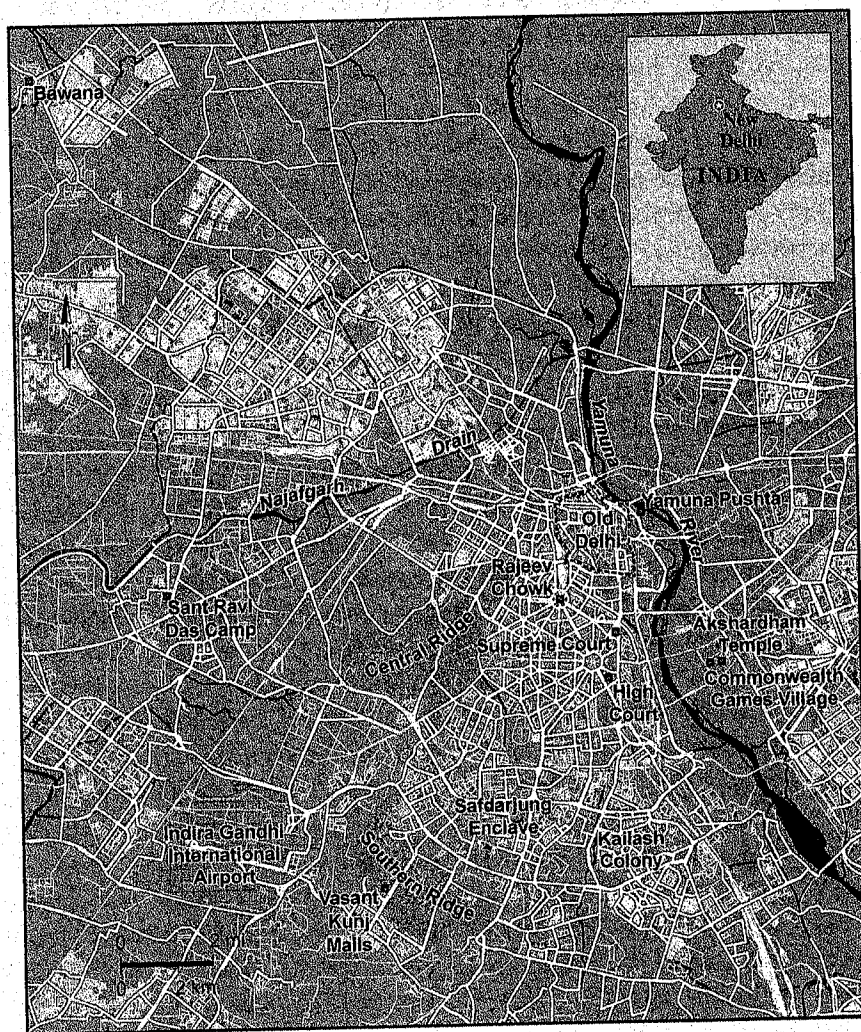




More than a billion
tion that global
triple in size by 2050. Sch
as "the growth of a popul
the world's second large
tions of the Third World
spatial discipline.² Inst
forces us to rethink the e
to rethink how it is that

Slums, squatter settle
are called in Delhi, are
lie beyond the realm o
presumed ungovernabl
absence of cartographi
this book, I trace how
maps and statistics as
Specifically, I show tha
city—represented mos
ping malls, the fivefol
million slum dwellers
occurring not solely th
calculus of cost-benef
gest. Rather, it also rec
future—what I call a v
ing public that takes



Introduction

More than a billion people live in squatter settlements today, a population that global development institutions nervously project could triple in size by 2050. Scholars have interpreted this future “planet of slums” as “the growth of a population outside state control.”¹ Using the case of Delhi, the world’s second largest city, my aim in this book is to challenge conceptions of the Third World megacity that emphasize a lack of state control and spatial discipline.² Instead, I focus on how the management of slums there forces us to rethink the epistemological foundation of government—that is, to rethink how it is that a state knows and directs its object.

Slums, squatter settlements, or *jhuggi jhompdi* (shanty) colonies, as they are called in Delhi, are often considered “informal” for the fact that they lie beyond the realm of state authorized maps, plans, and statutes. Their presumed ungovernability or unruliness, experts suggest, stems from the absence of cartographic and statistical simplifications of their territory. In this book, I trace how the production of an aesthetic normativity replaced maps and statistics as the key mechanism of rule in millennial Delhi. Specifically, I show that Delhi’s attempt to transform itself into a world-class city—represented most vividly by the construction of seventy new shopping malls, the fivefold increase in land prices, and the displacement of a million slum dwellers in the first decade of the twenty-first century³—is occurring not solely through a legal redefinition of property or an economic calculus of cost-benefit, as most accounts of globalized urbanization suggest. Rather, it also requires the dissemination of a compelling vision of the future—what I call a world-class aesthetic—and the cultivation of a viewing public that takes part in that very vision—the making of world-class

subjects. I begin with three scenes from millennial Delhi to sketch this aesthetic project.

SCENE 1

In 2003, a local environmental group submitted a petition to the Supreme Court of India challenging the construction of India's largest shopping mall complex for being built on Delhi's southern ridge, a protected green space according to the Delhi Master Plan. Expert testimony by the Delhi Development Authority (DDA)—the agency that drafts and is legally bound to implement the Master Plan—defended the project in the Court for being “planned” and thus legal because of its high-quality construction and its strategic function in boosting Delhi's architectural profile. Showing glossy, artistic renderings of the proposed development and describing the mall as a world-class commercial complex (see Figure I.1), the DDA argued that the visual appearance of the future mall was in itself enough to confirm the project's planned-ness (just look at it!). The Supreme Court, despite acknowledging that the project constituted a “flagrant violation” of planning law, sided with the DDA, allowing the mall construction to go forward.⁴

During the course of the mall proceedings, an adjacent multigenerational *jhuggi* colony that conformed with the land use designation of the Master Plan was declared unplanned and illegal for being a nuisance to the upscale neighborhoods nearby. Based on a set of photographs showing the unsightly conditions in the colony, and despite the absence of a survey

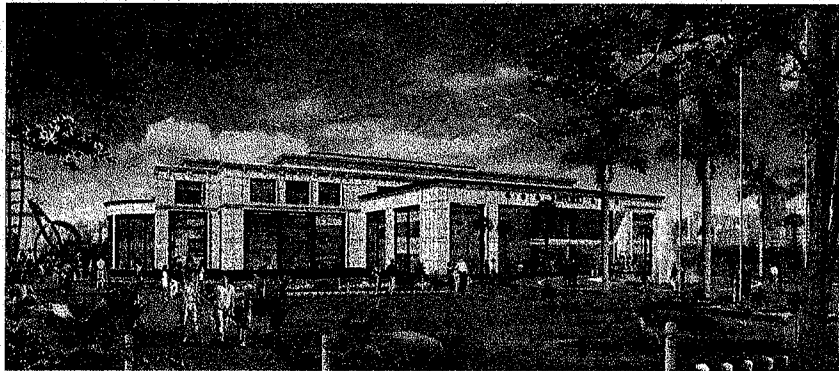


Figure I.1. An artistic rendering of the DLF Emporio, the most expensive mall in India and one of the seven malls in the disputed shopping mall complex located in Vasant Kunj (Dewan, 2007). Image reproduced with the permission of DLF Limited.

or scientific evaluation of the area, the court demolished the settlement and ordered the demolition of the court.⁵

In these two examples, the court's decision is based on the determination of the visual appearance of the city, regardless of its formal status or its function. The case between actually existing and planned representations of the city. He argues that the world-class aesthetic (or the case of the *jhuggi* colony) is a response. How did this response come about? plans, and statutes?

On a hot May afternoon, I sat in an air-conditioned elevator in the Delhi Development Commission's planning office, whose name literally means "panoptic view of the city." I was in the midst of guiding a group of equally panoptic vision: the Delhi Master Plan is updated every two years. The planning law, Jain and his colleagues are required to conduct a survey of the city. I plan revision can begin. I am a planning official, I opened the doors I had prepared on the survey the city?

Jain's answer that day was: "We didn't have a plan in India: 'We didn't have a plan.' I sent some engineers to survey the city. We were. If people knew we were, we would be. We know what need is. We know what a world-class city is. We know here was a planning regime. We know the calculations, but rather than the authority design and administration of the territory and population.

millennial Delhi to sketch this

ed a petition to the Supreme
of India's largest shopping
ern ridge, a protected green
pert testimony by the Delhi
y that drafts and is legally
ded the project in the Court
its high-quality construction
rchitectural profile. Showing
development and describing
x (see Figure I.1), the DDA
e mall was in itself enough to
at it!). The Supreme Court,
tuted a "flagrant violation" of
the mall construction to go

ys, an adjacent multigenera-
land use designation of the
al for being a nuisance to the
et of photographs showing
spite the absence of a survey



ost expensive mall in India and one of
in Vasant Kunj (Dewan, 2007). Image

INTRODUCTION (3)

or scientific evaluation of its so-called nuisance-causing activities, the DDA demolished the settlement without compensation, an action upheld by the court.⁵

In these two examples, "planned-ness," an attribute of urban space key to the determination of legality, was defined as that which *looks* planned, regardless of its formal standing in planning law or any correspondence between actually existing urban development and expert paper representations of the city. Here, it was a land use's relationship to a particular world-class aesthetic (conformance in the case of the mall, divergence in the case of the *jhuggi* colony) that determined the appropriate governance response. How did this world-class aesthetic come to stand in for maps, plans, and statutes?

SCENE 2

On a hot May afternoon early in my fieldwork in Delhi, I rode an air-conditioned elevator up the Vikas Minar to the office of A. K. Jain, the commissioner of planning in the DDA. Perched inside Delhi's tallest building, whose name literally means "development tower," Jain has a nearly panoptic view of the city he governs, and at the time of our meeting Jain was in the midst of guiding his agency in redrafting a document with an equally panoptic vision: the Delhi Master Plan. A statutory document that provides comprehensive planning guidelines for the city, the Delhi Master Plan is updated every twenty years to meet new mandates. According to planning law, Jain and his staff of 26,000 engineers, clerks, and field workers are required to conduct a comprehensive civic survey before any master plan revision can begin. Excited to have secured a meeting with Delhi's top planning official, I opened my notebook to the first of a long list of questions I had prepared on planning practice and began with: How did you survey the city?

Jain's answer that day fundamentally changed my understanding of planning in India: "We didn't do a survey. Well, we did a 'windshield survey': I sent some engineers out in cars and had them look and see how things were. If people knew we were measuring them, things would get too political. We know what needs to be done without having to survey. We know what a world-class city should look like."⁶ Forgoing precise surveyance, here was a planning regime that built a governing vision not through intricate calculations, but rather through the gaze itself. How can a planning authority design and administer a plan without first physically assessing the territory and population it would govern?

SCENE 3

Gopal is a resident of Shiv Camp, a *jhuggi* colony nestled in the midst of a burgeoning middle-class neighborhood in Delhi's most rapidly growing western district. As shopping malls and five-star hotels opened, west Delhi witnessed some of the most aggressive slum demolitions in millennial Delhi. I spent a year in Shiv Camp, examining how men and women like Gopal responded to the threat of demolition. A quarter of Shiv Camp homes had been bulldozed a few days before I first spoke with Gopal. Yet despite the fact that the government's bulldozers had arrived unannounced, without a legal notice, the demolition made sense to Gopal; it seemed part of a plan:

Sarkār [government] has made a new map that shows how the new city will look. There will be nice clean roads, big buildings; it will be beautiful; it will be clean and maintained. There will be less [traffic] *jam* and filth. . . . They are making Delhi like Paris, clearing all these *jhuggis* [shanties].⁷

When I asked Gopal how he knew what the map looked like, he replied matter-of-factly, "well, we haven't seen the map. That is only for officials to see, but they tell everyone about it. They say that the city will look beautiful and have all these nice things. The newspapers tell us about it, and we read those and learn about the map slowly." While Gopal made implicit reference to the Master Plan, a document being widely discussed in newspapers at the time, the map he described was more like a picture than a calculative grid of land use zones, infrastructure codes, and development norms. What gave this imagined map—a map without the calculative underpinnings so often presumed of cartography—such authority to Gopal?⁸

These scenes introduce key components of what I call "rule by aesthetics," a mode of governing space on the basis of codes of appearance rather than through the calculative instruments of map, census, and survey. Scenes 1 and 2 suggest that the judiciary, state planners, and the media share a common vision of a world-class city, even without a rigorous, technoscientific basis for defining such a city or evaluating progress toward its realization. Scene 3 shows that *jhuggi* dwellers—often depicted as obstacles to the world-class city—also participate in this vision, even when it appears against their interest to do so. These scenes thus animate the two motivating questions of this book: In the absence of statistical and cartographic techniques of rational planning, how are coherent ways of seeing put in place for identifying order and disorder? And, what compels marginalized populations to appropriate these same ways of seeing as their own? Phrased

through the above scene of 26,000 workers, know do Gopal and his neighbor world-class city—look at and his map?

AESTHETICS

The question of how and rendered governable themselves—has been a French philosopher Michel de France, for example, and governmentality, emerging cultivating a normative discipline guiding them "to do as they or recourse to disciplinary rized as "the conduct of c by constructing social categories economic growth or the categories such that they ple: growth is too slow, d take up these categories the habits, aspirations, and called "convenient ends":

According to Foucault, procedure of recording the birth rate or disease i tor" of modern government that "to govern a problem well-known account of they seek to secure, a state ungovernable space is the tion: "Whatever the unit a manner that permits the aggregated, and monitored and subsequently the color of census, survey, and carting the perfect map. . . . E space within which a system be created."¹³ Modern gov

through the above scenes, how does not just A. K. Jain, but also his staff of 26,000 workers, know what the world-class city looks like? And, why do Gopal and his neighbors—those being displaced to make way for the world-class city—look upon themselves through the gaze of the planner and his map?

AESTHETIC GOVERNMENTALITY

The question of how populations and territories are seen, ordered, and rendered governable—and subsequently come to see and govern themselves—has been a central concern of social and political theory. The French philosopher Michel Foucault, in his famous lectures at the Collège de France, for example, argued that a modern form of power, what he called governmentality, emerged in the late eighteenth century that operated by cultivating a normative disposition within broad population groups, thereby guiding them “to do as they ought” without requiring direct intervention or recourse to disciplinary mechanisms, like the police.⁹ Famously summarized as “the conduct of conduct,” governmentality, Foucault argued, works by constructing social categories that were once illegible, such as the rate of economic growth or the occurrence of a disease, and problematizing those categories such that they appear to require active improvement—for example: growth is too slow, disease is too prevalent. By training individuals to take up these categories in their own lives, governmental programs direct the habits, aspirations, and beliefs of the governed toward what Foucault called “convenient ends”: a growing economy, a healthy society.

According to Foucault, it was the rise of statistics, a scientifically rational procedure of recording the surface attributes of the population—such as the birth rate or disease incidence—that became “the main technical factor” of modern governmentality.¹⁰ This argument has led others to insist that “to govern a problem requires that it be counted.”¹¹ In James Scott’s well-known account of state simplification schemes and the legibility they seek to secure, a state’s ability to see into and intervene in otherwise ungovernable space is the product of careful measurement and calculation: “Whatever the units being manipulated, they must be organized in a manner that permits them to be identified, observed, recorded, counted, aggregated, and monitored.”¹² In British India, the East India Company and subsequently the colonial state invested tremendously in technologies of census, survey, and cartography under “the belief that they were creating the perfect map. . . . Rule in India was dependent on the creation of a space within which a systematic archive of knowledge of this space might be created.”¹³ Modern government across diverse contexts, in other words,

is thought to depend on rigorous technoscience, what Ian Hacking calls an "avalanche of printed numbers" and calculative techniques.¹⁴

When I met A. K. Jain (Scene 2), I was looking for maps and the avalanche of printed numbers according to which urban government operated in Delhi. His insistence that planning practice in Delhi required no such records made me realize I needed to pay more attention to absences than presences. Indeed, when I looked closer, I found a conspicuous absence of accurate and up-to-date maps and statistics on either the population or the territory. For example, a comprehensive statistical summary of the size and distribution of Delhi's slum population has not been reported since 1998. The Delhi government itself is unaware of the total number of *jhuggi* colonies in Delhi and therefore continues to report 1998 numbers as if they were valid to this day.¹⁵ Early in my fieldwork, when I held out hope that such records existed, I submitted a number of right to information requests to the DDA asking for summary statistics on the number of *jhuggis* demolished in Delhi in each district since 1990. Although I received a handwritten reply from one of fifteen districts, including the responding officer's own provisional, handwritten arithmetic, the final reply to my request said, "there is no such compiled record/information."

If modern cities are supposed to be built through technoscientific procedures of urban planning and government such as maps, censuses, and surveys, the conspicuous absence of such techniques in the world-class redevelopment of Delhi raises the question of how rule there is achieved. If we apply familiar models of government and planning, this absence of synoptic maps and numbers might look like a type of failure.¹⁶ But the above scenes suggest that this is not about failed government. Rather, millennial Delhi came to be characterized by a different mode of governing space, one in which intensely political decisions about who and what belongs in the city took place primarily on the basis of codes of appearance, not documents and records. As I show in the pages that follow, under conditions of such aesthetic rule, social order is inscribed in public modes of viewership as much as it is secured through reasoned injunctions, systems of belief, or statutory command. Saying this is not to deny the significance of the rational or the calculative; it is rather to insist that any form of rule draws on variable applications of each, and that certain ostensibly calculative technologies—such as a survey exercise or a numerical chart—can have equally important aesthetic functions, capable of training a particular way of seeing as much as they convey information or organize thoughts.

Bernard Cohn long ago turned our attention to the aesthetic underpinnings of political rule. In his classic studies of what he called the "investigative modalities" used to assemble knowledge and build the imperial capacity to govern, Cohn noted that in addition to survey and enumerative

modalities such as mapping "modality" was central to colonial this observational modality space looks and how it should of how new colonial visitor an already narrated experience of movement, the colonial familiar, preinformed ways: traders, Banaras as a Hindu of seeing—for example, by gal or to associate shopping place what Jacques Rancière of aesthetic engagement with and disorder.¹⁸ When a str space becomes dominant w the viewing public to identi that space becomes the basis what it should be, normative

Whereas Cohn studied h ferentiate between the native and essentialize native form indicate how it enables the e not belong in contemporary if they violate planning law with land-use plans. India is of the reliance on visual iden tification drives that took pl de Janeiro in preparation fo use of aesthetic markers of u cities. Yet while there is gro which urban systems funct of this work presumes that unused, government either else descends into ad hoc an

For example, in his hi AbdouMaliq Simone argue sions of it are unable to com ble of putting bodies and o disinvestment in "order," b cadastre, property and ad very possibility of putting in "common future," only exist

ance, what Ian Hacking calls an
ve techniques.¹⁴
looking for maps and the ava-
h urban government operated
ce in Delhi required no such
re attention to absences than
ound a conspicuous absence
s on either the population or
statistical summary of the size
has not been reported since
e of the total number of *jhuggi*
report 1998 numbers as if they
k, when I held out hope that
f right to information requests
the number of *jhuggis* demol-
though I received a handwrit-
ding the responding officer's
final reply to my request said,
on."

through technoscientific pro-
such as maps, censuses, and
techniques in the world-class
f how rule there is achieved. If
planning, this absence of syn-
type of failure.¹⁶ But the above
government. Rather, millennial
mode of governing space, one
who and what belongs in the
des of appearance, not docu-
at follow, under conditions of
n public modes of viewership
njunctions, systems of belief,
o deny the significance of the
st that any form of rule draws
certain ostensibly calculative
a numerical chart—can have
le of training a particular way
n or organize thoughts.

ion to the aesthetic underpin-
of what he called the "inves-
ledge and build the imperial
on to survey and enumerative

modalities such as mapping and census, what he termed an "observational modality" was central to colonial government in India. Cohn argued that this observational modality operates by creating expectations for how space looks and how it should look. He discussed this drawing from records of how new colonial visitors to India were trained to see "India" through an already narrated experience. By following set itineraries and patterns of movement, the colonial eye was directed to view strange sites/sights in familiar, preinformed ways: Calcutta as a city of slums, Bombay as a city of traders, Banaras as a Hindu city.¹⁷ As a method of training a particular way of seeing—for example, by guiding the eye to identify "the slum" as illegal or to associate shopping malls with progress—this modality can put in place what Jacques Rancière calls a "community of sense," or a shared mode of aesthetic engagement with mutually recognizable visual markers of order and disorder.¹⁸ When a strong narrative of moving through and seeing space becomes dominant within a population—that is, when it prompts the viewing public to identify with the state's vision—then how one sees that space becomes the basis for assessing what that space is, positively, and what it should be, normatively.

Whereas Cohn studied how this observational modality was used to differentiate between the native and the modern and to categorize, simplify, and essentialize native forms of life under colonial rule, the above scenes indicate how it enables the easy visual identification of what does and does not belong in contemporary urban landscapes. Malls appear planned even if they violate planning law; slums look unplanned even if they conform with land-use plans. India is of course not alone here: we need only think of the reliance on visual identifiers of blight in American cities or the beautification drives that took place in the slums and *favelas* of Beijing and Rio de Janeiro in preparation for the Olympic Games to note the widespread use of aesthetic markers of unbelonging in the governance of contemporary cities. Yet while there is growing interest today in the informal means by which urban systems function beyond grids, cadastres, and zones, much of this work presumes that when these calculative devices are missing or unused, government either disappears as a coherent conceptualization or else descends into ad hoc and localized systems of arbitrary rule.¹⁹

For example, in his highly influential reading of the African city, AbdouMalik Simone argues: "Vacuums of authority or excessive expressions of it are unable to consolidate strong overarching perspectives capable of putting bodies and objects in 'their' place." For Simone, under- and disinvestment in "order," by which he means technologies of "zoning, cadastre, property and administration," create a scenario in which the very possibility of putting in place a coherent urban vision, what he calls a "common future," only exist through pirate practices "cut off" from formal

state systems. As he writes: "Despite all of the development regimes that attempt to bring order and efficacy to African cities, they continue to be, in many respects, virtual cities," impossible achievements.²⁰ In Delhi, the lack of synoptic maps and statistics does not signal an absence of an overarching perspective, and limitations on rational planning technologies have not reduced order. Instead, what we find there is a situation in which it is the virtual city itself—an imagined future city—that produces the common future toward which collective energies are directed. In other words, as in so many postcolonial cities where development remains indexed to clearly felt, even while unmeasured, standards of order and appearance, it is those standards themselves that direct action in Delhi. This global index is what planners, politicians, and citizens in India call the world-class city.

IMAGINING THE WORLD-CLASS CITY

The project of world-class city making in Delhi, as in other emerging market contexts, is marked by a strong normative drive to reach globally indexed targets of development: to host prestigious international events, to house Fortune 500 companies, and to offer lifestyles capable of attracting global consumer classes. In millennial Delhi, this project transformed the long-standing postcolonial anxiety around catching up—the sense of temporal lag imposed first by colonialism and then the gradualism of fifty years of modernist planning after Independence²¹—into a far bolder fantasy futurism. This futurist disposition is indeed central to what I mean by millennial Delhi, a moment of market triumphalism beginning in the late 1990s that sketched the world-class city as an imminent break from the perceived inefficiencies and encumbrances of the more socialistic, planned city of the past—state-regulated housing, restrictions on business, bureaucratic red tape, and the regular deferral, for the elite at least, of individual advancement in the name of the collective. The world-class city thus operates as a future-oriented technology, shifting collective horizons toward the long run and projecting the norms of appearance and civility of the future city across the existing landscape. While world-class city making continues in Delhi to this day, I mark the end of Delhi's millennial moment at 2010, the year the city hosted the Commonwealth Games, a mega-event that the state used as a primary justification for massive physical transformations of the city, but the execution of which eventually led to corruption charges that, in ways that I turn to in the conclusion, have contributed to a shift in the nature and surety of world-class city making. Throughout this book I therefore refer to "millennial Delhi" in the past tense, and the world-class city and world-class city making in the present tense.

Delhi came to be characterized as a version, or an attempt to replicate, of the world-class cities. It was thus common for the wealthy bungalow owner to make a claim that their house held symbolic significance for planners and administrators. From the modernist impulse of upholding a single city standard, extracting measurable data to be benchmarked and achieved, the aesthetic operates as a reality on the basis of both locally circulating and ever-shifting the world-class aesthetic. "Paris?"; rather, it asks whether a world-class city, where Paris for. The world-class city making is a particular way of seeing a city of power/knowledge—the potential subjects a will to set their own criteria. Gopal's slum demolitions that D

It is precisely this vision of the future, without planning criteria, that gives us the stepping into an air-conditioned car or the pride of living near the Mahal, give world-class city. It captures this experience well, but we know when we are in the obscenity or divinity, 'we' the instant shock of recognition. It is the sensory knowledge of what is or is not world-class, the boundary between what is and what is not world-class ambitions.

Like other utopian projects, not progressive improvement sketches the interim as a casting elements of the p

the development regimes that in cities, they continue to be, in achievements.²⁰ In Delhi, the lack of an absence of an overarching planning technologies have not is a situation in which it is the —that produces the common directed. In other words, as in ment remains indexed to clearly order and appearance, it is those Delhi. This global index is what all the world-class city.

WORLD-CLASS CITY

Delhi, as in other emerging formative drive to reach globally prestigious international events, offer lifestyles capable of attracting Delhi, this project transformed and catching up—the sense of and then the gradualism of fifty dence²¹—into a far bolder fan-deed central to what I mean by mphalism beginning in the late s an imminent break from the of the more socialistic, planned restrictions on business, bureau- the elite at least, of individual The world-class city thus oper- collective horizons toward the urance and civility of the future rld-class city making continues i's millennial moment at 2010, n Games, a mega-event that the assive physical transformations ually led to corruption charges on, have contributed to a shift making. Throughout this book past tense, and the world-class ent tense.

Delhi came to be characterized in its millennial moment by a new extro- version, or an attempt to index the city's imagined future to other global cities. It was thus common to hear Delhi residents—from *jhuggi* dwellers to wealthy bungalow owners—distill the diverse changes taking place around them into the claim that “Delhi will look like Paris.”²² While Paris has long held symbolic significance as the “capital of modernity”—including among planners and administrators in urban India—the world-class city differs from the modernist impulse characteristic of earlier periods.²³ Rather than upholding a single city or urban model as an ideal—the modern—and extracting measurable design or infrastructural attributes from it that can be benchmarked and achieved (aha! We are modern now!), the world-class aesthetic operates as a regime for partitioning visual attributes of space on the basis of both locally rooted quality of life concerns as well as globally circulating and ever-shifting images of world-class spaces. The question the world-class aesthetic asks then is not “Does Delhi look sufficiently like Paris?”; rather, it asks whether the space in question would be acceptable in a world-class city, where any other iconic city might just as easily stand in for Paris. The world-class city is thus the aspirational target toward which world-class city making is oriented. It operates as a diffuse signifier, training a particular way of seeing and putting in place an aesthetically grounded form of power/knowledge—the world-class aesthetic—that inspires among its potential subjects a will to participate in its discourse and to make its visual criteria their own. Gopal evinced this when he said in response to ongoing slum demolitions that Delhi would become beautiful.

It is precisely this vague sense of an improved, more beautiful urban future, without planning benchmarks or even mutually agreeable definitional criteria, that gives the world-class city its efficacy: the excitement of stepping into an air-conditioned, stainless steel carriage on the Delhi Metro, or the pride of living near a shopping mall with more marble than the Taj Mahal, give world-classness a sensory self-evidence. Amita Baviskar captures this experience well: “We may not have been to Singapore or London, but we know when we are in the presence of something ‘world-class.’ Like obscenity or divinity, ‘world-classness’ provokes a response from within, an instant shock of recognition.”²⁴ I refer to a world-class aesthetic, then, to signal the sensory knowledge that allows for the easy differentiation between what is or is not world-class and the associated visual criteria that set the boundary between what does or does not belong in a place with world-class ambitions.

Like other utopian projects, world-class city making is oriented toward not progressive improvement, but an already known conclusion. It thereby sketches the interim as but a medium for reaching the anticipated future, casting elements of the present not suitably world-class—most notably the

slum—as anachronistic. In India, this is not the same anachronism that characterized the earlier developmentalist era of five-year plans, socialistic housing policy, and inclusive planning targets. In this developmentalist dispensation, which lasted through the Nehruvian era (1947–1989) and which was only slowly replaced by a more market-oriented dispensation through the 1990s, slums were seen as labor camps housing the working class—the builders of the modern city. Such areas were anachronistic in the sense that planning discourse registered them as insufficiently developed—lagging areas yet to have benefited from the modernizing and civilizing impulse of the urban. They needed to be ripped out of the village past, upgraded, and civilized through physical and social planning.²⁵ In the millennial moment, the slum shifted from labor camp to undercapitalized public resource, and slum dwellers were rescripted as encroachers obstructing the full realization of the world-class urban dream.²⁶

World-class city making hence needs to be seen as an inherently speculative project, premised on an almost prophetic temporality in which the present is wagered on the future. This speculative disposition was trained in millennial Delhi through persistent state, media, and business narratives declaring Delhi's (and India's) impending transformation. It was also performed through the circulation of images that hubristically projected a picture of the future already known—from artistic renderings of the future cityscape that real estate firms plastered around town on massive advertising hoardings, to the celebrated *Delhi Master Plan 2021*, which begins on page 1 with its goal of making Delhi a world-class city. I explore one especially potent future-making technology in chapter 1: mathematical projections of India's class structure that depict a poverty-free future and that provide a narrative wherein clearing slums to make way for luxury real estate appears a most inclusive endeavor. The speculative disposition of the world-class city thus cannot be dissociated from a deeper speculative turn in the urban economy.

Since the mid-1990s, beginning shortly after the advent of the pro-market reforms known as India's New Economic Policy, India's land market has been gradually liberalized, opening up new territories for private investment and prioritizing real estate profit regardless of its social or productive function. Foreign direct investment in real estate more than quadrupled in the late 2000s, with profits so high that companies with no history in property development began diverting profits from core business activities into the purchase of "land banks."²⁷ Speculative land development and the rentiership with which it is associated hence transformed real estate into the vanguard segment of the Indian economy, a speculative vehicle for generating private profit and state revenue, and casting nonprofit-generating land uses as inherently out of place (I discuss this further in chapter 1).

The Delhi government is spending public finances away from food subsidies toward high-speed Metro Rail; more than fifty satellite cities; and the Commonwealth Games built "to dispel most visible poverty."²⁹ Similarly, it has reduced after cost estimates almost doubled after London's Millennium development norms and ambitions and to encourage to upgrade undercapitalized and redevelop areas of the city. It is no secret that, as the Chinese means a slum-free city.³⁰

INCALCULABLE

Despite the strong mandate, the practical means of doing so were of the postcolonial planning decision to remove a slum from cities upon whose land slums was to be removed, for it was a complex chain of bureaucratic survey the households to determine those eligible for resettlement in a resettlement colony, obtaining the demolition, hiring to coordinate the resettlement, only was each of these steps patronage relations extended made the assembly of a demolition could be carried out were tampered with, false when the survey was completed necessary clearances and land people residing in the settlement and setting much of

ot the same anachronism that era of five-year plans, socialistic ts. In this developmentalist dis- an era (1947–1989) and which oriented dispensation through housing the working class—the anachronistic in the sense that efficiently developed—lagging nizing and civilizing impulse of the village past, upgraded, and ng.²⁵ In the millennial moment, apitalized public resource, and ers obstructing the full realiza-

be seen as an inherently specu- etic temporality in which the ulative disposition was trained e, media, and business narra- ing transformation. It was also s that hubristically projected a rtistic renderings of the future ound town on massive adver- aster Plan 2021, which begins world-class city. I explore one y in chapter 1: mathematical epict a poverty-free future and ms to make way for luxury real e speculative disposition of the from a deeper speculative turn

ter the advent of the pro-market Policy, India's land market has y territories for private invest- dless of its social or productive state more than quadrupled in panies with no history in prop- m core business activities into and development and the rent- ansformed real estate into the speculative vehicle for generat- ting nonprofit-generating land further in chapter 1).

The Delhi government participated in this project by gradually shifting public finances away from education, public housing, health care, and food subsidies toward highly visible infrastructure works such as the Delhi Metro Rail; more than fifty new flyovers; two new toll roads to Delhi's posh satellite cities; and the Commonwealth Games Village²⁸—prestige projects built “to dispel most visitors’ first impression that India is a country soaked in poverty.”²⁹ Similarly, it approved \$100 million, which it later retracted after cost estimates almost doubled, for building a signature bridge modeled after London's Millennium Bridge, and liberalized building bylaws and development norms to allow for denser and taller commercial development across the city—all steps to demonstrate the city's world-class ambitions and to encourage rising land prices. The flip side of these efforts to upgrade undercapitalized areas of the city was the need to remove or redevelop areas of the city not deemed suitably world-class. It thus became no secret that, as the Chief Secretary of Delhi declared, “a world-class city means a slum-free city.”³⁰

INCALCULABLE SLUMS AND THE RISE OF AESTHETIC RULE

Despite the strong mandate to remove slums by the early 2000s, the practical means of doing so were limited at the time. Since the establishment of the postcolonial planning apparatus and lasting through the 1990s, the decision to remove a slum lay almost entirely in the hands of the state agencies upon whose land slums were settled. If a settlement on DDA land was to be removed, for example, the DDA was charged with completing a complex chain of bureaucratic work: it had to notify the settlers, survey the households to determine resettlement eligibility, collect fees from those eligible for resettlement, purchase or allocate the necessary land for a resettlement colony, obtain support from the police for protection during the demolition, hire the demolition team for the appropriate day, and coordinate the resettlement exercise with the Municipal Corporation. Not only was each of these steps bureaucratically challenging, but the elaborate patronage relations extending from settlements into the lower bureaucracy made the assembly of accurate survey registers—a requirement before a demolition could be carried out at the time—nearly impossible.³¹ Surveys were tampered with, false names were appended, and between the time when the survey was completed and when the agency obtained the necessary clearances and land appropriations (usually years), the number of people residing in the settlement had changed, thus demanding a new survey and setting much of the same process in motion again. The complex

inscriptive chains necessary for bureaucratic surveillance, in other words, became equally complex chains of social influence, implicating actors and purposes that far exceeded those of the state.

The significance of these inscriptive chains stems from the fact that they are the precise means by which the state is made continuously present in low-income neighborhoods: it is through its written signature, Veena Das argues, that the state finds its way into everyday life. Reports, surveys, identification cards, and other civic insignia bring the state into the life of such neighborhoods by tying social statuses and subjectivities to state categories—such as below poverty line or pre-1990 resident—which are then linked to particular social entitlements, such as subsidized food or an eighteen square meter plot in cases of eviction. But these documentary circuits also embed the state in popular society, thereby giving forms of life without legal standing a position from which to not only manipulate records, but also make citizenship claims.³² Procuring a locally registered ration card, receiving an official electricity bill addressed to one's *jhuggi*, or registering a neighborhood welfare association through the Co-Operative Societies Act provided proof of legality by nature of these documents' incorporation into normal bureaucratic circuits, even though these documents in themselves have nothing to do with housing tenure.³³ Politicians and bureaucrats acknowledged *jhuggi* dwellers' document-backed occupancy claims historically both to cultivate vote banks, as well as because those documents implicated the state in the formation and life of their settlements: settlement histories are also state histories.³⁴

By the dawn of the new millennium, government as "rule by records" hence faced an avalanche of numbers, lists, and records produced with state imprint, but mobilized to rework the state's very order.³⁵ That those living in *jhuggis* are often Muslim, Dalit or from so-called other backward castes, or otherwise socially depressed, and hence constitutionally protected, meant that even when *jhuggi* colonies were threatened with demolition, the judiciary could easily be moved to issue stay orders—which postponed demolition, often indefinitely—to protect the "right to life" of the community, or by noting that slums were actively settled by state agents and were the product of a planning system that failed to provide the low-income housing mandated by the Master Plan.³⁶ As a result, despite sustained state efforts to reduce the growth of *jhuggi* colonies through the 1990s, their number almost doubled over this period.

In the early 2000s, however, there was a huge increase in public interest litigations (PILs) filed against settlements by resident welfare associations (RWAs)—property owners' associations mobilized around quality of life and neighborhood security issues.³⁷ Combined with the announcement of Delhi's successful bid to host the 2010 Commonwealth Games, which

the chief minister declared cities under increasing pressure. In the late 1990s, the and gloomy picture of slums in 2002 observed that "it was not the slum dwellers" according to existing conditions compatible with Delhi's image. The state had begun to endorse existing slums as world-class, and heritage sites. The frequent demands of RWAs and state agencies for failing to clear slums and slums.⁴¹

However, when the courts were to clear slums, judges were to consult government records, and in some cases a position where they were to mention issue informally. In a *jhuggi* colony in South Delhi, the state's position on controversies, claims and court cases of the parties. The records are, however, claims cannot be decided on record.⁴² In many instances, the state's entitlements itself was ambiguous, being prepared to order the state to be obligated to carry out the state's obligations.

Such an absence of cases, which led to the state's absence of bureaucrats and the courts to govern from a distance.⁴³ The state's "action at a distance" relied on inscriptions (e.g., surveys, maps, and statistics) into more generalizable forms of state power (e.g., maps and statistics) to exercise a centralized command to "control" the state's government offices. Delhi, however, broke this pattern of highly localized rather than centralized state power above. Until accurate visual records were available until the cascade of inscriptions in state offices and judges in courts.

Compounding these problems was the state's move to the Municipal Corporation

c surveillance, in other words, influence, implicating actors and e. The state's power stems from the fact that the state is made continuously present through its written signature, Veena Das brings the state into the life of everyday life. Reports, surveys, and maps bring the state into the life of everyday uses and subjectivities to state agents, pre-1990 resident—which are documents, such as subsidized food or ration cards. But these documentary forms of state power, thereby giving forms of state power which to not only manipulate but also to procure. Procuring a locally registered document addressed to one's *jhuggi*, or through the Co-Operative Society nature of these documents' legal status, even though these documents confer housing tenure.³³ Politicians and state agents' document-backed occupation of vote banks, as well as because of the information and life of their settlement histories.³⁴

government as "rule by records" and records produced with state power in every order.³⁵ That those living in the so-called other backward castes, or constitutionally protected, meant to be protected from demolition, the judgments—which postponed demolition to life of the community, and by state agents and were the means to provide the low-income housing despite sustained state efforts through the 1990s, their number

huge increase in public interest by resident welfare associations mobilized around quality of life issues, and the announcement of the Commonwealth Games, which

the chief minister declared Delhi's top priority,³⁸ this placed land agencies under increasing pressure from both above and below to clean up the city. In the late 1990s, the courts increasingly took notice of "the dismal and gloomy picture of such *jhuggi*/jhopries coming up regularly,"³⁹ and in 2002 observed that "it would require 272 years to resettle the slum dwellers" according to existing procedures.⁴⁰ This set of conditions was incompatible with Delhi's imagined world-class future, so the courts—which had begun to endorse explicitly the vision of making Delhi a showpiece, world-class, and heritage city at the time—responded to the increasingly frequent demands of RWAs by intervening in slum matters and rebuking state agencies for failing to address the "menace of illegal encroachment" and slums.⁴¹

However, when the courts pushed state agencies to more aggressively clear slums, judges were befuddled by messy ground realities, missing government records, and incomplete surveys. The courts found themselves in a position where they were unable to even assess the size of the problem, not to mention issue informed action orders. For example, in a case against a *jhuggi* colony in South Delhi, the High Court stated: "There are several controversies, claims and counter claims made by the learned counsel for the parties. The records are, however, scanty and the said claims and counter claims cannot be decided on the basis of existing material and documents on record."⁴² In many instances, the ownership of the land occupied by settlements itself was ambiguous, putting the court in the strange position of being prepared to order a demolition, but not knowing which agency was obligated to carry out the order.

Such an absence of cadastral precision was widespread in slum-related cases, which led to the absence of a synoptic vision by which upper-level bureaucrats and the courts could "survey a large territory at a glance" and govern from a distance.⁴³ For the sociologist of science Bruno Latour, such "action at a distance" relies on a "cascade" or relay of measurements and inscriptions (e.g., survey registers) that can be combined and simplified into more generalizable and thus legible representations of the territory (e.g., maps and statistical tables) as they move up the chain of administrative command to "centers of calculation," such as courtrooms and centralized government offices.⁴⁴ The absence of accurate baseline surveys in Delhi, however, broke this cascade, rendering knowledge of slum space highly localized rather than abstractly knowable and manipulable from above. Until accurate visual simplifications of slum space were secured (i.e., until the cascade of inscriptions was complete), bureaucrats sitting in state offices and judges in courtrooms had their hands tied, or so it seemed.

Compounding these calculative challenges was the fact that according to the Municipal Corporation, 70 percent of Delhi was "unauthorized,"

meaning that it violated land use codes or building bylaws in one way or another.⁴⁵ If the court were to begin removing all unauthorized land uses, most of Delhi would have to be razed, including many developments central to Delhi's world-class ambitions—such as the Vasant Kunj shopping mall complex described in Scene 1 above. Thus, strict enforcement of the Master Plan or development codes, which had been avoided for almost fifty years, would lead to not just a slum-free city, but also a business-, mall-, and industry-free city. Recognizing this dilemma, the Municipal Corporation submitted in the High Court that the problem of unauthorized constructions and slums is “mammoth in nature—and cannot be controlled by simply dealing under the existing laws or under the provisions of [Delhi's] master plan.”⁴⁶ Rational bureaucratic procedures and calculative planning, in other words, were not up to the task of world-class city making.

The courts responded to this dilemma by abandoning the system of rule by records, which was based on the requirement that state agencies upon whose land *jhuggis* were settled create map- and survey-based simplifications of the occupied land. Instead of requiring these complex and increasingly politicized calculative procedures, the courts started using a surrogate indicator to identify illegality: the “look” of space. That is, the judiciary started to adopt the position that settlements of *jhuggis* were illegal not just because they occupied public land, a position that had proven ineffective in remedying the growing menace of slums, but because they violated the world-class aesthetic.

I explore the conditions that made such aesthetic judgments possible in chapters 2, 3, and 4. Chapter 2, “The Power of Property,” examines an urban governance experiment called Bhagidari—a word meaning “participation” in Hindi—that gave RWAs and the property owners they represent increased access to state decision-making channels in Delhi. If the urban poor have been able to secure housing historically by using documentary and patronage ties to implicate themselves in the spaces of the local state, then Delhi's Bhagidari Scheme, I show, had the effect of gentrifying the state by tuning these same spaces to the quality-of-life and civic demands of RWAs. Despite being celebrated for enhancing citizen-government partnership, this scheme empowered property owners, allowing them to use state channels to extend their codes of civility and appearance beyond their homes and neighborhoods and across the whole of urban space. The world-class city is thus founded on not only speculative theories of ever-rising land prices (the focus of chapter 1, “World-Class City Making”), but also the glorification of property ownership as a foundation of urbanity.

In chapter 3, “Nuisance Talk,” I consider how propertied codes of civility and appearance became normalized into a popular aesthetic sensibility in millennial Delhi. I do so by tracing how property owners' everyday

depictions of the nuisance hood lay talk into an organized talk—a type of speech reappropriations of space—was it helped consolidate and belongs in the world-class self-evidently out of place.

Nuisance, an inherent revulsion, is a long-standing slum is gross,” or “that statements of slums as might be unlikely to dispute—performative effects that to carry statutory force. Criminalization.” Review Delhi from the past through of court proceedings and classify distant territories the massive demolition thetic codes. Specifically to include not only objects the judiciary increasingly India, as nuisances, the might apply to an overfl

Chapters 2, 3, and 4 thetic was put in place in to borrow Rancière's ph boundary between order thereby allowing the ci elite neighborhood assoc the book turns to the co ated the world-class aest

To explore the contradiction both imposed externally analytic of the aesthetic political contestation th it. According to Rancière mining what presents it

building bylaws in one way or
 vying all unauthorized land uses,
 including many developments cen-
 tral as the Vasant Kunj shopping
 mall. Thus, strict enforcement of the
 regulations had been avoided for almost fifty
 years, but also a business-, mall-, and
 residential, the Municipal Corporation
 problem of unauthorized construc-
 tion—and cannot be controlled by
 law under the provisions of [Delhi's]
 procedures and calculative planning,
 world-class city making.

by abandoning the system of rule
 government that state agencies upon
 top-down and survey-based simplifica-
 tion of these complex and increas-
 ingly complex courts started using a surrogate
 of space. That is, the judiciary
 of *jhuggis* were illegal not just
 because that had proven ineffective
 laws, but because they violated the

with aesthetic judgments possible
 "Power of Property," examines an
amlat—a word meaning "parti-
 cipatory"—property owners they represent
 channels in Delhi. If the urban
 history by using documentary
 in the spaces of the local state,
 had the effect of gentrifying the
 quality-of-life and civic demands
 enhancing citizen-government
 property owners, allowing them to
 civility and appearance beyond
 across the whole of urban space.

not only speculative theories of
 1, "World-Class City Making"),
 ship as a foundation of urbanity.
 how propertied codes of civil-
 to a popular aesthetic sensibil-
 how property owners' everyday

depictions of the nuisance and incivility of slums moved from neighbor-
 hood lay talk into an organizing lens for remaking the city. As this nuisance
 talk—a type of speech rooted in localized, class-specific habits and appro-
 priations of space—was taken up by the media, the state, and the judiciary,
 it helped consolidate an aesthetic consensus concerning who and what
 belongs in the world-class city. Slums in this new aesthetic discourse were
 self-evidently out of place.

Nuisance, an inherently aesthetic category used to identify sensory
 revulsion, is a long-standing type of descriptive utterance in India: "that
 slum is gross," or "that street stinks." Yet as seemingly benign, descriptive
 statements of slums as nuisances—statements even slum residents would
 be unlikely to dispute—entered state and judicial discourse, they acquired
 performative effects that allowed the simple identification of unsightliness
 to carry statutory force. I document this process in chapter 4, "Aesthetic
 Criminalization." Reviewing court documents in slum-related cases in
 Delhi from the past thirty years and drawing on detailed observations
 of court proceedings and the practical means by which judges "see" and
 classify distant territories, I here show how the judiciary was able to order
 the massive demolition of slums based on their affront to world-class aes-
 thetic codes. Specifically, by reinterpreting the category of public nuisance
 to include not only objects or actions but also entire population groups,
 the judiciary increasingly classified slums, for the first time in postcolonial
 India, as nuisances, the remedy for which became removal—the same as
 might apply to an overflowing dumpster or sewage pond.

Chapters 2, 3, and 4 together aim to show how a certain world-class aes-
 thetic was put in place in millennial Delhi—a "distribution of the sensible,"
 to borrow Rancière's phrase, that delimited sensory experience, setting the
 boundary between order and disorder, the visible and the invisible, and
 thereby allowing the city's "governors," be they planners, politicians, or
 elite neighborhood associations, to rule by aesthetics.⁴⁷ The remainder of
 the book turns to the complex ways in which *jhuggi* dwellers have appropri-
 ated the world-class aesthetic, turning it in another direction.

AESTHETIC POLITICS

To explore the contradictory process by which codes of appearance are
 both imposed externally and appropriated through inner faculties, I use an
 analytic of the aesthetic that treats sensory experience as a vibrant site of
 political contestation that while informed by rationality is not reducible to
 it. According to Rancière the aesthetic is "a system of *a priori* forms deter-
 mining what presents itself to sense experience," although the *a priori* here

is not founded on a transcendental sublime, as is the case for Immanuel Kant, but rather in social structures that appear or are handed down *as though* they are fixed and natural.⁴⁸ For Kant, when “we find ourselves concurring spontaneously in an aesthetic judgment, able to agree that a certain phenomenon is sublime or beautiful, we exercise a precious form of intersubjectivity, establishing ourselves as a community of feeling subjects linked by a quick sense of our shared capacities.”⁴⁹ Yet Kant’s community—a “community of sense” in Rancière’s language—while potentially emancipatory, can easily slip into a means of hegemony. This is because the aesthetic takes root in the sensuous immediacies of the individual while simultaneously bonding them to a greater whole—the “community of feeling subjects.” What through social and perceptual training strikes one as individual taste—rooted in one’s own inner faculties—is, in a hegemonic order, the affective material that secures our sometimes unwitting promotion of a common good defined through hegemonic norms.

Recall the example of Gopal from Scene 3 above, who said, in the face of his own possible displacement, that the world-class city will be beautiful. What is profound about Gopal’s utterance is that while it was his own aesthetic judgment, it simultaneously seemed to have an objective rooting, as if it were inscribed on a map that anyone could look at and agree on. This is what Rancière means when he defines the distribution of the sensible [*le partage du sensible*] as “the system of self-evident facts of sense perception that simultaneously discloses the existence of something in common”—a shared aesthetic disposition—as well as “who can have a share in what is common to the community.”⁵⁰ For Gopal, the beauty of the world-class city was a self-evident fact, known just by looking; even while he recognized that the settlement that housed him had no part in that community (the world-class city), he participated in what was common to it. In this way, what I am calling rule by aesthetics consists not just of the deployment of standardized aesthetic sensibilities for partitioning and ordering things—the work of the state, the judiciary, political elites, or broadly defined governors—which is the focus of the first part of the book. It also stems from the complex ways in which these aesthetic sensibilities are established among a community of sense—including those who have no ostensible part in *le partage*—shaping what they see and can say, even when they might disagree otherwise.⁵¹

The English phrase “the distribution of the sensible,” from the French *le partage du sensible*, is somewhat inadequate, even awkward, due to the fact that the French *partage* can have two opposite meanings: “to have in common, to share” or “to divide, to share out.”⁵² Despite this awkwardness, what I find compelling about Rancière’s theory of the aesthetic as the “distribution of the sensible” is that the *partage* (as the dividing-up and

sharing out) of parts and positions, as Rancière says, “the manner in which the sensible is distributed and in what way various parts of the community participate in this distribution.”⁵³ In other words, the right to participation—even by those who have no part—the “part with no part.” This leads us to ask: Why does he participate? Why does he partake in the world-class city? In arguing the beautiful from the ugly, he is not—when it seems against his interests—arguing, and what I find Gopal’s point to notice, is that any social order that produces a community—produces an unequal distribution of the sensible—what they can see and what they can say, what they can do, as mere noise, and thus who has no part. The latter part of the book (chapters 4–6) discusses the sensibilities in *jhuggi* dwellers’ apartments, arguing that statements like Gopal’s take up dominant norms of appearance, statements of belief or signs of status, the seeable and the sayable aimed at the subjects of discourse: they are effective.

But before getting there, let us return to *jhuggi* dwellers’ political demands and the rule by aesthetics for it is only with an understanding of the rule by aesthetics which they found themselves in the *jhuggi* dwellers’ situation above, through the 1997 success preventing or postponing the elementary circuitry of the state and the judiciary to protect their rights, for this type of plea when, in 1997, the Bombay Municipal Corporation was fighting their right, as citizens, to live in the *jhuggi* dwellers’ in 1997, the Supreme Court struck down the poor further, stating that “Article 19(1)(d) accords right to residence and not to the mental right.”⁵⁵

The reinterpretation of the rule by aesthetics in the form of aesthetic rule that it is the right to life was recognized in the *jhuggi* dwellers’ situation of *jhuggi* dwellers as nuisances.

ne, as is the case for Immanuel appear or are handed down as at, when "we find ourselves con- gment, able to agree that a cer- we exercise a precious form of a community of feeling subjects ies."⁴⁹ Yet Kant's community—a e—while potentially emancipa- ny. This is because the aesthetic the individual while simultane- the "community of feeling sub- training strikes one as individual —is, in a hegemonic order, the times unwitting promotion of a norms.

e 3 above, who said, in the face world-class city will be beauti- nce is that while it was his own ed to have an objective rooting, could look at and agree on. This e distribution of the sensible [*le* vident facts of sense perception e of something in common"—a who can have a share in what is , the beauty of the world-class looking; even while he recog- had no part in that community what was common to it. In this consists not just of the deploy- s for partitioning and ordering ary, political elites, or broadly he first part of the book. It also these aesthetic sensibilities are —including those who have no they see and can say, even when

the sensible," from the French uate, even awkward, due to the opposite meanings: "to have in e out."⁵² Despite this awkward- ère's theory of the aesthetic as *partage* (as the dividing up and

sharing out) of parts and positions that it puts in place also shapes, as he says, "the manner in which something in common *lends itself to participa- tion* and in what way various individuals have [or do not have] a part in this distribution."⁵³ In other words, it sets what is shared—what lends itself to participation—even by those with no share: the politically abandoned, the "part with no part." This is the question Gopal's statement motivates us to ask: Why does he participate in the language of authority? Why does he partake in the world-class aesthetic—a particular regime of partition- ing the beautiful from the ugly, that which belongs from that which does not—when it seems against his interest to do so? What I take Rancière to be arguing, and what I find Gopal and his Shiv Camp neighbors instructing us to notice, is that any social order—the distribution of parts and positions in a community—produces and is produced by an aesthetic order—the dis- tribution of the sensible—which shapes how differently placed individuals see and what they can say, what gets recognized as speech and what is heard as mere noise, and thus who has the talent to speak in sensible terms. In the latter part of the book (chapters 5 and 6), I explore the performative possi- bilities in *jhuggi* dwellers' appropriation of dominant aesthetic codes, argu- ing that statements like Gopal's—statements by the excluded that seem to take up dominant norms of appearance—should be read not as descriptive statements of belief or signs of resignation, but rather as experiments in the seeable and the sayable aimed at garnering recognition as legitimate sub- jects of discourse: they are efforts to *take part* in order to *have a part*.

But before getting there, let me make clear the degree to which *jhuggi* dwellers' political demands were rendered mere noise in millennial Delhi, for it is only with an understanding of the constrained environment within which they found themselves that these experiments make sense. As I men- tioned above, through the 1990s settlers and their advocates found great success preventing or postponing displacement by intervening in the docu- mentary circuitry of the state or, when all else failed, by appealing to the judiciary to protect their right to life. The Supreme Court opened the door for this type of plea when, in a landmark decision in 1985, it challenged the Bombay Municipal Corporation's eviction of pavement dwellers for violat- ing their right, as citizens, to livelihood, a component of the right to life.⁵⁴ In 1997, the Supreme Court strengthened the occupancy rights of the urban poor further, stating that "Article 19(1)(e) [of the Indian Constitution] accords right to residence and settlement in any part of India as a funda- mental right."⁵⁵

The reinterpretation of nuisance law I describe in chapter 4, and the form of aesthetic rule that it codified, fundamentally transformed how the right to life was recognized in millennial Delhi. Specifically, the classifica- tion of *jhuggi* dwellers as nuisances redefined them not as a depressed social

group whose right to life was subject to great risk, but as themselves sources of risk to property-owning citizens' right to life. My review of legal judgments here specifically shows how the basic statement "slums are illegal" and reference to *jhuggi* colonies as "illegal encroachments"—common, almost taken-for-granted utterances in millennial Delhi—gained widespread circulation in judicial discourse only after the equation of slums with nuisance in the early 2000s. From this point on, *jhuggi* dwellers became objects—nuisances, encroachers—to be managed, not citizens warranting equal protection.⁵⁶

There are numerous examples of this new judicial position, but the case of Nangla Machi is particularly instructive for the boldness with which the Supreme Court turned down the right to life plea of the 2,800 households that once lived in this multigenerational settlement. Nangla Machi was located in central Delhi, not far from the Supreme Court building, and it predominantly housed Dalit laborers.⁵⁷ The Special Leave Petition submitted by Nangla Machi's lawyer made note of this fact, and it shared all the other features of previous, successful right to life petitions: "The citizens have a right to life, a right which cannot be exercised without [a] proper place to live," and "the demolition of said slum without ensuring proper relocation of its poor residents is in total violation of their fundamental right of Right to Shelter, enshrined under Article 21 of the Constitution as interpreted by this Hon'ble Court in its various judgements [*sic*]."⁵⁸ The Bench responded definitively in 2006: "When you are occupying illegal land, you have no legal right, what of talk of fundamental right, to stay there a minute longer."⁵⁹ Residents of *jhuggi* colonies in millennial Delhi hence found themselves self-evidently out of place, cast as outsiders in a city they had considered home for decades, and relegated to a state of abandonment—a condition in which, Agamben writes, one "is not, in fact, simply set outside the law and made indifferent to it but *abandoned* by it, that is, exposed and threatened on the threshold in which law and life, outside and inside, become indistinguishable."⁶⁰

This is the context in which I entered the settlement I call Shiv Camp. During the course of my fieldwork, a court case was being heard in the Delhi High Court over the settlement's status, and on two separate occasions during the twelve months that I spent visiting Shiv Camp in 2007 and 2008, state bulldozers descended upon the settlement, razing around a quarter of its *jhuggis*. Like settlers elsewhere in Delhi, Shiv Camp residents found limited scope for judicial redress; similarly, they found that the documentary credentials of belonging they had so carefully assembled over the previous years went unrecognized: politicians and bureaucrats, after all, had little power in the face of orders from India's upper courts. How, then, were they to stake their claim to the city?

I was initially unprepared for the complex and chaotic nature of life in Delhi. In Delhi, the network of *Sajha Manch* (Joint Platforms) was involved in the legal analysis of the Hazards Centre, the *rehabilitation* Manch. The vibrant group of activists spent months in Delhi (and throughout the city throughout my follow-up) and were incredibly successful over time, utilizing patronage, documentation, and litigation. I learned from this in the Gandhian old timers, radical communist student leaders who had the right *nāre-bāzī* (slogan: *hamārā nārā* (struggle is our own)) consisted of.

When I entered Shiv Camp, the settlement was demolished over a hundred years ago. Such *sangharsh* was not a new phenomenon. Residents described their position in the city, even adopting the notion of *incivility* to characterize slum incivility. To them, the lack of *jāgriktā* (awakenedness) was a sign of *incivility*. Delhi's slum-based *incivility* was a prominent scholarly account of the global slum dweller.⁶¹ Javier *incivility* was a polluted Argentine shantytown, a place of *incivility* as an effect of environmental *incivility* taken beliefs people hold," to imagine a world otherwise *incivility*.⁶² In Loïc Wacziarg *incivility*," he argues that the American *incivility* he extends his argument to the *incivility* of Brazilian *favelas*—are full of *incivility* economy, but also from the *incivility* of numerous populations that *incivility* political utility.⁶³ Such *incivility* of the *incivility* of slum *incivility* that aims to recover subaltern *incivility* organizational capacity and *incivility* sense of what politics looks like.

at risk, but as themselves sources
to life. My review of legal judg-
asic statement "slums are illegal"
gal encroachments"—common,
millennial Delhi—gained wide-
y after the equation of slums with
point on, *jhuggi* dwellers became
managed, not citizens warranting

ew judicial position, but the case
for the boldness with which the
life plea of the 2,800 households
settlement. Nangla Machi was
Supreme Court building, and it
e Special Leave Petition submit-
of this fact, and it shared all the
t to life petitions: "The citizens
be exercised without [a] proper
d slum without ensuring proper
olation of their fundamental right
e 21 of the Constitution as inter-
s judgements [*sic*]."⁵⁸ The Bench
u are occupying illegal land, you
mental right, to stay there a min-
in millennial Delhi hence found
t as outsiders in a city they had
ed to a state of abandonment—a
"is not, in fact, simply set out-
abandoned by it, that is, exposed
law and life, outside and inside,

the settlement I call Shiv Camp.
urt case was being heard in the
atus, and on two separate occa-
ent visiting Shiv Camp in 2007
n the settlement, razing around
here in Delhi, Shiv Camp resi-
ess; similarly, they found that the
had so carefully assembled over
ticians and bureaucrats, after all,
India's upper courts. How, then,

I was initially unprepared to address this question. My entry point into the complex and charged field of land politics and slum demolitions in Delhi was a network of slum-based organizations and unions called Sajha Manch (Joint Platform). During my initial research in 2005, I was involved in the legal analysis and documentation of slum demolitions with the Hazards Centre, the research and support NGO associated with Sajha Manch. The vibrant group of activists with whom I interacted in my early months in Delhi (and who helped keep me abreast of events across the city throughout my following twenty-four months of fieldwork) had been incredibly successful over the preceding years in mobilizing settlers and utilizing patronage, documentary, and judicial channels to prevent demolition. I learned from this inspiring and eclectic group of slum-based youth, Gandhian old timers, radicalized social workers, and ultra-left and communist student leaders what a community meeting looked like, how to do the right *nāre-bāzī* (sloganeering)—*sangharsh hamārā nārā hai, sangharsh hamārā nārā* (struggle is our slogan)—and what true *sangharsh* (resistance) consisted of.

When I entered Shiv Camp shortly after the Municipal Corporation demolished over a hundred of its *jhuggis* in an unannounced raid in 2007, such *sangharsh* was notable for its absence. In fact, like Gopal, most residents described their possible eviction as a necessary step to beautify the city, even adopting the nuisance talk activist property owners used to characterize slum incivility. To many of my activist comrades, this signaled the lack of *jāgriktā* (awakening) they saw holding back a true political movement. Delhi's slum-based activists were not alone in offering this reading. Prominent scholarly accounts also question the "historical agency" of the global slum dweller.⁶¹ Javier Auyero and Debora Swistun, in their study of a polluted Argentine shantytown, describe the absence of collective resistance as an effect of environmental uncertainty and the "confused and mistaken beliefs people hold," a status of degraded life that hinders their ability to imagine a world otherwise—what the authors call a condition of "hopeful submission."⁶² In Loïc Wacquant's influential study of "advanced marginality," he argues that the American black ghetto and the French *banlieue*—and he extends his argument to informal settlements through a brief discussion of Brazilian *favelas*—are functionally disconnected not just from the global economy, but also from politics, operating as "mere warehouses for super-numerary populations that no longer have any identifiable economic or political utility."⁶³ Such narratives, I argue in chapter 3, sustain the territorial stigmatization of slums and those who live in them. But even literature that aims to recover subaltern political agency through a focus on the organizational capacity and collective resistance of the urban poor offers little sense of what politics look like when traditional patronage, documentary,

re foreclosed, as is so common in
sert vernacular land markets into
what some call the globalization of

dies strewn before bulldozers and
celebrated, when viewed through
ent they prove to be exceptional,
diated through far more mundane
a place and over the materials for
his sense, the presence or absence
ange basis for explaining political
ents, for example, did encamp en
ted Member of Parliament; they
ldozers set upon razing their *jhug-*
urt petition, and launch a hunger
s that we would tend to count as
of how settlers actually cultivated
longer wanted them. I therefore
of Shiv Camp residents who, like
eir own imagination. Just as under
nt when settlers appropriated the
licating themselves in its inscrip-
normative workings of dominant
uplicate everyday life in the work-
er ends. In other words, I turn to
often glossed over by scholars and

World-Class Detritus," beginning
on raid in Shiv Camp. Recording
eir own settlement as an aesthetic
etic became the implicit ordering
precarious position. Yet rather than
sign of resignation or inner belief,
rent performative settings—from
ums—showing their entailments
initially expect. While these state-
itized, slum-free city, they simul-
r aspirations intelligible on terms
part in the world-class aesthetic,
e city-visioning process, position-
odds—turn the city imagined in

After examining the performative possibilities of taking up the world-class aesthetic in their everyday speech and public engagements in chapter 5, I turn in chapter 6, "The Propriety of Property," to the specific terms on which settlers imagine and speak of the future city. Specifically, I trace how residents adopted a particular "slum future"—government resettlement—and invested it with ethical force aimed at transforming how those who live in a world-class city, even on its margins, are placed. In light of the state's celebration of property ownership as a pathway to legal recognition and the speculative profits the land market promised, Shiv Camp residents often entered a speculative register in describing resettlement, transforming it from a geography of banishment into a geography of hope. Yet while a refined vision of resettlement provides a foundation for settlers to make claims and assert their place within the world-class city, it also reinforces a model of propertied citizenship that stigmatizes and further excludes those who continue to rely on public and common land.

The conclusion thus traces the rise of new policies of inclusive growth aimed at transforming slum land into legible and monetized property markets. In the wake of a series of corruption and governance crises in the aftermath of the Commonwealth Games, and a more general tarnishing of the image of the world-class city, a period that marks the end of millennial Delhi, the Delhi government rebranded Delhi as "the caring city." Amidst popular calls for enhanced systems of public accountability, inclusive growth emerged as a new paradigm of development in which the property market was construed as the core technology for allowing the urban poor to—in the language of the Ministry of Urban Housing and Poverty Alleviation—"create and share in the wealth of the nation." Along with a renewed commitment to calculative techniques for monitoring population and territory, such as biometric ID cards and comprehensive digital land maps, inclusive growth aims to use land titling to transform property markets into mechanisms of both financial and political inclusion for the poor. But under conditions of such market rule, the urban poor find that the propertied citizenship on offer is accessible only by submitting to displacement and resettlement. As a result, inclusion ironically comes at the expense of a place in the city. The contradiction at the heart of the world-class city hence lies in the fact that its future depends more than ever not on middle-class and elite buy-in, but rather on the participation of the urban poor—the very group being expelled to the margins—in the now anemic housing market.

While recent events in Delhi have precipitated an attempted return to a more calculative mode of government, the dream of the world-class city goes on, albeit in a far less confident form. And, like all popular imaginaries, the world-class city emerges only through the collective vision of its adherents. It is a loosely defined sense of what the city is and ought

to be, and it gains material traction only to the extent that it is adopted and elaborated in residents' daily practices and habits. As an aesthetic idealization, the world-class city clarifies what does and does not belong, but it leaves considerable room for different meanings to be applied to it. Oriented toward producing aesthetic, not ideological, consensus, the world-class city tells us little, in other words, about how to reconcile competing world-class interests: shopping malls and high-rise towers as much as secluded neighborhood parks or heritage monuments fit the world-class "look." Yet the different real estate, amenity, and heritage interests these physical structures represent rub up against each other in the actual process of world-class city making.⁶⁶ In other words, while the world-class city forges an aesthetic consensus, there is considerable room for difference in its operationalization. The place of the informal settlement remains problematic throughout, yet as the shifting terrain of city making in Delhi makes clear, aesthetic politics profoundly shape how the urban future is understood and fought for. *Rule by Aesthetics* argues that aesthetic politics not only provide a powerful foundation for governing space and populations under conditions of rapid growth and spatial transformation, but also will play an increasingly integral role in how the twenty-first century metropolis is shaped. Who participates in the aesthetic imagination of the future and how the capacity to participate in such politics is cultivated among those historically excluded are perhaps the key political questions confronting India's increasingly urban future.

World-

PIC

In millennial Delhi, talk of the Delhi Master Plan emerged into a world-class city. The with reference to this image reminded of this impending media's campaign to prepare hosted by Delhi, and other you make a world-class city.

According to A. K. Jain, Development Authority (I building high quality sports beautification of the city."¹ proclaimed: "The urban plan adequate and quality urban with most developed metropolitan world-class city is an idealized city assembled from transnational global cities. "Delhi might of London or Paris," read 10 cities, says Mayor," proclaimed "this idea of the new position influenced by "the intensification