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Colonialism, Indigenous Elites and the Transformation of Cities in the Non-Western World: Ahmedabad (Western India), 1890–1947

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Processes of transformation in cities in the non-western world during the colonial period have often been described as one-way processes through which European colonial regimes restructured the physical and social environments of the cities and established their domination there.[1] Rarely have scholars explored the possibility that these processes could have been contested and negotiated and that the indigenous elites of the cities could have appropriated some of the policies of the colonial governments to their advantage, thereby imparting a somewhat different nature to the changes in the cities.[2]

[1] Thus, for Anthony King, the transformation in Delhi between the early 19th and the mid 20th centuries was a process whereby the British colonial government installed, apparently at will, particular spatial and physical arrangements in the old city of Delhi and in the region immediately beyond it. For Narayani Gupta, this process had the additional impact of damaging the finely balanced social relationships and social structure of the city which had done so much to enhance the quality of social life there in earlier times. For Veena Oldenburg, the changes in late 19th century Lucknow represented a process by which the government, 'guided by a ruthless concern for the security and well-being of its own members and agents', drastically reorganized the physical space in the city. For Mariam Dossal, again, the changes in late 19th century Bombay were constituted by the drastic restructuring of the landscape, topography and everyday life of the people in the city through the active intervention by the colonial state. The ordinary residents of the city had hardly any voice in those developments. Anthony D. King, *Colonial Urban Development* (London, 1976); Narayani Gupta, *Delhi Between Two Empires 1803–1931: Society, Government and Urban Growth* (Delhi, 1981); Veena Oldenburg, *The Making of Colonial Lucknow* (Princeton, 1984); Mariam Dossal, *Imperial Designs and Indian Realities: The Planning of Bombay City, 1845–1875* (Bombay, 1991).

[2] Though some works on South Asian cities examined the question of contestation and the attempts at political dominance in the cities by the indigenous elites, they kept the description of these contestations limited mostly to the sphere of electoral and representational politics. None of them took up the question of contestation by the indigenous elites (or, for that matter, by other social groups) in the field of spatial reorganization in the cities or dealt with the cities as lived and build environments. Examples of such works are, Kenneth Gillion, *Ahmedabad: A Study in Indian Urban History* (Berkeley, 1968); C. A. Bayly, *The Local Roots of Indian Politics:*

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This article seeks to correct this deficiency by showing that the process of change in at least one non-western city, namely, Ahmedabad, a large industrial city in western India, in the first half of the twentieth century, was not a one-way process of the establishment of domination by the colonial government but was instead one where a section of the Indian elites contested the restructuring that the government was carrying out in the city and appropriated it to bring about their own reorganization of the urban centre. In carrying out the reorganization, the elites also established their political and social hegemony in the urban centre. The article analyses how the Indian elite group brought about the transformation, the nature of the changes fostered and the way in which the process of transformation helped the elite leaders to establish their hegemony in the city.[3]

Two 'sites' have been chosen to study the process and nature of the changes that took place in Ahmedabad during the first half of the twentieth century. One of them is the spatial organization of the

Allahabad 1880–1920 (Oxford, 1975); Rajat Ray, *Urban Roots of Indian Nationalism: Pressure Groups and Conflict of Interests in Calcutta City Politics, 1875–1939* (New Delhi, 1979); A.D.D. Gordon, *Businessmen and Politics: Rising Nationalism and a Modernising Economy in Bombay, 1918–1933* (New Delhi, 1978); Douglas Haynes, *Rhetoric and Ritual in Colonial India: the shaping of a Public Culture in Surat City, 1852–1928* (Berkeley, 1991).

[3] In doing so, the article also seeks to make a contribution to the general question of the link between spatial reorganization in cities and the growth of social hierarchies and power structures there. This crucial issue has been rather ignored in European urban studies and has not been taken up at all in the South Asian urban context. In European urban studies, the works which have explored this question, either at the theoretical or empirical level or both, are Pierre Bourdieu, *Outline of a Theory of Practice* (Cambridge, 1977), pp. 89–90; Anthony Giddens, *Central Problems in Social Theory: Action, Structure and Contradiction in Social Analysis* (London, 1979), pp. 206–10; Linda W. Donley-Reid, 'A structuring structure: the Swahili house', in Susan Kent (ed.), *Domestic Architecture and the Use of Space: An Interdisciplinary Cross-cultural Study* (Cambridge, 1990), pp. 114–26; Roderick J. Lawrence, 'Public, collective and private space: a study or urban housing in Switzerland', in Kent, *op. cit.*, pp. 73–91. In the South Asian context, though a number of works (particularly the ones which have emphasized the aspect of colonial domination) have studied the question of spatial transformation in cities in the colonial period, they have not linked the changes in the spatial sphere to developments in the economy and politics in the cities. Thus, though the works by King, Oldenburg and Dossal all saw the changes in the spatial organization as constituting one element in the establishment of domination by the colonial government, they did not, for example, point out the reasons why the government adopted one set of policies for one city and another set for the other; why the government implemented a particular policy at a particular point of time in a certain city; or what impact such changes in spatial organisation had on the economic and political organisation of the cities., King, *op. cit.*; Oldenburg, *op. cit.*; Dossal, *op. cit.*

city; the other is the sphere of social relations and social identities in the urban centre. This article will concentrate however on examining the nature and implications of the changes in only one of the 'sites', namely, that of the spatial organization of the city. The changes in the sphere of social relations and social identities will be touched upon briefly. The article will conclude by comparing the changes in Ahmedabad with those in some other non-western cities and by examining the implications of the Ahmedabad experience for understanding the processes of transformation in cities in the non-western world under colonialism. The article starts by outlining briefly the main characteristics of the pre-modern city of Ahmedabad. It will then move on to define the late nineteenth-century context in which the first interventions by the colonial government took place in the city's morphology, before going into the discussion of how the Indian elite group took over the process of reorganization of the city.

Pre-modern Ahmedabad: History, Space and Society

Ahmedabad was founded by Sultan Ahmed Shah of Gujarat in A.D. 1411 on a spacious plain east of the river Sabarmati, close to the site of two earlier trading centres known as Asaval and Karnavati.[4] A citadel, called the Bhadra citadel or 'Bhadr', was built on the old Hindu site of Asaval, to form the central quarter of the city. The palace of the Sultan was constructed inside the citadel, and, close by, were built the Jumma Masjid and the triple gateway or the Teen Darwaja. Initially, the city consisted of 'pols' or conglomerations of houses interspersed with winding streets and open spaces, organized in a semi-circular fashion around the central citadel of Bhadra. The city also had a number of suburbs or 'puras', which encircled the original nucleus.[5]

Ahmedabad developed to be an important centre of trade and industry under the rule of the Gujarat Sultans. In 1572 Ahmedabad

[4] M S Commissariat, *A History of Gujarat*, Vol. I (Bombay, 1938), pp. 90–2; *Census of India, 1961*, Vol. V, Part X-A(i), *Special Report on Ahmedabad City* (Delhi, 1967), pp. 2–6; Ali Muhammad Khan, *Mirat-i-Ahmadi*, Supplement, trans. S. N. Ali and C. N. Seddon (Baroda, 1928), pp. 5–34.

[5] *Census of India, 1961*, Vol. V, Part X-A(i), pp. 2–6; Ali Muhammad Khan, *Mirat-i-Ahmadi*, pp. 5–34. Please refer to Map 1.

passed under Mughal rule. The Marathas took over the city in the early eighteenth century.[6] Ahmedabad came under British rule in 1817.[7]

The organization of space in pre-modern Ahmedabad had two important characteristics. First, space in the city was organized according to a ritual cosmography which the city represented.[8] Secondly, spaces used for commercial, residential and religious purposes were not separated from each other. In that way Ahmedabad resembled both a traditional Hindu town and typical Islamic city. This characteristic regarding the lack of a fixed categorization of space persisted even as late as the nineteenth century.[9]

The 'pol' constituted the basic spatial unit of society in the 'traditional' city. The pol community was generally composed of people from the same caste or professional group but sometimes it was heterogeneous in caste composition.[10] Social ties also extended beyond the limits of the pol in pre-modern Ahmedabad. Manifestations of

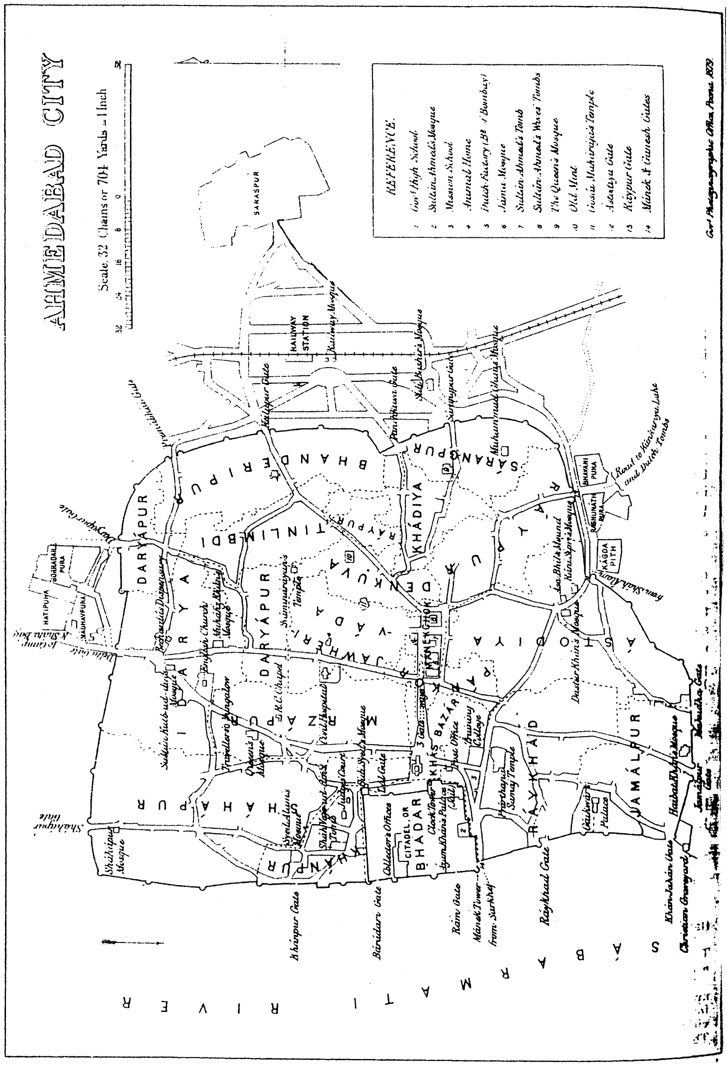
[6] Gillion, *Ahmedabad*, pp. 14, 29–30; Terry, *Voyage to East India* (1618), pp. 179–80. Ahmedabad's prosperity continued until about the middle of the 17th century. As Ahmedabad was suffering a period of decline in the early 18th century, the Maratha conquest of the city made matters worse for the city's economy. However, not everything came to a standstill., B. G. Gokhale, 'Capital Accumulation in XVIIth Century Western India', *Journal of the Asiatic Society of Bombay*, 1964–65, p. 60.

[7] After taking over, the British administration tried to promote economic growth in the city by first reducing the duties on imports and exports from the city, and secondly by ensuring peace and security for the merchants. This policy soon had its desired effect but it was not to the extent the British administration had expected. It was only after 1830 that the Ahmedabad economy started to expand rapidly again. Letters from the Collector of Ahmedabad to the Government of Bombay, dated 29 August 1820, 22 August 1825 and 20 September 1825 in Government of Bombay, Revenue Dept., Vol. 159, Year 1820; Vol. 137, Year 1825; and vol. 117, Year 1825 respectively (Maharashtra State Archives, Bombay; hereafter abbreviated as MSA). Government of Bombay, Revenue Dept., Vol. 133, Year 1840, p. 155 (MSA).

[8] According to this cosmography, the morphology of the city had to be designed so that the urban centre symbolized the universe and thereby could represent the centre of the world. Both the predominantly Hindu population of the city and its Islamic rulers wanted their capital city to be constructed in that way. But differences arose over the choice of the form through which their imagination could be translated into reality. What resulted however, was a peculiar combination of different modes of expression of the layout, inspired by both the Hindu and Islamic traditions, which was reflected in the cityscape of 'traditional' Ahmedabad. For a detailed treatment of this subject see Siddhartha Raychaudhuri, 'Indian Elites, Urban Space and the Restructuring of Ahmedabad City, 1890–1947' (Unpublished Ph.D. Dissertation, University of Cambridge, 1997), pp. 16–24.

[9] For a detailed treatment of this, see *Ibid*., pp. 24–5.

[10] For more information on the 'pols', see *Ibid*., pp. 25–30.



Map 1 Ahmedabad: the old city.

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these wider social networks could be seen in the various religious, caste and professional organizations spread across the city. Cohesion within these city-wide associations was maintained by wider patronage networks that often extended across religious or caste boundaries. The most institutionalized form of such a patronage network in the city was represented by the position of the *Nagarsheth*.[11]

Changes in the Urban Economy and Society of Ahmedabad, 1820–1880

The nineteenth century ushered in significant changes in the economy and society of Ahmedabad, largely in the same way as it did in many other parts of India. First, a substantial expansion took place in the volume of trade both to and from the city.[12] Secondly, the city's position relative to other commercial centres changed significantly in the nineteenth-century because of the expansion of the railway.[13] Thirdly, though the nineteenth century brought about a significant expansion of the city's economy, it also caused a partial decline in certain sectors.[14]

The nineteenth century also introduced crucial changes in the social structure of the city of Ahmedabad. Population rose from about 80,000 in 1817 to 90,000 in 1832, 97,048 in 1851 and

[11] The Nagarsheth provided an informal link between the city and the state when representative urban institutions were yet to develop in Ahmedabad. *Ibid*., pp. 25–30.

[12] New items were added to the list of imports and exports from the city. A substantial expansion also took place in the trade of at least two commodities, namely, opium and cotton, through the city of Ahmedabad.

[13] Earlier, Ahmedabad participated in the commercial network of north and western India mainly in its capacity as a centre for manufacturing cotton, silk and various other products. But with the extension of the railways and growth of the export trade, the city started to become more of an entrepot centre. James Campbell, *Gazetteer of the Bombay Presidency*, Vol. IV (Bombay, 1879), pp. 99–101.

[14] Examples of sectors which suffered decline included the local handloom weaving industry, the production of handspun cotton thread, calico-printing and the local handicrafts sector. For more details regarding the changes in the urban economy of Ahmedabad in the 19th century, see Government of Bombay, Revenue Dept., Vol. 133, Year 1840, p. 155 (MSA); Circuit Report of the Commissioner of the Northern Division, dated 20 July 1830, Government of Bombay, Revenue Dept., Vol. 12, Compilation 293, Year 1830; Campbell, *Gazetteer of the Bombay Presidency*, Vol. IV, pp. 54–5, 95, 99–100, 131–3, 140; J. Robertson, *Western India: Reports addressed to the Chambers of Commerce of Manchester, Liverpool, Blackburn and Glasgow by Mackay Alexander* (1853), p. 60; Gillion, *Ahmedabad*, pp. 47–8; and Raychaudhuri, *op. cit*., pp. 33–7.

116,873 in 1872.[15] The composition of the population also changed to a certain extent.[16] The tight social bonds of the old city began to be loosened and some newly rich groups emerged.[17]

Economic growth and social changes were reflected in the spatial structure of the city. A differential pattern of growth between areas started to emerge in Ahmedabad. New sub-centres of wealth and power developed in certain areas. The ward of Shahpur was one such area where a new sub-centre developed. However, the spatial structure of the basic units of residence and social organization in both the old and new sub-centres continued to remain almost the same.[18]

Growth of the Mill Industry and the City, 1880–1920

The most significant change in Ahmedabad during the nineteenth century was, however, the growth of the mill industry. This growth took place in the later part of the century and had crucial implications for the city's economy and society.[19] The first mill came up in 1858 mainly due to the efforts of a Nagar Brahmin, Ranchhodlal Chhotalal. By the end of the nineteenth century the textile industry had taken root in Ahmedabad city.[20]

The First World War had significant effects on the cotton textile industry. With the decline of cotton textile imports because of diffi-

[15] Gillion, *op. cit*., p. 53.

[16] The proportion of Muslims, for example, had started to fall in the late 18th century. The same trend continued in the 19th century. Campbell, *Gazetteer of the Bombay Presidency*, Vol. IV, pp. 293, 317–23.

[17] The middle of the social pyramid broadened and the financial predominance of the Jains was invaded by Vaishnav Banias, the Patidars and some Parsis. The control of the traditional social organizations lessened. So also did the domination of the caste organizations. E. G. Fawcett, Report on the Collectorate of Ahmedabad, 1849, in *Selections from the Records of the Bombay Government* (Bombay, 1854), Vol. V, new series, p. 70; E. W. Hopkins, *India Old and New* (New York, 1902), pp. 179–204.

[18] Campbell, *Gazetteer of the Bombay Presidency*, Vol. IV, 317–23.

[19] The textile industry in Ahmedabad owed its origins to the revival of business activities in the city during the first half of the 19th century. Though Ahmedabad did not have any distinctive locational or natural advantages, the presence of a substantial amount of investible surplus and cheap surplus labour, the lesser grip of Europeans on the city's economy and the social and cultural milieu helped the development of the mill industry.

[20] Makrand Mehta, *The Ahmedabad Cotton Textile Industry: Genesis and Growth* (Ahmedabad, 1982), pp. 51–2, 64–7, 67–75; Sujata Patel, *The Making of Industrial Relations: the Ahmedabad Textile Industry, 1918–1939* (Delhi, 1987), pp. 21–4.

culties with shipping and insurance, an import substitution process was accelerated, with Indian industry and specifically Ahmedabad, developing a strong base in the domestic market and at the same time initiating the production of quality goods. Between 1914 and 1920, the number of spindles in Ahmedabad increased by 12.09%, looms by 17.79% and the workforce by 23%. The trend became stronger in 1920–23, when eight new units were added, the spindles increased by 18.6%, looms by 24.36% and the workforce by 13.55% .[21] After 1922 however, the war-induced boom collapsed. But Ahmedabad was able to tide over the crisis much better than, for example, Bombay, and in fact experienced some growth between 1923 and 1928. The period 1928 to 1933 was again a period of growth for the Ahmedabad textile industry.[22]

The growth of the mill industry had a considerable impact on the city's life. It, first of all, led to the emergence of certain new social identities. The millowners definitely constituted one of these new social identities. A loose and heterogeneous working class was another social identity that started to emerge in Ahmedabad city in the wake of the growth of the mill industry in the early decades of the twentieth century.[23]

The growth of the mill industry had other implications too. It brought a number of new issues and problems to the city. Their nature was such that they could not be dealt with properly within the social and economic organization of the 'traditional' city. They called for changes in the city's morphology and in the way space was used and perceived there.

One of these new problems was the growth of extreme congestion. The textile mills brought about a great increase in the population of the city and since most of the newcomers wanted to settle inside the walled city and in the suburbs for social and cultural reasons, the density of population in both these areas increased tremendously.[24]

[21] Mehta, *op. cit*., pp. 136–8; Patel, *op. cit*., pp. 32–5.

[22] N. N. Desai, *Directory of the Ahmedabad Mill Industry, 1891–1956* (Ahmedabad, 1957), p. 386; Report of the Indian Tariff Board (Cotton Textile Industry Enquiry), vol. I, *Report* (Bombay, 1927), pp. 9–11, 21–7; Report of the Indian Tariff Board regarding the grant of protection to the Cotton Textile Industry (Calcutta, 1932), pp. 14–25.

[23] For more details regarding the emergence of these new social identities in Ahmedabad city, see Raychaudhuri, *op. cit*., pp. 45–50.

[24] The textile mills brought about a great increase in the population of the city both by providing opportunities for all within it and so checking any exodus, and by attracting many newcomers, workers for the mills, and traders and artisans to serve the expanding population. The population within municipal limits rose from

The growth of the mill industry also caused considerable problems of pollution and insanitary conditions in the city. Though no concrete statistics exist to show the level of poisonous gases emitted and the quantity of waste products produced by the mills, the extent of pollution and insanitary conditions is evident from the toll these conditions took on the city's population.[25]

The rise of these new problems had considerable implications for the city's course of development. The extreme congestion, diseases and death rate not only threatened the further growth of the mill industry but also the very survival of Ahmedabad as a social and economic entity. So most sections of the city's population felt that something needed to be done. A section of the people argued that the problems could be still solved within the existing social, economic and spatial organization of the city. But another section of the populace and the colonial government thought that some degree of reorganization needed to be carried out both inside and on the outskirts of the city.[26] Following the policy recommendations for bringing about modifications, the government started to intervene in Ahmedabad city.

116,873 in 1872, to 144,451 in 1891, to 181,774 in 1901, to 213,727 in 1911, and to 274,007 in 1921. In 1872, the number of persons per square mile within the Ahmedabad city wall was 53,435, greater than in Bombay and double that in London. In the walled suburb of Saraspur it was 63,914 per square mile, and in the more crowded quarters of the main city it was even greater. By 1902 the density within the city limits was 60,000 per square mile and in the Kalupur ward it was 120,000. L. J. Sedgwick, *Census of India*, 1921, Vol. IX, Cities of the Bombay Presidency, Part I, Report (Poona, 1922), Part A, p. 3, 63; Dr Hewlett's report, Government of Bombay, General Department, vol. 78, Year 1875; vol. 66, Year 1903.

[25] Between 1898 and 1902 the mean death rate in Ahmedabad was 81.52 per mille (1,000) of population. In 1903 the death rate declined to 60.26 but then went up again in 1905 to 63.43 per mille. It did not show any sign of abatement as it continued to remain at a high level at 57.22 in 1907 and 56.54 in 1909. The main causes were fever, plague, respiratory diseases, dysentry and diarrhoea. Significantly, most of these diseases are aggravated by the presence of insanitary conditions and pollution. Infant mortality in the city was also quite high. The death rate of infants under one year of age per 1,000 births was 552.32 in 1904, 802.99 in 1905, 725.79 in 1907 and 976.69 in 1908. Government of Bombay, *Annual Report of the Sanitary Commissioner for the Government of Bombay*, Year 1903 (Bombay, 1904), pp. 5–6; Year 1904 (Bombay, 1905), p. 6; Year 1905 (Bombay, 1906), p. 6; Year 1906 (Bombay, 1907), p. 5; Year 1907 (Bombay, 1908), p. 6; Year 1908 (Bombay, 1909), p. 7.

[26] Gillion, *Ahmedabad*, pp. 120–6, 136–42. The first group included the head of the Nagarsheth family and other members of the older elite. The city people who were in favour of the restructuring of the urban morphology included new upcoming upper middle class individuals turned industrialists like Ranchhodlal Chhotalal, and new anglicized professional individuals such as L. M. Wadia and Ramanbhai Mahipatram Nilkanth. Of course, both the head of the Nagarsheth family and these

Urban Problems and Colonial Intervention: The Reorganization of Ahmedabad City by the Colonial Government, 1895–1920

Initial attempts to ameliorate the situation were made by the government in the form of intervention through the institution of the Municipality.[27] In addition, concrete steps were taken by the government to bring about 'improvement' in the various areas of the city.[28]

The government intervened in the city in other ways too. Increasingly, the intervention took the form of a reorganization of the city's landscape. Thus, officials started to reorganize land in the walled part of the city in accordance with a new 'order' of spatial organization. In the initial phase, this was done through the division of land into 'public' and 'private' spaces, delineation of particular areas as 'open spaces', 'opening out' of certain 'congested' localities, and the realignment of existing streets and the construction of new ones. Later on, this reorganization took the form of town planning. In addition, the government tried to incorporate additional lands on the outskirts and add them on to main area of the city. The lands on the outskirts were mainly agricultural. The government tried to bring

upcoming ruling class people were allies of the government then and constituted, as we shall see later, the older elite of the city.

[27] Already, by the late 19th century, the Municipality had been established in Ahmedabad as a powerful force in city matters. Significantly, the Ahmedabad Municipality at this time was largely composed of elected and nominated members of the older elites of the city mentioned earlier. The government's intervention through the institution of the Municipality involved the bringing of various areas, both inside the city and immediately outside it, under a regime of municipal laws and bye-laws by including those areas within municipal limits. The bye-laws were used to control the sanitary practices and building activities in those areas and thereby attempts were made by the government to ameliorate the problems of insanitary conditions and pollution there. For greater details, see Government of Bombay, *Report on Municipal Taxation and Expenditure in the Bombay Presidency*, Year 1899–1900 (Bombay, 1901), p. 1; *Report of the Municipalities of the Northern Division*, Government of Bombay, General Dept., Vol. 38, Year 1879; Government of Gujarat, Town Planning and Valuation Department, *Ahmedabad Metropolitan Area, 2000 A.D.* (Ahmedabad, 1968)), p. 111; and Raychaudhuri, *op. cit*., pp. 53–4.

[28] The 'improvement' was sought to be brought about through a number of water supply and drainage projects. For details see, Gillion, *Ahmedabad*, pp. 137–8, 139–40; Government of Bombay, *Report on Municipal Taxation and Expenditure in the Bombay Presidency*, Year 1903–04 (Bombay, 1905), p. 2; Year 1904–05 (Bombay, 1906), p. 3; Year 1905–06 (Bombay, 1907), pp. 2–5. Significantly, these projects, apart from entailing taxation, also adversely affected certain social practices in the urban centre. Consequently, the implementation of the schemes met with severe opposition from large sections of the population.

about the conversion of these agricultural lands into lands for non-agricultural use through a variety of measures, which included new taxation policies. Once this was achieved, the lands were neatly organized according to a new spatial order, through the town planning schemes, and added on to the city area.[29]

One has to note, however, that as far as the process of incorporation of new lands into Ahmedabad was concerned, the government could carry out only the first part of the process. This was because by the time the government started to reorganize the newly converted lands through town planning, a group of new Indian elites had gained control of the Municipality, the institution through which town planning was carried out. The elite group led by Vallabhbhai Patel had strategically used the grievances generated among the city's populace, as a result of the various schemes for restructuring carried out by the government, to establish themselves politically in the urban centre. Consequently the government lost control over the process and the new Indian urban leadership took it over, marking a decisive shift in the balance of local political power.

The 1910s represented a particularly intense period in the reorganization of the city carried out by the colonial government. In course of the first decade of the twentieth century, the government made several attempts to prevail upon the Municipal Board to carry out changes in the city's morphology according to plans drawn up by the government. But the government soon realized that this would be a difficult enterprise as many of the old leadership, who dominated the Municipality, still very much favoured preserving the 'traditional' spatial and social organization of the walled city because their own prominence and power were dependent on and sustained by that mode of organization.[30] Thus in 1910 the government decided to supersede the elected Municipal Board of the Ahmedabad Municipality in favour of a Committee of Management composed of the government's chosen men.[31]

[29] For details of this process of reorganization, see Raychaudhuri, *op. cit*., pp. 57–70. The colonial government intervened in Ahmedabad's morphology for a variety of reasons. Some of these reasons concerned the need of the government to generate more revenue for itself. Some others were more strategic and symbolic in nature. For a detailed evaluation of these reasons, refer to *ibid*., pp. 58–60.

[30] In this connection, see Gillion, *Ahmedabad*, pp. 135–42.

[31] The Committee of Management was initially appointed for one year, i.e., from 11 May 1910 to 10 May 1911. But later its term was extended until 1915, *The Praja Bandhu*, 29 May 1910, pp. 1–2. The reasons that were put forward to justify the supersession of the municipal council, make it clear that the existing council

After taking over, the Committee of Management started to address the various issues of congestion and insanitary conditions in Ahmedabad in accordance with the new programme of economic rationalization and space management given to them by the government and thereby started to transform the city. Thus the water supply and drainage systems in the urban centre were put into 'proper order' and plans were made for their existence. Certain new bye-laws and rules were promulgated and many existing ones were modified. A large number of people in the city who were used to their 'traditional' ways of living were drastically affected by these changes.[32] The Committee of Management did not keep their programme of the reorganization of Ahmedabad limited to the walled part of the city. They also started to extend the jurisdiction of the Municipality to certain areas situated outside the walled city and bring those areas under the regime of the new bye-laws.[33]

Reorganization of this sort needed additional finance, however. Consequently, in August 1911 the Municipality under the Committee of Management proposed to increase the water-tax and water connection fee. In 1914 again, the Committee of Management decided to substitute a terminal tax for octroi and house-tax in

was not adequately implementing the new programme of space management and economic rationalization that the government was seeking to impose on the city. For example, the various reasons cited included 'inability of the municipal council to agree upon an *unobjectionable* scheme of improvement resulting in the lapse of a government grant of Rs 50,000, neglect of sanitary needs and the absence of markets, except for a vegetable market, and a public slaughter-house, absence of provision for the drainage of the whole city, failure in duty to remove encroachments, a certain *insanitary* burial ground and the need to revise the Rules and Bye-laws, and so on', *The Praja Bandhu*, 22 May 1910, p. 1.

[32] So, Dahyabhai Dalsukhram of Lunsawada Moti pol had the verandah of his ancestral house demolished because it constituted an 'encroachment', as per the new bye-laws. Again, as a result of the new laws, Chamanlal Ramji's flour factory in Mandvi's pol was ordered to be closed down. The construction of an extension for the Otta of a Jain temple in Pada pol was also stopped. Bohra Hamjubhai Yussafalli was asked to close one of the outlets of his house in Raikhad as the existence of that opening was violating the new notions of 'public' and 'private' space being imposed in the city. *The Ahmedabad Municipal Record* (hereafter abbreviated as *AMR*), No. 112, 2nd quarter, 1913–14, pp. 14–15; No. 116, 2nd quarter, 1914–15, pp. 13–15; No. 117, 3rd quarter, 1914–15, p. 10.

[33] The Chairman of the Committee stated the object of taking these suburban blocks within municipal control to be the regulation of building activities in those areas by specific bye-laws so that 'public health' there was not endangered by 'irregular' and 'insanitary' methods of construction. Government of Bombay, General Department, Vol. No. 132, Comp. No. 1090, Year 1911, pp. 335–9, 353–7.

Ahmedabad for raising an extra one lakh of rupees every year for the various projects.[34]

By late 1913, the enhancement of taxes and the attempts at drastic restructuring of the walled city by the government-sponsored Committee of Management provoked widespread protests in Ahmedabad. The protests took the shape of large protest meetings and 'public' demonstrations. These protests not only meant resistance to the government's schemes but also implied a serious crisis of authority for the government in the urban centre.[35]

By 1915 thus, the government and the municipal Committee of Management faced a situation in which their moral authority in the city had begun to slip quite significantly away from them. Large sections of the population had turned against them because of their policies. As shall be seen in the following section, it was around this time that a section of the Indian elites in Ahmedabad, led by Vallabhbhai Patel, utilized the anti-government sentiment prevailing in the city to make their debut in municipal politics. Once they installed themselves in the Municipality, the elite group carried out their own reorganization of the city and established their hegemony in the urban centre. The following sections will probe who these elites were, the way in which they established their domination in the Municipality in Ahmedabad, and how, after assuming control of the municipal institution, they brought about a reorganization of the city.

The Identity of the New Indian Elite Group

The new Indian elites that are being referred to here did not constitute a well-defined political party or group in the initial period. In

[34] It was decided that the water rate would be increased from 5% to 10% on the rental. In addition, the Committee decided in 1914 to levy a special sanitary cess at the annual rate of 2 annas per 1,000 gallons of water, registered by meter, on all buildings and lands within the municipal district which were connected to the municipal drainage system. Significantly enough, this new tax affected the mill industry of the city adversely. *The Praja Bandhu*, 27 Aug. 1911, pp. 1–2; 28 July 1912, pp. 1–2; 8 Sept. 1912, p. 3; 15 Sept. 1912, p. 3; Government of Bombay, General Department, Comp. 286, Year 1914, pp. 63–8, 100–07, 119–21; Comp. 256, Year 1914, pp. 137–9.

[35] For a detailed account of these protests in Ahmedabad city against the various policies of the Committee of Management, see Raychaudhuri, *op. cit*., pp. 75–8.

the beginning, they functioned as a conglomeration of various interconnected interests with broad common aims, with a core group at the centre. Individuals who functioned as the key members of this core group included industrialists like Kasturbhai Lalbhai and Ambalal Sarabhai; a Patidar turned middle class professional and later politician, Vallabhbhai Patel; a middle class socialist professional politician and trade unionist, Shankarlal Banker; and middle class professionals turned politicians such as G. V. Mavlankar and Bhulabhai Desai.[36] Though thrown together first by the experience of opposition to the urban policies of the colonial government, by the 1920s they had begun to function more as an integrated interest-group.

In terms of class background, the new elite leaders were not fundamentally different from the section of the Indian elites who had been previously dominant in the city.[37] There were, however, some social differences between the two groups. In general, the new men came from lesser known families or lesser known lineages of existing prominent families in the city. For example, Kasturbhai Lalbhai, one of the doyens of the mill industry of Ahmedabad and a prominent member of the new elite group, belonged to the less known lineage of an Oswal Jain social group whose more prominent lineage was represented by the Nagarsheth's family.[38] Vallabhbhai Patel, by far the most prominent leader of this group, hailed from a family who had previously been Patidar agriculturalists but had become an

[36] The term 'middle class' has a particular connotation in the Indian context. It represents a broad spectrum of people who cannot be classified as part of the working class or the upper classes such as large landowners or industrialists or businessmen. The broad spectrum of the middle class is divided into three main categories: the 'lower middle' class, the 'middle' and the 'upper middle' classes. The class of people who are depicted as the 'middle class' in modern western countries, such as Britain, would stand in the same category, economically and socially, with the 'upper middle' class in India.

[37] Here the word 'class' is used in the broad Marxist sense of the term. As has been seen earlier, the older elites had been co-opted by the colonial government into the Municipality from the late 19th century. Their ranks consisted of traditional wealthy and powerful men of the city such as the head of the old Nagarsheth family, new anglicized professional individuals such as L. M. Wadia and Ramanbhai Mahipatram Nilkanth, and new upcoming upper middle class individuals turned industrialists like Ranchhodlal Chhotalal.

[38] D. Tripathi, *The Dynamics of a Tradition: Kasturbhai Lalbhai and his Entrepreneurship* (New Delhi, 1981), pp. 24–6. Another important member, Ambalal Sarabhai came from a Jain family and was the adopted son of Chimanlal Nagindas of the pedhi of Karamchand Premchand. (H. Spodek, 'The "Manchesterisation" of Ahmedabad', *Economic Weekly*, Vol. XVII, 13 March 1965, pp. 483–90).

ordinary middle class family once they moved to the city. Patel started off in Ahmedabad city as a lawyer; then, he went away from there to become a barrister-at-law. Eventually he returned to the city to be a professional politician.[39]

The main differences between these two groups of elites were, however, political. Whereas the previously dominant group had chosen to ally themselves closely with the colonial government, a distinguishing characteristic of the new elite leaders was their stand against the government. As we shall see presently, the reason for such a stand by the new city leaders was partly strategic and partly the result of the life experiences of their various members in specific social and economic circumstances.

The Take-over of the Ahmedabad Municipality by the New Indian Elite Leaders

In 1915, the Municipal Board that had been superseded by the Committee of Management in 1910, was reinstated. The reorganized Board consisted of 40 members, 27 of them elected and the rest consisting of nominated members.[40] This provided the different sections of the indigenous population of the city again with the opportunity to have their representatives on the Board and to try to assume control of developments in Ahmedabad. The elite leaders mentioned above also took advantage of this situation to acquire a certain degree of control over the Municipality at this time.[41] Here they were helped by the fact that these new leaders had already gained substantial confidence among the people by organizing protests against the government's various interventionist measures. After 1915 they tried to consolidate this position, adopting a stance

[39] D. N. Pathak and P. N. Sheth, *Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel: From Civic to National Leadership* (Ahmedabad, 1980). Some of the other leaders of the new elite group, such as Shankarlal Banker, Bhulabhai Desai, Gulzarilal Nanda and G. V. Mavlankar, came from ordinary middle class backgrounds. (M. Shukla, *Six Decades of Textile Labour Association, Ahmedabad* (Ahmedabad, 1977), p. 1; Paresh Majumdar, *An Anatomy of Peaceful Industrial Relations* (Bombay, 1973), p. 76; Mahadev Desai, *A Righteous Struggle* (Ahmedabad, 1968), pp. 4, 8, 25–6; Erik Erikson, *Gandhi's Truth. On the Origins of Militant Non-Violence* (London, 1970), pp. 40, 68–9; Royal Commission of Labour in India, *Evidence*, Vol. I, Part II. *Bombay Presidency (including Sind). Oral Evidence* (London, 1931), p. 111.) A large number of their other members and the bulk of their supporters belonged to the middle or lower middle classes.

[40] *The Praja Bandhu*, 24 Feb. 1916, pp. 1–2.

[41] *Ibid*., 17 June 1917, pp. 1–2.

of public opposition to the government.[42] In 1917, Vallabhbhai Patel, the foremost leader of this group was elected to the Municipal Board. Some other members of the core of this group had already done so in 1915.

Vallabhbhai's group tried to consolidate their position in the Municipality and in the city in a variety of ways. Firstly, they tried to achieve this by removing from office certain abrasive and arrogant government officials who then still dominated the municipal administration.[43] At the same time the new elite leaders tried to broaden their political base and strengthen their position through the extension of municipal franchise in the city. Taking advantage of the government's plans for extending local self-government, Vallabhbhai's group tried to ensure that the social groups which would tend to support their efforts in the Municipality and to whose ranks most of their members belonged, secured more representation on the Municipal Board.[44] However, in extending the franchise the new political elites were careful to keep the expanded franchise restricted to the property-holding, tax and rent-paying sections and the salaried middle classes in the urban society. There was no pressure for a general enfranchisement.[45]

[42] This is not to deny, however, the ideological reasons which led these individuals to oppose British rule. Instead, what is being stressed is that the anti-government stance was strategically deployed and used here by this section of the Indian elites. This was because the predominant mood among the city's populace around this time was one of defiance of the government. Adoption of such a stand by the new leaders helped them not only to gain the support of the general population but also to isolate those elites who were on the side of the government and had previously been entrenched in the Municipality. Certainly, that section was the main adversary of this new leadership in their attempt to gain hegemony in the city.

[43] *AMR*, No. 127, 1st quarter, 1917–18, p. 76; Proceedings of the adjourned general meeting of the Ahmedabad Municipality held on 7 June 1917, *AMR*, No. 127, 1st quarter, 1917–18, pp. 74–82; *The Praja Bandhu*, 10 March 1918, pp. 1–2.

[44] So the minimum tax-paying qualification for enfranchisement was set at Rs 6 per annum for residents of the general areas of the city and Rs 8-8 for the areas covered by underground drainage. Previously the minimum qualification for this category had been much higher. The minimum qualification for house owners was brought down to an annual rental of Rs 80 (Proceedings of the special general meeting of the Ahmedabad Municipality held on 23 July 1918, *AMR*, No. 132, 2nd quarter, 1918–19, pp. 25–6).

[45] The property-holding, tax and rent-paying sections and the salaried middle classes in the urban society were granted a special position in the Municipality by the creation of a General ward for them with a significant number of seats allocated to it on the Municipal Board. So members of these social groups voted twice, once as members of the General ward and again as residents of their respective local wards. Even within the General ward, a special position was granted to the salaried

The second way in which Vallabhbhai's group tried to strengthen their position was by forging alliances with the leaders of the different economic interests in Ahmedabad. The strategy here was to get as many of their members and supporters elected on the different municipal committees in negotiation with these various social groups. Of course, in return, the political leaders centred around Vallabhbhai had to grant certain concessions and ensure benefits for these interests.[46] Vallabhbhai's group also looked for allies in the local communities of the pols. The intervention of the colonial government in the physical and social organization of the pols had already forced the community leaders in these localities to negotiate with the outside authorities. After some of their members had been elected on the Municipal Board, the group led by Patel used the situation to find new supporters in the city by forging alliances with political leaders in the pols and other neighbourhoods by ensuring for them certain benefits through the use of the municipal infrastructure.[47]

By 1918, a large number of members and supporters of Vallabhbhai's group had been elected to the different municipal Committees. Significantly, most of these men were either members of the emerging industrial bourgeoisie or were prominent lawyers, doctors, school teachers and other professionals of the city.[48] Vallabhbhai's group totally dominated the Sanitary, Public Works, and Rules and Bye-laws Committees. The group also held fifty percent of the membership of the Managing and Road Line Committees. Control over these various municipal committees helped Vallabhbhai's group to

middle classes working at the mills and in the railways by allocating a particular number of seats to them. This is significant because a substantial section of these middle class people were members of the Patidar community to which Vallabhbhai himself belonged. Significantly again, the Muslim communities of the city were not granted any extra allocation of seats in this reorganization of franchise carried out by the indigenous elites. (*AMR*, No. 132, 2nd quarter, 1918–19, pp. 26–7, 28–32).

[46] For more details, see Raychaudhuri, *op. cit*., pp. 95–6.

[47] In this connection, see *AMR*, No. 132, 2nd quarter, 1918–19, pp. 79–85; *AMR*, No. 154, 4th quarter, 1923–24, pp. 74–81.

[48] Mulchand Shah (lawyer) was elected Chairman of the Managing Committee. Sheth Balabhai Damodardas (industrialist) and Nathubhai Shah (lawyer) were chosen as members. Vallabhbhai was elected Chairman of the Sanitary Committee and so also was R. S. Harilalbhai Chairman of the Schools Committee. Of the five members of the Schools Committee, three were Vallabhbhai's allies. They were Krishnalal Desai (lawyer), Phirozshaw Karanjawala (lawyer) and Girdharlal Uttamram (industrialist). (*AMR*, No. 132, 2nd quarter, 1918–19, pp. 79–85; *AMR*, No. 154, 4th quarter, 1923–24, pp. 74–81).

intervene in different spheres of the city's life very effectively at a later stage.[49]

The strategy of broadening the political base, consolidation of the position they had acquired at a particular point of time, and the tactical manipulation of prevailing political opinion in the city paid off for Vallabhbhai's group in 1919. In the municipal elections of 1919, the group managed to acquire a dominant position in the Municipality.[50]

Meanwhile, the new Indian elites under the leadership of Vallabhbhai continued their strategy of presenting public opposition to the colonial government. The government also, on its part, provided the Indian leaders ample grounds for building up this opposition by adopting various unpopular schemes. Between 1916 and 1920 thus, two major schemes were prepared by the government for restructuring the walled city. These were the City Wall and the Relief Road schemes.[51] In 1920 the government suggested the implementation of both the schemes to the Ahmedabad Municipality. However, by late 1920, the General Board, dominated by Vallabhbhai's group,

[49] *AMR*, No. 154, 4th quarter, 1923–24, pp. 74–81.

[50] Many of their core members were elected to the Municipal Board from the different wards. Thus B. P. Thakore (middle class educationist) was elected from the Khadia ward, Kalidas Zaveri (pleader turned politician) from the Kalupur ward, Vallabhbhai from the Dariapur ward, Phirozshaw Karanjawala (lawyer) from Shahpur, G. V. Mavlankar (lawyer) from Jamalpur, G. K. Mavlankar (lawyer) from Pura 'A', Balmukund Girjashankar from Pura 'B', and Krishnalal Desai (lawyer) from the General ward (*AMR*, No. 134, 4th quarter, 1918–19, pp. 152–6). The group acquired control of most of the important municipal Committees. Thus Nathubhai Shah was elected Chairman of the Managing Committee, Vallabhbhai of the Sanitary Committee, and B. P. Thakore of the School Committee. It also captured the majority of the membership of the Managing, Sanitary, School, and Town Planning Committees. (*AMR*, No. 139, 1st quarter, 1920–21, pp. 27–31).

[51] The City Wall scheme, which had its origins in a comprehensive plan prepared for Ahmedabad city, by A. E. Mirams, the Consulting Surveyor to the government of Bombay, in 1916, envisaged the demolition of the historic city wall of Ahmedabad and the construction of a ring road in its place, and also proposed the displacement of a substantial number of people from the area. The Relief Road scheme, first suggested by the Consulting Surveyor to government, A. E. Mirams, in his Report on the Ahmedabad City Wall Improvement scheme of 1919, in its turn, proposed the construction of an arterial road, 60 feet wide and about 6,000 feet long, starting from Saker Bazaar near the Ahmedabad railway station at the west end up to the Bhadar on the east. The scheme involved the acquisition of about 630 properties for the purpose of building the road, covering an area of 63,175 square yards, the displacement of approximately 5,000 people, and an expenditure budget of forty-one-and-half lakh rupees. (*The Praja Bandhu*, 18 Feb. 1923, p. 14; Government of Bombay, Revenue Department ('28' Series), File no. 1086/28 I, pp.323–35; File no. 1086/28 III, pp. 301–5; *AMR*, No. 143, 1st quarter, 1921–2, pp. 109–11, 121).

managed to postpone the implementation of the City Wall scheme. The Relief Road scheme was stalled by the new leaders in June 1921.[52] Significantly, the strategy of opposition adopted by the new city leaders to the various plans of the government for drastically restructuring the walled city helped them to put up an impressive performance in the municipal elections of April 1921.[53]

The new Indian leaders managed to retain their control on the Municipality until January 1922. Thereafter, in February 1922, the Municipal Board was suspended by the government and a Committee of Management was installed in its place for a period of two years. The suspension occurred as the outcome of a conflict between the elite leaders and the government over the question of freeing the municipal primary schools from government control.[54] The

[52] Government of Bombay, General Department, Comp. 742, Year 1921, pp. 99–102; Government of Bombay, Revenue Department ('28' Series), File no. 1086/28 I, pp. 323–35; File no. 1086/28 III, pp. 301–5; *AMR*, No. 143, 1st quarter, 1921–2, pp. 109–11, 121. It may be pointed out in this context that the new city leaders opposed the implementation of the two schemes for two quite different sets of reasons. Whereas their opposition to the City Wall scheme stemmed from certain differences over the mode of its implementation, the Relief Road scheme was opposed because it would have affected a vital power base of the leaders in Ahmedabad.

[53] *AMR*, No. 143, 1st quarter, 1921–22, pp. 32–5.

[54] It may be pointed out in this context that from around early 1921, the Indian leaders of Ahmedabad tried to free the primary schools of the Municipality from government control as part of their participation in the Non-Co-operation movement launched by the Indian National Congress under the leadership of Mahatma Gandhi in August 1920. By late 1920, a large section of the new city leadership of Ahmedabad led by Vallabhbhai had joined, either directly or indirectly, the Gujarat Pradesh Congress. The joining of the Congress by the elite leaders was strategic, at least in part. The leaders reasoned that this was the best way by which they could harness the anti-government sentiment prevailing among the city's populace to their advantage and also seek redress for some of the grievances that they had against the government during this period. That the decision was strategic is further proved by the fact that the group chose to go for a limited non-co-operation with the government in the city. They did not, after all, resign *en masse* from the Municipal Board. Instead they decided to go for non-co-operation with the government so far as the control over the municipal primary schools was concerned. The choice of the field of education is significant. This is because by the early 20th century an expansion of education had become a primary social need in Ahmedabad city. The Indian elites tried to fulfil this social need through the use of the institution of the Municipality. The elites thought that this would earn them social prestige and moral authority among the city's population. But the problem for the elites was that the government was also involved in the enterprise. So the elites had to share the moral authority with the government. Of course they did not want this to happen. Thus what they needed to do in this situation was to free the schools from governmental control and to assume total jurisdiction over them so that the elites only could get the benefit of the social prestige acquired by virtue of fulfilling the need

installation of the Committee of Management of course brought the municipal schools back to the control of the government. But the government had other aims too. It tried to use the opportunity to revive certain old schemes and also to prepare new ones for the reorganization of the city.

Thus, in January and October 1923, the second Committee of Management, under pressure from the government, decided to implement the Relief Road and the City Wall schemes in Ahmedabad. As had happened with the schemes of the first Committee of Management, this immediately led to large-scale demonstrations and protests and also called into question the legitimacy of the organization implementing the schemes.[55] By 1924 thus, the moral authority of the government stood seriously undermined in Ahmedabad city.[56]

for education. The Non-Co-operation movement provided a very convenient opportunity in this context to carry out this scheme. *The Praja Bandhu*, 5 Sept. 1920, pp. 1–2; 3 Oct. 1920, p. 2; 21 Nov. 1920, p. 2.

For details regarding the conflict between the elite leaders and the government over the control of municipal schools, see *The Praja Bandhu*, 6 Feb. 1921, pp. 2–3; 6 March 1921, p. 3; 1 Jan. 1922, p. 23; 12 Feb. 1922, pp. 1–2; Pathak and Sheth, *Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel*, pp. 127, 142–5, 169; and Raychaudhuri, *op. cit*., pp. 101–6. After the supersession of the Municipal Board, the elite group led by Vallabhbhai tried to organize primary education for the children of Ahmedabad through the creation of alternative institutions such as the People's Primary Education Association. The Association schools soon proved to be immensely successful. The scheme of alternative 'national' education also made some progress in the field of higher education. Thus the Gujarat Vidyapith was founded by Mahatma Gandhi in 1920 as the 'national university' for Gujarat and by 1923 it was well established. *The Praja Bandhu*, 12 Feb. 1922, pp. 1–2; 30 July 1922, p. 17; 16 Dec. 1923, p. 1; Ahmedabad Municipality, *Annual Administrative Report*, 1921–22; Pathak and Sheth, *op. cit*., p. 205.

[55] A number of the new city leaders led by Vallabhbhai Patel also strategically participated in this movement and mobilized the population against the schemes. The protesters criticized the plans not only on economic grounds, but also for the reason that the schemes were not compatible with the social and economic realities of Ahmedabad. *The Praja Bandhu*, 14 Jan. 1923, p. 3; 16 Sept. 1923, pp. 1–2; 23 Sept. 1923, pp. 1–2; 7 Oct. 1923, pp. 2–3; 14 Oct. 1923,pp. 2–3; for a detailed account of these protests see also Raychaudhuri, *op. cit*., pp. 83–5.

[56] That the course of events took this turn, was partly the result of the government's lack of tact in bringing about the restructuration of the city. Partly, of course, it was the outcome of the intelligent manipulation of the situation by a section of the indigenous elites of Ahmedabad who strategically used the grievances generated among the city's populace (as a result of the various schemes for restructuring the city) to establish themselves politically in the urban centre. Of course one has to admit here that the Indian elite group could not have done that well for themselves if the government had not made the use of certain infrastructural facilities such as the resources of the municipal institution so crucial to the process of transformation in the city. The centrality of the municipal institution in the restructuring process

The Municipal Board was reinstated in January 1924. On 30 January 1924 municipal elections were held in Ahmedabad. The political leaders centred around Vallabhbhai again gained control of the Municipality.[57] Vallabhbhai was elected President of the Municipality. All the vital positions in the Municipality once again came to be occupied by the Indian elites led by Vallabhbhai.[58]

The Reorganization of Ahmedabad City by the Indian Elite Leaders

Once the city leaders assumed control of the Municipality, they started to use the infrastructural facilities provided by that institution to bring about a transformation of Ahmedabad city. As will be seen later, the transformation of the city's morphology helped the urban leaders to establish their political and social hegemony in Ahmedabad. However, it is important to note that in bringing about the restructuring, the elite leaders were not solely pursuing their broad 'class' interests. They were also being the conscious protagonists of a 'modernity' which went beyond those interests.[59] The transformation that they were seeking to bring about in the urban centre was certainly 'modernist' in nature.[60] In addition, they were attempting to establish a new political, social and cultural order in

and the structural characteristics (especially the elective nature of the Municipality) of the institution had left the scope for sections of the city's population to capture the Municipality and gain control of the process of restructuring. In the case of Ahmedabad it was the elite leaders headed by Vallabhbhai, who managed to achieve that by 1924.

[57] The elite leaders had by now taken over the City Congress. In the elections they won 34 out of 38 non-Muslim seats (21 in Khadia, Dariapur, Raikhad, Para-A and Para-B and 12 in Kalupur, Shahpur and Jamalpur wards). Out of the 10 Muslim seats, six elected Muslim councillors were sympathetic towards them. Thus in the newly constituted house of 60 members (48 elected and 12 nominated) the new Congress-based leaders achieved a comfortable majority. *The Praja Bandhu*, 3 Feb. 1924, pp. 1–2; 10 Feb. 1924, pp. 1–2.

[58] Vallabhbhai was also elected Chairman of the Managing Committee. B. P. Thakore was chosen as a Vice-President and Chairman of the Schools Committee while Dr Kanuga was elected Chairman of the Sanitary Committee. *The Praja Bandhu*, 10 Feb. 1924, pp. 1–2; 17 Feb. 1924, p. 3.

[59] Not surprisingly, the pursuance of their aims in some cases actually set them against various social groups (e.g., mill-owners, Patidars), both elite and subaltern, in and around Ahmedabad city.

[60] Here the term 'modernist' transformation has been understood in the way Professor Anthony Giddens has defined it in his *The Consequences of Modernity* (Cambridge, 1996).

Ahmedabad. In many ways, the various components of this new order were 'modern' in nature, but were not essentially 'Western'. In some cases, however, they were selectively appropriated and reinterpreted adaptations of Western models.

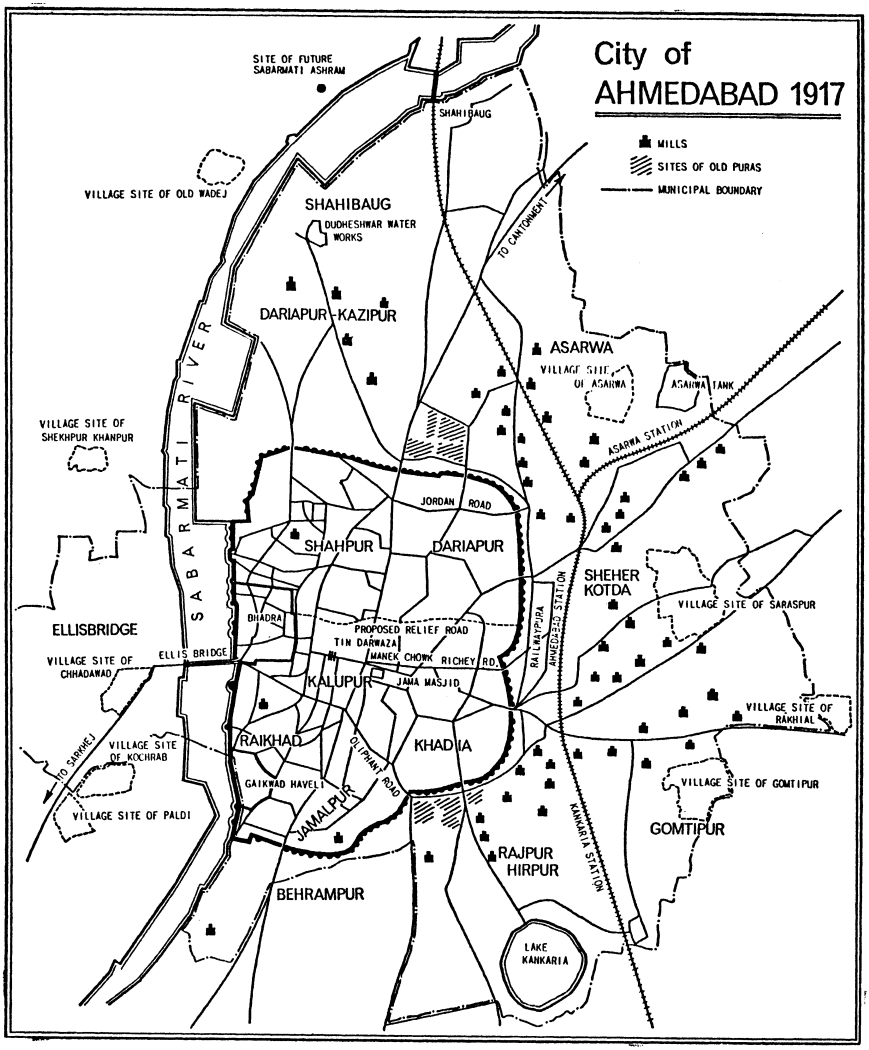
One of the first steps the elite leaders took regarding the reorganization of Ahmedabad[61] was to plan the restructuring and opening up of its pols in order to 'relieve' the congestion in the urban centre. Plans were accordingly formulated for the acquiring of houses, kotdas, walls and medas in the various streets and pols inside the city, so that two or more streets could be connected and plots opened up as air spaces to provide light and ventilation.[62] Plans were also drawn up to widen the road between the Khadia Police Chowki and Char Rasta, and to remove the congestion from the quarters occupied by the municipal sweepers by demolishing those quarters and moving the displaced people to special quarters constructed for the purpose. The new leaders decided that the whole scheme would be carried out without any extra taxation by covering all the costs from a grant from the government.[63]

The elite leaders' attempts at reorganizing Ahmedabad city were not, however, to be confined to just restructuring in the pols. They had more comprehensive plans in mind. This time however, their attention was directed more towards the lands outside the city walls. In fact, the city leaders had started reorganizing the lands outside the walls from earlier on. Thus in 1918, the modified Jamalpur scheme was formulated by the new leadership by making use of an original plan drawn up by the colonial government. The scheme proposed to reorganize according to the new spatial order a piece of land, more or less rectangular in shape, to the south of the city wall between the Jamalpur and Astodia Gates, bounded on the east by

[61] Please refer to Map 2.

[62] Thus it was arranged that the Vageshwar and Bhou's pols would be joined by the removal of the built structure on survey number 124. A square open space would be opened up by the acquisition of survey numbers 277 and 278. The survey number 135 would be acquired in order to make a through passage from Saria's pol in Dhana Sutar's pol to Dhungota's pol. Details of the acquisition of the different survey numbers can be found in *AMR*, No. 134, 4th quarter, 1918–19, pp. 61–6. See also *AMR*, No. 134, 4th quarter, 1918–19, pp. 226–7; No. 140, 2nd quarter, 1920–21, pp. 17–18; No. 142, 4th quarter, 1920–21, p. 94; No. 143, 1st quarter, 1921–22, pp. 109–11, 121; Government of Bombay, Revenue Department ('28' Series), File no. 1086/28 I, pp. 323–35; File no. 1086/28 III, pp. 301–5.

[63] *AMR*, No. 128, 2nd quarter, 1917–18, pp. 41–4; No. 134, 4th quarter, 1918–19, pp. 140–4, 157–83.



Map 2 Ahmedabad city 1917.

the Pirana Road and on the south by a nala (canal). The land was more or less open and used generally for agricultural purposes.[64]

In April 1920, the Municipal Board decided to impose a land tax of two per cent on the situation value on 'open' lands, situated on

[64] The scheme received the sanction of the Government in June 1918 and the notice for its implementation was published in the same month next year. Government of Bombay, General Department ('General' Series), File no. 4482 I, p. 41.

the outskirts of the city, so as to bring those lands to non-agricultural use by the people from the city. A year later, the Board decided that a scheme would be formulated whereby vacant plots of land outside the city walls, fit for building purposes, would be acquired, conveniently divided, and sold to intending purchasers on condition that they would build upon them within a year of the purchase.[65]

In April 1921, therefore, the Ahmedabad Municipality declared its intention of formulating the Ellis Bridge Town Planning Scheme. The scheme proposed to cover an area of about 700 acres, including land within the municipal limits and the boundary of the Notified Area Committee, and also some land outside those limits but contiguous thereto, but not within the jurisdiction of any other local authority. Within the municipal limits, it included the whole of the area to the west of the Sabarmati river which was under municipal jurisdiction as also some land between the Delhi Gate and the river in Dariapur Kazipur and the village site of Kagdiwad. The project included some land outside the municipal limits but within the jurisdiction of the Notified Area Committee in Shekhpur Khanpur, Changispur, Chhadawad, Kocharab, Kagdiwad and Paldi. Outside the jurisdiction of the Municipality and the Notified Area Committee, some lands in Usmanpur, Shekhpur Khanpur, Changispur, Chhadawad, Kocharab and Paldi were also included in the scheme.[66]

From 1924, the political leadership headed by Patel started to rush for a more vigorous reorganization of the city. They first took up the City Wall scheme. As has been seen earlier, after the supersession of the Municipal Board in 1922, the Committee of Management had decided to implement the City Wall scheme. This had led to vigorous protests and considerable political unrest in the city. The new Indian elite group was perfectly aware of this. So they could not implement the original scheme. But they could not do away with the scheme altogether either, because the scheme played a crucial role in their whole plan of reorganizing the city. Equally, the City Wall scheme was vital for the success of other town planning schemes in the suburbs which the group was trying to implement. In this situation what they did was to go for a modified version of the scheme so that it could blend in well with the social and economic realities of the city.

[65] *AMR*, No. 139, 1st quarter, 1920–21, pp. 15–16; No. 142, 4th quarter, 1920–21, pp. 63–5.

[66] Government of Bombay, General Department ('General' series), File no. 2061 I, pp. 3–4, 295–310.

Thus in November 1924 the Town Planning Committee of the new Municipal Board controlled by Vallabhbhai Patel's group asked Mirams, the Consulting Surveyor to Government, to prepare another similar scheme for constructing a circular road round the city either by demolishing the city wall or in some other way. Mirams was specially asked to suggest the acquisition of as few private properties as possible, and the President of Municipality was requested to write to government for the amendment of section 18 of the Town Planning Act whereby a Betterment Tax could be levied instead of a lump sum as unearned increment from the owners of lands in the area covered by the scheme as had been planned earlier. So the original scheme prepared by Mirams for demolishing the city wall, against which there was so much public uproar, was divested of most of its contentious aspects. In the new plan the people were not required to pay a lump sum by way of unearned increment, and as few private properties as possible were proposed to be acquired. The scheme found a general approval among the population because now the poor and middle class people of that area would not be forced to part with their properties in order to pay their share of the cost of improvement. With the modifications they would be able to remain in possession of their properties and reap the full benefit of the improvement of their area. They of course were required to pay a Betterment Tax (a much lower amount than they were required to pay in the earlier scheme) as they would reap the benefit of the improvement. The proposal of the Town Planning Committee received the approval of the General Board of the Municipality in December 1924.[67]

After winning the municipal elections in 1924, though the new city leadership implemented the City Wall scheme with modifications, they did not do the same in the case of the Relief Road scheme. The Committee of Management had tried to implement the scheme between 1922 and 1924. But this had created widespread protests in the city. So when they came to power, the new leaders chose to shelve the Kalupur Relief Road scheme as they did not want to antagonize the people entrenched in the walled city, on whom they had to depend for support.[68]

[67] *The Praja Bandhu*, 23 Nov. 1924, pp. 1–2; 14 Dec. 1924, pp. 10–12.

[68] *The Praja Bandhu*, 31 Aug. 1924, p. 2; It is interesting to see that after 1928, the elites reversed the decision they had adopted in 1924 regarding the Relief Road scheme. In June 1928 the Municipality approved of the Relief road scheme as outlined in Mirams' Report of 1923 on the basis of a 60 feet road alignment. The

After they had implemented the modified city wall scheme, the Indian elites took up the question of implementing the related Ellis Bridge, Jamalpur and Kankaria schemes. As has already been pointed out, these schemes, and especially the Ellis Bridge one, constituted extremely crucial elements in the new elite group's programme for the reorganization of the city as part of their quest for establishing their hegemony in the urban centre.

Getting the Jamalpur scheme accepted by the population and ready for implementation was not a major problem for the new elite leaders but implementation of the Ellis Bridge scheme proved to be rather more difficult. In the Jamalpur scheme the main issue in conflict was related to the allocation of new 'final' plots to holders of 'original' plots in the area covered by the scheme.[69] The difficulty with the Ellis Bridge arose from the fact that it involved a much greater area than the other schemes and there were also powerful agrarian and commercial interests who owned land in that area, including Patidar and commercial interests allied to the municipal leadership.[70]

notification for the acquisition of lands was published in August 1928. The lands notified included provision for a 60 feet road and for plots to form frontages to the new road as well as for land for housing the displaced. The reversal of the previous decision was probably due to the fact that by 1928, the indigenous elites felt that they were well entrenched in the Municipality and they also realized that without the implementation of the Relief Road scheme it would be difficult to increase the demand for land in the newly town-planned areas. Increase in the demand for land in the town-planned areas was crucial for the success of the new spatial order that the elites were trying to bring about in the city.

The later history of the Relief Road scheme was as follows. As a result of certain legal problems and public pressure the Municipality suggested to the government in 1930 to cancel the sanctioning of the scheme. Later, however, on the advice of the government, it was decided that the scheme would be revised. The revised scheme was accepted by the Municipality in 1933 and the final notification for the acquisitions was issued in May 1934. The acquisition of land for housing the displaced was dropped as being outside the provisions of the Municipal Boroughs Act of 1925. The work of acquisition was then started in August 1934 but was stopped subsequently because of the filing of suits by owners of land under the scheme. However, a representative suit among these was decided in January 1937 by the High Court in favour of the government and the Municipality and then the work of acquisition of land started again without impediment. Government of Bombay, Revenue Department ('28' Series), File no. 1086/28 I, pp. 323–35; File no. 1086/28 III, pp. 301–5.

[69] Details of this conflict may be found in Government of Bombay, General Department ('General' Series), File no. 4482 I, pp. 191–333; and in Raychaudhuri, *op. cit*., pp. 113–14.

[70] An idea of the range of interests involved in the area proposed to be covered by the Ellis Bridge scheme can be had from studying the list of signatories to petitions

In 1924 the new city leaders received full control of the Ellis Bridge scheme[71] and tried in various ways to get the decision to implement the scheme accepted by the city's population. It is possible to classify the different strategies followed by the new leadership in this regard broadly into two categories. One of them was vigorous propaganda and the intensive use of the rhetoric of urban modernity in defence of the scheme. The other tactic was to take up specific issues which concerned certain interests in the area of the scheme in order to gain confidence and moral authority among those communities. In addition, certain prevailing circumstances helped the new leaders to stall the opposition of certain social groups which had interests in that area.

The propaganda offensive was prosecuted by the new political leaders through certain organizations such as the Sanitary Association of Ahmedabad. The Sanitary Association had originally been founded in September 1919 'to educate the general public in the fundamental principles of sanitation and hygiene by means of lectures, leaflets, exhibitions, and to keep a watchful eye over the administration of municipal affairs by certain members of the public'. But by 1921 the new leadership took over the Association and started to use it as a front for projecting certain new ideas about the organization of space in the city.[72]

The main difficulty that the Indian leadership faced with the implementation of the Ellis Bridge scheme, in fact, was the growing alliance developing between some of the mill agents of the city who had purchased or leased land in that area before the 1920s and the rich and middle level agriculturists, mainly of the Patidar commun-

submitted against the scheme to the government. See, for example, the petitions dated 12 July 1924 and 11 September 1926 in Government of Bombay, General Department ('General' Series), File no. 2061 I, pp. 256–7, and File no. 2061 IV, pp. 29–30, respectively. In the first case, most of the signatories were agriculturists. In the second one, the main signatories were mostly mill agents.

[71] The scheme also received the sanction of the government in 1924. Government of Bombay, General Department ('General' Series), File no. 2061 I, pp. 295–6; *The Praja Bandhu*, 10 Feb. 1924, pp. 1–2; 17 Feb. 1924, p. 3.

[72] Significantly, the elite leaders were trying to combine in the ideas propagated at the various meetings organized by the Sanitary Association a western sanitation rhetoric with a rural community nostalgia reflected in the plans for constructing garden villages to gain support among the city populace for their plans for reorganizing Ahmedabad city. This was a useful strategy as they were addressing not only industrialists, traders and artisans among the townspeople but also Patidars-turned-middle classes who had strong connections with the countryside as well as the Patidar peasantry on the outskirts of the city. *The Praja Bandhu*, 12 Oct. 1919, p. 1; 4 Nov. 1923, pp. 2–3; 23 Dec. 1923, pp. 1–2; 13 Jan. 1924, p. 3; 17 April 1927, p. 1.

ity, who were already dominant in that area, in opposing the implementation of the scheme. In this situation the political leaders adopted the strategy of splitting up this opposition alliance. This they achieved by first trying to draw the peasant elements from this alliance to their side by taking up some of the vital issues which were important to them.[73] The city leaders tried to draw part of the mill agents' group in the alliance to their side as well. Here they were helped by the fact that, though many of the mill agents owned land in the Ellis Bridge area, they, at the same time, had more vital interests in other parts of the city which they did not want to endanger by antagonizing the municipal leadership. After all, the mill agents needed their support for vital issues concerning the mill industry in the city. Moreover, there were many mill agents who did not have any landed property there, but had the intention of buying up land when the landholders of the area were forced to sell off their lands as a result of the high contribution and non-agricultural assessment under the scheme. This was one of the reasons why these members of the mercantile community tended to support the implementation of the scheme. Some of them, again, such as Kasturbhai Lalbhai or Ambalal Sarabhai, were themselves part of the Indian elite leadership dominating the Municipality. Though they did have some landed property in the Ellis Bridge area they were willing to pay for the increased assessment and contribution in anticipation of future gains.

Thus by 1926 the Ellis Bridge scheme received some degree of acceptance among the wider sections of Ahmedabad's populace, though it took some years before the scheme could be implemented. The Jamalpur scheme had already been sanctioned in September 1919. The scheme came into force in 1925.[74] Some other schemes

[73] The elite leadership had already done that before by organizing the Kheda Satyagraha. But now they took up some of the issues that immediately affected the peasantry on the outskirts of Ahmedabad city. It may be noted here that in drawing the peasantry to their side the elite leaders were immensely helped by the fact that Vallabhbhai Patel, their leading member, belonged to the same Patidar 'community' as the majority of the peasantry. Vallabhbhai enjoyed great respect and confidence among that community for his participation in the Kheda Satyagraha and other agitation concerning the Patidar community. See, *The Praja Bandhu*, 14 Dec. 1924, pp. 1–2.

[74] The Kankaria scheme was declared in 1924. It received sanction in 1927 and the scheme came into force in 1934. The Maninagar scheme was declared in1924. It was approved the next year and came into force in 1931. Ahmedabad Municipal Corporation (Town Planning Department), *Draft Revised Development Plan, 1975–1985* (Ahmedabad, 1975), Vol. I, pp. 152 A-B; *AMR*, No. 152, 2nd quarter, 1923–24, pp. 18–19.

also received official approval around the same time and were implemented within a few years.[75]

These various town planning schemes brought about a significant reorganization of the city's landscape. The following sections will probe the nature of this reorganization and try to understand the impact this had on the city. They will also examine how the reorganization helped to sustain a new social hierarchy and power structure and enabled the new elites to establish and maintain their hegemony in the city.

The Nature of the Reorganization

As has been pointed out earlier, space in the old city of Ahmedabad was organized in some respects according to a ritual cosmography which the city represented. The boundaries between different types of land within this cosmography were not fixed. So the same plot could be used for different purposes, economic, residential, or religious, at the same time. Also, each plot had different types of values at the same time and not all the values were measured in monetary terms.[76] The reorganization of Ahmedabad carried out through town planning brought about a break in this spatial arrangement. The changes introduced can be classified broadly into two categories:

(1) As had happened with town planning undertaken by the government, town planning carried out by the Indian elites in Ahmedabad divided up land in the city into distinct and fixed categories according to the use of a particular piece of land was put to. A piece of land could be now used for one purpose only and could not be put to different uses at the same time. Thus the whole area under the Jamalpur town planning scheme was divided into two main zones: (a) a residential zone, and (b) a commercial zone.[77] One can notice

[75] *Ibid*.

[76] One has to note in this context that the spatial organization in the old city did not remain static all throughout. Changes were introduced into this spatial organization as a result of the economic and social developments in the 19th and early 20th centuries. But the reorganization that took place then was never that drastic as the one which was carried out by the municipal regime, first under the colonial government, and then under the new indigenous elites.

[77] The land within the second zone was stipulated to be of higher value than that in the first zone. The residential zone was again subdivided into minor zones defining the class of residence and density of population allowed in them. General Department ('General' Series), File no. 4482 I, pp. 44, 167.

here that these planned zones were to have 'fixed' boundaries and as such they were designed to bring about a rupture between the spatial locations of commerce and residence, contrary to what had existed before.

(2) the process of town planning also established one particular system of valuation of land in a situation where a number of such systems had coexisted for a long time. This was the valuation of land based on certain economic criteria and expressed in monetary terms. Though land in the city had started to be valued increasingly in economic terms from the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, the transformation had still been rather slow. The other systems of valuation had existed alongside. The reorganization, carried out through town planning from the 1920s, brought about a substantial change in this situation because now all other systems of valuation that had existed in the previous cosmological system were superseded by a new economic system of valuation. Thus all the lands in the Jamalpur town planning area of the city were divided into three different valuation 'zones' in accordance with their proximity to the main streets.[78] The first zone included all lands having a frontage on the two main roads, namely, the Shah Alam road and the Slaughter House road, and was assigned the highest value. The other two

[78] The process of town planning brought about certain changes in the pattern and significance of streets in the urban morphology of Ahmedabad. In the traditional city the streets were mostly winding and curved and the narrower streets branched off from the main ones not necessary at right angles. The pattern of streets in such a situation could be seen as a series of enclosures arranged in a particular sequence in the overall network of accessibility and exclusion. The innermost or the most exclusive area in this network carried the highest status. This is evident from the fact that the innermost part of a pol carried the highest status. E.g., see Harish Doshi, *Traditional Neighbourhood in a Modern City* (New Delhi, 1974). Under the town planning schemes, the roads intersected each other mostly at right angles and smaller streets branched off from the main streets in such a way as to form a nearly rectangular grid. In this rectangular pattern, the space with the highest value or status was the place where the two main streets intersected each other at right angles. In addition, the space near the main streets carried high values and the value diminished the further one went away from the main street. So the streets were not seen as forming a system of 'enclosures' but as providing the vital links between the spatial locations of the different segments of the general surplus appropriation system. The market-place occupied an important position, at least symbolically, in the new hierarchy; probably this explains why it was planned to be located at the junction of the two main roads under the Jamalpur town planning scheme. This makes sense if we take into account that the process of town planning was closely linked during this period with growing commercialization and rationalization of the economy. General Department ('General' Series), File no. 4482 I, p. 42.

zones, being farther away from the roads, were accorded correspondingly lower values.[79]

The changes in the city's spatial organization were first implemented in the town-planned areas. But as more and more areas of the city were brought under the different town planning schemes and the city slowly expanded into the planned regions on its outskirts, the major part of the city was brought under the new spatial order. Also, as an increasing number of people moved out of the old city to live in the town-planned areas,[80] this new spatial order began to influence popular perceptions of space in the city.

The Urban Landscape of Ahmedabad after the Reorganization

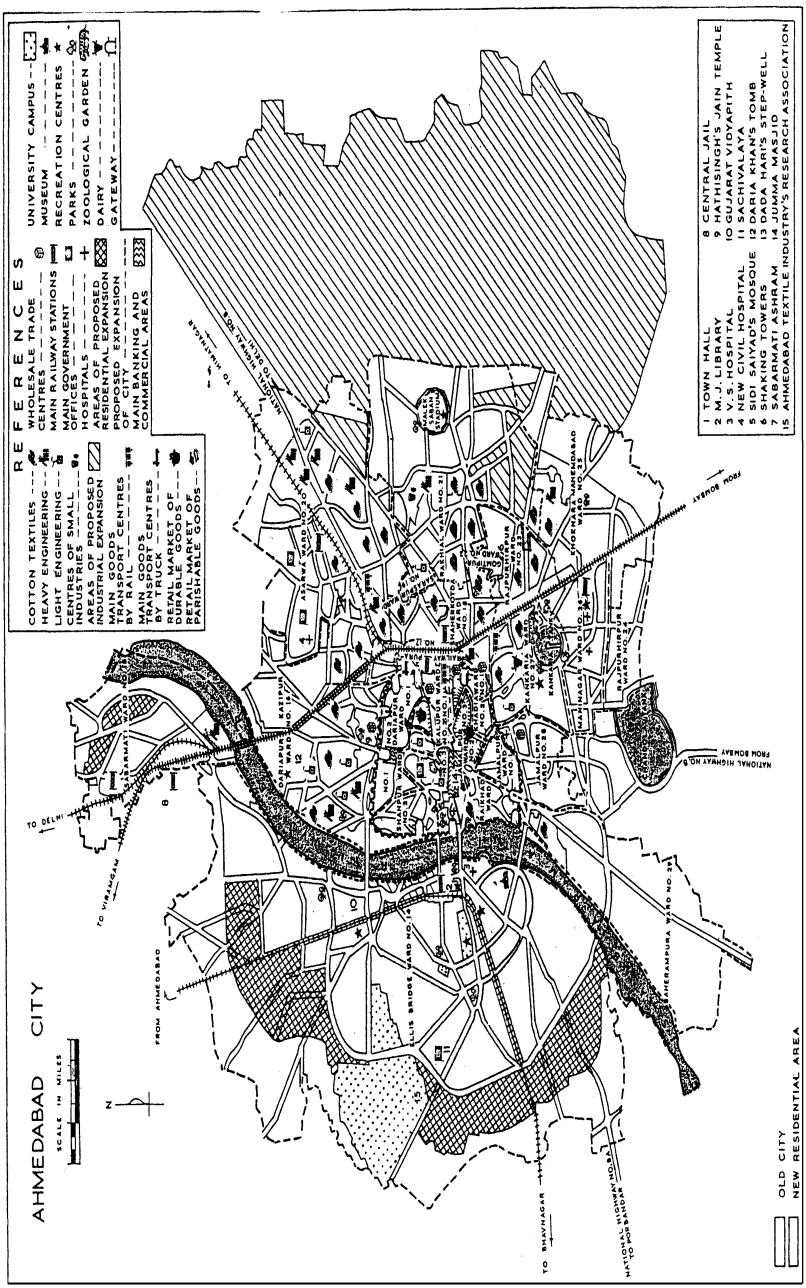
The reorganization of Ahmedabad brought about substantial alterations in the city's landscape.[81] This section is concerned with examining the altered urban landscape of Ahmedabad and seeing how space was organized within it. The most striking change that the process of town planning and the overall spatial reorganization brought about in the city's landscape was the delineation of space in accordance with a particular pattern. The first textile mills in the city had sprung up on the periphery of its walled part, to the left of the

[79] General Department ('General' Series), File no. 4482 I, pp. 167–9.

[80] This was made economically viable by the growth of co-operative housing initiated and patronized by the new indigenous elites of the city.

[81] Please refer to Map 3. Before examining the altered urban landscape of Ahmedabad, two qualifications need to be made. First, the alteration did not take place immediately after the implementation of the town planning schemes. The schemes themselves took several years to be implemented and not all of them were implemented at the same time. So the city had to develop over a certain number of years according to the new spatial order before the full effects of the reorganization could be realized. It is estimated that the length of this 'intermediate' period was about ten to fifteen years. Secondly, it was only the new parts of the city (i.e., the areas outside the walls) that grew according to the new spatial order initially. The walled part was not much affected by the new perceptions of the use and organization of space until the late 1930s and 1940s. Within the new parts also, not all areas developed at the same pace. Thus, the altered urban organization was more visible in the newer parts of the city than in the older ones.

One has to note in this context that the new part of the city occupied an area much larger than that covered by the walled part. In 1961, it was estimated that the walled part covered an area of 2.1 square miles or 5.5 square kms, while the area outside the walls measured 33.8 square miles or 87.5 square kms. So the new part was almost 15 times larger than the walled part. Please refer to *Census of India*, 1961, Vol. V, Gujarat, Part X-A(i) (see fn. 4), p. 54.



Map 3 Ahmedabad city 1951.

railway line. But later, the textile mills came up to the right of the railway line. This area, lying between the Asarwa and Maninagar railway stations, later on developed as an industrial belt. In the post-independence period, in addition to textile mills, a number of heavy engineering works were established in this region. Factories were also constructed close to the residential localities, north and south of the old fort wall. So this was the industrial 'zone' in the 'reorganized' city. Close to this industrial zone, to the east of the city, extending into Asarwa, Saraspur and Gomtipur, grew up the working class area.[82]

The commercial area developed in two different parts of the city. The main zone grew in the centre of the old city, on Richey Road or the modern-day Gandhi Marg, the principal arterial road from the Bhadra to the railway station, with sub-bazaars branching off into Pankore Naka, Manek Chowk and Ratan Pol. It was here that the modern banking institutions and insurance companies were also established in course of time. Later on, a second commercial zone developed along the modern day Ashram Road, near the Gujarat Vidyapith, on the western bank of the Sabarmati. An important point to be noted here is the gradual conversion from the 1940s of the central part of the walled city from a primarily residential area into a commercial district and shifting of people from the central part to the newly town-planned areas on the outskirts of the city.[83]

The new residential localities were founded mainly in the vast areas beyond the Ellis Bridge on the western side of the river. As we have seen earlier, the lands in these areas had previously been used for agricultural purposes but were later converted under the town planning schemes into land for non-agricultural use. Further residential localities developed to the south-west of the walled city in Maninagar and round about the Kankaria lake as well as beyond the industrial zones where large blocks of agricultural lands were added to house the teeming population of the growing city. In the post-independence period, the residential localities developed in a ring pattern around Ahmedabad along the national highways going out of the city in various directions.[84]

[82] *Ibid*., pp. 115–16.
[83] *Ibid*.
[84] *Ibid*. It is important to note here that in most cases the people who moved to the new residential localities belonged to the middle and upper middle classes, though some came from the lower middle classes as well. As more and more land in the centre of the walled city was converted to commercial space, many lower

Reorganization and Elite Hegemony

The reorganization of the city brought two immediate benefits for the new urban leadership. It first of all brought the control of a large extent of space in and around the city into their hands. Secondly, it helped them to introduce a new system of signification into the spatial realm of the reorganized city. As we shall see slightly later, through this new system of signification the elites imprinted their authority on the city's landscape, which in turn helped them to establish their hegemony there.

The control over a large extent of space is evident from the instance of just one of the many town planning schemes implemented by the municipal regime of the elites in Ahmedabad. The Ellis Bridge scheme, for example, absorbed within its limits six entirely agricultural villages, 617 acres of land lying within the limits of the District Local Board and 616 acres within the Notified area limits, as against only 493 acres within the municipal limits.[85] So here was a case where the people in control of the Municipality brought under their jurisdiction through using the Town Planning Act an extra 1,233 acres of land while having only 493 acres of land under their direct control to start with.[86]

The new system of signification was introduced through reorganizing space in a way which attributed higher status or value to particular areas which had not previously enjoyed this status and denied high status to certain other areas which had this status before. In the reorganized city the thrust was to develop the area around the Gujarat Vidyapith and the Gujarat College, on the western side of the river, as the new area of high status or importance. The Ellis Bridge town planning scheme played a large part in the carrying out of this aim. The land in that area was mainly agricultural and, according to the critics of the scheme, had not much chance of development. In that situation, the area was attributed higher value by,

middle class people were forced to shift from that part to the working class areas outside the walls, especially to Asarwa, Saraspur and Gomtipur. The lower and lower middle class people in other areas of the walled city, such as Kalupur, however, stayed where they used to live earlier. Kalupur, still today, remains a congested and underdeveloped area of the city.

[85] General Department ('General' Series), File no. 2061 I, pp. 3–4.

[86] Procedural details as to how this could be done under the Town Planning Act could be had from Government of Bombay, General Department ('General' Series), File no. 2061 IV, pp. 33–9.

on the one hand, linking it up through a network of communication channels with the commercial and industrial part of the city on the other side of the river. On the other hand, institutions having a high symbolic value in the newly emerging social and cultural order of the city, such as the Gujarat Vidyapith, were constructed in that area.[87] We have already noticed how the Gujarat Vidyapith occupied a central role in the non-co-operation movement that the new urban leaders launched in Ahmedabad in 1920. It can be inferred that in the 1920s the political leaders of Ahmedabad centred around Vallabhbhai Patel tried to establish a new social and cultural order in the city. The Gujarat Vidyapith provided the institutional basis for the establishment of the new order. An indication of the essence of this new social and cultural order could be derived from an analysis of the publications brought out by the Vidyapith on ancient Indian history, literature, culture and philosophy, since 1922. It is beyond the scope of this article to do such an analysis here. But it may be noted that this cultural order had strong resemblance with the

[87] The network of communication channels included a bridge at Shahpur and a circular road running almost parallel to the river linking the Gujarat College area to the vicinity of the Gujarat Vidyapith. *Ibid*., pp. 35–8. That the Ellis Bridge scheme was biased towards developing the Vidyapith area as the new symbolic centre of the city is clear from some contemporary petitions directed against the scheme. For example, a petition from some of the landholders in that area noted that the 'Vidyapith which now lies entirely within the Local Board limits is avowedly an object of political reverence to the party in power in the Municipality. Keeping the development of the Gujarat College area in view the Ellis Bridge scheme proposes to open up the Vidyapith vicinity by the Shahpur bridge which alone absorbs more than half the costs of the scheme; and if the cost of the metalled roads, water and other facilities were taken it constituted an additional 20% of the cost of the scheme. All these were designed to facilitate the rapid development of the Gujarat Vidyapith vicinity'. The bias towards the Gujarat Vidyapith area was also reflected in the absence of a bridge near the Calico mill in the plan connecting the southern portion of plan area to the southern part of the city across the river. Again the landholders of the Ellis Bridge area pointed out at a meeting in 1925 that 'the scheme as proposed fails to offer equal facilities of migration to all the residents of Ahmedabad city, particularly those who live in the south of the Richey Road as it proposes to make no bridge near the Calico mill. Such a bridge would have connected the southern area of the scheme directly with the Ahmedabad railway station, the mills and the important markets of Ahmedabad which alone attract about 80% of the vehicular traffic coming from the four important talukas of the district such as Viramgam, Sanand, Dholka and Dhandhuka, each containing very thriving centres of cotton ginning'. The bias was quite clear because, as one petitioner complained, there were vast areas of open lands within the Municipal limits and on their limits, but instead of implementing town planning schemes for those areas, the Municipality had gone for the Ellis Bridge area. *Ibid*., pp. 33–4.

'nationalist' discourses emerging during the same period in certain other parts of India.[88] The idea of this new nationhood was sought to be spread not only through the publications of the institution but also, more subtly, through conducting degree courses in history, literature, philosophy, politics, economics, art and music.[89]

During the period from the 1930s through to the 1960s, the area around the Gujarat Vidyapith developed as the new 'ceremonial centre' of the city, replacing the old one of the Bhadra fort. The earlier ceremonial centre comprising the Bhadra fort was converted to an 'archaeological monument' in the new urban morphology of the twentieth century. This area had started to lose its symbolic significance from the late nineteenth century as a result of the economic and social developments. But the reorganization of the city in the first half of the twentieth century put an end to its symbolic power by finally dissolving the older cosmological order according to which space had been organized in the city and on which its symbolic power had been dependent. The old ceremonial centre, having been detached from its social and cultural milieu, became converted into an inert powerless 'object'.

The growth of the Vidyapith area as the new symbolic centre also implied the decline in status of other areas. Attempts to promote this trend could be seen in the efforts of the urban leaders (as also of the colonial government) to declare some of the areas, which had enjoyed high status in the city earlier, as 'insanitary' and too 'congested'. So people had to be moved out from those areas to the newer areas. Under the new arrangement it was considered more healthy and also more prestigious to live in the town-planned areas. Provision of certain facilities also made it more convenient to live in these new areas under the changing circumstances. Of course a part of the elite of Ahmedabad did buy up land and construct bungalows in these areas. But it was necessary to draw the other sections of the population into them to ensure the success of the project. It was also crucial to enlist the support of a greater number of people for the new discourse in order to exercise hegemony over the city. But it was difficult to persuade the average middle or lower middle class person to move out of the old parts, given the cost of the shifting and certain

[88] For reference, please see, Partha Chatterjee, *Nationalist Thought and the Colonial World: A Derivative Discourse?* (New Delhi, 1986), and Partha Chatterjee, *The Nation and its Fragments: Colonial and Postcolonial Histories* (Princeton, 1993).

[89] See in this context, *Census of India*, 1961, Vol. V, Gujarat, Part X-A(i), pp. 191–2.

advantages that were there in the old city. A cheap and convenient option was found in the organization of co-operative housing.

The reorganization of Ahmedabad consolidated the authority of the new urban leadership in other ways too. In the previous section we have seen how as a result of the reorganization through town planning, new areas were added to the city, and the total area was divided into clearly delineated areas for particular purposes. Thus most of the land in Ahmedabad was now neatly arranged into working class areas, middle and upper middle class residential localities, commercial areas, and, industrial areas. This expansion and delineation lessened the problems of congestion and insanitary conditions and brought about rationalization of space in the city, which in turn contributed to the ongoing growth of the mill industry and development of the urban economy.[90]

Since most of Vallabhbhai's section of the urban elites was dependent to a large extent on the mill industry, the growth of the industry helped them both to maintain their own incomes and bring about some economic growth in the city. Economic growth, in turn, enabled them to sustain and further their political domination. The development of the mill industry reinforced the domination of the new city leaders in another way too. The expansion of the mill industry along capitalist lines contributed to the growth of a new social hierarchy based on the economic relations of production. This reinforced the social prominence of the new leaders, as a large section of them belonged to the class of the owners of capital. The elite leaders were already occupying important positions in the Municipality and other urban institutions. The urban leadership realized that what they needed in this situation was the maintenance of their dominant position in the political and administrative institutions and the extension of that leading position to the other spheres of urban life. They understood that this depended largely on their ability to build up and sustain patronage networks through the fulfilment of various community functions within the city. So they began to deploy new resources to address the needs of different groups and in particular they paid close attention to educational provision.

In addition, the new urban leaders tried to build patronage networks with the professed leaderships of the various sections of the

[90] The growth of the mill industry is seen from the following figures. In 1922 the number of mills in the city was 56. By 1925 this number increased to 60; in 1928 it became 66; in 1932, 78; in 1934, 82; and in 1936, 84. N. N. Desai, *Directory of*

city's populace. The strategy was that if whole 'communities' could not be won over by the fulfilment of their 'community' needs, at least their partial support could be acquired by striking up mutually-convenient alliances with their professed leaderships. The understanding was that the city leaders would provide these intermediate level social leaders, and through them their clientele, benefits and certain shares in power, in return for their and their groups' loyalty to the city elites. As will be seen in a subsequent section, this practice of building patronage networks with the professed leaderships of social groups and 'communities' was later on used by the urban leadership to socially control certain groups in Ahmedabad such as the mill-based working classes and the increasingly self-conscious Muslims. Then it will also be seen that in some contexts, the elite leaders developed a vested interest in ensuring that the professed leaderships remained in positions of authority in their respective groups as this position was advantageous to the elite leadership's overall dominance in the city.

Community Needs and Social Hegemony

As we have mentioned in the previous section, the new political leaders of Ahmedabad started to deploy new resources to address the needs of different groups in their attempt to gain social hegemony in the urban centre. The field of higher education was one sphere which the new urban leaders targeted the most.[91]

Thus in 1927, a society called the Gujarat Law Society was formed by the new elite leaders and registered in Ahmedabad with the object of providing facilities for the study of law by starting a Law College.[92] The Ahmedabad Education Society was set up in May 1935 with about 300 life members.[93] The Society very soon became the organization through which the new Indian elites collected funds from rich

Ahmedabad Mill Industry (Ahmedabad: Ahmedabad Stockbrokers' Association, 1951), p. 386.

[91] As has been pointed out earlier, education had emerged as one of the most important community needs in the city of Ahmedabad during the first half of the 20th century. Within the sphere of education, again, the demand for setting up institutions offering 'professional' courses had emerged as a major demand of the people of the city.

[92] *The Praja Bandhu*, 3 April 1927, p. 2.

[93] In the first elections, Acharya Anandshanker Dhruva was elected the President and Sheth Kasturbhai Lalbhai the Chairman of the governing body of the Society.

and philanthropic individuals and catered to the need for various kinds of education in the city by founding the relevant institutions.[94]

The elites also established social welfare organizations to cater to the other social needs of the population. The Prarthana Samaj had already been operating for several decades. In the later period, social welfare organizations such as the Bhagini Samaj, Sansar Sudharak Hall, Vanita Vishram, and the Mahila Pathsala were started.[95] The Gujarat Harijan Sevak Sangh was established in 1932 with its headquarters in Ahmedabad. The Jyoti Sangh was founded in 1934 by Mridula Sarabhai and the Vikas Griha in 1937.[96] Apart from satisfying these 'community' needs, the new leaders were also able to create new employment opportunities in the city because of the development of the mill industry. As available figures show, many of these new jobs were taken up by people from the city.[97] This development also strengthened the social prestige and moral authority of the elites.

The strategy of fulfilling of the crucial economic and social needs of the city population and the building of patronage networks paid

[94] Thus the H.L. College of Commerce was started in June 1936 following a donation of Rs 60,000 made by Sheth Tribhuvandas Hargovinddas and Sheth Amritlal Hargovinddas. The S.L.D. Arts College was started in June 1937 with a donation of Rs two lakhs given by Sheths Chimanlal, Kasturbhai and Narottambhai. The necessity for a Science College was also felt around this time. But the efforts to provide one were interrupted by the Second World War and the 'Quit India' movement and bore fruit some years later when the Society received a munificent contribution of Rs seven lakhs from Sheth Navinchandra Mafatlal for the M.G. Science Institute which started functioning in June 1946. The Shri Lallubhai Motilal Pharmacy College was added in June 1947 and the Physical Research Laboratory came into existence in 1950. G. V. Mavlankar, one of the leading members of the indigenous elite group and also an important organizer of the Society took great efforts to bring about the founding of the Gujarat University. He organized the purchase of 525 acres of agricultural land adjacent to the Society's lands for the University. He also inspired Sheth Kasturbhai Lalbhai to donate Rs 25 lakhs for an engineering college in Ahmedabad and Sheth Amritlal Hargovandas to donate Rs 5 lakhs for an agricultural college at Anand. The Society build as many as twelve hostels for the students studying at these colleges from public donations and grants from the government. Kasturbhai Lalbhai Papers, Reel no. R3362, Files 1 to 5 & Reel no. R3363, Files 5 to 8: *Ahmedabad Education Society*, 1941–50 (NMML, New Delhi).

[95] *Census of India*, 1961, Vol. V, Gujarat, Part X-A(i) (see fn. 4), p. 27.

[96] Both these organizations were devised to work for the social, economic and psychological rehabilitation of young women 'irrespective of caste and community', *ibid*.; Government of Gujarat, *Gujarat State Gazetteer, Ahmedabad District Gazetteer* (Ahmedabad, 1984), pp. 774–80.

[97] The increase in employment opportunities is evident from the fact that whereas in 1922 the number of hands employed by the mills was 52,571, the number in 1929 climbed to 58,837. Then the number showed a more or less steady increase. It became 69,562 in 1931; 80,705 in 1936; 75,517 in 1941; and 78,053

off well for the Indian elite leaders of Ahmedabad. In the political sphere, members and supporters of this group managed to gain a dominant position in all the municipal elections after the late 1920s. For instance, at the municipal elections held in late 1927, most of the seats on the municipal council were captured by members of this group. Vallabhbhai Patel was elected President of the Ahmedabad Municipality and B.P. Thakore was elected Vice-President. The city leadership acquired control of all the important municipal Committees such as the Standing Committee, Sanitary Committee, etc.[98] Though Vallabhbhai Patel shifted to the politics at the national level after 1928, his supporters continued to maintain their hold over the Municipality in the later period.[99] The new political leaders managed to establish and maintain their dominant position in other spheres as well. They had already gained moral authority among large sections of the city's population. This process ultimately enabled them to acquire a hegemonic position in Ahmedabad city in the course of time.

Restructuring of Social Relations and Elite Hegemony

The Ahmedabad elite leaders did not, however, establish their hegemony only through the restructuring of the city's morphology. They followed other strategies as well. They achieved new authority by instituting forms of political and economic control which both mollified and defined the emerging working class and the increasingly self-conscious Muslims of the city.[100] In practice, this took the form

in 1945. N. N. Desai, *Directory of Ahmedabad Mill Industry*, p. 386; *Census of India*, 1961, Vol. V, Gujarat, Part X-A(i), pp. 154–64.

[98] *AMR*, No. 169, 3rd quarter, 1927–28, pp. 52–94.

[99] Pathak and Sheth, *Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel*, pp. 332–5, 379–80; Howard Spodek, 'From Gandhi to Violence: Ahmedabad's 1985 Riots in Historical Perspective', *Modern Asian Studies*, 23, 4 (1989), pp. 774–5.

[100] The notion of 'social control' that has influenced this discussion needs some explanation. The concept was first popularized in American sociology by Edward A. Ross in his book *Social Control, a Survey of the Foundations of Order* (1901). According to Ross, a society has the responsibility to control the animal nature of 'Man'. 'Man''s tendency to pursue his self-interest to the point of war of all against all must be limited, he said, through learning or selection. Social institutions such as the family, marriage and religion were accorded the power to carry out the limitation at the primary level, while professional associations were assigned this duty at the secondary level. Since Ross's formulation of the concept, the notion has had many vicissitudes. It was taken up and developed by Robert Park and the Chicago sociologists during the early years of the 20th century. Later, Edwin Lemert disting-

of the restructuring of capital–labour relations and social relations in general in the city, a project intimately associated with the redefinition of space.

It was from around 1935 that the new political leaders of Ahmedabad embarked upon their programme of restructuring capital–labour relations. They had already found that the workers were organized around various neighbourhood associations or around cross-neighbourhood 'religious', 'caste' or 'economic' organizations. Each of these organizations had their respective leaders. In that situation the elite leadership had tried to work out alliances with the various sections of the workers of the city through the organization of the Textile Labour Association and had attempted to control the workers through the mechanism of arbitration.[101] But by 1934 all these arrangements had failed, mainly because of the impact of the World

uished between the two types of social control, namely, the 'active' and the 'passive' one and also pointed out the dynamic nature of the process. (Edwin Lemert, *Human Deviance, Social Problems, and Social Control* (New Jersey, 1972).) Talcott Parsons defined the concept as a negative mechanism essential to society for repressing social deviance. (Talcott Parsons, *The Social System* (Glencoe, 1951).) The concept went through a substantial reorientation in the writings of Michel Foucault. Without mentioning the term 'social control' directly, Foucault emphasized the more subtle and often hidden ways in which social control operates in modern-day societies through his analysis of the process of 'disciplining'. (Michel Foucault, *Discipline and Punish: The Birth of the Prison*. trans. From the French by Alan Sheridan (London, 1977); M. Foucault, *Power/Knowledge: Selected Interviews and other Writings 1972–1977*. trans. From the French by Colin Gordon (Brighton, 1980); H. L. Dreyfus and P. Rabinow, *Michel Foucault: Beyond Structuralism and Hermeneutics* (Brighton, 1982); Gary Gutting (ed.), *The Cambridge Companion to Foucault* (Cambridge, 1994).) However, many scholars missed the point that the process also involved a considerable degree of resistance and contestation as well. I use the notion of 'social control' here in a rather nuanced way with recognizing that contestation and negotiation form an integral part of the process. In this connection, see C. Ackroyd *et al*., *The Technology of Political Control* (London, 1980); Christopher Dandeker, *Surveillance, Power and Modernity: Bureaucracy and Discipline from 1700 to the Present Day* (Cambridge, 1994); J. Gibbs (ed.), *Social Control: Views from the Social Sciences* (London, 1982); A. Horwitz, *The Logic of Social Control* (New York, 1990); Gareth Stedman Jones, *Languages of Class: Studies in English Working Class History 1832–1982* (Cambridge, 1983); among others.

[101] Royal Commission of Labour in India, *Report of the Royal Commission of Labour in India* (Calcutta, 1929); *Evidence*, Vol. I, Part I. *Bombay Presidency (including Sind). Written Evidence* (London, 1931); *Evidence*, Vol. I, Part II. *Bombay Presidency (including Sind). Oral Evidence* (London, 1931); Textile Labour Enquiry Committee, *Report of the Textile Labour Enquiry Committee 1937–38*, Vol. I, *Interim Report* (Bombay, 1938); *Report of the Textile Labour Enquiry Committee*, Vol. II (Bombay, 1940); Shukla, *Six Decades of Textile Labour Association, Ahmedabad*; Mahadev Desai, *A Righteous Struggle*; Erikson, *Gandhi's Truth. On the Origins of Militant Non-Violence*; Patel, *The Making of Industrial Relations: The Ahmedabad Textile Industry 1918–1939*.

Depression and accompanying economic hardship. In this situation, the Indian leadership decided that they would alter the various bases of organization among the workers in the city. Since neighbourhood associations formed one of the most prominent ways in which the workers organized themselves, they resolved to strike at that form of organization first. They began to create new neighbourhoods for the workers and tried to ensure that these were not organized on the basis of caste, religion or the regional identity of the workers as previous living areas had been. Rather, workers from different caste, religious and regional backgrounds were forced to live together in these new neighbourhoods. The strategy was that this would not only destroy all the previous neighbourhood and patronage networks among the workers but would also 'homogenize' them and bestow on them a new identity.

The elite leaders managed to 'homogenize' the working class of the city in this way to a substantial degree and to impart to it a new collective and relatively quiescent identity. Once that was completed, they placed the newly unified working class under a new leadership, represented by the TLA, that was allied to them. Then they worked out an arrangement so that the grievances and demands of the workers were voiced through that single and unified leadership and met through negotiations under that arrangement and not through open conflict. In addition, they granted concrete advantages through that arrangement in the form of educational and economic benefits so that the arrangement could receive a certain degree of acceptance and legitimacy among the workers of the city. Furthermore, institutional safeguards were provided for this arrangement by use of the state's political and legal resources, so that alternative protest movements and unorganized protests did not threaten its existence and effectiveness. Alongside this, the new arrangement for controlling the workers was also cured of the inherent weaknesses that had plagued the previous one. It was through these new arrangements that the political leaders of Ahmedabad established a substantial degree of control over the city's working class.[102]

As far as the Muslims were concerned, political control was established by the elite leaders of the city in the following way. Muslims in Ahmedabad city were initially not organized as a homogenous social group. They consisted of various groups, differentiated from one another in terms of language, ethnic origin and other factors,

[102] For details, see Raychaudhuri, *op. cit.*, ch. 5.

which broadly subscribed to the tenets of Islam. In case of many of these groups, the Islamic identity did not constitute their prime identity. In the course of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries a broad 'Muslim' identity started to grow among the various Islamic groups promoted by the Muslim leaders from both within and outside the city.[103] At this stage, the elite leadership of Ahmedabad started to forge alliances of convenience with the various professed leaders of this emerging broadly-based Muslim group in the city. These alliances worked well until the late 1930s. After that they broke down because of a culmination of local conflicts over residential space and distribution of resources and also as a result of the intervention of the all-India Muslim League in the city's affairs. So from 1941 the elites had to formulate new ways for controlling the Muslim masses of Ahmedabad. They managed to achieve this aim in the following way.

Social groups in the city which had subscribed to the religious tenets of Islam in a variety of ways, were homogenized, reconstituted and unified as a new social group, the 'Muslims', thereby overriding all their other identities. A new social leadership represented by the Muslim League was then accepted and confirmed as their new 'representative' leadership. Institutions such as the Peace Committee, People's Provincial Food Council and Gujarat Food Committee, were created, involving this new leadership thus for addressing the various social and economic needs of the Muslim groups. These institutions ensured that various grievances concerning these groups were resolved through peaceful institutional means and not through open conflicts. Of course the elite leaders of the city had to make sure that the new Muslim leadership which was part of the arrangement remained in control of the Muslim masses and that a mutually convenient arrangement was worked out with them. From time to time they also had to see to it that the new Muslim leadership did not become too powerful among the Muslim populace or become antagonistic to the domination of the elite group in the city. In the course of time, these institutions extended their functions so as to cater to an increasing number of day-to-day needs of the Muslim population. As more and more issues impinging on the local Muslim population

[103] See in this connection, Satish Misra, *Muslim Communities in Gujarat: Preliminary Studies in their History and Social Organisation* (New York, 1964); Government of Bombay, Revenue Department ('28' Series), File no. 8276/28 I, pp. 9–21, 57–8, 65–7; File 8276/28 II, pp. 39–45, 57–8, 69, 105, 113–15, 131–9, 201, 205–7, 219, 233.

were resolved through these 'peaceful' institutional means, many potential conflicts which could have involved them were avoided and the Muslim masses were brought under a regime of social control. The system gained some acceptance and legitimacy among the Muslim populace in the course of time as it provided concrete benefits in the form of flood relief and the ensuring of food grains supply in times of crisis during the Second World War.[104]

As in the case of the reorganization in the spatial sphere, the elite leaders also carried out the restructuring of capital–labour relations and social relations in Ahmedabad through a selective appropriation of the colonial state's various 'modernizing' policies and much of its language. I argue in this context that the fact that the Ahmedabad elites managed to carry out a restructuring of social relations strengthened their political position in the city and helped them to gain overall hegemony there.

Concluding Remarks

By the mid 1940s thus, the city of Ahmedabad stood significantly transformed from what it used to be around the beginning of the twentieth century. Although the colonial government played a part in the process of transformation, the more important role was played by the Indian elites of the city led by Vallabhbhai Patel. Large areas of the city stood reorganized. Space in the city came to be organized on a different basis from what it used to be in the old city. The reorganization of Ahmedabad carried out through town planning brought about a significant break in the spatial arrangement of the 'traditional' city. Town planning divided up land into distinct and fixed categories according to the use a particular piece of land was put to. So a particular piece of land could be now used for one purpose only and could not be put to different uses at the same time. The process of town planning also established one particular system of valuation of land in a situation where a number of such systems had coexisted for a long time. This was the valuation of land based on certain economic criteria and expressed in monetary terms. Most of the land in Ahmedabad was also now neatly arranged into working class areas, middle and upper middle class residential localities, commercial areas, and, industrial areas. New high status areas came up

[104] For details, see Raychaudhuri, *op. cit*., ch. 6.

replacing the old ritually significant ones. On the other hand, some aspects of the older, culturally valued landscape of the city were deliberately preserved allowing the elites to represent both modernity and tradition, both religion and commerce, both in the joint family and the smaller nuclear one.

The changes both reflected and facilitated the rise of new social classes. A new social elite group led by people like Vallabhbhai Patel and Kasturbhai Lalbhai, among others, rose to assume positions of social dominance and power in the city. Of course, the power that the new elite leadership acquired was different in nature from that exercised by the colonial government in the country during this period. Partly, it was in the nature of a moral authority which the elites increasingly enjoyed among the city's populace. Partly, it mirrored administrative power that they held by being in positions of control on the city's various administrative and social welfare institutions. Since some of these urban institutions, such as the Municipality, fulfilled both administrative and social welfare functions, control over the bodies helped the elite leaders not only to exercise a certain degree of coercive power in the city but also enabled them to gain and maintain moral hegemony among large sections of the city's population, a situation which they preserved until the 1970s and 80s. As has been pointed out earlier, the city elites established their power also by restructuring social identities and social relations in the city. The two social groups the restructuring focused on mainly were the emerging working class and the increasingly self-conscious Muslims.

The nature of the transformation brought about in Ahmedabad was largely 'modernist'. Following Anthony Giddens, a 'modernist' transformation can be defined as one where social activities and social relations in particular places and in specific time periods are disembedded or 'lifted out' from their local contexts of interaction, reorganized and then re-embedded into other (local) contexts. Essentially then, a 'modernist' transformation is discontinuist in nature.[105] The changes in Ahmedabad in the first half of the twentieth century were 'modernist' as they involved significant disembedding and re-embedding of both space and social relations in the city. Thus space in the old city was alienated (under the successive municipal regimes of the colonial rulers and the Indian elites) from its

[105] Giddens, *The Consequences of Modernity*, esp. pp. 1–6, 21–8, 55–63, 70–8, 79–82, 100–11, 174–8.

social and cosmographical context, stripped of the multiple meanings it carried, and reorganized according to only its commercial value through town planning. Human beings, too, were removed from their complex localized spatial contexts and reorganized. Thus a large number of workers in Ahmedabad residing in different neighbourhoods, organized according to differences of caste, religion and regional identity, were all brought to live together in new working class localities and efforts were made to 'homogenize' them and bestow on them a new identity. Similarly, groups of people who subscribed to the tenets of Islam in their own different ways and had very different 'community' identities were subsumed under a broad 'Muslim' identity and were integrated into an institutionalized framework so that a degree of social control by the elites could be imposed on them.

As far as the spatial organization and the structure of society were concerned, certain other Indian cities, such as Bombay and Calcutta, also underwent changes during this period. In that way the transformation in Ahmedabad was by no means unique. But the remarkable aspect of Ahmedabad's transformation was that in this city, a section of the indigenous elites played a significant role in bringing about the changes, whereas in the other cities it was the colonial government which was the main agent of change almost until the coming of independence. The greater role played by the indigenous elites in the transformation of Ahmedabad meant that in that city, the elites commanded a greater share of power than their counterparts in the other cities were able to do and this partially enhanced their importance on the national political stage.[106]

[106] There were possibly many reasons why the Indian elites in the other cities could not follow a similar trajectory. One reason, of course, was the strategy those groups chose to follow in their respective cities at different points of time. But the particular contexts in the cities were also in a large way responsible for the possible strategies that the elites could draw up and the success that those strategies could achieve. For example, the colonial government's control over the process of reorganization was much greater in cities such as Bombay and Calcutta than it was in Ahmedabad. This made it far more difficult for the elites in those cities to gain control over the process of reorganization there. Again, as has been already pointed out, in the Ahmedabad case, homogenization of the working class through rehousing constituted a crucial component of the process of restructuring of capital–labour relations. In Bombay though similar efforts were undertaken both by the Government and by some of the millowners in the late 1930s and in course of the 1940s, the efforts at rehousing failed because of the sheer volume of the Bombay working class combined with lack of available land in Bombay. Apart from the greater governmental control in Bombay and Calcutta, the Indian elites in those cities were also more divided than they were in Ahmedabad. In Calcutta, in addition, the Indian

The greater involvement of the Indian elites also imparted a distinctive character to the transformation in Ahmedabad. In Bombay and Calcutta, as well as in other colonial cities such as Cairo and Rabat, Kuala Lumpur and Jakarta, the changes that took place in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries were marked by attempts (on the part of the government) to impose 'colonial difference'.[107] In Ahmedabad, by contrast, attempts to foster colonial difference were thwarted as the process of restructuring started there by the government was contested and eventually taken over by a section of the Indian elites. Further, the Indian elites ensured that the restructuring of the city's morphology was mediated by concern for the local traditions and practices regarding the organization and use of space.

The process of restructuring in Ahmebadad was accompanied by efforts on behalf of its political leaders to establish a new social and cultural order in the city. This feature contributed further to the distinctive nature of its transformation. The social and cultural order fostered new ideas of nationhood, of history, and of domesticity, among other aspects, and promoted new linguistic and literary forms in the cultural and social life of the population. In many ways, these new forms were 'modern' in nature, but were not essentially 'Western'. In some cases, however, they were selectively appropriated and reinterpreted adaptations of Western models.

The distinguishing feature of the new cultural order in Ahmedabad was that the new ideas and cultural forms found widespread

elites had much less control over the economy, as the economy there was dominated by European business. By contrast, the Indian elites in Ahmedabad not only had near total control over the city's economy but were also much more united than their counterparts in Bombay or Calcutta. (See in this context, Sharada Dwevedi and Rahul Mehrotra, *Bombay: The Cities Within* (Bombay, 1995), p. 157; Gordon, *Businessmen and Politics*, chs 4, 5 and 6; Rajat Ray, *Urban Roots of Indian Nationalism*, pp. 3–4, 72–3; and Raychaudhuri, *op. cit*., pp. 245–7.) Madras proved to be an exception in this context, however. This was because despite the fact that it was a large coastal centre with powerful Anglo-Indian groups and a strong state interest, Indian groups there had begun by the late colonial period to have a significant agency in deciding the shaping of the city, both spatial and social.

[107] See in this context works such as Janet Abu-Lughod, *Rabat: Urban Apartheid in Morocco* (Princeton, 1980); Sukanta Chaudhuri (ed.), *Calcutta: The Living City*, vol. II. *The Present and Future* (Calcutta, 1990); Dossal, *Imperial Designs and Indian Realities*; Dwevedi and Mehrotra, *Bombay: The Cities Within*; Gordon, *Businessmen and Politics*; King, *Colonial Urban Development*; Thomas R. Metcalf, *An Imperial Vision: Indian Architecture and Britain's Raj* (Berkeley, 1989); Oldenburg, *The Making of Colonial Lucknow*; Rajat Ray, *Urban Roots of Indian Nationalism*; Gwendolyn Wright, *The Politics of Design in French Colonial Urbanism* (Chicago, 1991); Brenda Yeoh, *Contesting Space: Power Relations and the Urban Built Environment in Colonial Singapore* (Kuala Lumpur, 1996).

acceptance among larger sections of the city's population, including its popular classes. This was in contrast with developments in cities such as Bombay or Calcutta where, though changes were introduced in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, the elite and popular cultural spheres remained largely detached from each other.[108] Additionally, the changes introduced by the Indian leaders in the cultural realms of Bombay and Calcutta were not accompanied by concomitant changes brought about by them in the morphologies of the two cities, as the reorganization of space there was carried out mainly by the colonial government. This constituted another reason why the restructuring in Bombay and Calcutta was in many ways different from that in Ahmedabad.

One other Indian city underwent a similar transformation during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries as did Ahmedabad. This was the city of Allahabad in the then United Provinces in northern India. There also, a section of the Indian elites brought about significant changes in the city's morphology and social organization as well as in its cultural sphere.[109] The Indian leaders consequently established their hegemony in the urban centre. Curiously however, these changes have not been well documented in the existing historiography of urban India.

One of the principal aims of this article has been to argue that similar developments might have also taken place in some other non-western cities, especially in South-east and West Asia and in certain parts of Africa, during the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. But there again, paucity of research on these lines prevents us from being able to present a definitive narrative of those processes in the particular non-western cities. It seems that the lack of information on the role of local elites in non-western cities stems from the overwhelming preoccupation of scholars with studying colonial port towns. In the large port cities it is more likely that the indigenous elites would be found to have occupied a rather subordinate position. In some cases, of course, the elites organized resistance to the various policies of the colonial power or even tried to appropriate some of the government's policies to their advantage. But these attempts were, on most occasions,

[108] Chaudhuri (ed.), *Calcutta: The Living City*, vol. II; Sujata Patel and Alice Thorner (eds.), *Bombay: Metaphor for Modern India* (Bombay, 1995); Sujata Patel and Alice Thorner (eds.), *Bombay: Mosaic of Modern Culture* (Bombay, 1995).

[109] For understanding the nature of social and political changes in Allahabad until the 1920s, see Bayly, *The Local Roots of Indian Politics*.

thwarted because of the large military, economic and political presence of the colonial power in the ports. In this context, thus, studies of inland cities and intermediate towns seem to be more useful in understanding the role of local elites in the transformation of cities under colonialism. Indeed, as is shown by the Indian case, it was in the inland and intermediate centres that the local elites resisted colonial rule much more effectively; in some of them they actually wrested control of the cities, restructured the urban centres and established their domination there. In doing so, they also set a pattern of development for non-western cities under colonial rule, a pattern that was in significant ways different from the usual trajectory of the establishment of domination by the colonial power in the cities. In India, by the late 1930s, the government's authority had started to erode in certain inland centres such as Ahmedabad and Allahabad.[110] Indian elite groups had begun to gain hegemony in these inland urban centres. This was a significant development because many of the prominent leaders and financial backers of the nationalist movement such as Vallabhbhai Patel, Kasturbhai Lalbhai, Jawaharlal Nehru, Purushottamdas Tandon and Madan Mohan Malaviya, among others, hailed from these inland centres and had started their political careers as members of political combines which had gained hegemony there. In the course of the 1930s and 1940s, Congress activities also shifted more and more to these inland centres. No wonder thus that the pattern of development followed in Ahmedabad was replicated in many other cities, including the metropolitan centres, in post-colonial India.[111]

[110] The colonial government and its allies continued to dominate metropolitan cities such as Bombay, Calcutta and Delhi, however.

[111] In independent India, members of the emerging Indian bourgeoisie and their political and economic allies, in a number of cities, gained political control of urban institutions, transformed the morphologies of those centres, redefined social identities and social relations there and established their hegemony in those places. The changes in the morphologies of the cities helped to rationalize space and promote capitalist development. The redefinition of social identities and the establishment of concomitant social institutions helped to discipline the recalcitrant underprivileged groups. The new elites of the cities also fostered alliances with elites in other areas, for example, with the landed elites in the countryside. At the same time new ideas of nationhood were sought to be fostered among the population. 'Swadeshi' came back in the form of 'self-reliance' through the Five-Year Plans. But in all these efforts the massive infrastructure of the ever-growing post-colonial state was used by the elites to promote the development of Indian capitalism. The development did not of course take place entirely smoothly. Periodically, crises occurred either in the form of economic problems or political agitations. But most often the crises

In large parts of the non-western world, a substantial number of the elites who assumed power in the post-colonial states hailed from urban areas. It is quite possible that many of these elites gained power at the national level in their respective countries through first establishing their authority in the inland and intermediate cities of the countries. Getting to know how these indigenous leaders established themselves in the cities and how they subsequently used those positions to enhance their power on the national political stage would not only explain the social origins of post-colonial cities better but would also help us to understand the processes of transformation of cities under colonialism much more comprehensively.

were met by the ruling groups through the growing institutional means (and of course also through the means of coercion) provided by the post-colonial state. In this connection see works such as, Atul Kohli, *The State and Poverty in India: The Politics of Reform* (Cambridge, 1987); Atul Kohli (ed.), *The State and Development in the Third World* (Princeton, 1986); Atul Kohli, *Democracy and Discontent: India's Growing Crisis of Governability* (Cambridge, 1990); Paul Brass, *The Politics of India since Independence* (Cambridge, 1994); Francine Frankel, *India's Green Revolution: Economic Gains and Political Costs* (Princeton, 1971); Francine Frankel, *India's Political Economy, 1947–1977: The Gradual Revolution* (Princeton, 1978); Francine Frankel (ed.) *Dominance and State Power in Modern India: Decline of a Social Order*, 2 vols (New Delhi, 1989–1990); Dietmar Rothermund and Subrata Mitra (eds.), *Legitimacy and Conflict in South Asia* (New Delhi, 1997); C. A. Bayly, *Origins of Nationality in South Asia: Patriotism and Ethical Government in the Making of Modern India* (New Delhi, 1998).