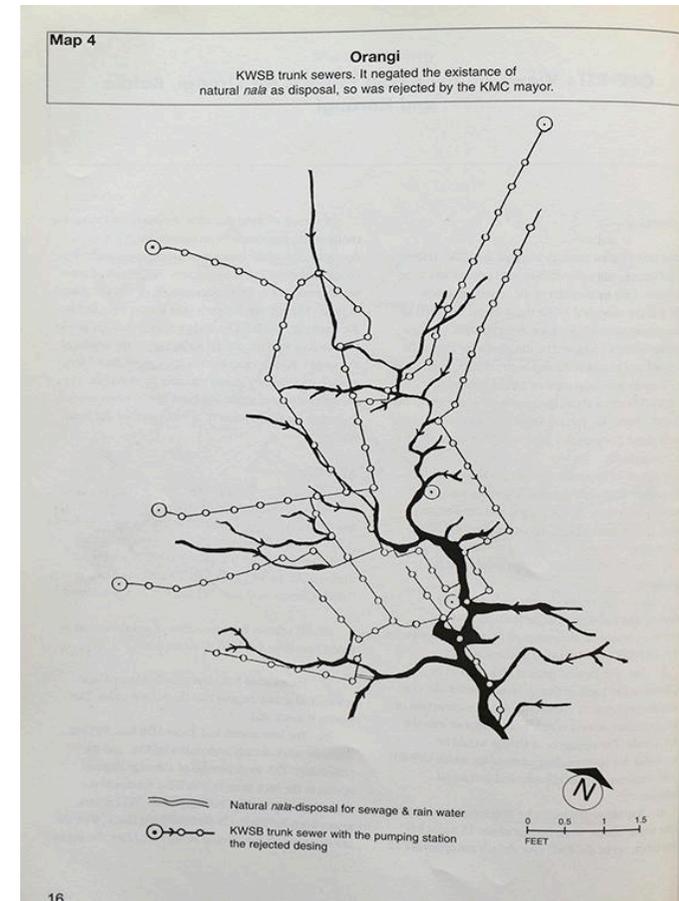


Image courtesy Arif Hasan

# 01

## Land and the political balance

### Environmental Justice for Karachi

In 'Place and Postcolonial Ecofeminism', scholar Shazia Rahman argues for an understanding of environmental justice through the lens of post-colonial studies and ecofeminist theory to excavate the notion of belonging. She suggests that 'when we foreground place and the environment... we find alternative discourses of belonging to the land that resist patriarchal and religious nationalism'<sup>8</sup>.

There is an urgency across the field, as human rights and community-based activists are threatened and slain and with greater polarisation of liberal and religious sentiments.<sup>9</sup> The moral argument of land rights tied to material history of infrastructural development need to be addressed, as social movements and peasant uprisings such as the Okara Peasant Revolt<sup>10</sup> come into confrontation with the state. 'The re-forming or reconstruction of the commons becomes a larger and more contested question, both as a conceptual right as well as a practical and political reality with political agency. This is particularly so in the fluid assemblages of land-use, where the rural, periphery and urban are constantly redefined according to seasons, urban ethnic strife and human migration. Between this friction, we have to ask how and where modes of agency emerge, where the subaltern speaks to state and stakeholders.'<sup>11</sup>

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<sup>8</sup> Sankaran, Chitra. 2020. "Place and Postcolonial Ecofeminism: Pakistani Women's Literary and Cinematic Fictions. By Shazia Rahman." ISLE: Interdisciplinary Studies in Literature and Environment.

<sup>9</sup> See technical Appendix 02 for a transcription of interview with sociologist Afiya Zia

<sup>10</sup> Akhtar, Aasim Sajjad. "The state as landlord in Pakistani Punjab: Peasant struggles on the Okara military farms." *The Journal of peasant studies* 33, no. 3 (2006): 479-501.

<sup>11</sup> Anwar, Nausheen H. "State power, civic participation and the urban frontier: The politics of the commons in Karachi." *Antipode* 44, no. 3 (2012): 601-620.

Much of what has been termed 'environmental justice' or 'environmental defence' emerges from studies and media reports of slain activists defending their forests, natural resources and indigenous rights.<sup>12</sup> The extensive research by Rob Nixon gives a sense of the complexity of this movement and offers a set of fluid points that are interlinked and form - 'a broad umbrella - an entanglement of food security, forest, rights of the dead, land rights, opponents of mining, mega-dams – and how all these struggles bleed into each other... [this] becomes a movement that needs to be interrogated as an intersectional space – of class, mobility, gender and transnational solidarity.'<sup>13</sup>

The Orangi Pilot Project sits within the dense urban landscape of Karachi<sup>14</sup> which is characterized by rampant informality as a result of high rates of rural-to-urban migration and an acute shortage of housing, with high-density *katchi abadis*<sup>15</sup> that crowd the city. Many of these informal settlements are not recognized by government agencies, and have no formal connection to existing water, sanitation, and health services. When initiating urban development projects, planning agencies in Karachi use outdated maps and only focus on formal communities and regularized informal settlements. As a

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<sup>12</sup> Counter-mapping: cartography that lets the powerless speak' Laurence O'Dwyer <https://www.theguardian.com/science/blog/2018/mar/06/counter-mapping-cartography-that-lets-the-powerless-speak>

<sup>13</sup> Nixon, Rob. *Slow Violence and the Environmentalism of the Poor*. Harvard University Press, 2011.

<sup>14</sup> Hasan, Arif, Noman Ahmed, Mansoor Raza, Asiya Sadiq, Saeeduddin Ahmed, and Moizza B. Sarwar. *Land ownership, control and contestation in Karachi and implications for low-income housing*. Human Settlements Group, International Institute for Environment and Development, 2013.

<sup>15</sup> Informal settlements. See Glossary Appendix 1

result, 61% of Karachi's residents live in 539 *katchi abadis*, which are located on government- owned land and on unofficially divided agricultural land on the periphery of the city.<sup>16</sup>

It is this periphery, the rural or 'peri-urban'<sup>17</sup> that spaces emerge as sites of conflict and vulnerability. Some of these fringes of the city are older urban villages known as *goths*<sup>18</sup> which were once rural but have now been absorbed into the expanding urban metropolis. 'This is a heterogeneous space defined by multiple ethnicities languages and mobilities, as well as histories of migration and displacement...In Pakistan the rural-urban interface is the new site of 'informal urbanization' that signals an intricate fusion of forms and functions, labor and commuter flows, housing types and land markets vital both for the poor and an emergent middle class.'<sup>19</sup>

When Rahman was shot in 2013, she was one of several urban activists who had been targeted by the land and water mafia. 'The ethnic conflict in Karachi... has turned land into an instrument of power.'<sup>20</sup> One of the main initiatives that Rahman was driving through the Orangi Pilot Project-Research and Training Institute (OPP/RTI)<sup>21</sup> was to teach the community youth to map their urban villages and thus empower them and create a strong relationship between community-based mapping and environmental literacy. The reclaiming of the *goths* (urban villages) through this mode of mapping becomes a subversive moment, a transference of knowledge and a mode of resistance within the structures of power and illegal land occupation.

Urban scholar Nausheen Anwar, 'considers the shift from the metropolis to the agrarian–urban frontier as a process that signals the production of a new value regime centred on the revalorisation of a rural economy and its transformation

into urban real estate, as well as the changing priorities and preferences of the state.

It proposes that Karachi's agrarian–urban transformations can be understood as value struggles that pivot on three interconnected processes: strategies of enclosure for the production of private property; accumulation by dispossession

that separates rural populations from the means of subsistence through direct extra-economic force such as the state; and "value grabbing" or the appropriation and distribution of (surplus) value through rent between diverse state and private actors.<sup>22</sup>



Orangi Town, Karachi 2021 photo: author

Karachi's status remains important to the global economy and during the War on Terror; its access to the warm waters of the Arabian Sea made this port city of great geo-strategic value and has directed a course of history that is apart

<sup>16</sup> Ibid

<sup>17</sup> Anwar, Nausheen H. 2013. *Planning Karachi's Urban Futures*. Asia Research Institute, National University of Singapore

<sup>18</sup> See Glossary Appendix 1

<sup>19</sup> Ibid.

<sup>20</sup> Hasan, Arif, Noman Ahmed, Mansoor Raza, Asiya Sadiq, Saeeduddin Ahmed, and Moizza B. Sarwar. *Land ownership, control and contestation in Karachi and implications for low-income housing*. Human Settlements Group, International Institute for Environment and Development, 2013.

<sup>21</sup> Hasan, Arif. "What Has Emerged From 30 Years of the Orangi Pilot Project." In *Oxford Research Encyclopedia of Global Public Health*. 2020.

<sup>22</sup> Anwar, Nausheen. "Receding rurality, booming periphery." *Economic & Political Weekly* 53, no. 12 (2018): 46-54.

from the rest of the country. In 1843, the British Empire annexed Sindh<sup>23</sup> in order to contain the expansion of Russia into India and the Middle East; using Karachi as a base to launch the Afghan wars.

Karachi became a crucial British cantonment for the supply chain of the subsequent war in Afghanistan, and in the 1980s as the front-line state in the Russian invasion of Afghanistan. After 9/11, Karachi Port was again used as a supply route for the NATO troops in Afghanistan.

Over this time, the city has absorbed the influx of war refugees from Afghanistan, large amounts of illegal weapons have found their way into the city to fuel the proxy wars in the region from the 1990s onwards.

The colonial legacy of Karachi and the contemporary displacements and historical migrations need to be foregrounded - to understand the particular 'environment' that has evolved specifically within the urban settlements of Orangi. Part of this legacy, begins in the land outside the metropolitan centre; within the long history of colonial violence enacted through 19C agrarian laws which were set up to create precarity for the landed peasants. 'Through these laws, the creation of a new rural hierarchy was established and the British were able to achieve the main objective of providing land revenue to the British Empire and political support for the colonial forces.'<sup>24</sup>

In his book review of 'The great agrarian conquest: the colonial reshaping of a rural world', Tariq Ali, talks about "the great agrarian conquest [which] was worked out through "contradictory dialectic" between two forces: "one that transformed society from below, and the other that sought to impose a structure from above. This was a "deep conquest" that not only reconstituted landscapes and peoples but also configured the very imagination of the rural.

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<sup>23</sup> Karachi is the largest city in the province of Sindh

<sup>24</sup> Ali, Tariq. "The great agrarian conquest: the colonial reshaping of a rural world: by Neeladri Bhattacharya, Bangalore, Orient (2020): 359-360.

Peoples and lands were classified, ordered and made legible as revenue-paying units. Settlement offices and subsequently census operations straightjacketed rural lands and peoples into master categories of villages, tenurial systems, property rights and customary law. Over time, through repeated enumerations and mappings, these categories gained a "corporeal existence".

The conquest proceeded even as categories ran into a rural diversity that resisted homogenisation'.<sup>25</sup>

This 'contradictory dialectic' is interesting when placed against the image of the X-Ray and the tension between mapping as a mode of partitioning between visible/invisible and the embodied/ relational map-making that defies it. It is also clear that maps pre-exist (as a mode of vision) and exceed (generate) the reality they describe.<sup>26</sup>

We can open up the possibility to reflect on historical relations of land struggles for women and peasants<sup>27</sup>, but also of animating historical memory to inspire future modes of resistance. How do histories of dispossession and historical memory find ways and gestures to re-emerge in other forms, and become mobilised within local geographies and frameworks. I am thinking here about research of PAIGC<sup>28</sup> and the recovery of history through the 'walking archives' in which 'the struggle was made of walking and marching, a constant walking'.<sup>29</sup>

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<sup>25</sup> Ibid.

<sup>26</sup> Conversation with Riccardo Badano

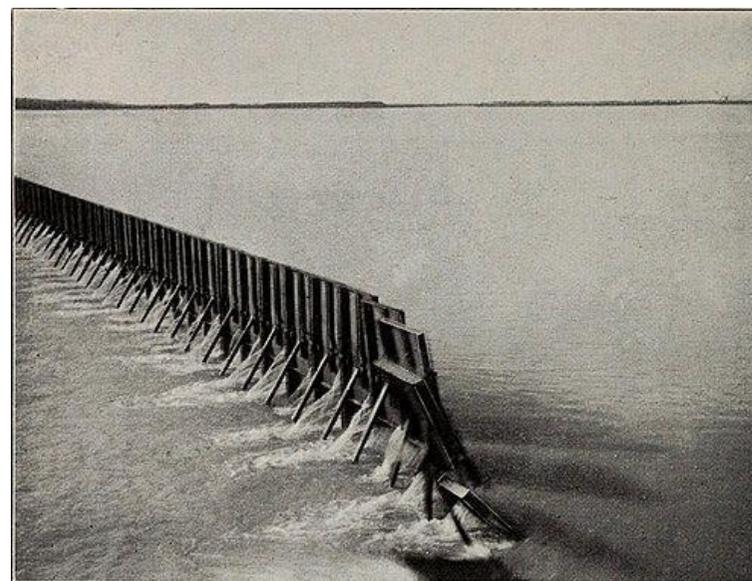
<sup>27</sup> Federici, Silvia. 2004. *Caliban and the Witch*. Autonomedia.

<sup>28</sup> The African Party for the Independence of Guinea and Cape Verde

<sup>29</sup> I do not have a citation on this except that it is a chapter from a book pdf entitled 'Walking Archives, the PIAGC, the recovery of the History'

How can the process of counter mapping become a way to redress the inequality and exclusionary policies of a colonial present? I look for submerged perspectives such as gestures of de-colonial walking<sup>30</sup> in relation to Partition history, as an inherited, inscripted language.

To think about dispossession and large-scale evictions, in relation to the anti-colonial movement, to the Partition of India (1947) and the subsequent partition of East / West Pakistan (1971). Rahman herself fled with her family as refugees during the 1971 war; her own personal history of dispossession from East Pakistan (now Bangladesh) was reflective of her refusal to accept the rampant evictions that she witnessed within Karachi's settlements for the poor.



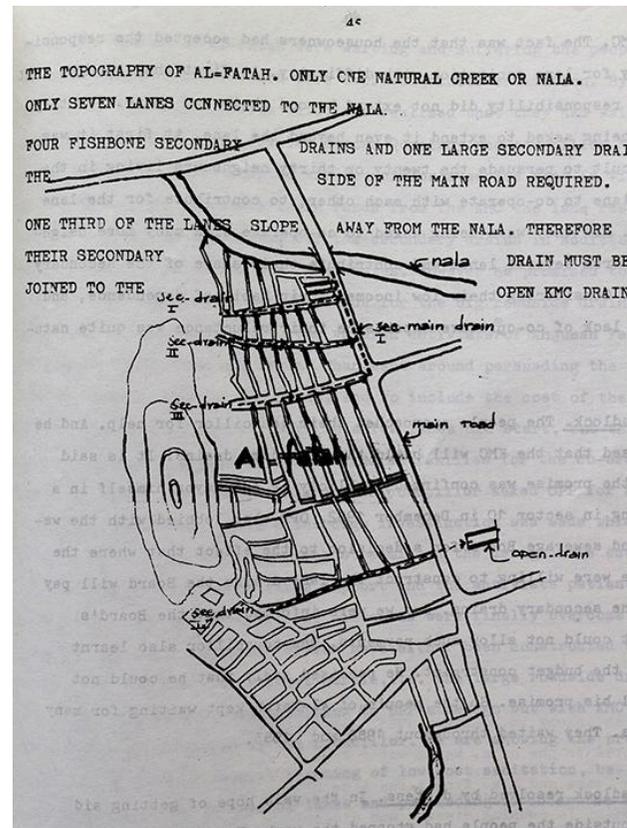
Mirala Shutters, 1915, Canal Colonies in the Punjab  
Source: Wikipedia

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<sup>30</sup>Gómez-Barris, Macarena. *The extractive zone: Social ecologies and decolonial perspectives*. Duke University Press, 2017.

02

The Map is like an X-Ray to the body  
Counter-mapping as a political tool



*In the face of this capitalist expansion, the burden remains largely on frontline communities to defend their ecologies using the tools available to them. Across Indonesia's resource frontiers, the "cartographic impulse" Edward Said once named to describe anticolonial struggles is apparent in the form of 'counter-mapping'.<sup>31</sup>*

I begin this chapter by referencing the last public address (below) by Perween Rahman at the Asian Coalition for Housing Rights (ACHR) Bangkok, 23 February 2013. Just weeks before she was shot.

I am interested in the language she uses, and the way she migrates the terms of a geographical mapping to that of an embodied, corporeal connection, which is not easily translatable, but nonetheless is rooted in her own situated experience. The comparison of the map as *an X-Ray to the body*<sup>32</sup>, creates a friction which is visible and tangible, and intertwines the embodied process of walking and the X-ray's primary function to scan and diagnose<sup>33</sup>. The metaphor of the X-ray renders visible something that cannot be seen, (or has been obscured) and through this visibility becomes a tool for change and transformation.

*with the map we became visible...the map made the government take us seriously. So that's the power of the map...the maps are our eyes, they are like the X-Ray, they tell us what to do, where to go, who to lobby.<sup>34</sup>*

Rahman herself has to walk the lanes to understand her environment. She is drawing as she goes along, she is first involved in a process of embodied mapping herself, to actually locate herself in the context of Orangi, because she is an outsider to that community. Here, there is a learning through the act of walking.

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<sup>31</sup> Tilley, Lisa. "The impulse is cartographic": Counter-Mapping Indonesia's Resource Frontiers in the Context of Coloniality." *Antipode* 52, no. 5 (2020): 1434-1454.

<sup>32</sup> See technical Appendix 02 for a transcription of the lecture

<sup>33</sup> The X-Ray also raises questions of health. In her seminal book 'X-Ray Architecture', Beatrice Colomina says, "modern architecture was shaped by the dominant medical obsession of its time—tuberculosis—and the technology that became associated with it—X-rays". This bodily metaphor is based on Colomina's comparison of an architect to a doctor "practicing a form of preventive medicine that nurtures and rebuilds the body and the psyche". In other words, Colomina uses metaphors to form chains of open-ended and, at times, loose associations between design, illnesses, and images.

<sup>34</sup> See technical Appendix 02 for a transcription of the lecture

So, something seen at the level of the lane is documented and provides information that can be gathered only through the intimate social interaction with the community, and is different from the political expediency that Google Maps offers, where many of the communities can be located from above. In each case the map is doing something different.<sup>35</sup>

Within the traditional environment of the settlements, Rahman's presence as a woman enabled her greater access to the domestic spaces within the community. 'She was able to befriend families rather than just individuals. She [knew] the social organisers, their families, how many children, meeting their wives, going to their homes. All that brought a new dimension to the Orangi Pilot Project. Wherever she worked, there was a link with the house; people she worked with and for. Men usually don't enter this side.'<sup>36</sup>

In interviews with mentors and students who worked with OPP, there is an emphasis on participatory methods within the community, training of youth in the settlements and the active participation of women through savings groups. The sanitation manual booklet<sup>37</sup> (opposite) shows the way OPP was trying to enable and make visible the integral role of women in mobilising community. They acknowledge the importance of the 'walking-map' which functioned in multiple ways, as this would show the visible contribution of the community in building infrastructure in their neighbourhoods.<sup>38</sup>

*It was an informal way of working, we were given information about settlements, we would go out into the streets with our note and sketch books and draw as we walked. The main thing was we were documenting the land users and all that we saw. Taking photos of course, but you know what it was like at that time, there were no phones, only small cameras...and then we would bring back the hand drawn sketches to Perween, there were some drafting tables and we would just hand draft them there on scale. Both the hand drawn sketches and drafts were then filed, very simply into folders.<sup>39</sup>*

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<sup>35</sup> Conversation with Susan Schuppli May, 2020

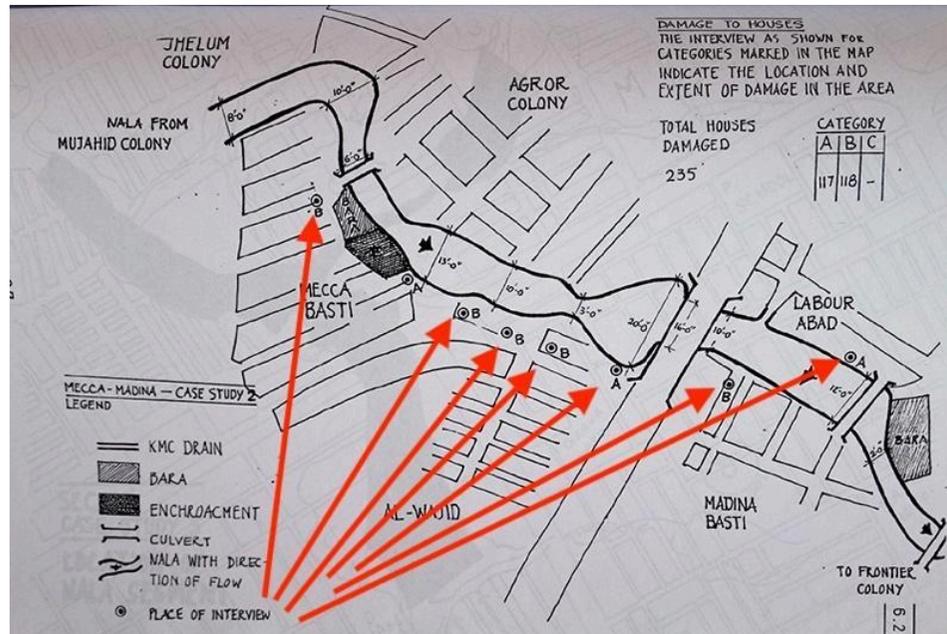
<sup>36</sup> See technical Appendix 02 for a transcription of my interview with Prof. Arif Hasan

<sup>37</sup> See Research Archive for more images of the Sanitation booklet produced by OPP

<sup>38</sup> See technical Appendix 02 for a transcription of my interview with Prof Noman Ahmed

<sup>39</sup> See technical Appendix 02 for a transcription of my interview with Asiya Sadiq Polack

In the map below, we see on the bottom left hand corner, a marker to pin the 'place of interview'. The presence of these locational pins on these maps, to gather data specific to the ground, were the cornerstones of leaning, mobilising and advocacy. They would form the participatory-model and build the human structures of the Orangi Pilot project. This process becomes an urgent political question and a tool<sup>40</sup>; a bottom-up form of mapping which mobilised the community and a political consciousness.



The state not mapping the informal settlements is a clear political decision, it becomes an obfuscation of knowledge, and a passive form of violence<sup>41</sup>

<sup>40</sup> Lorde, Audre. *The master's tools will never dismantle the master's house*. Penguin UK, 2018.

<sup>41</sup> Nixon, Rob. *Slow Violence and the Environmentalism of the Poor*. Harvard University Press, 2011.

Involved by withholding infrastructure. The purpose of their surgery is not to cure, and Rahman uses this analogy to redress and resist the lack of political will in the governance system, 'as if the State is conducting surgery on the body, without an X-ray'.<sup>42</sup>

These maps are 'counter' to the official maps; they are the means to collate data and reveal the gaps as well as the true state of the settlement or body of land.<sup>43</sup>

*Who does the mapping, we all do mapping. Her daughter maps, he maps, friends map... all of us are a mixture of people living in the community, people have community-based organisations... So the map helps us build up relationships.*<sup>44</sup>

The role of women in mapping is further emphasised in Rahman's address at the conference in Bangkok, *she too has learnt mapping; she maps her villages in the flood affected areas... all of us are a mixture of people living in the community, people have community-based organisations... so the map helps us build up relationships.*<sup>45</sup>

Here, 'women and nature are seen as structurally and materially intertwined, as women do most of the domestic work... putting them in integral relation with environmental questions of health, food, safety, and water quality.'<sup>46</sup>

The manual for sanitation and laying sewage lines which was produced by OPP<sup>47</sup>

<sup>42</sup> See technical Appendix 02 for a transcription of my interview with Asiya Sadiq Polack

<sup>43</sup> Conversation with Ifor Duncan, 2020

<sup>44</sup> See technical Appendix 02 for a transcription of the lecture

<sup>45</sup> See technical Appendix 02 for a transcription of the lecture

<sup>46</sup> Sankaran, Chitra. 2020. "Place and Postcolonial Ecofeminism: Pakistani Women's Literary and Cinematic Fictions." *ISLE: Interdisciplinary Studies in Literature and Environment*.

<sup>47</sup> See Research Archive

Makes visible the active participation of women within the urban settlement of OPP, and this is further discussed by Prof. Noman Ahmed in the interview.

The pedagogic dimension of Rahman's project is seen in the way she had to learn and unlearn—to establish trust with the community.<sup>48</sup>

In this way, the walking-map is a method that produces a process of 'unlearning' the landscape, while at the same time re- inscripting it with new potentialities. Geographer Tariq Jazeel suggests, 'that landscape conceived as a description of space bounds the concept to a specific spatiality, a spatiality that we suggest might in certain contexts need to be reconsidered or, "unlearned" to include the views of other stakeholders, users, and communities.'<sup>49</sup>

The concept of counter mapping emerges through the work of Nancy Peluso who pioneered research on political forests in Indonesia in the 1990s – this created a strong interlink between research and activism. In her text, "Whose woods are these? Counter-mapping forest territories in Kalimantan, Indonesia', Peluso says, ' maps can be used to pose alternatives to the languages and images of power and become a medium of empowerment or protest "counter-maps" as I call them here, greatly increase the power of people living in a mapped area to control representations of themselves and their Counter-maps thus have the potential for challenging the omissions of human settlements from forest maps, for contesting the homogenization of space on political, zoning, or property maps, for altering the categories of land and forest management, and for expressing social relationships in space rather than depicting abstract space in itself.'<sup>50</sup>

The counter hegemonic and grass- roots strength of this mapping process, together with the ways that it impacts a complex set of infrastructures situates

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<sup>48</sup> Conversation with Arif Hasan 2018

<sup>49</sup> Friess, Daniel A., and Tariq Jazeel. 2017. "Unlearning 'Landscape.'" *Annals of the American Association of Geographers* 107 (1): 14–21. <https://doi.org/10.1080/24694452.2016.1230414>.

<sup>50</sup> Peluso, Nancy Lee. "Whose woods are these? Counter-mapping forest territories in Kalimantan, Indonesia." *Antipode* 27, no. 4 (1995): 383-406.

this project within a form of 'slow' counter insurgency that is taking place in the environment. It speaks to the de-colonial politics of social movements situated in the Global South. A stronger coupling of research and activism over the last two decades has created solidarity within environmental defence and greater indigenous counter mapping where human rights lawsuits have been woven together with participatory politics.<sup>51</sup>

How can the process of counter-mapping become a way to redress the inequality and exclusionary policies of a colonial present? It is useful to think about Abdul Malick Simone's notion of people as infrastructure, and to translate and repurpose the phrase to think about the walking and the sharing of embodied knowledge, and the passing of knowledge across generations as creating a very different kind of infrastructure, one built by the community's material and embodied contribution.<sup>52</sup>

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<sup>51</sup> Kapur, Ratna. "Damming Women's Rights: Gender and the Narmada Valley Projects." *Canadian Woman Studies* 13, no. 3 (1993).

<sup>52</sup> Conversation with Shela Sheikh May 2020

OPP-020/11

## سہولت پیشہ ورانہ اور... اپنی پی-آؤٹ آئی

### لوگوں کو سہولتیں دینا اور سہولتیں دینا



لوگوں کو سہولتیں نہ ہونے کی صورت میں  
اس کے نقصانات سے آگاہ کیا جائے  
مخاطب طرح کی بیماریاں ہوں گی۔

زیر زمین بان کی سطح ملے ہوگی  
جس سے مکان کو نقصان پہنچے گا



پڑوسی کو سہولتیں آپس میں حاصل ہوں گی

### سہولتوں کے ساتھ ساتھ ایک کتابچہ

Booklet for guidelines to build sewage lines, OPP  
Source: Arif Hasan

## 03

# New / old forms of insurgent knowledge

During the peasant's revolt on the Okara Military Farms, a land struggle initiated in 1999 by nearly a hundred thousand tenant farmers in more than twenty districts of Punjab, Pakistan's most populous province. The struggle came together under the umbrella of the women's *Anjuman-e-Mazareen Punjab*<sup>53</sup> and the slogan of the movement:

'Malki ya maut'  
Ownership or Death

This mobilising slogan used by tenants against the landlord is almost the same as that deployed by tenants – 'tierra o muerte' ('land or death') – on the large rural estates in the eastern lowlands of Peru some 40 years ago. This was a call to action that brought different classes and religious groups together on a common platform and cause.

Current discourse of feminist activism and ethics brings the intersection and urgent relationship of theory and practice to the fore. Two feminist scholars whose texts I have found useful to form the relational aspects of my research and situate my understanding within an intersectional reading are the work of María Lugones and Chandra T. Mohanty. In 'Pilgrimages / Peregrinajes',<sup>54</sup> Maria Lugones uses "theoretico-practical" reflection within experiential social learning to dissolve false dichotomies between theory and practice'.

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<sup>53</sup> Saigol, Rubina. *Ownership Or Death: Women and Tenant Struggles in Pakistan Punjab*. Rupa & Company, 2010.

<sup>54</sup> Lugones, María. *Pilgrimages/peregrinajes: Theorizing coalition against multiple oppressions*. Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, 2003.

I wish to put this research project in conversation with the scholarship of these feminist scholars. I am interested in where they place/ situate the centre of knowledge(s) production and how this can be mined, how do we find ways to create transversal relationships between what we produce and how it can engage with the knowledge produced by others. Chandra Mohanty suggests that feminist practice operates at a number of levels,

at the level of daily life through the everyday acts that constitute our identities and relational communities  
at the level of collective action in groups, networks, and movements constituted around feminist visions of social transformation:  
and at the level of theory, pedagogy and textual creativity in the scholarly and writing practices of feminists engaged in the production of knowledge.<sup>55</sup>

The case study of OPP offers a model, a pedagogic learning experiment which begins from the specificity of location. There is a strong transnational element embedded in the genealogy of the organisation; this developed through coalitions as well as individuals after anti-colonial struggles in the 1950s and 1960s, in nations within Africa, Asia and Latin America and against the politics of the Cold War era. At this time, issues of social justice were linked to land rights for the poor, evictions and acute urban housing were emerging.

Transnational links are not always direct, but move through a chain of events over time and geography. The emergence and role of international coalitions, comes out of a duty of care, and a bottom up learning from the ground. This

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<sup>55</sup> Mohanty, Chandra Talpade. *Feminism without Borders*. New York, USA: Duke University Press, 2003. <https://doi.org/10.1515/9780822384649>

notion of collectivism was most evident in the work being done in the *favelas* and the *barricades* of Argentina and Chile. During the 1950 and 60s. It is within these spaces of chaos and heterogeneous communities that the sharing of knowledge within the community led to a global movement of urban activism.<sup>56</sup>

Turner's book 'Freedom to Build' which came out in 1972, was an important bible for low income housing, community development and self-help. The research that formed the basis of this work, was developed out of his engagement with the squatter settlements of Lima<sup>57</sup>

where he worked between 1957-1977. Turner visited the OPP in the 1980s and his theoretical stance was formed through this context and combined aspects of the work of the Peruvian urban theorists Fernando Belaúnde, Pedro Beltrán and Carlos Delgado. Peru, at this time was undergoing an intensive national debate on housing policy for the poor which were linked to much broader debates on city planning, political ideology, and the nature of democracy.

Another pivotal figure in the link was Father Jorge Anzorena, a Jesuit priest based in Japan, who has been travelling in Africa, Asia and Latin America for many decades. The documentation of his work was circulated widely in the journal, *Selavip News*<sup>58</sup>, which supported urban poor groups including their struggles to avoid eviction. It was through *Selavip News* that many informal contacts between different urban poor groups were first established within and between nations, and it connected the map between OPP, ACHR, SDI, CODI and Spark.<sup>59</sup> It was Fr Anzorena who persuaded many of the coalition members of SDI to go to the first Southern Africa People's Dialogue on Land and Shelter in South Africa in 1991, organised by Joel Bolnick.<sup>60</sup>

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<sup>56</sup> Bromley, Ray. "Peru 1957–1977: How time and place influenced John Turner's ideas on housing policy." *Habitat International* 27, no. 2 (2003): 271-292.

<sup>57</sup> Ibid

<sup>58</sup> <https://www.selavip.org/>

<sup>59</sup> See Appendix 03

<sup>60</sup> IS a low-income, WELFARE COLONY. "Driven by need, learning by experience." *Waterlines* 16 (1997): 19.

In the debate 'Nature, Politics and Possibilities' Donna Haraway and David Harvey discuss the role of alliance forming-

'looking for real possible connections between different situated knowledges, that is actually about alliance formation; it's about learning to translate, to converse from one language to another, about having conversations which can transgress boundaries—disciplinary boundaries, national boundaries, ethnic boundaries, and the like... deep objective knowledge, is going to come from building upon the notion of situated knowledges...from being located in different political as well as disciplinary contexts.

# 04

## Practice as research

### Walking inCommon

The case of Orangi Pilot Project offered a spatial imaginary with several strategies and questions, and the research for this project has led me to explore pathways which are too wide to explore in the space of this essay.

During the Covid- 19 pandemic, my primary mode of research were the interviews<sup>61</sup> I was trying to conduct, as a way to get close to my field work, and to understand the local, the situated politics and the materiality of place. They were also a form of witnessing a specific violent act, a trauma, and as testimonies to understand and 'rebuild' that history.<sup>62</sup>

I began to think about ways to expand my research through a form of remote practice that could be a set of instructions. So, I began to storyboard a chain of virtual encounters or conversations that linked in time and space to artists, writers and scholars in different locations. Mapping offered a way forward.

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<sup>61</sup> 'The process of interviewing is directly associated with the process of remembering and it relies heavily on how these memories are recalled and the way they are narrated.

<sup>62</sup> Citatino unknown, except that it is a chapter from a book pdf entitled 'Walking Archives, the PIAGC, the recovery of the History' Gómez-Barris, Macarena. *The extractive zone: Social ecologies and decolonial perspectives*. Duke University Press, 2017.

I invited them to follow a loose set of guidelines, which are formed through the understanding of the – walking-map or the map as an x-ray for the body. I began to think of how each collaborator could move

forward the frame of this storyboard. Situate a moment in time - that reveals a testimony about a place or a witnessing.

Coming out of the specificity of their location and a way to reimagine their own work in relation to these guidelines. I found myself in the role of mediator, within this field of documentation - of voices- creating a space for critical reflection – between the shadow of my research – and an new ambulatory walking practice.

Walking inCommon<sup>63</sup>  
A series of podcasts from the field

Over the course of a month, I received recorded sound moments from the Botanic Gardens in Port of Spain, Trinidad & Tobago  
Situated recounts and poetic spatialisations of the city from the Lawrence Gardens in Lahore.

As I edited the podcasts, I realized the many complexities that are part of a chain of creative collaborations / and production. The uneven recordings and the ambient sounds gave me a sense of the uneven geographies we live in during the time of Covid.

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<sup>63</sup> See Appendix 4

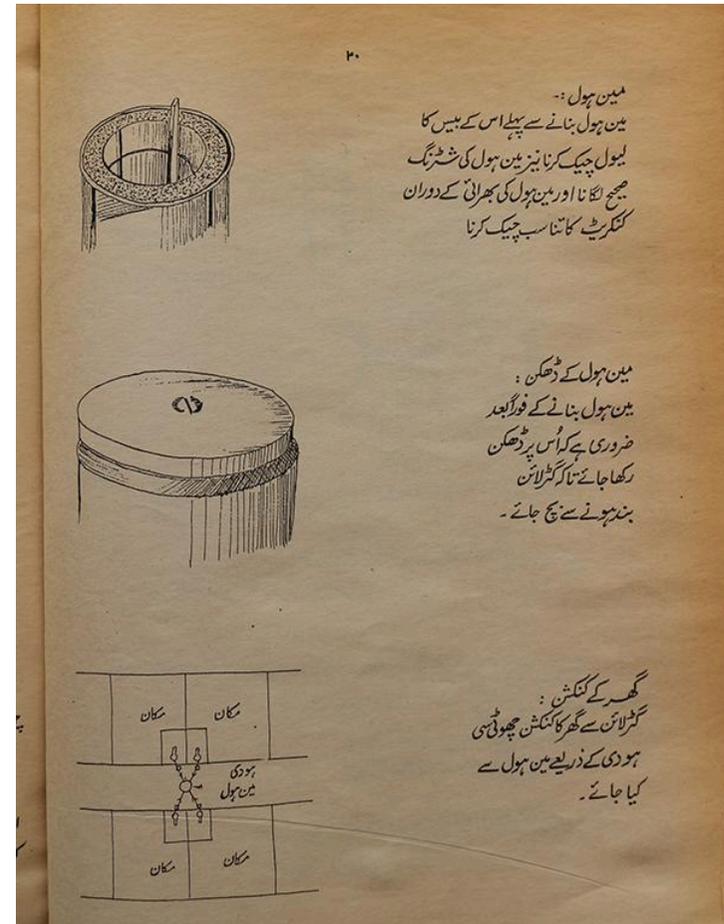
I realized there were points of intersection in here  
 ideas that transmit from one author to another.  
 Discussions that are trans-disciplinary  
 a new, imagined network of conversations  
 Perhaps, a multi-sensory map

So,  
 walking inCommon – is a method of research for me,  
 an investigative tool to think about how I can develop a language  
 how do modes of moving through space, understanding difference through  
 geography, become the grounds for producing an audio-visual lexicon.<sup>64</sup>

I am thinking here of Abdul Malick Simone's notion of people as infrastructure:  
 I want to translate and repurpose this phrase and think about the walking and  
 the sharing of embodied knowledge and the passing of knowledge across  
 generations as creating a very different kind of infrastructure – but one in  
 which life would be more liveable.

these podcasts are a pilot that will grow in further episodes  
 They are an attempt to bring into visible dialogue the 'voice' of  
 Rahman with other voices  
 And to understand the issue and urgency of the projects  
 To offer a proposal on political action and resources

It is also an attempt to make this work an act of active inheritance  
 To think about the way in which this body of research can find new  
 access through a form of mobile situated knowledge and learning.



Instruction Manual for laying sewage lines, produced by OPP  
 Source: Arif Hasan

<sup>64</sup> Conversation with Susan Schuppli

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# Technical Appendix 01

## Glossary

**Form:** the 'standard' definition of a term or word

**Formative:** the conceptual and poetic implication behind a word and/or concept

### **Informal settlement** Katchi Abadi کچی آبادی

**Form:** As a result of high rates of rural-to-urban migration and an acute shortage of housing, high-density informal settlements, or *katchi abadis*, crowd the city. Many of these *katchi abadis* are not recognized by government agencies, and have no formal connections to existing water, sanitation, and health services. 61% of Karachi's residents live in 539 *katchi abadis*, which are located on government- owned land and on unofficially divided agricultural land on the periphery of the city.

**Formative:**

a) There is a cultural sensitivity and specificity to this term and it is a term not liked by many urban scholars. It alludes to the idea of becoming - an object, a figure in the making. While this has negative connotations, what could be understood as positive to imagine, is an intervention into the baking - hardening - ripening process of the community that can be politically transformative. In some ways this is what Rahman and others like her were trying to achieve, to counteract the forces that allow for the exploitative and degrading conditions to continue, but calling for the imperative to intervene and for the state to assume responsibility. (conversation with Ifor Duncan- Date)

b) 'Katchi abadis' would literally mean something waiting to be demolished versus people-built housing, which is something waiting to be regularized. A huge jurisdictional difference. (Asiya Pollock, email correspondence 19 May 2020)

### **Evictions** Qanooni Takhliya قانونی تخلیہ

**Form:** the action of expelling someone from a property; expulsion, displacement, banishment, dispossession

**Formative:**

a) historic expulsions: 1947 / 1971 > before/after the big historic events> explore more regional, denying language rights not just housing rights.

b) *We all worked in evictions here (Karachi) but the biggest was the evictions of the Lyari Expressway () construction which was in the early 2000s. We all worked on developing materials. It then became a human rights issue because the man who was leading the peoples movement on the ground, a journalist.*

His son was killed under very mysterious circumstances, which was the other side once again trying to break the movement. So yes, in different capacities we have all been involved, and been witness. (Asiya Pollock)

c) Evictions is one of the structural devices used by government to expel/ displace informal communities

d) اخراج iḳhrāj The Urdu Word اخراج meaning in english is exhalations. Tther similar words are Ikhraj and Bahar Ki Saans.

e) evidence; proof

اخراج iḳhrāj [inf. n. iv of خرج 'to pass or go out or forth']

Expulsion, ejection, dislodgment, turning out of possession, **eviction**; exclusion; extraction; derivation; disbursement, expenditure, expense.

## Witness گواہ

### Form:

a) a person who sees an event, typically a crime or accident, take place.

b) evidence; proof.

c) have knowledge of (a development) from observation or experience.

### Formative:

- a) گواہی guwāhī Evidence, witness, testimony; deposition; written testimony: To give evidence, to witness (to), bear testimony (to), testify, attest; to depose (to): — gawāhī karnā, or gawāhī likhnā (-par), To witness (a document), to attest. sic physical and organizational structures and facilities (e.g. buildings, roads, power supplies) needed for the operation of a society or enterprise
- b) استنہاد istishhād Summoning witnesses; bringing testimony or proof; taking evidence; falling a martyr to religion.
- c) شہادت shahadat Evidence, testimony, witness; martyrdom: — shahādat-ē-tā'īdī, s.f. Corroborative evidence: — shahādat-ē-tahrīrī, s.f. Written or documentary evidence: — shahādat-ē-ḥuzūrī, s.f. Ocular evidence: — shahādat-ē-dast-āwezī, s.f. Documentary evidence: — shahādat-denā, v.n. To give evidence, to bear witness: — shahādat-ē-zannī, s.f. Presumptive evidence...

## Infrastructure Bunyadi dhancha ڈھانچہ بنیادی

**Form:** the basic physical and organizational structures and facilities (e.g. buildings, roads, power supplies) needed for the operation of a society or enterprise

### Formative:

a) infrastructures that are profoundly lacking - Infrastructures of violence

b) Abdul Makick Simone

c) 'Development doesn't come from concrete. Development is not five star hotels and mega road projects. What we need is human development.' Perween Rahman

d) Infrastructure threshold : Over the past few years, changes have taken place in many of the bodies, especially the process of identification and the infrastructure thresholds. What was in fact feasible and desirable at that point when Perween and Arif Hasan were working; those requirements have changed because many of the places that were initially completely residential have now transformed to mixed-land use situations. There are more

people utilising the same infrastructure. So in many cases, the threshold of infrastructures also needs to be revisited and possibly a new connection needs to be established between people and any kind of support organisation like OPP.

## Encroachment Qabza تجاوزات

## Urban Villages *goths* دیہات گوٹھ

(280 terms in the urdu dictionary)

### Form:

**Formative:** a) Villages on the urban periphery

- b) An assembly, a gathering, a company; a feast, an entertainment; — an encampment, a camp; — a settlement; a village: — goṭ-bastī, s.f. A village site; the chief or first assemblage of houses erected on the settlement of a village
- c) ہار hār Cultivated land surrounding a **village** (a little further off than the goṅrā); a **village-common**; a cultivated tract; a plot or allotment of ground; — a field; — pasturage.
- d) کھیت khet Allotment of land (to **villagers**): — khet-patr, or khet-kḥat, s.m. Mortgage of a field: — A rough field-book: — khet čoṅnā, To flee from the field (of battle): — khet-dār, s.m. The owner or occupant of a field:
- e) ویران wīrān Laid waste, depopulated, ruined; waste, desolate, desert; dreary, dismal: — wīrān karnā, v.t. To lay waste, ruin, destroy, depopulate, desolate: — wīrān-kheṛā, s.m. The deserted site of a village.
- f) گاہ gāṭa The division of a village by gāṭās; a kind of tenure under which the fields of individual proprietors are not found in juxtaposition, but scattered through many villages: — gāṭe-wār, adj. According to gāṭās; — The division of a village according to gāṭās
- g) کھنڈر khaṅḍar Destroyed, ruined, in ruins, dilapidated; — a ruin, a dilapidated building or tenement; a mass of ruins (as of a village or town); — a break, gap, hole, cavity, chasm, abyss; broken or raviny ground.
- h) کورہ korā A new arrangement or settlement; a list of villages or fields to be registered according to a new allotment: — To remain unprofited or unsatisfied; to get nothing, to be disappointed.
- i) قصبہ qaṣba A large village; a small town (particularly when inhabited by decent people or families of some rank); a township.

## X-RAY ایکس رے

**Form:** An X-ray, rarely called X-radiation, is a penetrating form of high-energy electromagnetic radiation. Most X-rays have a wavelength ranging from 10 picometers to 10 nanometers, corresponding to frequencies in the range 30 petahertz to 30 exahertz and energies in the range 124 eV to 124 keV.

### Formative:

- a) the idea of a map embodied and a body of the city mapped- the ability to see beyond the form, the internal composition of a body/ space, a photographic / digital image of the internal composition of something, especially a part of the body, produced by X-rays being passed through it and being absorbed to different degrees by different materials.
- b) To see within, to sense an internal composition that is not outwardly expressed. The x-ray of the city as a crucial term. (discussion with lfor)
- c) If the mapping that she is countering is the mapping from above, or the state mapping onto the area – satellite mapping – imaging that is going into the ground, underground, which is more controlling – than the x-ray seems more innocent – a conceptual tool - controlling use of imaging – x-ray is more within the body – is more intimate.

# Technical Appendix 02

## Interviews

02 – PR

Perween Rahman

(Extract) 23 February 2013, Bangkok  
Conference

Asian Coalition for Housing Rights  
(ACHR)

Map, why is it important for us, map for us is like an X-ray [is] to a doctor, for us who are development workers, if they do not know what exists in any settlement or a city. Then there is a fear that we might do something which the government usually does, sometimes even financed by the UN ADB, World Bank, that they dig up a place, they don't have any idea, if there's a telephone line, a water line or a gas line and they want to lay a sewage line. So, in the process of laying sewage they cut everything else.

So that is why for us, a map is like an X-ray that tells us what the problem is so we can resolve it - like an X-ray for a doctor. OK, now, second, what does a map tell us?

What do we get in a map? In a map because we are the ninja turtles of the sewage lines. We began with ninja turtles of the sewage lines. So initially, when in 1982, we began mapping. We first began mapping Orangi Town. It is a town in Karachi, which has 130 settlements, one point five million people. So we mapped first about the sewerage and the drainage and the water lines, the clinics and the schools and the block makers yards.

In Pakistan everywhere there is self-help, everywhere. We sometimes think, where is the government?

And that we relate to the fact that Pakistan's entire budget, about 85 percent, goes to the IMF World Bank to loan returns and to defence. So, hardly anything left for the people, anything left for development. That's why people need to survive and to do a lot of self-help- everything, they lay sewer lines, water lines, they set up their own schools, clinics. Of course, they do their own business. They build their own houses. So for us, it was very important to understand who is doing what. There is a sewerage line, is it a government sewerage line. Is it a people-laid work or where it doesn't exist. So all of that information, this kind of information spanned every sector like water, also all the actors involved, schools- all the actors involved.

So, the mapping has spanned the entire Karachi city. And today we are involved in mapping those settlements, which about six years back, were known as rural villages, but when we mapped we found they are no longer villages, they are urban. Just the map itself helped the government and the people, the government to announce land titles and the people to get - just a map.

Well, because the map showed that, for example, we were able to walk ourselves, get the Google map, satellite images, put the two together, get a lot of help from the residents, the *goth* (village) elders, our community activists, Siraj, he's also got an

office in the *goth* (village) and able to map each and every settlement which had become urban. The government's data showed that there are only about 400 such settlements, but our mapping all together, all of us mapping showed that there are more than 2,000 such settlements. In fact, just knowing that there are two thousand such settlements, we were advocating everybody. We advocate all of us separately, but the same thing we advocate. And I think the idea was to make the government understand that it's too many you cannot evict, it's...how do we say that it's a fait accompli and you can't do anything about it, so you might as well give land titles.

It was in the beginning of 2006 that we started mapping all these settlements. And in April 2010, 50 percent of all these urban *goths* (villages), they are known as urban villages, which is a contrast, the Chief Minister says they are urban villages, so 1063 were announced to get the land title, and it was the map that did it. So we remember one thing we were asking, all of us were discussing, why is it so important to the elders of the villages? Why didn't they lobby before, so they said that when we used to go lobby without a map, and they used to think, ok, it's not serious, but when they went with the map. The map, they said with the map we became visible, map made us visible and the map made the government take us

seriously. So that that's the power of the map.

Who does the mapping? We all do mapping...she too has learnt mapping, she maps her villages in the flood affected areas. Her daughter maps, he maps, friends map, we are all ninja turtles of mapping. We don't know anything unless somebody shows us a map. All of us, everybody together, I mean, like all of us, are a mixture of people living in the community, people have community-based organizations. There are groups and we all map together. And these are highly professional maps that began at rudimentary sketches. But then we link it up to Google satellite images. the GIS, we tried to use it, but for us, it's too time consuming and it does not get us close to the community. So for us, the walking map, the Google satellite images linking up, that makes us build up a relationship. So the map helps us build up relationships.

What has the map done? The map has helped professionals understand reality and have the courage to accept reality, that's very important. We might know reality, but can't accept it. ok, so the professionals understand reality and to have the courage to build up the courage. The government to understand reality, and for the government to understand that

somebody else also has that information so that somebody else can pressure.

It's not just us, or the ADB (Asian Development Bank), World Bank or UN developing this info, the people, the NGOs, CDOs and the people have this info, the media has this info. The media is very important for this work, because the media in our case used all our maps and today all our maps are being used by the government, the media, the politicians, they are using the maps. So it's good for us. And in this also, we have a strategy that sometimes on a map we do not put our name. We also say, ok, you put your name, you put the chief minister's name, you put the government department's name as long as you accept that map. So that is also a strategy for us, that we take a back seat, we become invisible. And sometimes a number of times the people use the map and put their organization's seal on it. And we love that. It's great for us.

OK, and of course the community also understands because we've found that the communities, the people within settlements, a number of times understand their own work, their own lane, their few lanes, but an understanding of the entire area that is needed. And once the understanding is there, the advocacy takes another level. It goes to another

level. Because within the community there are people, levels of people like some who know their lane work, some who know their *mohalla* work. But there are some who understand the town work and the city work. So this helps take the advocacy and pressurizing of the government and of course, the government officials within the department also making use of it and supporting it. So the community understands there is a lot of relationship building because the info, whenever it's gathered, it's gathered while talking, by discussing, while being in the settlement. The relationship building for us has been the key that has helped advocacy and city-wide upgrading.

A point I missed when I said who does the map, the youths of the community have been very important. Community youths right from 1981 till to date are involved in mapping all across. We are a network, the Community Development Network of more than 80 partner organizations and 3,000 community-based organizations across the two most populous provinces. We are also in two more provinces, but in one province there is a lot of Taliban and Al Qaeda, so we have to be very careful. And the fourth province is also now getting, so we have to be careful. But two provinces, which are the most populous, are a lot of youths. Why? It's a strategy that youths who are involved because the youths like to talk. Youths are not short of time. They

build up relationships, and that's both ways, to understand and to gently extend some info that anybody wants to extend into any town, any city, any settlement.

The second, that in the OPP-RTI work and the TTRC's work and the URC's work - we began as working in settlements and then we expanded into the town, but our expansion into the city and other cities was due to the maps. The maps are our eyes, they are like the X-Ray, they tell us what to do, where to go, who to lobby.

OK, finally, I did explain it a little bit, how the *goths*, the villages have become urban and that for us was such an exciting development. I remember when Diana (Mitlin, IIED) was there in 2010 and she went and met the community members and they were distraught, [they said] 'because the government gives land titles to the rich, why not to us, we are here since ages, we are the oldest settlers of Karachi. These were settlements which were there even before all the migrants came to Karachi'.

Karachi is a city of migrants. All the settlements since 1947, before the birth of Pakistan. And they said, why not us, why they are migrants. This was also a case of friction, political friction between the old settlers and the migrants. But the map did it. And even that settlement where you went to, they have got the land title.

They've even got the individual land title. He's involved, he'll explain how the land title map is different from the infrastructure map and how they're linking it up. So you were just saying in 2010 that if today we die, we will be so happy.

Because let me explain to you one thing more - why you said that, because Karachi is in flames, one of the aspects of the violence is the land. Number one, who gets the land titles. It's very important because the latest migrants who are represented by a very violent political party have all got the land title, they came after the 1980s. And these, the original settlers even before 1947, the partition of Pakistan never got it. I remember when we were doing the mapping, there were a lot of angry young people. They said, 'oh, that settlement, they are migrants, they have got it, we are the original settlers, we have not got it'.

So this - the map and the land title and now you're doing a lot of infrastructure, saving groups, we learnt from our partners in SDI (Slum Dwellers International) and it's become such an important tool for us. We think, why didn't we get it 20 years back. And so we have a lot of initiatives within these so-called urban villages, which are urban, but it's a compromise. So this land title thing has been a step forward for the peace of Karachi.

It's contributed to the peace and the political balance.  
So it's very powerful.

Thank you.

02

Extract of Interview Arif Hasan  
Karachi  
December 2018  
Architect, planner, activist, social  
researcher, and writer. Former  
Director of the Orangi Pilot  
Project

**Naiza Khan (NK):** I was thinking a lot about Parveen Rehman and about clusters of things that have happened in the city of Karachi. There was something about her femininity and that something was missing in how she is

represented, the angle I was thinking about was her gender.

**Arif Hasan (AH):** You'll have to define femininity for me.

**NK:** The fact that she was a woman working (in that environment) and she didn't let go of her femininity (in a very male space). She didn't exploit it or use it but it was very much there.

**AH:** She didn't let go of it at all. In the work that she did, femininity was important. The fact that she was a woman and she was extremely soft and very considerate to people, she made them feel comfortable. She got a lot more out of people and developed more understanding than a man could have or a woman who was bossy and did not have that woman's concern or softness. I think that was important.  
When she came to Orangi in the beginning, having known her in college where she was a fairly mischievous student, I did not think she would last in Orangi. But I think more than anything else was her immense patience and her dedication which emerged very strongly when she started working there. Her decision to work against poverty, especially against homelessness was very strong and I think there are fields in which women have a better understanding than men.

Also, she was able to befriend families rather than just individuals. That was another very important part. For instance,

social organisers she worked with. I worked with them earlier than she did and I didn't know about their families, she did. How many children, meeting their wives, going to their homes. All that brought a new dimension to the Orangi Pilot Project. Wherever she worked, there was a link with the house; people she worked with and for. Men usually don't enter this side.  
**NK:** They often can't pry, (into the house)

**AH:** They can't pry also but they don't even make the effort.

**NK:** So how long did it take for her to be taken seriously, to be heard?

**AH:** She came in 1983. I would say by about 1987 she was taken pretty seriously. Although for her to be sure of herself it took a bit longer. She was a very obstinate person. What she felt was right was right and there was no moving her. In that sense she was always like that. But I think after 1987 she started to express herself both verbally and through her work and to take the initiative.  
It was her dedication that was important, her softness, her interest in the lives of the people she worked with rather than just the work that she did. That made a big difference to the Orangi Pilot Project.

**NK:** Class was quite an issue.

**AH:** She came from the middle class so an english speaking background, in the sense she went to an english speaking school. When she came (to OPP) she could hardly speak urdu properly, I mean she could carry on a conversation, but she couldn't have a dialogue. But she learnt very fast, very quickly.

And what was very important - the social organisers really became her teachers and she accepted them as her teachers, which normally someone of her background would not have done. She accepted them, she learnt from them and at the same time she taught them also. So there was a good interchange. She taught them but they taught her about Orangi about the lives of people, about the problems that they had.

**NK:** She listened

**AH:** She listened. She was a very good listener.

**NK:** So I was thinking about her personality and her femininity. Just about the idea of access (to a more domestic space). And you've sort of really said that possibility to access (that she had). About (speaking) a language. I was just thinking that language is not just what you're speaking or understanding or translating but it's also about a level of communication, about something deeper.

**AH:** You see the moment you talk about children, their illness, about wives' problems, the money matters of the household, issues of entertainment, recreation, all that immediately changes the relationship of the planner with those you are planning with. So that of course is not something that is very common. I think there are three issues here.

One was her personality - her patience, her determination, her dedication to a certain structure of thinking. The second important factor in this was the relationship that she could establish with those that she worked with and worked for, the personal relationship. So that was very important.

And third was her willingness to learn from those who worked for her, who were social organisers. You put all three things together and it is very rare that in a project manager you get all these things together. Take Akhtar Hameed Khan; he was not interested in the details of the people he worked for, who worked for him. It was peripheral to him.

**NK:** So many people have been victims of the city's greed and mafia and nepotism. But this chain of violence and these women who've worked, Parveen Rehman and Sabeen Mehmood. Do you feel there is any sense of linking these deaths, of the

activities (they were part of). The fact that they were women. Do you think that they were easy targets, linked not in terms of the criminal cases that were linked but just the fact that these were women whose bodies were subjected to...(violence)?

**AH:** Actually I don't know about Sabeen because I didn't know her well enough and I don't know the situation well enough. But (for) Parveen, I would say there was no link to the fact that she was a woman. If there had been another man in her place, they would have shot him much earlier.

**NK:** Ok, so there is a difference then. If it was a man he might have been shot earlier.

**AH:** Probably, they would have shot him much earlier.

**NK:** So maybe they waited for her.

**AH:** Probably, because I don't think there was a link. There were other people who were doing more or less the same thing as Parveen. Not quite, because hers was at a very sophisticated level. There were others who were fighting for land rights like Nisar Baloch, they were shot dead also. Parveen was doing something much bigger than Nisar Baloch in one sense, so she had to go. So I don't think there was a woman aspect to it, no. She was just providing/ developing information that was dangerous for the people who were

indulging in large scale development of real estate in the area where the Orangi Pilot Project was working.

**NK:** Thank you so much.

Noman Ahmed (NA): (Perween) was my teacher and she used to be a visiting faculty at the College, where I was studying architecture, that was something in the early 80s and later as a young professional I joined the Orangi Pilot Project.

Dr Akhtar Hameed Khan had just experimented with the idea of how he can intervene in Orangi, when he was invited by Agha Hasan Abidi to deal with the issues of incoming refugees and settlers in Orangi.

Akhtar Hameed Khan took that rather long path of first understanding the people, their preferences, their aspirations, and what did they expect from the settlement that were evolving in Orangi. So, I think that that was an extraordinary patience that he applied and a very unique methodology of understanding. He would just sit down at *chai khannas* (road side tea shops) and other public places, and interact with people to understand their overall psyche, their preferences, their enthusiasm to start a new life in the city.

Around that time, he was able to identify that sanitation was emerging as an important challenge for people because somehow the availability of water was there, but due to inappropriate and inadequate disposal of that base water, the abodes that the people had constructed and the various other facilities that they had developed both by themselves and through some sort of collective action, they were getting destroyed. They were getting damaged because of stagnant water. And in general, the overall quality of life was very badly impacted by that.

It was around that time that Perween, as a young graduate, joined OPP and she also participated in the evolution of those ideas around sanitation.

Now, amongst the various components of the sanitation intervention, mapping was something that was of paramount importance to the people in Orangi, they had an urban background. They were familiar with the lifestyle of cities and they wanted that the neighbourhood that they were living in then also their houses, they should reflect the same type of community, the same type of overall urban aesthetics as they were possibly familiar with when they came back from Dhaka and from other places.

03-NA  
Noman Ahmed  
Chairperson of Department of  
Architecture and Planning at  
NED University, Karachi.

Firstly, mapping was used as a tool for articulating the intervention that the sanitation programme that OPP was trying to make. That was the first, in fact, utilisation of the maps that were prepared.

And coincidentally, many of the initial maps were developed by the architecture students of Dawood College who were given this summer practise assignment by the respective teachers who also collaborated with Akhtar Hameed Khan and others. They developed those big maps in the initial run, documenting settlements, documenting different topographical ingredients and the services that existed in the periphery, and they also identified the existence of different types of infrastructure within the Orangi neighbourhood as well as its surroundings. And if they would come across any kind of extraordinary detail, extraordinary happening, they would also take photographs and use those photographs as a means to show those details and blow up any kind of situation that was worthy of analysis and to be utilised for any further intervention.

So later on, the same maps were used for the purpose of communicating with people, because when Arif Hasan and his colleagues were able to develop the local sanitation intervention, it had to be taken to people and the few tools that they had developed over the period of time -

included maps to identify the run of the sanitation programme as well as its disposal.

The maps were also used for the purpose of showing the people that a system worthy of taking the wastewater and disposing it safely is possible through their own action and eventually would link up with the larger sanitation system of the city. So there was an argument that was taken to people.

Secondly, by the way of photographic slides, he was able to show that many of the components that we were proposing to be utilised, would work together. So, maps acted as a very important communication tool at that point in time.

NK: So you are saying that the project of mapping started, in a sense, as a pedagogic tool, an experiment in a sense, in the summer programme at Dawood College. (Dawood University of Engineering and Technology, Karachi)

NA: Yes, indeed.. And it was also a very intensely needed tool, and Arif Hassan himself was a very accomplished architect. He knew the importance of documentation and also understanding the physicality of the settlement and communicating the same to people. So maps were used as a means of doing that.

The second important underlying reason for mapping was to document the various

subdivisions of land because it was expected that at some point in time there would be an interface with the local authorities, the municipal corporation, as well as the development authorities, many of which did not consider the Orangi settlement as legal.

So that was the second layer of the utilisation of these maps, in which not only the infrastructural needs were identified in these maps, but also the overall residences, shops and other types of commercial facilities that the people had constructed and they were also mapped in the form of a settlement plan. And they were all sequentially done in order to show that this development, which was entirely home grown, was evolving and it was quite commensurate with the manner in which any other neighbourhood in the planned localities of the city were being developed. So those maps were actually used for the purpose of not only documentation, but convincing the local authorities to recognise that development was taking place.

So, Arif Saab and the other team members of OPP understood the importance of maps both for the purpose of facilitating the development of various kinds, introducing components of infrastructure, and at the same time proving the fact that the settlement is there, people have invested in it and it is

worthwhile to introduce services into it and possibly regularise it whenever the legal and administrative remit for that was available.

Perween as a young colleague obviously participated in this whole exercise. And we remember her as a teacher, she would also take us to Orangi and we would spend time with the community and also the survey team of OPP that was doing this mapping exercise on a regular basis. So, I think mapping was used as a kind of communication tool in the initial run. But then it

became a very important component of documentation and a means of proving the ownership and overall utilisation of land.

In some cases, these maps were also used as a means of resolving internal disputes and conflicts, because sometimes the communities would develop an internal fight amongst themselves. In fact, challenging the rights on the territory, challenging each other's occupational rights.

So in some cases, a map that was prepared and authenticated by the OPP team, that was often used as a means of resolving these disputes, and it also facilitated arbitration between different fighting factions. In some cases, these

maps were also very instrumental in preventing evictions from taking place, because when these maps were taken to the city authorities who were planning to evict a certain portion

of Orangi, or a certain part of the peripheral settlements, these maps were used as a means to convince them that these settlements have existed for a long time. And according to the standing law, they possess a chance of rehabilitation and regularisation.

So this whole exercise, I believe intensified and OPP, in fact, excelled in the overall development of mapping profiles and at the same time engaging local people, the local youth in building up their capacities to participate in the mapping exercise for their own good. And later on, using the same mapping approaches to earn a livelihood for themselves.

I believe that one of the major successes of the OPP's team was that they were able to teach a sizable number of youth that have very little formal education, but they would become very useful apprentices. Initially learning the technique and later on developing their own small scale enterprises of mapping. And in some cases, some of them excel to that extent that now they are offering these services to a very wide and rather sophisticated clientele all across the

country. I believe the institution Technical Training Resource Centre under Siraj uddin colleagues, that is a case in point. Perween nurtured them to a great extent, but now is operating on his own and is not only providing services, but also training many other young people in Orangi and elsewhere.

So she was right in saying that it was like an X-Ray, because while it was identifying a problem- in the same series of maps, they also identified the potential solutions - about to connect the main sewage lines with main disposal points and utilising the same or in fact, developing a system. Because this was also a common argument that was raised by the people of Orangi, that had been built up over the sanitation system level. And if there is no proper disposal, then obviously the waste water would come back into the lanes and not necessarily be a very useful solution. So I think this mapping profile over the period of time was able to grow because of the emerging needs as well as the demand of the local communities.

Naiza Khan: Through the Asian Coalition for Housing Rights, there's a strong regional set of affiliation that yourself, Arif Sahib, Perween were forming with more Southeast Asia, South-South dialogue. How do you feel this link with other countries and activists was important.

What was the value of this contact with other activists and urban scholars who were working in the field.

NA: There's a paper which was 'Driven by need Learning by experience', which is authored by a number of people. But it takes the case study of, Manilla, the Rio Vista settlement, and also Johannesburg. Different kinds of landscapes, different kinds of problems, but also very similar. Noman Ahmed These were enormously important connections and the Asian Coalition of Housing Rights was formed in the 80s and that was the time when OPP and many other similar, like minded

professionals interacted with the people from India, Thailand and other places. There was a very strong connexion between the work of Spark, Sheela Patel and her colleagues, and these regularly visits Karachi and vice versa. And both used to draw strength from each other's work.

Because the type of challenges faced by Sheela and her colleagues in Bombay were very similar to what OPP and other places were experiencing. And similarly, the work of some Sookbaniabancha in Thailand.

So, I had a very strong interaction with all of them for a good 25 years, we used to meet frequently.

I think the most amongst the various benefits that this platform provided, apart from sharing ideas and possibly contemplating common problems was the passing on of this entire knowledge, this heritage of learning to the younger generation.

So, ACHR provided a platform for coming together, a basis for sharing ideas and also a kind of a strength for collective issues where any of the individual partners would experience any kind of challenge, then all the people from ACHR would come as a kind of moral and administrative support. When evictions would take place in Bangkok, we would all go there, play a role, raising slogans and doing things. And similarly, when we had this Lyari Expressway episode in Karachi, there were many people that we were able to invite from ACHR and from other like minded organisations to come and provide assistance to us in trying to convince the authorities to prevent evictions from taking place.

04

Dr Afiya Zia Extract

October 2020

Dr Afiya Zia is a feminist scholar and teaches Women and Gender Studies.

**Afiya Zia (AZ):** I met Perween a couple of times...and of course, because of Arif (Hasan) who was a mentor for many of us, he introduced me to Perween. In fact, I met Dr Akhtar Hamid Khan and Parveen at the same time, when I went to visit Orangi. I was in the development sector, so the Pilot Project was like a touchstone, everybody who was in the development sector had to go and see it as students. This was in 1993, and part of it was also because we were preparing for the World Conference on Women in Beijing in 1995. So we were gathering information on women and development in Pakistan because we were the lead organisation. Benazir (Bhutto) was the Prime Minister, but still there were very few women leaders who were known or taking leadership roles. So Perween was an important figure and unusual in that regard, that somebody was so embedded in the people's communities. It was like old school and old world development, she remarked that - the difference between NGOs which were our type- who sat in offices or worked at the UN, but this community based work in a city like Karachi was unusual. So she was really the icon for that.

And subsequently we all got involved in our own works, I became an academic and the disconnect between community work and my own sort of ivory tower academic pursuits meant that we hadn't met for many years. But I do recall the night, 2am or 4am in the morning, I got a call from a journalist friend and all he kept saying is "she's dead, they've killed her, she's dead, they've killed". And I had no idea who he was talking about, it just came as a complete shock.

**NK:** And of course, the legacy lives on in the actual work being done on the ground. The kind of incentive that she brought forward to map, to create that sense of awareness of land rights and legal claims.

**AZ:** We need this kind of mapping, I've been saying it about violence, about other issues in every province. You can't understand...you can't come up with solutions or talk about how to tackle an issue unless you map. It's not that the whole community is the same or is homogeneous in terms of its challenges. Every community, every neighbourhood....and I think people don't understand how big neighbourhoods are in Karachi certainly.

**NK:** I guess that's where the OPP-RTI work is so important, it's not just about the roads that are laid, but also the knowledge of the community which Perween really

gained from the walking-map kind of practise. And also as a woman, she had a certain edge - of walking through a neighbourhood, to have access to the community of women in that neighbourhood.

**AZ:** I remember, when I went in 1993, she took me into one of the neighbourhoods and she said - "the way to look at women's issues is to walk down these *nalas*, you know these were the gutters, where the waste supply used to flow. She was very proud of that, and she said, this is what has helped women the most - because it's a supply line taking waste outside of their house rather than them having to deal with it inside. And recently, when I did a study of Karachi, the number one cause of disputes within neighbourhoods was about things like where to dump the garbage, and that led to major violence. It would lead to major skirmishes within the neighbourhoods and it's also an obstruction for women, to climb over it, to slip on waste and sludge outside the house. These are everyday challenges for women, which people underestimate. She was very proud to have organised the *nalas*.

**Naiza Khan** There's an interesting paper on sanitation and women, it expands on what you're saying, that we don't realise there is a very intimate relation for women who are having to deal with this on their

domestic front, and the conflict comes right to their doorstep if these issues aren't sorted out.

So, in terms of these conversations with her, what do you think was her relationship to feminist politics? Because she's obviously presented papers but there's not a lot of material that she might have theorised from the work on the ground. Were there writers that were important to her or people that she looked up to? There was of course Akhtar Hamid Khan and Arif Hasan. But do you think there are other cornerstones to her relationship with feminist politics?

**AZ:** I think there was certainly the OPP people for a very long time, but at least in my memory, they were not enamoured by this idea of feminism...they may have been respectful of feminist politics and what it did at the national level and against the State, how it posed a challenge. But I don't recall her ever identifying herself as a feminist or being enamoured by the idea of feminism. I think a lot of the old school development workers felt that the work to be done was mobilising communities, working with poverty, working with a material, in a tangible way to improve people's lives; which they didn't connect with feminist readings, teaching or feminist politics necessarily. They felt there was too much of a disconnect...which is quite a common sort of gap in understanding.

But she was just too embedded in the practical and there was this separation of theory and practise that was felt on both sides. And so I don't think that there's any work where she attempts to bridge the two, unlike Najma Sadiq's work or some other development workers of that period, Women's Action Forum. Nigar Ahmed, but despite their biases, they attempted to merge the two. I would not say that Perween did that.

**NK:** Would you place her within feminist activism?

**AZ:** You know, she was an urban planner with a cause. But we would describe women like her as feminist because they're challenging such big questions. One of the core contradictions and questions that is an obstacle and a promoter of patriarchy. Of course, we would call her one of the leading feminist challengers in that sense. But often people who are radical, do not consider themselves radical and often people who are feminist do not identify themselves as such, which doesn't mean they aren't. But to answer your question, I herself didn't identify as such; it seemed it had a tinge of being Western, of being something not from the community. So very often lady health-workers don't call themselves feminists. They don't call themselves secularists, but in reality they are. So it's

how we as academics categorise them, not what they themselves identify with.

**NK:** Yes, a sort of ...I wouldn't say failed attempt, but a disconnect, or suspicion between theory and practise or the relationship between community, rural work and feminism - that bridge hasn't been crossed in our context. Where women can come together crossing class boundaries, secular / non-secular and learn from each other. How do we take this forward?

**AZ:** It's changing so much now. I think with the MeToo Movement, and even before with globalisation, with more women going to study at universities and returning, that the whole critical mass and the sheer momentum and speed of communication, of exposure to ideas...my 20 years in development work seems like a glacial speed of things moving. So definitely there's been a shift in speed, in interest, in depth and in sheer numbers.

**NK:** You may not know the answer, but did Rahman attend the Press Club protests or WAF meetings or protests events, did you ever find her in those spaces.

**AZ:** I think it would be that WAF would join her cause. But she did not participate in the World Conference preparations, Arif (Hasan) would. But she, by all accounts of what I hear about her, she was more shy.

She was not a person who looked for the limelight...I don't think she acted as a spokesperson for women's causes or feminist causes. As I said she was a development worker, embedded in the community, committed to that. And I don't think she felt that it was either her personality or her place to go and promote.

The irony is that she was doing one of the most dangerous things... like Asma Jahangir (the lawyer / human-rights activists). Both of them, Perween and Asma were doing such dangerous advocacy, and were facing such dangerous challenges. And yet Asma deployed the media, called attention onto herself, she provoked, Asma would poke the bear.

And Perween didn't provoke, Perween was the silent everyday, routine worker who would chip away at things. Very different strategic methods both of them used and yet both were doing incredibly tangible and very risky activism in that sense.

**NK:** You've spoken a lot about memorialisation and also the symbolism of her activism. And I really appreciate that, because those are questions that I've been grappling with and thinking about. One of the things that this leads to is, why there is a delay in justice - in terms of pinning down her perpetrators and the trauma of her death. And so, how do we

make this visible and audible. This idea of the mural being painted over, it shows a very active level of negation, to discredit what she did. Why is there a delay in justice, is that something you could reflect on.

**AZ:** From a feminist perspective, I will tell you Naiza, that one of the biggest challenges for us has been this idea of violence against women or women's violations, which are not being taken as an urgent question. Violence is just considered normative in our context. So it's been so difficult to create a sense of outrage or sense of injustice, because it's considered domestic, it's considered private, it's considered something that the State is not worried about.

And there's also been a shift in that, and that has been a tribute to the women's movement that has constantly hammered away at this idea of women, requiring justice and the question of violence against women to be redressed. So that's been a huge contribution by the women's movement. We just haven't given up on the idea of putting this on the map, considering this a national emergency.

The other complication is, of course, in Perween Rahman's case, it's not so simple as Malala's - being attacked literally by the Taliban, it's not so neat. In mega cities there's always landed

interests. In some cases, in non-urban sectors or non-urban sites, it is sometimes about land owners and their politics. So the concept of land property complicates this issue.

There are layers and layers of violence in Karachi, and if you scrape one, you find another. So when polio workers get murdered in Karachi, it's not just that the religious right has attacked them or killed them. There's layers of injustices and collusion, patriarchy, collisions... even routine, every day, religious organisations disapprove of women being in public spaces so that prevents.. strips away protection. And when you're stripped of protection, then obviously you're an easy target, you're a sitting duck.

I think Perween Rahman was a victim of layers of patriarchal... exposure. She was exposed from the lack of protection because of different layers of patriarchy that were impinging on her, she was challenging propertied classes, she was challenging municipal mapping and of the corruption behind that. She was the target of...yes, religious right wing or extremist groups, but also a peculiar mood and a peculiar climate of religious terrorism. So I think, when it's complicated, you have different motives behind the murder or injustice, then it becomes hard to deliver that justice in a fair way.

It becomes hard for the lawyers to fight the case. The families get fatigued. We've

seen this in the case of Sabeen Mahmud also, there are reprisals, threats, secondary threats to your family. It's not easy, and to be fair, it's not easy in any country.

It is the different layers of the patriarchies and how they collude and how the government doesn't want to take a risk, doesn't consider women worth it. And everybody just wants to get on with their life. That's also kind of a cultural fatalism that, it's happened, it was unfortunate, if you get into dirty business, if you're an activist and you're challenging stuff...the number of times I got warnings, you know, or "don't write this, don't even write this because, you know, they'll come for you and it will provoke people." So this idea of provoking patriarchy, gives the impression that you will therefore not get justice. (They say) it's not a just world, so you should accommodate it, rather than change it.

I think she was a victim of this kind of thing.

So, Benazir Bhutto hasn't gotten Justice, to expect a citizen to get that justice...it's changing I think, but it's slow.

**NK:** Yeah, of course, at that time, 2013, six or seven other urban activists were shot. Also, a number of headmasters who ran co-educational schools in these neighbourhoods were shot. So, there was a whole kind of cleansing, a kind of rampage I think.

**AZ:** Oh yes, there's a radar. That's one of the things that changed in the War-on-Terror years, that there is a radar and this split that became part of our narrative about something called 'liberals' - you know nobody was called 'liberals' before this - not just liberals, but called 'liberal secularists'. And you know that I've argued that it's not just some Taliban whose thought of this or some kind of religious organisation that's thought of this. This actually has been the contribution of global academic turn in the post 9/11 period. And it has been many scholars who have created this critique of the West and Colonial past, which is a fair critique. But what they've done in the process is categorise those in Pakistan, progressives and feminists who seem to be out of sync because they are reformers, because they want to change, move towards to a more liberal and /or secular State. They've sort of been pigeonholed into this idea of being colluders and native informants and imperialists, [anti-state] you know, and there's a strange.. yes, a backlash against them, kind of a competitive thing. Oddly, it's come from the Pakistan diaspora as well, academics - those who have never worked in the field or just have a vague sense of it.

That has created a radar... I'm not saying they are entirely responsible for it, I'm just saying that it's a bent, it's a thrust - its a turn that has taken place. So that's a fascist tendency when you start - on both

sides - if you dismiss somebody as 'ninja' because she wears the 'purdah' or 'burqa' and we decide that she's a terrorist, that's equally damaging as pointing out and saying that you're a liberal because of your lifestyle, because you believe in women's equality.

It's not about just getting our rights, it's about changing Pakistan. Resisting this conservative ghettoisation, both physically, in terms of our mobility and spaces and access for women being in public spaces. I mean, people just don't seem to even grasp that Pakistani women do not occupy public spaces. We don't see them. And it's such an obvious point. Our landscape is one that is dominated by gender apartheid. So I don't want to give up on that basic right of occupying public space.

**NK:** Part of what I want to research, and I know my essay is not going to cover all the things that I'm interested in. But this question of evictions haunts me. Not only because having lived in Karachi, every day I would read about a *basti*, an *abaadi* being burnt, as acts of arson. And you realise, well it wasn't just a gas cylinder inside the *jhuggis* that set fire to the whole community of 250 people, it was obviously intentional in order to get them out of that space where they were trying to get some shelter. So there are all kinds of coercive, violent actions to evict people.

And it's really quite complex, in terms of Perwen Rahman and what she personally went through - her memory of leaving Bangladesh as a refugee in crisis and this memory of being evicted, leaving home. She came from quite a well-to-do family, and went to St. Joseph's College (Karachi), there's that time of her upbringing and then her turn towards what was happening in the local community. Working with Dr. Akhtar Hameed Khan and the OPP, gave her that connection back to her own experience of dispossession. A way to commit herself to what was going on in Orangi because a lot of the settlement there had people who had fled from the 1971 war, or flood refugees and so there was quite a mixed community of settlers.

**AZ:** Oh, that's a great point, a great observation Naiza, I think you should use that.

**NK:** I feel that very strongly. I know it's not articulated very much in her work - leaving her home in East Pakistan, (now Bangladesh), was very traumatic and under very violent, coercive conditions. So, settling her mind and body and commitment to work within these *abaadis* - walking through the streets, making those maps, talking to women in those communities.

So I guess what I'm saying is - this dispossession, the evictions - work on

different scales. There is a historic dimension and a contemporary one, and we cannot forget partition 1947.

I wanted to think about this idea of the female /body as a kind of embodied political tool, and herself, she in a sense was performing this action, this gesture with her body physically. I feel there's a strong connexion. I suppose I'm wanting to think about her relationship to place, to dispossession, and how (historical) memory comes from trauma and her body.

**AZ:** All the themes you mentioned are so (inter)linked because even in recent studies that I've been doing, we've all observed how the Behari community is a forgotten one, in that they're even erased by the State, you know they have such difficulty getting ID cards, they're not even given an identity by the State. And so many of them are in limbo. The other point is because of their ethnic status, they are the ones that have the least access. They tend to be the most home-based workers, but because of their class status combined with their ethnic status, they are lower on the rung of the hierarchy of community hierarchies and in communities where life is so precarious and exactly what you're saying- evictions, and even if they are not dramatic evictions, Naiza - the women who come and work in our houses who are of that ethnicity, have to keep shifting houses on an annual basis

because they can't afford rent or because they've been evicted in a lawful way. But still, the fluidity, the precarity of rental living and not owning is a huge factor in places like Karachi. So this combination of class and ethnicity is peculiar to Karachi and certainly the connexion with Perween's own ethnic background.

**NK:** Yes, this sense of dispossession is very important as a nerve to her work.

**AZ:** And you're right that women are dispossessed of their bodily right in public spaces. They are also dispossessed of their homes on a regular basis. So what could be more precarious, and the irony is that as feminists we say, the State is obsessed and/or the right wing is obsessed and men are obsessed with us being in the private sphere. And yet they evict us from that sphere all the time, they strip us of privacy all the time. Right. And yet want us to be modest and in domestic spaces/ spheres and never be mobile either.

So a woman's body is stuck and depending on her ethnicity and class, she's even more crushed and stuck in this male narrative from both sides. If you want protection - so then give us that privacy, then guarantee us that shelter. But they don't even do that. And then we become vulnerable to that. So there is no stability to be a young woman, and of a certain ethnicity and class in Pakistan.

**NK:** Yeah, and I think through this mapping process, she produced knowledge of a particular place that she was speaking from. And that knowledge also gave a sense of ownership... it was a way of reclaiming space through the body, through the act of walking.

**NK:** I just want to touch on the Okara peasant movement. It's really interesting to read your account of that peasant uprising in your book. It's revealing to see how the women were very much in the forefront of the uprising.

**AZ:** Yes, you're right. All the three case studies (in my book) connect with this question - the lady health workers - the women Councillors and the Okara peasant women - all of them have reclaimed public spaces and mobility and become political agents. Of course, with the women Councilors, that's quite obvious. But the fact is that their tussle and their struggle to be female and in male dominated Union Council was not a joke, was not easy. I think for me, these three women's movements are critically important in terms of mobility because they were about facilitating women into public space, but without the use of religion. Right. That's where I categorise them as secular movements or secular resistance.

They are connected because this is about women claiming citizenship, agency, political agency, not religious agency. Right. So there's that - now the Okara Women's Movement - actually initially women were not leaders, they were not even organised as women. And what the conflict and movement did - with intervention by women's movements - is that it got them organised - as women, women qua women, and set up the Anjuman Tehrik, the women's wing of it. They became politicised, so feminist consciousness is important because they may be there, but they're not organised politically, for their rights. And that's why I think this is particularly important, you see the origin of consciousness, political consciousness come about.

I think of course, if Perween's efforts were to get women invested and work towards their rights, mobilise them for improving their lives, then all of these movements are exactly the same. Perween would be part of this.

The other point that you make about knowledge production, that's also very important. Who makes knowledge, who produces knowledge - so if you go to the archives or look at State laws or parliamentary laws, or you can look at books written, all by men. But in these movements, women are writing and producing knowledge. I use

and mine that knowledge, that experience to create feminist historiography or to document feminist movements in Pakistan. That's the key difference, you know. And women from the religious right depend on male texts or attempt to reinterpret those things - Here, women are producing their own knowledge, women's knowledge, which is different from mens. So I think that's the other key important point that you make.

**NK:** Yes, out of their own experience. Do you think Perween was aware of the issue of environmental justice within the context of indigenous, political organising / resistance and also this kind of transnational link? So, I'm putting Rahman's work in conversation with certain movements which are happening in tandem. And do you think that she was thinking of this, even in the spectrum of her contribution to the Coalition of housing rights in Bangkok, the conferences that she was part of, I know that she had strong links with some of the people in those centres.

**AZ** Yeah, I think it would have been inevitable, even if she was on a personal level, shy, that's what a lot of people say to me, shy of the limelight, interested and far more invested in the local, indigenous. But I think it would have been impossible under globalisation for any of us to remain singular in our lens or committed only to a

community level. Of course, she would have been, not just connected trans-nationally.

But I think, apart from the sentiment and the sort of emotion, I think even politically, I wish she had been alive to see how many more people in Pakistan and women are involved in the environment question. Are getting invested, are taking degrees in environmental studies and climate change. And journalists are looking at the same political, land grabbing question as she was and looking at mapping. Far more of the younger generation realises that this is the cause for this century.

And I wish she had been alive to see it because she would have definitely been inspired or involved or included or taken on a wave of this as well. There's no way that a thinking intellectual and activist can ignore the connectivity of movements as they are transnational and even within domestically gaining momentum.

So I think yes, to answer your question, yes, I think she would have been involved in the global lessons and, you know, 16 year olds talking about climate change. Even for people like me who are neither artists nor climate activists / environmentalists, for me, this....to think and connect with this, our children are environmentalist you know and of course, her work may have taken a different direction or challenged ...it's hard in Pakistan because the military is involved in everything. But I'm not saying there would have any great success or break through, but I think she would have found more community. She would have found more solidarity, more peers and a sense of sisterhood than before. I wish she had lived to see that. I do.

**NK** I think she was so embedded in her work that she didn't get the chance to reflect critically on what she had achieved or what the community had achieved. And, of course, make more use of these transnational movements and the

solidarity that they bring because when you are working in Pakistan, you literally throw yourself into the work and you never have time to step away. And people that I talked to, who are working in the field, women, I'm still trying to harass them and pin them down to have a conversation. And I can really feel how difficult it is for them to reflect critically on what they're doing. And I think that's such an important thing to do, maybe even with them, to have a conversation with them to stop them, to press the pause button and say, look, what you're doing is really critical, it's really important, it's really intellectual. And also as you said and we chatted about this once before, that intellectual space of discourse is so limited sometimes within those spaces because a place like Karachi doesn't afford you time or critical reflection.

**AZ:** Absolutely.

## Technical Appendix 03

### **ACHR**

#### **Asian Coalition for Housing Rights**

ACHR, now 24 years old, is a coalition of Asian professionals, NGOs and community organizations committed to finding ways to make change in the countries where their work is rooted - change that goes along with the particular realities of their own cultures, politics and ways of doing things. The collective experience of all these groups represents a huge quantum

of understanding and possibilities - Asia's own home-grown development wisdom. After linking together as a coalition first in 1989, we began exploring ways of joining forces and supporting each other through a growing number of joint initiatives: housing rights campaigns, fact-finding missions, training and advisory programs, exchange visits, workshops and study tours, projects to promote community savings and community funds and citywide slum upgrading.

Through this collaborative work over many years, all these people and organizations in the coalition have found that they had one crucial thing in

common: a belief that the key resource to solve our enormous problems of poverty and housing is the people who experience those problems directly, who are most urgently wanting change and most vitally motivated to resolve those problems. The poor themselves represent Asia's greatest and least-tapped development force.

## **SDI**

### **Slum Dwellers International**

SDI: Slum/Shack Dwellers International. A global network of community-based organisations and federations of the urban poor that Jockin helped found and was its first president. They are active in 32 countries and hundreds of cities and towns across Africa, Asia and Latin America. In each country where SDI has a presence, affiliate organisations come together at the community, city and national level to form federations of the urban poor.

SDI was formed in the aftermath of the anti-apartheid movement and a year after Nelson Mandela was freed. SDI's emergence as a transnational movement of the urban poor was, for the most part, organic and almost spontaneous, carried across borders by women members of savings collectives with family and friends in slums in the cities of other countries. SDI only achieved sufficient critical mass in the late 1990s to become a recognised transnational movement when the South Africans and Indians

combined their efforts to take the federation model to East Africa, West Africa, Asia and Latin America

### **Svelip and Father Jorge Anzorena**

Fr Anzorena came regularly to South Asia as part of his six months of travelling, visiting and documenting community processes. He provided funds for the first knowledge exchange for Mahila Milan to go to South India and Bangladesh to see how others were managing housing savings and projects. Fr Anzorena also persuaded us that we had to go to the first Southern Africa People's Dialogue on Land and Shelter in South Africa in 1991.

## **IIED**

### **International Institute for Environment and Development**

mission is to build a fairer, more sustainable world, using evidence, action and influence, working in partnership with others.

**Somsook Boonyabancha** is a Thai architect and planner who worked with Thailand's National Housing Authority from 1977 to 1989, with the Urban Community Development Office (UCDO, which she helped set up) from 1992 to 2000

## **CODI**

**Community Organizations Development Institute** where she was appointed director and continued in that post until 2009. She was also one of the founders of the Asian Coalition for Housing Rights (ACHR) in 1989.

# Technical Appendix 04

## **Walking inCommon**

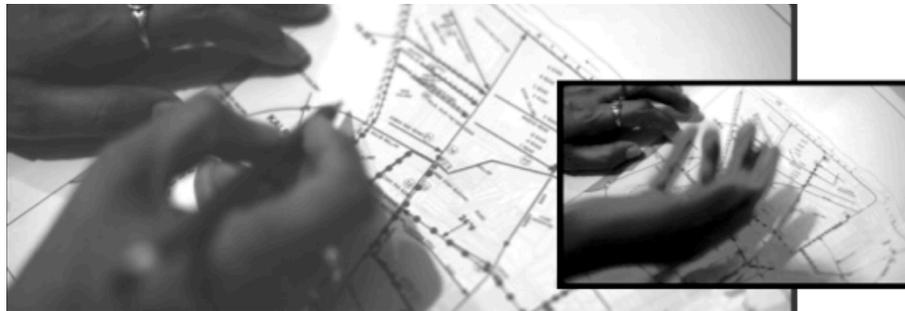
### **A series of podcasts from the field**

Walking inCommon is a set of creative collaborations that come out of my MA project at the Center for Research Architecture.

In developing this concept I use the situated/pedagogic learning of three pioneers who have been instrumental in establishing and developing the work of the Orangi Pilot Project:

Dr Askhtar Hameed Khan, Arif Hasan and Perween Rahman, the urban scholar and activist shot in Karachi (2013). The method of the *walking-map* formed the basis for the OPP-RTI\* to map the informal settlements and urban infrastructure of Orangi Town, Karachi since the inception of the project in 1980.

In her words, Rahman says: *a map (for us) is like an X-Ray (for the doctor), which tells us the problem so we can resolve it.* These maps developed environmental literacy and advocacy within the OPP community and beyond, to eventually support legal claims for land rights. Rahman with others in the community, were involved in a process of embodied, counter-mapping, which enabled them to understand the social and political relations, domestic and gendered spaces of the neighborhoods in which they were working. By taking this model, I explore how ideas of a performative, embodied mapping allows for multiple ways of sensing the land and the body.



Through these podcasts, I place Rahman's 'voice' in conversation with other voices; to draw lines from a field site and situate the collaborator, but also the work of Rahman within the intersection of postcolonial/ feminist and environmental justice struggles.

The guidelines for collaboration are a provocation or prompt; a way to reimagine their own practice/research in relation to a specific site, geography, event, or memory.

\* **Walking inCommon** is the first phase of an experimental pilot.

\*To participate, please download from the online CRA Exhibition [distanceDIFFERENCEduration](#)

\*[Orangi Pilot Project- Research and Training Institute](#) (OPP-RTI)

\* Video still from an interview with Perween Rahman (Director and Producer: Balazs Gardi)

# Walking inCommon

## Guidelines for collaboration

Naiza Khan

**Locality / location** Can you begin by telling us where you are standing. Describe the space; give us a sense of the texture of this place. Why is this location/ site significant for you.

Is it a particular moment which is important. What is your memory of this space, who did you walk with in this place.

Is it an industrial site - a ruin - a site for demolition - a street crossing or a historic building.

Take your time to create the space; people listening don't know where you are.

There is no problem if you repeat things.

**Sensory** what is the time of day? What is the light, sense of the atmosphere, describe the temperature, is it humid, cold, frosty.

Can you record the ambient sounds (20 sec- one minute) around you while you are walking. The sound of walking on gravel/ through leaves, birds, the noise of traffic, the noise of people, in the demonstration, or a demolition site.

**Respond** Can you situate the walk / your position - in relation to the materials/ ideas you are working with. How is this walk/ specific site/ location a response to the ideas you are thinking through. Is your response to this in the form of - a poem you are reading in that site or a set of sound recordings from that location.

Can you build on your knowledge /perception of this location in a way that is sensory and critical. Can you think of this as a situated testimony - speaking descriptively or conceptually – or simply as a situated gesture.

**Condition** How do you respond under the situation of the pandemic, does it make you rethink your practice. What kind of coping mechanism have you developed.

In each city, there are a set of conditions that we are navigating: the lockdowns - limitations on movement - curfew timings (Karachi) surveillance app (UK) - the use of greater policing (Paris) - the imbalance in the racial statistics of those loosing their life - children and free school lunches.

> Recording device: If you are using your own recording device, you can use a sound recorder (Zoom) or your cell phone recorder. Keep the recording between 5 – 20mins. Try to record the ambient sounds that are part of your space, such as the street noises, birds or footsteps.

> Save a location pin (GPS)