

The troubled passage from 'village communities' to planned new town developments in mid-twentieth-century South Asia

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ABSTRACT: This article begins with an examination of how rural and urban society in India were conceptualized in relation to one another at different moments during the twentieth century, arguing that rapid urbanization during the middle decades forced important changes in those conceptualizations. If in an earlier period analysts saw the world of the village dweller as radically separate from that of the urban dweller, then rapid urbanization destabilized this idea and forced analysts to entertain the implications of there being a kind of 'sliding scale' between the two. This discursive shift helped produce a new object of concern in mid-century urban sociology – that of the 'villager in the city'. While this sociological object formed the core of numerous mid-century (and later) studies of existing large cities, it played a more determinate role as *a priori* grounds for planned new towns than it did for perhaps any other model of urban growth. The article argues that proponents of planned new towns favoured their conservative potential: namely, the new town promised to nurture 'inherited tendencies and habits' in first-generation urban migrants, rather than produce wholly new modes of urban subjectivity.

This article posits an intellectual genealogy for understanding how comprehensively planned new towns became a focus of planning attention in twentieth-century India. Though comprehensively planned new towns were built in small numbers in India beginning in the nineteenth century (and earlier if we consider pre-British period examples such as Jaipur, for example), the largest number were built following independence in 1947. According to Robert Home, 'India accommodated some five million people in 118 new towns built between independence in 194[7] and 1981, in what has been probably the largest new town programme in the world.'¹ If we add the several new towns built prior to independence and the many that have been constructed since 1981 then we would find the numbers – in

¹ R. Home, *Of Planting and Planning: The Making of British Colonial Cities* (London, 1996), 206.

terms of both towns and population – to be considerably higher than that. Indeed, new town developments are enjoying a resurgence in popularity across South Asia today though it is perhaps too soon to say whether the genealogy traced here remains as relevant as it once was.²

There were a number of factors that made new town development plausible and desirable. These include economic imperatives that grew out of post-independence industrial policy, when both state-run and private industries secured efficient ways to combine industrial capital with locally available resources and labour. Most of the new towns built in India housed managers, workers and support personnel for steel, fertilizer, oil refining and other industrial concerns, though towns planned for administrative and other purposes shared both conceptual and spatial principles in common with them. Demographic forces also played a crucial role in the history of India's planned new towns, including crises resulting from periodic famines and the influx of political refugees into cities at India's partition. In this regard, new towns were seen by many as a way to ensure the even distribution of population between larger and smaller cities. Finally, in a variety of ways only hinted at here, both of the last century's two world wars indelibly shaped the rationale (and designs) for new towns in India, not least by mobilizing an international coterie of new town proponents to place their planning agenda on firmer institutional footings. While these larger events and processes directly shaped the intellectual genealogy I consider here, and I will address each of these issues schematically, many features of that genealogy predate these processes or cannot causally be derived from them.

The village and the city

My first argument may seem paradoxical: new town discourse depended importantly on changes in the way rural society was conceptualized in relation to urban society in India. If colonial suburbs emerged partly in response to overcrowding in India's densest cities, then planned new cities gained conceptual force in the context of rapid rural to urban in-migration during the middle decades of the twentieth century. The latter kind of urbanization forced important changes to an older set of

² New town developments that run the gamut from gated communities to 'integrated townships' have proliferated in recent years in both India and Pakistan. While little scholarship has been published on this phenomenon thus far, it has been the subject of scores of newspaper articles. For an example of the latter see A. Gentleman, 'Real India seeps into gated villas: professionals protest as their luxury community fails to keep out dust, heat, and squalor', *Observer*, 26 Aug. 2007, accessed 1 Jan. 2010 at: www.guardian.co.uk/world/2007/aug/26/india.ameliagentleman/print; and S. Gupta, 'Inside gate, India's good life; outside, the servants' slums', *New York Times*, 9 Jun. 2008, accessed 1 Jan. 2010 at www.nytimes.com/2008/06/09/world/asia/09gated.html. More scholarly works include C. Brosius, *India Shining: Consuming Pleasures of India's New Middle Classes* (New Delhi, 2009); S. Schindler, 'A 21st-century urban landscape: the emergence of new social-spatial formations in Gurgaon', in *Sarai Reader 07: Frontiers* (Delhi, 2007), 499–508.

assumptions about what differentiated rural from urban society. To put it schematically, whereas in an earlier period the world of the village dweller was seen as radically separate from that of the urban dweller, rapid urbanization forced theorists to entertain the implications of there being a kind of 'sliding scale' between the two. The new town concept became relevant, in part, because of its seeming potential to shape and nurture a rapidly proliferating new kind of subject – the villager in the city. While this sociological concept informed numerous mid-twentieth-century studies of existing Indian cities, it played a more determinate role as *a priori* grounds for new town aesthetics than it did for any other urban setting. As I hope to demonstrate, despite often being seen as an emblem of modernity – and one thinks here of places like Jamshedpur, Chandigarh or Islamabad³ – the new town idea was actually socially conservative in that new towns were seen as being promising precisely for their ability to nurture 'inherited tendencies and habits' in their residents rather than fostering wholly urbane subjectivities.⁴ Like a number of other 'modern' forms in twentieth-century India, the new town was designed in part to invoke the Indian village, or at least much of its social framework.

The Indian village played a more abstract role in establishing a second relevant context for this history. This was the role India played in the development of the concept of the 'village community', a staple of late nineteenth-century Anglo-European social and political science. Though earlier formulations exist, Henry Sumner Maine's elaboration of the concept beginning in 1861 (which he subsequently refined) was certainly the most influential. Most authors point to the formative role that Maine's experience as legal member of council in India played in the development of his magnum opus, *Ancient Law*, a work Maine characterized as a study of 'the earliest ideas of mankind, as they are reflected in Ancient Law,

³ Jamshedpur is a planned industrial city in the Indian state of Jharkand built by the Tata Steel Company beginning in 1907. Chandigarh was built under Jawaharlal Nehru's guidance as the capital of independent India's newly configured Punjab province beginning in 1956; among other prominent mid-century modernist architects, Le Corbusier played an important role in its design. Islamabad is the capital city of Pakistan planned by Constantin Doxiades beginning in 1958. Of these three, only Chandigarh has received ample attention by urban historians. On Jamshedpur, see M. Dutta, *Jamshedpur: The Growth of the City and its Regions* (Calcutta, 1977). On Islamabad, see O. Yakas, *Islamabad: The Birth of a Capital* (Karachi, 2001); S. Nilsson, *The New Capitals of India, Pakistan, and Bangladesh*, trans. E. Andréasson (Lund, 1973). Ravi Kalia has written three monographs on newly planned capital cities in India that foreground their progressiveness, including one on Chandigarh. See R. Kalia, *Chandigarh: The Making of an Indian City* (New Delhi, 1999); *Bhubaneswar: From a Temple Town to a Capital City* (Carbondale, 1994); *Gandhinagar: Building National Identity in Postcolonial India* (Columbia, SC, 2004). The literature on Chandigarh is extensive. Interested readers might compare Vikramaditya Prakash's recent monograph on the city with Norma Evenson's earlier work. Prakash foregrounds the city he grew up in during the 1970s and 1980s, while Evenson wrote just as the city was being completed. See V. Prakash, *Chandigarh's Le Corbusier: The Struggle for Modernity in Postcolonial India* (Seattle, 2002); N. Evenson, *Chandigarh* (Berkeley, 1966).

⁴ R. Mukerjee, *Man and his Habitation: A Study in Social Ecology* (London, 1940), 224–5.

and ... the relation of these ideas to modern thought'.⁵ Maine's research focused on the history of society as evidenced in the evolution of its juridical forms; the 'village community' emerged in his work as one such ancient form established on the basis of collective (as opposed to individual) proprietorship over land. The society bound by the village community form was characterized by its perduring conservatism, and by its hierarchical organization based on the family or clan as the fundamental unit.

For some nineteenth-century theorists, the village community compared positively with the degenerated society that industrialism drew in its wake; for others, the village community was a negative check on progress that stood for cultural stagnation and social inequality.⁶ Whichever view one held, however, consensus prevailed that actual village communities were all but extinct in modern industrial society, even if traces of their existence could be found in contemporary land usage and nomenclature applied to agrarian tracts in England, Scandinavia, Russia and elsewhere. In India, however, Maine surmised that village communities continued to flourish intact well into the present.

John Stuart Mill, writing in 1871, commented on Maine's discovery: 'Mr. Maine found that the state of things in regard to landed property which exists in India wherever it has not been disturbed by British legislation, is strikingly in accordance with that which recent historical investigations prove to have once existed in what are now the most advanced communities.'⁷ What made Maine's work all the more valuable, according to Mill, was that his discovery came not from ancient books or treatises but from 'the large and miscellaneous official literature' in the records of the Indian government, and from 'the oral conversation of experienced observers who have passed their maturity in administrative office'.⁸ The existence of the ancient village community in India was confirmed, in other words, in the handwritten notes filed by colonial officers in the field. As Clive Dewey put it, 'in England, save for a handful of "survivals", the village community was a purely historical phenomenon, studied by historians; but in India it was an omnipresent reality, utilized by revenue officials in assessing and collecting the land revenue'.⁹

⁵ H.S. Maine, from the *Preface to the First Edition* (1861), reprinted in *Ancient Law: Its Connection with the Early History of Society, and its Relation to Modern Ideas*, 5th edn (New York, 1888), v.

⁶ See C. Dewey, 'Images of the village community: a study in Anglo-Indian ideology', *Modern Asian Studies*, 6 (1972), 291–328; L. Dumont, 'The "village community" from Munro to Maine', *Contributions to Indian Sociology*, 9 (Dec. 1965), 67–89.

⁷ J.S. Mill, 'Maine on village communities, 1871', in J.M. Robson, M. Moir and S. Moir (eds.), *The Collected Works of John Stuart Mill, XXX – Writings on India* (Toronto and London, 1990); consulted online 19 Feb. 2010 at: http://oll.libertyfund.org/?option=com_staticxt&staticfile=show.php%3Ftitle=264&chapter=21944&layout=html&Itemid=27.

⁸ Mill, 'Maine on village communities'. The quoted passages in Mill's text are from Maine's original 1861 edition of *Ancient Law*.

⁹ Dewey, 'Images of the village community', 291.

The same empirical studies of India's villages, supplemented in later decades by ethnographic accounts, became the bedrock of another core concept in nineteenth-century evolutionary social science, and in later modernization theories. In its most general form, this was the idea that primitive and modern societies occupy dichotomous social worlds that are linked, one to the other, through some manner of evolutionary process. The first mode of society is said to be held together by group or associational ties (for which the 'family' forms the ideal case) rather than individual autonomy and self-interest. Determinate dimensions of social life are constituted *in situ* through the sedimentation of customs, shared beliefs and mores. Social interaction is characterized by regular face-to-face contact between people who know one another and share collective interests in common. The second mode of society, in contrast, is based on relations that 'arise from the free agreement of Individuals', rather than from larger associational forms such as kin groups, family or co-religionists.¹⁰ Individuals uphold obligations in this second mode on the basis of contractual agreements, rather than through the protocols that bound collectivities together.

The empirically observable features used to classify societies of the first type are historical and particularistic, and include such things as religious belief, consanguinity and in the Indian context, importantly, caste. The key features for classifying the second type of society are universal rather than particularistic, and apply to any and all of its members. These include such things as aggregate age profiles, and income, health and education levels. Note that the latter are all measurable qualities, and thus capable of being compared against statistically derived norms. If in the first type of society – let us call this Social 1 – the key goal of change over time is 'improvement', then in the second type of society – let us call this Social 2 – the key goal of change over time is 'development'.¹¹ Improvement is addressed to communities tied together through bonds of kinship, culture and shared history in a particular place; development, conversely, is concerned with the proper distribution of 'beings [and activities] on a territory' in accord with normative standards and goals.¹²

¹⁰ H.S. Maine, *Ancient Law: Its Connection with the Early History of Society, and its Relation to Modern Ideas*, 11th edn (London, 1887 (1861)), 169.

¹¹ My use of the '1' and '2' terminology is inspired by an essay Dipesh Chakrabarty wrote some years ago. What makes this heuristic strategy useful for my purposes – even at the risk of appearing unoriginal – is that while there are more well-established labels available to characterize these basic differences (see below), choosing one over another would mask how broad the spectrum of scholarship organized around these distinctions in some form or another really is. The differences between particular lines of theory seems less critically important, therefore, than what they shared in common. That sharing helped facilitate the transfer and appropriation of statements, images and concepts across well-defined disciplinary boundaries, something I see as an important aspect of new town history. See D. Chakrabarty, 'The two histories of capital', in his *Provincializing Europe: Postcolonial Thought and Historical Difference* (Princeton, 2000), 47–71.

¹² P. Rabinow, 'France in Morocco: techno-cosmopolitanism and middling modernism', *Assemblage*, 17 (Apr. 1992), 56.

Versions of this sociological model can be traced through several intellectual genealogies, including Maine's depiction of societal development moving from social ties based on *status* to ones based on *contract*, Ferdinand Tönnies' late nineteenth-century distinction between societies organized according to *gemeinschaft* and *gesellschaft* (the first term often translated as community and the second term as society) and Emile Durkheim's distinction between 'mechanical' and 'organic' solidarities, and so forth. What makes it relevant to the present discussion is how the transition from Social 1 to Social 2 in India was mapped onto the transition from rural to urban life. Put somewhat differently, if for industrialized Western societies the transition was largely historical, in India the movement from one to another was simultaneously historical and spatial.¹³ Indian sociologist Radhakamal Mukerjee, whom we will encounter more fully below, stated this principle succinctly and often. Here is an example from an article he wrote in 1943:

In most rural communities [Social 1] the bulk of social action is based on primary, face-to-face, integral, intimate relations as discernible in the family, the clan, the caste and neighbourhood groups. The norm of social action is derived from the familial and cultural types of grouping, characterized by mutual sharing of resources, risks and rewards, and this regulates and 'humanises' fractional, rational, contractual phases of behaviour and relations [Social 2] associated with ecologic, economic or mechanical types of grouping.¹⁴

The rest of this article will trace how a small interdisciplinary group of planners, sociologists, economists, geographers and reformers of various stripes altered their prescriptions for urban development in India as they imagined society moving from one state to the other. Their work underscores how much a developmentalist, modernizing, post-colonial state – with its five-year plans, massive bureaucracies and statistically derived policy goals – may have at one time owed to a culturalist strain of social theory for crafting a vision of India's urban future. As I hope to suggest in the closing passage of this article, this theoretical strain may well be partially responsible for structurally embedding a pernicious form of conservative xenophobia at the very core of Indian planning orthodoxy.

The colonial suburb

As a set of sociological and morphological propositions about what form social life in India's cities should take, twentieth-century planning

¹³ Ferdinand Tönnies' elaboration of *Gemeinschaft* and *Gesellschaft* appears first in an 1887 work by that title. See F. Tönnies, *Community and Society (Gemeinschaft und Gesellschaft)*, trans. C.P. Loomis (East Lansing, 1957). Maine's theory on the transition from 'status' to 'contract' appears in Maine, *Ancient Law*. Political theorist Karuna Mantena reassesses Maine's contributions to colonial constructions of traditional society in her *Alibis of Empire: Henry Maine and the Ends of Liberal Empire* (Princeton, 2010).

¹⁴ R. Mukerjee, 'Ecological and cultural patterns of social organization', *American Sociological Review*, 8 (Dec. 1943), 643–9, 646.

discourse shared an early nineteenth-century materialist conviction that living arrangements and the physical conditions of social life directly moulded the moral character of both individuals and societies in predictable and determinate ways.¹⁵ This idea was as relevant to nineteenth-century British efforts to establish 'Islands of Englishness' (including racially exclusive clubs, 'hill stations' and residential districts) to help shore up their ethnic identity as it was to mid-twentieth-century Indian urban planners who sought to ameliorate the social disjunctions of urban in-migration in their designs for new industrial towns.

A number of scholars have now studied the development of colonial-era suburbs in this light, paying particular attention to how space and built form were designed to address Anglo-European anxieties over racial difference and an (unrealized) desire for social and racial segregation, and to support evolving middle-class ideals of gentility, domesticity and conjugal sexuality as these changed in subtle ways across the long nineteenth century.¹⁶ These predominantly residential enclaves of white colonial residents and their Indian servants stood out physically from other 'native' suburbs in Indian cities by virtue of their exorbitant use of space, by privileging the isolated single family house as a building typology, and by expressing greater adherence to the concepts and norms of sanitary science than the latter settlements did. Colonial suburbs inhabited by the white colonial community in India also enjoyed the lion's share of municipal investment in such things as water supply, carpeted roads, sewage and police security.

This type of suburb was constructed beginning in the late eighteenth century in India, and remained present despite alterations throughout the period of British rule. The importance of this kind of residential arrangement for structuring domestic experience among the British expatriate population in particular was significant, something underscored

¹⁵ See I. Baucom, *Out of Place: Englishness, Empire, and the Locations of Identity* (Princeton, 1999), esp. ch. 2; J. and J. Comaroff, *Of Revelation and Revolution: The Dialectics of Modernity on a South African Frontier* (Chicago, 1997), 274–322; W.J. Glover, 'Objects, models, and exemplary works: educating sentiment in colonial Punjab', *Journal of Asian Studies*, 64 (Aug. 2005), 539–66; D. Scott, 'Colonial governmentality', *Social Text*, 43 (1995), 191–220; S. Srivastava, *Constructing Post-Colonial India: National Character and the Doon School* (London, 1998).

¹⁶ See, for example, J. Archer, 'Colonial suburbs in South Asia, 1700–1850', in R. Silverstone (ed.), *Visions of Suburbia* (London, 1997), 26–54; A. Blunt, 'Imperial geographies of home: British domesticity in India, 1886–1925', *Transactions of the Institute of British Geographers*, n.s., 24 (1999), 421–40; S. Chattopadhyay, 'Blurring boundaries: the limits of "white town" in colonial Calcutta', *Journal of the Society of Architectural Historians*, 59 (2000), 154–79; S. Chattopadhyay, "'Goods, chattels, and sundry items": constructing 19th century Anglo Indian domestic life', *Journal of Material Culture*, 7 (2002), 243–71; P. Chopra, *A Joint Enterprise: The Making of Colonial Bombay, 1854–1918* (Minneapolis, 2011); B. Cohn, 'The British in Benares: a nineteenth century colonial society', *Comparative Studies in Society and History*, 4 (Jan. 1962), 169–99; W.J. Glover, *Making Lahore Modern: Constructing and Imagining a Colonial City* (Minneapolis, 2008); J. Hosagrahar, *Indigenous Modernities: Negotiating Architecture and Urbanism* (London, 2005); A. King, *Colonial Urban Development: Culture, Social Power, and Environment* (London, 1976).

by how often suburbs form privileged topoi in the fiction of Kipling, Forster and Orwell, among others. As literary critic Todd Kuchta has observed, regardless of the details of their actual setting, colonial society in these authors' works was almost always *suburban* society. And it was suburban society of a certain sort: one shot through with anxiety, ennui and a peculiarly colonial sense of the 'uncanny'. This literature also reminds us that by the early decades of the twentieth century suburban settings were seen by many as 'pretentious and second-rate',¹⁷ condemned for their 'appalling monotony, ugliness and dullness',¹⁸ and declared bereft of the vibrancy and cultural opportunities available to the city dweller. Whatever the content of these colonial narratives, whatever the tribulations of the white expatriate characters who inhabited them and whatever departures from Anglo-American histories of suburbia the colonial suburb may demand, these settings held in focus a sense of the 'social' that privileged historical, cultural categories – including race, ethnicity, the nature of the family and a sense of shared culture – in crafting a physical milieu capable of upholding culturally distinct values. This is what I have called 'Social 1'.

From isolation to congestion

By the turn of the twentieth century, this type of (largely expatriate) colonial suburb grew increasingly irrelevant as an urban problem-space. By that time, industrialization, in-migration from the countryside (often on the heels of plague or famine) and natural population growth in cities brought new issues to the fore. Historical data on growth rates for India's cities are not fully reliable but what evidence we do have suggests that urban growth was rapid in many regions by the turn of the twentieth century, particularly in larger cities. In many older cities, the physically constrained and densely crowded inner districts reached full capacity by the last decades of the nineteenth century, something that generated a brisk demand in many cities for unoccupied land in the periphery.¹⁹

Early legislation targeting the amelioration of urban congestion in India included the 1898 Bombay Improvement Trust Act, which formalized

¹⁷ T. Kuchta, 'Suburbia, resentment, and the end of empire in *A Passage to India*', *Novel: A Forum on Fiction*, 36 (Summer 2003), 307–29.

¹⁸ From an unattributed report in the *Times* (London) in 1904, cited in D. Hardy, *From Garden Cities to New Towns: Campaigning for Town and Country Planning, 1899–1946* (London, 1991), 10.

¹⁹ M.S.A. Rao, 'Six decades of urbanization in India, 1901–1961', *Indian Economic and Social History Review*, 2 (Jan. 1965), 23–41; Jal F. Bulsara, *Problems of Rapid Urbanization in India* (Bombay: Popular Prakashan, 1964). According to decennial census data, in 1901–11 rural population grew much faster than urban population; in 1911–21 there was an overall decrease in the rural, and a modest increase in the urban population; from 1921 to 1931 urban growth increased nearly 20%; in 1931–41 the urban growth rate was 32%. The highest urban growth rate was during the period 1941–51, which is recorded at 41.4%. World War II and partition are usually seen as the twin causes of such a high growth rate during that census period.

procedures for acquiring land, laying down infrastructure (roads, sewer, water) and preparing plots for development.²⁰ A number of other municipalities established Improvement Trusts in subsequent decades, and in 1915 Bombay (again out ahead of other cities but soon to be imitated) passed its first Town Planning Act, based largely on the British Town Planning Act of 1909.²¹ The creation of Improvement Trusts and the passage of Town Planning Acts broadened the range of options available to planners for channelling urban growth, including the option of constructing newly planned towns. As Nandini Gooptu has noted, the post-war period saw the emergence of an ‘urban-based “constructive” civic nationalist vision’, among the growing middle classes in India, who ‘increasingly saw civic institutions, town governance and urban development as the motors of modernization, progress and national efficiency’.²²

Ebenezer Howard’s promotion of the Garden City in England at the turn of the twentieth century exerted an important influence on this civic vision. Howard’s goal was to replace the noxious quarters of the inner city, and the stultifying boredom of the countryside with a decentralized, socially integrated medium-sized town that combined the best qualities of rural and urban life. In its own way, Howard’s model valorized the positive social features associated with the idealized ‘village community’, particularly in the work of architects Raymond Unwin and Barry Parker who actualized Howard’s plans.²³ Through Howard’s advocacy, and through that of the international coterie of promoters, planners and reformers that formed around him, the Garden City presented an alternative to progressive reformers in India who decried the political effects of Improvement Trust urbanization – which in most cases entailed slum clearance, displacing the urban poor and the erection of middle-class housing schemes on recently cleared, centrally located parcels.²⁴

Scottish town planner and environmental sociologist Patrick Geddes was the most significant figure promoting Howard’s ideas in India. Geddes held a number of official and unofficial positions in India between 1914 and 1919, including Professor of Civics and Sociology at the University of

²⁰ In light of the overall trajectory of my argument it is perhaps worth noting here that beginning in the 1950s, municipal ‘improvement trusts’ in India (and after 1947 in Pakistan as well) were replaced by municipal ‘development authorities’. As I argue above, this tracks a corresponding shift in theoretical emphasis from Social 1 to Social 2 as the basis for understanding society.

²¹ See Home, *Of Planting and Planning*, 81–3.

²² N. Gooptu, *The Politics of the Urban Poor in Early Twentieth Century India* (Cambridge, 2001), 79.

²³ H. Meller, ‘Review’, *Journal of Historical Geography*, 16 (Apr. 1990), 234. Also see S. Buder, ‘Ebenezer Howard: the genesis of a town planning movement’, *Journal of the American Institute of Planners*, 35 (Nov. 1969), 390–8.

²⁴ See Gooptu, *The Politics of the Urban Poor*, 97–100; S. Hazareesingh, ‘Colonial modernism and the flawed paradigms of urban renewal: the uneven development of Bombay City, 1900–1925’, *Urban History*, 28 (2001), 235–55.

Bombay, and planning consultant to numerous municipalities and princely states. In the latter capacity, Geddes wrote some 50 town planning reports on a range of Indian cities. His reports have usually been read as revealing a sympathetic approach to the indigenous quarters of Indian cities, arguing for their conservation and improvement through 'conservative surgery', rather than wholesale demolition or slum clearance (something which often put Geddes at odds with colonial officials in the towns that he visited). I want to suggest instead that we look at the role Geddes played in enabling the change from 'Social 1' to 'Social 2' to emerge conceptually as a *transition*, rather than as an abrupt change, since while the impact of Geddes' physical plans for Indian cities was relatively minimal, Geddes' writing and other activities had a disproportionate impact on the way planners, economists and sociologists conceptualized, studied and proposed plans for Indian cities.

In particular, Geddes' reports address a growing need for housing outside the crowded quarters of Indian cities, and the model Geddes had in mind for new extramural settlements drew directly on Howard's Garden City ideal. In his 1917 report on Lahore, for example, Geddes identified several sites outside the city suitable for planned 'Garden villages';²⁵ in a report for the Raja Holkar of Indore State written one year earlier, Geddes borrowed language directly from Howard to justify his recommendation for planned new settlements: '[In these new garden suburbs] town and country conditions [will be] peculiarly united and combined, with much of the advantages and economy of both, and with fewer than hitherto of the disadvantages of either.'²⁶

In large part, that influence came about through Geddes' insistence on the interconnectedness of cities and their hinterlands in a regional context. By emphasizing the synthesis of woodland, field and city as integrated parts of a 'regional' whole (which was the rhetorical purpose behind his famous 'Valley Section' diagram), Geddes' work marked a generative departure from previous thinking on the Indian city, since colonial officials and Indian nationalists alike continued to see the Indian village as a more or less isolated phenomenon well into the early twentieth century.

This was in sharp contrast to the situation in England. By the last quarter of the nineteenth century, the very real problems of poverty, poor health and environmental degradation in England's agricultural villages was becoming increasingly visible. George Godwin, editor of *The Builder* magazine and a tireless advocate of housing reform in mid-nineteenth-century England, drew attention to the insanitary state of English villages as early as 1859, the same year that the Royal Commission reported on the health of the Indian army. Thirty years later, journalist George Millen

²⁵ Geddes, cited in M. Stalley (ed.), *Patrick Geddes: Spokesman for Man and the Environment* (New Brunswick, 1972), 424–8.

²⁶ P. Geddes, *Town Planning Towards City Development: A Report to the Durbar of Indor, Parts I and II* (Indore, 1918), 76.

travelled throughout southern England to document the state of the rural poor, publishing his findings in a regular column in the *London Daily News*. Millen challenged the stereotypical rural image of 'prosperous villages and charming little homes, embowered in orchards and flower gardens, and tenanted by a comfortable and contented peasantry, healthy, thriving, happy, and beyond all comparison better off than the corresponding class in our great towns'.²⁷ Instead, his columns described a rural landscape of 'sordid' poverty, 'tumbledown ramshackle, damp and draughty' houses and intractable zones of disease.²⁸

Works like these and others during the late nineteenth century served to link the English village to the industrial city conceptually, since problems of poverty, child labour, poor housing and rampant disease were seen to be shared by both. Modernization and its deadly discomforts affected the village and the metropolis together in real time, in other words, just as solutions to those shared problems were seen to necessitate simultaneous reforms in both the countryside and the city. The same connections took much longer to draw in India, however, and Geddes' emphasis on the 'region' as the proper unit of analysis for understanding the Indian city initiated an approach that necessitated the simultaneous consideration of conditions in the countryside as well.

Geddes' town planning reports and sociological publications undertaken while he was in India mark the intrusion into Indian sociology of organicism as an epistemological frame for understanding the relationship between human society and its physical milieu. While there is no space here to treat Geddes' planning work in India with any detail, his repeated emphasis was on the interdependence of physical, natural and indeed psychic phenomena in the constitution of the city and its regional setting; his call for 'selective surgery' was a mode of intervention into the city fabric designed not to disrupt the organic whole. As architectural historian Arindam Dutta writes,

Geddes's surgical metaphors construed the ideal urban intervention into the geocultural environment as if [it were] a graft onto a living corpus, where change is already at work. The new intervention, at once historical and architectural, must mitigate its foreignness, its exceptionality, so that the 'improved' elements are indistinguishable from the ongoing life of the ever-evolving whole of the existing environment.²⁹

Geddes' call to resolve the transcendent (culture in evolution) with the empirical (life in its many varieties on the ground) as a working methodology depended on establishing a multi-disciplinary basis of knowledge – drawing on, among others, sociology, biology, economics,

²⁷ G. Millen cited in *Life in the Victorian Village: The Daily News Survey of 1891*, vol. 1, ed. L. Bellamy and T. Williamson (London, 1999), 20.

²⁸ *Ibid.*, 22–4.

²⁹ A. Dutta, 'Organicism: interdisciplinarity and para-architectures', *Journal of the Society of Architectural Historians*, 64 (Dec. 2005), 427.

psychology, anthropology, geography, history, aesthetics, physiology, chemistry, botany – whose findings would be exhaustively annotated ('not only logical but graphic in presentment, as far as may be') to provide a framework for intervention.³⁰

With his emphasis on the exhaustive cataloguing of physical and social features present on site, and on the multi-disciplinary field of knowledge this annotation required, Geddes helped push the fledgling new discipline of town planning in India towards the systematic, scientific and empirically based methods that characterized the academic social sciences more generally at the time. As I suggested earlier, these are the kinds of metrics that presupposed – and indeed helped produce – the theoretical validity of society organized according to the principles of Social 2. Geddes' well-publicized 1916 report on Lucknow, written in collaboration with architect and town planner H.V. Lanchester, claimed that 'every section' of the report was based on detailed 'study upon the ground', and that all of the proposed plans had been 'tested to scale, criticized . . . from many points of view', and submitted to re-evaluation before the 'final preparation of sketches for the draftsman in the office'.³¹ In an exhibition that accompanied his report, detailed survey maps of the city were presented with overlays indicating population densities, occupational groupings, the distribution of religious groups and statistics on epidemic disease. While Geddes had little to do with actual implementation of the work, many of his plans for Lucknow were eventually carried out by L.M. Jopling, chairman of the Lucknow Improvement Trust, and J.M. Linton Bogle, chief engineer of the city.³²

The improvement of Lucknow was well publicized, and Bogle went on to write a popular planning manual in 1929, entitled *Town Planning in India*. In this work, Bogle, a mechanical engineer by training, replaced Geddes' emphasis on close survey and observation with a set of universally applicable 'rules' regardless of time or place.³³ These included rules governing minimum amounts of open space in newly developed settlements, the distribution of schools, parks and shops, the width of roads, the height of houses, residential densities per acre, and so forth. While Bogle's book was addressed primarily to municipal groups eager to improve the dilapidated areas of existing cities (which was also the major focus of Geddes' earlier efforts), he made positive mention of the Garden City movement in England at the time, the emergence of model factory towns to house industrial workers in Europe, and the

³⁰ P. Geddes, 'Essentials of sociology in relation to economics', *Indian Journal of Economics*, 3 (1920), 3.

³¹ P. Geddes, *Town Planning in Lucknow: A Report to the Municipal Council by Professor Geddes* (Lucknow, 1916), 1. Whether Geddes actually carried out detailed surveys himself is open to question, however. See P. Hall, *Cities of Tomorrow: An Intellectual History of Urban Planning and Urban Design in the Twentieth Century*, 3rd edn (London, 2002), 268–70.

³² See L.M. Jopling, 'Town planning in Lucknow', *Planning Review*, 101 (Jan. 1923), 25–36.

³³ J.M. Linton Bogle, *Town Planning in India* (Bombay, 1929). Bogle neglected to credit Geddes in the book.

development of a 'Model Town' on the outskirts of Lahore, a Garden City built by Indian residents that was remarkably faithful to Ebenezer Howard's prescriptions.³⁴

Peasants into Indians

World War I also played a role in preparing the ground for some of these transitions. In his book, *From Garden Cities to New Towns* (1991), historian Dennis Hardy emphasized the importance of the war in prompting 'a high degree of millennial expectation' among advocates of the Town Planning movement in England more generally, and in prompting a return to basic principles among advocates of the Garden City movement in particular. A small 'breakaway' group from the mainstream movement in England – which by that time had grown content to see the spread of bedroom community 'garden suburbs' instead of the more holistically conceived 'garden cities' championed by Howard – argued strenuously for government sponsorship of new town construction to facilitate post-war reconstruction.³⁵ F.J. Osborn's 1918 book, *New Towns after the War* (written under the pseudonym 'The Townsmen'), helped publicize this view and ensure its continued prominence.³⁶ A revised version of this book became a central intellectual piece of England's post-World War II 'new town' movement.

It was during World War I that Geddes collaborated with Radhakamal Mukerjee (1889–1968), an Indian sociologist who helped establish the theoretical foundations for an 'urban ecology'-based planning discourse in India over the course of his long and varied career. In an article published in the *American Journal of Sociology* in 1932, Mukerjee underscored the 'region' as the prime unit of 'social ecological study' in a formulation that characteristically effaced Geddes' influence: 'The cultural order is woven within the skeleton of the ecological order, and it is the intermeshing of the two orders, organic and spiritual, which sets before us the complex web of the whole life-community in its completeness.'³⁷ The basis for sustaining the 'community in its completeness' was establishing a harmonic balance between economic development and ecological forces, something that required the expansion of ecological knowledge and 'a re-orientation of the results of field-workers as well as systematizers in such diverse specialized branches of learning as economics, agriculture, entomology, bio-chemistry, and epidemiology'.³⁸

For Mukerjee (like Geddes), village and city could not be rigidly separated, either as analytical categories or as empirical domains: 'The

³⁴ See Glover, *Making Lahore Modern*, 151–7.

³⁵ Hardy, *From Garden Cities to New Towns*, 127–34.

³⁶ F.J. Osborn, *New Towns after the War* (London, 1918).

³⁷ R. Mukerjee, 'The ecological outlook in sociology', *American Journal of Sociology*, 38 (Nov. 1932), 350.

³⁸ *Ibid.*, 353.

metropolis, the city, the country-town and the village are all links in an ecological process', he wrote, 'which interpenetrates and over-reaches them all . . . Urbanism, if it be not segregative and pathological, normally rests on a balanced development of cities, country towns and villages.' At the same time, however, Mukerjee warned that the increasing integration of rural and urban society was accompanied by 'a chaos and confusion of the relations between cities, country towns, and villages' with occasionally disastrous defects.

In a series of lectures delivered at the University of Lucknow in the 1930s and later published under the title *Man and his Habitation* (1940), Mukerjee described this confusion in the form of a protracted crisis. For him, the most legible evidence of crisis was found in the 'hybrid industrial centres' growing uncontrollably on the periphery of larger cities – something Mukerjee described as the 'liminal towns of the new East'. These settlements, Mukerjee argued, were 'for the most part [geared for] the single man, who moves from one hut to another with an unusual frequency, uprooting him from all objects, habits, and attitudes, which formerly rooted him to the soil, home, and community in his traditional cultural milieu'.³⁹ The arboreal metaphor of 'rooting' and 'uprooting' in this and other passages highlights the privileged role natural and material environments played for him as agents of social determination.

Mukerjee intersected directly with most of the figures discussed thus far. Geddes' famous 'Place–Work–Folk' schema (adapted from Le Play's *Lieu–Travail–Famille*) was most fully worked out in a series of articles published in the *Indian Journal of Economics* (1920) around the time he worked with Mukerjee. That journal was co-founded in Allahabad by economist H. Stanley Jevons (son of the more famous economist William Stanley Jevons), who wrote a planning report for the city of Allahabad in 1919.⁴⁰ Mukerjee, Jevons, Bogle and Lanchester, from the fields of sociology, economics, engineering and town planning, respectively, helped durably install Geddesian ideas at the centre of a new, multi-disciplinary approach to planning the Indian city.⁴¹

By the 1920s, other developments, other forms of research and other sociological theories helped to unravel confidence in the putative isolation of India's villages. By then, villages had not only become the focus of nationalist political mobilization, but also of more paternalistic anti-nationalist government 'village uplift' campaigns, which entailed among other things the introduction of village sanitation schemes, competitive games, scientific farming methods, improved grain seeds and livestock, medical relief and, briefly, village radio broadcasts or 'community

³⁹ Mukerjee, *Man and his Habitation*, 13.

⁴⁰ Geddes, 'Essentials of sociology in relation to economics'. This publication was co-founded by H. Stanley Jevons and C.D. Thompson at the University of Allahabad.

⁴¹ See, for example, R. Mukerjee, 'The regional balance of man', *American Journal of Sociology*, 36 (Nov. 1930), 455–60.

listening' schemes.⁴² Scholars from the incipient field of rural sociology began theorizing the effects of modernization on rural communities in the 1920s, and by the 1930s, the term 'rurbanization' was used analytically by American and British sociologists to describe 'the interpenetration of urban and rural life, particularly the penetration of the countryside by influences emanating from the city'.⁴³ While ethnographic and sociological research on Indian villages proliferated only after independence, by the early 1950s, researchers had already catalogued a long list of such influences, including the following list compiled by prominent anthropologist M.N. Srinivas:

formal partition of the joint family (though sentimental ties are still strong), recourse to law courts to settle family disputes, diversification and specialization of occupations, black marketing, prostitution, the appearance of community leaders and 'incipient capitalists with one leg in Villages and another in City', factionalism created by the leading political parties, a network of good roads, [the] popularization of buses and motor-cycles, cash wages, bonuses and cost-of-living allowances, coffee-and-tea-houses, cinemas and shopping centres, welfare services, luxury goods, cosmetics, laundry services, measures of famine control and public health, involvement in a monetized national and international economy, payment of taxes in cash, growing cash crops, using mill and factory made goods, accepting improved agricultural practices, higher education, etc. The changes have also brought unemployment, population and immigration increases, the spread of allopathic practitioners, ration shops, and the like.⁴⁴

One major effect of the numerous sociological and ethnographic studies carried out on Indian villages during the 1950s and 1960s was to demonstrate how intricately connected most villages were with urban economies and processes. In a 1958 article, Srinivas argued that this has been the case for a long time: 'the typical Indian village was not self-sufficient even in the days of primitive communications, and it is absurd to talk of "reviving" something that never existed'.⁴⁵ Yet despite presenting ample evidence of social transformation, few of these studies went so far as to describe village and urban communities as functionally identical.

In 1947, the year of India's independence, University of Chicago anthropologist Robert Redfield published an influential article on what he called the 'folk-urban' continuum, a concept that would form the

⁴² J. Zivin, 'The imagined reign of the iron lecturer: village broadcasting in colonial India', *Modern Asian Studies*, 32 (1998), 717–38. Also see F.L. Brayne, *The Gurgaon Experiment* (London, 1928). On the role of villages in nationalist political mobilization see S. Jodhka, 'Nation and village: images of rural India in Gandhi, Nehru, and Ambedkar', *Economic and Political Weekly* (10 Aug. 2002), 3334–53.

⁴³ N. Carpenter, 'Courtship practices and contemporary social change in America', *Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science*, 160 (Mar. 1932), 38–44 n. 1. The term 'rurban' was reputedly first coined by rural sociologist C.J. Galpin in his book, *Rural Life* (New York, 1923).

⁴⁴ This is a list attributed to M.S. Srinivas by H.R. Trivedi, in *Urbanism: A New Outlook* (Delhi, 1976), 18.

⁴⁵ M.N. Srinivas, 'The industrialization and urbanization of rural areas', *Sociological Bulletin*, 5 (Sep. 1958), 79–88, at 80.

framework for multiple urban and rural ethnographies in subsequent years in India. While Redfield developed the concept based on his ethnographic work in the Yucatan during the 1920s and 1930s, the concept was easily extended to other geographical settings. Redfield's basic argument was that 'folk societies' shared a number of features in common wherever they happened to be, and that these were in more or less polar contrast to 'the society of the modern city'.⁴⁶ The folk society of Redfield's description was an ideal rather than actually existing type, another feature which made the concept transportable beyond its original setting. Explicitly linking his model to earlier concepts developed by Maine, Durkheim and Tonnies, Redfield's description of folk society maps neatly onto our earlier definition of 'Social 1' above:

Such a society is small, isolated, non-literate, and homogeneous, with a strong sense of group solidarity . . . Behavior is traditional, spontaneous, uncritical, and personal; there is no legislation or habit of experiment and reflection for intellectual ends. Kinship, its relationships and institutions, are the type categories of experience and the familial group is the unit of action.⁴⁷

As an ideal type, no actually existing society fully attained all of the qualities Redfield described. At the same time, every existing 'folk society' had some combination of these qualities, and could be characterized according to how far or close it came to the ideal. This is what made the 'folk-urban' model a *continuum*, and Redfield included urbanizing societies within the model through the intermediate category of 'peasant' society:

The vast, complicated, and rapidly changing world in which the urbanite and even the urbanized country-dweller live today is enormously different from the small, inward-facing folk society, with its well-integrated and little-changing moral and religious conceptions . . . Where cities have arisen, the country people dependent on those cities have developed economic and political relationships, as well as relationships of status, with the city people, and so have become that special kind of rural folk we call peasantry . . . many a village or small town has, perhaps, as many points of resemblance with the folk society as with urban life.⁴⁸

Despite being subjected to considerable criticism – for being overly simplistic, for deriving from too narrow of an empirical basis and for failing to develop the 'urban' end of the continuum sufficiently, for example – Redfield's model remained influential throughout the 1950s and 1960s in India during a period of time that witnessed unprecedented rapid urbanization alongside massive, state-planned technological change. Chicago anthropologist Milton Singer, who often collaborated with Redfield, helped extend the latter's framework to the Indian setting where it formed a central paradigm in numerous village ethnographies and

⁴⁶ R. Redfield, 'The folk society', *American Journal of Sociology*, 52 (Jan. 1947), 293.

⁴⁷ *Ibid.*, 293.

⁴⁸ *Ibid.*, 306.

studies of peripheral urbanism.⁴⁹ While most of these studies documented departures from the folk ideal in the actually existing communities being studied – sometimes in exhaustive detail – the fundamental difference between ‘rural’ and ‘urban’ values continued to hold analytical purchase. Morris Opler, another American anthropologist trained at Chicago, reflected a common opinion in an article published in 1956: ‘The involvement of [villages] with organizations, places, and events outside of the village is considerable and it seems that this has been the case for a very long time. Yet it has not interfered with the separate identity and cohesiveness of the community, which in some respects is more marked than before.’⁵⁰

Recapitulating the Indian village in planned new towns

In the remaining sections of this article, I want to highlight the ways in which the intellectual genealogy I have been tracing thus far began to affect the more projective discourses and practices of urban planning. While the sociological ideas I have been tracing organized a wealth of mid-century (and later) studies of existing large cities, they played a more determinate role as *a priori* grounds for new town organization and aesthetics than they did for perhaps any other urban setting.

One of the earliest people to identify the potential benefits of planning entirely new cities in India – rather than modifying older ones – was Radhakamal Mukerjee, as we briefly noted above. For Mukerjee, newly planned towns held out the promise of completely avoiding the prior mistakes and problems that beset existing cities, including uncontrolled growth, caste-segregated neighbourhoods and various sorts of demographic imbalances (including an excess of single men, low birth rates, high mortality and so forth). With proper planning, the material environment could produce more felicitous conditions for balanced society than was possible in the overgrown, and socially deleterious, city. ‘Only a restoration of immediacy of relationships and of communal life through neighbourhood ... occupational, or cultural groups can bring about balance and normality in urban culture’, Mukerjee wrote, and immediacy was for him both a social and a spatial quality. New town designs should

⁴⁹ See R. Redfield and M.B. Singer, ‘The cultural role of cities’, *Economic Development and Cultural Change*, 3 (Oct. 1954), 53–73; M. Singer, ‘Beyond tradition and modernity in Madras’, *Comparative Studies in Society and History*, 13 (Apr. 1971), 160–95. Redfield planned to do fieldwork in Orissa in the late 1950s but fell sick on his arrival in India and returned to the US. Singer and Redfield’s development of the concept of Great and Little Tradition(s) to explain the role that cities played in cultural change is laid out in their 1954 article. On the continuing influence of Redfield’s framework in South Asian anthropology (and in Buddhist studies in particular) see C. Wilcox, *Robert Redfield and the Development of American Anthropology* (Lanham, 2004).

⁵⁰ M. Opler, ‘The extensions of an Indian village’, *Journal of Asian Studies*, 16 (Nov. 1956), 5–10, at 10. Also see L. Dumont and D. Pocock, ‘For a sociology of India’, *Contributions to Indian Sociology*, 1 (1957), 7–22.

support 'face-to-face relationships' and communal activities, he argued – both of which were features that characterized village society – and provide 'facilities for dramatizing ... communal life and expressing baulked or sublimated social affections'.⁵¹

For Mukerjee and others, the development of new towns entailed an effort to effect a certain concatenation of disparate social worlds – Social 1 and Social 2, if you will – into a synthetic whole, one that necessitated a distinctive spatial armature. Looking at the plans of new towns that were actually built during the immediate post-independence period in India, one sees the physical trace of these ideas most clearly in the towns' formal geometries – in their emphasis on a central space or building, or in the aggregation of 'neighbourhood units', each individually focused on a school, temple or community hall at the centre. Otto Koenigsberger, who was responsible for planning several new towns in post-1947 India as director of housing for the Ministry of Health (from 1948 to 1951), described the 'neighbourhood unit plan' – a design promoted by American planner Clarence Perry in the 1920s – as 'the best possible link with the type of community [known from villages]', arguing that 'a village-like neighbourhood makes it easier for [new residents] to understand their *civic responsibilities* than [they could in] a large, amorphous city'.⁵² Though the translation of 'civic' virtues from a non-urban milieu may seem paradoxical here, and indeed may point to the extreme pliability the term 'village' had acquired by that time, the small-scale 'village-like' urban neighbourhood became an overwhelming focus of design and community development efforts in mid-century planning discourse.⁵³ This is one of the most enduring physical artifacts of the period, and it corresponds to a much more widely diffuse political project whereby the state seeks 'to give the empirical form of a population group the moral attributes of a community'.⁵⁴

In the way these designs emphasize the importance of close proximity – through the provision of 'gathering' places, through structuring

⁵¹ Mukerjee, *Man and his Habitation*, 226.

⁵² O.H. Koenigsberger, 'New towns in India', *Town Planning Review*, 23 (Jul. 1952), 105; emphasis added. Perry's scheme is described succinctly in C. Perry, 'City planning for neighborhood life', *Social Forces*, 8 (Sep. 1929), 98–100. For the application of Perry's scheme in India, see S. Vidyarthi, "'Inappropriate" appropriations of planning ideas: informalizing the formal and localizing the global', unpublished University of Michigan Ph.D. dissertation, 2008.

⁵³ See, for example, Marshall Clinard's work on neighbourhood revitalization with the Ford Foundation in Delhi during the 1950s and 1960s, as outlined in his *Manual of Urban Community Development* (Delhi, c. 1960). The Delhi experience is addressed in Clinard, *Slums and Community Development: Experiments in Self-Help* (New York, 1966).

⁵⁴ P. Chatterjee, *The Politics of the Governed: Reflections on Popular Politics in Most of the World* (Delhi, 2004), 57. Chatterjee was describing how disenfranchised groups of city dwellers have to negotiate a relation with the welfare state by asserting forms of community based on their area of residence as being formally akin to those recognized as belonging to enfranchised, civil society. My inversion of Chatterjee's subject and object here is meant to suggest that states, too, are often involved in the same project.

opportunities for frequent 'face to face' contact and by placing community buildings in the middle of neighbourhoods and commerce only at the edges – a kind of aesthetics emerges in the new town that marks both a rupture with what existed at the time, but also an effort to recuperate key features of an older imagined village milieu. The fact that the new town with its neighbourhood unit looks almost nothing like the village it seeks to recapitulate marks the rupture. At the same time, the new town attempts to recuperate something older: that is, a kind of society based on the collective rather than the individual, on people's organic habits and psychological needs rather than on independent will and the restless search for the 'new'. It is in this sense that I suggest we see new town development as a socially 'conservative' project. Here is Mukerjee once again: 'social planning implies a correct understanding of the settled social attitudes, habits or institutions, which the city-dweller still cherishes, and their conscious nurture and adaptation to [a] new milieu . . . it is through the inherited tendencies and habits rather than will that man achieves progress'.⁵⁵

The reformatting of village and urban worlds that the new town represents thus necessarily engages deeper social processes and more long-standing concerns in South Asia than either their earlier promoters (who saw it as an emblem of progressive change), or those who today might dismiss it (as a regrettable by-product of Westernization), have usually recognized. Ashis Nandy has argued that certain 'core concerns and anxieties of Indian civilization have come to be reflected in the [literal and metaphoric] journey from the village to the city', evidence for which is provided by how central that journey has been thematically in modern Indian cinema, literature and politics.⁵⁶ We can place new town developments in the mid-twentieth century somewhere in this frame to ask, along with Nandy, whether that journey has finally been exhausted as a figure through which Indian modernity is imagined as a condition of urban life. Nandy argued that

the village is no longer a living presence in mainstream Indian intellectual life. In the various visions of the future floating around in the region there is much that is worthwhile, but not the vivacity of an imagined village. The village is quickly becoming a place where strangers live, where sati and untouchability are practiced, where ethnic and religious riots have been taking place for centuries, and where, unless the civilized intervene, the inhabitants continue to pursue the sports of homicide and robbery.⁵⁷

⁵⁵ Mukerjee, *Man and his Habitation*, 224–5.

⁵⁶ A. Nandy, *An Ambiguous Journey to the City: The Village and Other Odd Ruins of the Self in the Indian Imagination* (New Delhi, 2001), 24. Other examples discussed by Nandy include the films of Satyajit Ray, R.K. Narayan's short story 'Malgudi' and Gandhi's adoption of the village and ashram as key sites for the unfolding of independent India's future.

⁵⁷ *Ibid.*, 23.

And if the role played by the village in constituting an urban imagination has changed, so too has the nature of the city being conjured undergone considerable change.

India's largest cities, sometimes called the 'metros', are notable as sites for a new configuration of middle-class activism, effected through new configurations of 'community', that is directed at holding municipalities accountable for ensuring property values, privacy, security and a healthy urban environment. Despite the putatively liberal values these initiatives hold in focus, asserting the rights to a 'bourgeois city' on behalf of a subculture of elites not infrequently entails an illiberal campaign of squatter evictions, anti-encroachment campaigns and gentrification projects that drive poor and disenfranchised communities out of older areas, and keep them away from new ones.⁵⁸ Given the importance Indian planning discourse has given to establishing the conditions for 'community' to flourish based on spatial proximity and shared cultural affinities and habits – we might say, thus, on the principles of Social 1 – the post-liberalization Indian metro seems destined to intensify class and ethnic exclusivity as the basis for neighbourhood formation. The question is whether or not the urban armatures that the historical protagonists I have discussed produced (and indeed that are continuing to be produced) need to be rethought in light of these trends, and of the genealogies that brought them into play.

⁵⁸ See A. Baviskar, 'Between violence and desire: space, power, and identity in the making of metropolitan Delhi', *International Social Science Journal*, 175 (2003), 89–98; Chatterjee, *The Politics of the Governed*, 131–47.