

Planning for the needs of urban poor in the Global South: The value of a feminist approach

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Abstract

This paper is influenced by Sue Hendler's concerns about the interlinked issues of feminism, ethics and social justice in planning. It uses a feminist-inspired 'everyday life' framework to explore the implication of recent settlement planning on the lives of urban poor people in Delhi. The work argues that, at the very least, planners need to understand the everyday lives of the urban poor if they are to execute socially just decision making in the planning of new settlements for them. Moreover, it suggests that using feminist approaches to planning may provide a more ethical starting point in a context of what Watson (2003) identifies as the 'conflicting rationales' between different groups in the urban arena.

Keywords

Housing, evictions, resettlement, urban poverty, feminism, the Global South, inequality

Introduction and context

Inspired by Sue Hendler's concerns, this work uses a feminist 'everyday life' approach to explore the implications of the 'planning' of settlements for the urban poor in India. It is specifically *not* a feminist critique simply of women's lives in such settlements. Nor does it provide a broad feminist critique of planning, which has been provided by others (Fainstein, 1992; Ritzdorf, 1994; Roy, 2001; Saarikoski, 2002; Sandercock and Forsyth, 1992). What it does, is highlight the value of a feminist approach as a conceptual framework to deliver broader social justice for *all*. The strength of an everyday life perspective is that it accommodates what Watson (2006) refers to as the 'deep difference' within the widening socio-economic and cultural diversity in cities of the Global South. In doing so it encourages planning theorists to seek alternatives to normative planning approaches by

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venturing into what Sandercock (1995) calls 'borderlands', those areas of possibility which might offer a better, more ethical way of addressing socio-spatial issues. However, equally importantly, it provides planning practitioners with a usable alternative to dominant methodologies used for understanding the needs of the urban poor.

Many issues condition planning's ability and willingness to support the urban poor in the Global South. Roy (2009) discusses several possible failings in the context of India. Amongst these are inadequate planning practice, failure to accurately forecast changing need and planning policy increasingly underpinned by the imposition of values based on neoliberal, capitalist-driven rationality, the latter noted repeatedly by others (Du Plessis, 2005; Fernandes, 2004; Roy, 2009). Both Shatkin (2004) and Fernandes (2004) highlight the political amnesia which seeks to disregard the existence of poverty through an apparent abandonment of place-based poverty alleviation policies. This paper, however, goes further by suggesting that planning does not simply forget the poor but through dominant planning rationales, actually exacerbates their difficulties.

These rationales are manifesting in the built fabric of cities through spatial policies which prioritise the needs and desires of the affluent (Fernandes, 2004). These policies have become the guiding norms of planning. Their use as standard processes and planning tools, without regard for their value or impact, allows little room for accommodating Watson's (2003) 'conflicting rationales' existing between different stakeholders in the urban arena.

It is now time for planning to adopt alternative approaches, at least for poorer communities. For this, planners will need to cross over into Sandercock's (1995) 'borderlands'. One such borderland, to which Roy (2001) suggests planning theorists fear to go, is feminism. Even when theorists do venture into new realms, practice is slow to follow without the tools to translate theory into action. In the Global South particularly, the tools and standards planning practices have been developed to support the market rationale driving development – to maximise inward investment and economic output (Wu, 2000). There is a need, therefore, to develop practical tools to guide the actions of planning practitioners in line with theoretical advances. Thus, this work seeks to show how a feminist-inspired framework, based on understanding the fundamental difference in the everyday lives of different groups, might be valuable in helping planners make socially just decisions where a community's needs do not match those of more affluent or dominant groups, or indeed, where there is little consensus within the community being planned for.

Spatial segregation of the poor

Globalisation has dramatically affected forms and use of urban space, not least by increasing urban land values in many developing cities (Nijman, 2000). For example, India's economic liberalisation, and the arrival of multinational corporations, raised land values in Mumbai to amongst the highest in the world by the mid-1990s. However, the city was also home to some of the poorest people in the world, many of whom lived in locations which were becoming increasingly economically significant for commercial development (Mukhija, 2001; Payne, 2001).

What this highlighted was an unravelling of the earlier wisdom that the poor occupy poor land (Gilbert and Ward, 1988). As cities expand, once poor, peripheral locations, badly serviced and on land with negative inherent characteristics (poor soil, poor drainage, flood risk) suddenly became worthy of investment and of interest to developers and planners. Around the world, this has led to millions of urban poor people being evicted and/or relocated to newer, even more peripheral locations, to release now commercially valuable land for development.

Evictions are driven both by what Sibley (1995) calls 'spatial purification' and by a related, general, preference of governments in the Global South to curb migration of certain groups of people to the city, and prevent resulting informal development¹ established by them (De Haan, 2002). Fernandes (2004) raises concerns that the poor and other marginalised groups are not simply relocated but that their marginalisation is embedded within a political-discursive process which seeks to make them invisible.

Beyond the demands of the market and political ambitions to promote cities as attractive, modernising global locations, eviction and relocation are undertaken ostensibly in the name of environmental improvement or often for the supposed betterment and protection of the poor. One would expect then, that the sites to which the urban poor are resettled, and the services and facilities therein, would be an improvement on their unserved, makeshift informal settlements. They frequently are not. This is either because they are unplanned or, as this paper seeks to show, because the rationales which underpin their planning are inappropriate, with planners blind to the everyday needs of the poor in relation to their settlements. This work uses the case study of Bhalaswa relocation colony in Delhi, India, because it represents an example of a location where these rationales have resulted in the development of a 'planned' settlement for the relocation of urban slum dwellers which has served to exacerbate their difficulties.

Feminism and conceptual frameworks

Feminist epistemology was founded upon the notion of women as an ontological category holding a systematically inferior position in all spheres of life (Goetz, 1988). As such, women were seen as being united by their experiences, which were perceived as significantly different from those of men (Lennon and Whitford, 1994). This focus, on the specific differences and inequalities born of gender, found its way into feminist sociological approaches, which sought to include the 'domestic domain' as being the main location of women's collective experience (Yeatman, 1986). From this grew an acceptance of 'experience' itself as being a valid field of study (Eisenstein and Jardine, 1980). Through the validation of other forms of knowledge and experience, feminism has grown to encompass not only women but other subordinated groups. Academics and others can, through feminist approaches, seek to reform conceptions and practices so that they serve the interests of these groups. As Snyder (1995: 92) notes:

Feminist thought directs attention to and admits a broader range of experience as legitimate and valid knowledge. Other forms of knowing and other knowers exist beyond the limited authorities and expert status granted by traditional scientific method and the dominant patriarchal culture.

From this standpoint, the experiences not only of women but of the urban poor are valid forms of knowledge and the urban poor are expert knowers.

It is in this privileging of experiential knowledge that feminism has become most useful in exploring the lives of the urban poor in the Global South. This is particularly important in relation to policy issues, as policy makers tend to not only to be men but also very far removed, socio-economically, from the lived, daily experiences of the urban poor. They are, moreover, frequently driven by agendas, such as macro economic development, which can conflict with the needs of the poor (see, for example, Fernandez, 2004; Shatkin, 2004; Watson, 2003, 2006). Thus theoretical approaches which make clear these conflicting needs and agendas, and utilise alternative forms of knowledge, are vital to address inequalities.

However, theoretical approaches to inequality and difference are of little use unless they can be translated into practice. As Fainstein (2000: 473), discussing the reinvigoration of planning theory, notes:

At the millennium's end, then, planning theorists have returned to many of the past century's preoccupations. Like their nineteenth-century predecessors, they are seeking to interpose the planning process between urban development and the market to produce a more democratic and just society. The communicative theorists have reasserted the moral preoccupations that underlay nineteenth-century radicalism, the new urbanists have promoted a return to concern with physical form, and just-city theorists have resurrected the spirit of utopia that inspired Ebenezer Howard and his fellow radicals. Although strategic and substantive issues separate the three schools of thought described here, they share an optimism that had been largely lacking in previous decades. Sustaining this optimism depends on translating it into practice.

The translation of theoretical knowledge into practice cannot be effective without rethinking the tools and frameworks used to collect, analyse and use it. There are several conceptual frameworks through which planners might, theoretically, understand the needs of the urban poor in the Global South. They have differing degrees of grounding in feminism. Some are very focused on economic development and tend to prioritise the productive realm, overlooking the reproductive sphere and the social nature of existence. Others are particularly valuable for exploring poverty and social injustice from an academic standpoint but less adaptable for the development of planning policy.

It is vital that the framework selected is appropriate to the specific situation or question being addressed. However, in the context of planning policy and practice, it is also important that it is a usable tool through which not only to *understand* the experiences of the urban poor but to directly use those experiences to bring about practical improvement. It is for that reason that this paper argues for the development of a settlement planning and development system based on experiential knowledge and a feminist epistemology, rather than more traditional 'scientific' methods of knowledge gathering and the dominant patriarchal culture.

Notable amongst the frameworks commonly in use, and having gained dominance amongst the development professions, is the Sustainable Livelihoods Framework (SLF). There have been numerous definitions of the concept and practical research frameworks developed for its use (Carney, 1999; Drinkwater, 2001; Scoones, 1998). While the SLF has provided a valuable shared point of reference for researchers, it tends to prioritise livelihood and poverty over other aspects of life. However, poor people are not merely embodiments of poverty and agents of survival, their everyday lives are greater than the productive sphere which is privileged by the livelihoods approach. Moreover, as Beall

(2002) notes, many livelihood-based analyses overlook the role of gender in access to and management of livelihood resources. Although feminist researchers using the livelihoods approach have incorporated a greater attention to the specific difficulties faced by women (see, for example, Francis, 2000; Masika and Joekes, 1996; Whitehead and Kabeer, 2001), the livelihoods framework itself does not specifically encourage this. Nor does it necessarily require or facilitate the collection of experience-based knowledge.

For many poor people, hardship stems from a lack of rights – in particular, and of relevance to this paper, rights to land and other resources and rights to work. A ‘rights-based approach’ (RBA) argues that all those in positions of authority should strive to uphold these basic rights which support livelihoods. Moreover, as Drinkwater (2001) argues, these rights should be upheld regardless of their being too politically sensitive or complex. Two problems arise with rights-based approaches. First, there is controversy over whose rights are to be prioritised and which rights are fundamental. In the context of planning, upholding of rights might translate into acting in the public good. However, as Roy (2001) discusses, there are many different interpretations of ‘public’. Second, even if a consensus on rights can be reached, there is a significant difference between recognising rights in law and upholding them in practice. This can be demonstrated by the difficulties many countries experience in upholding women’s land and property rights when customary practices overrule or disregard law (Speak, 2005). The approach may not, therefore, be as valuable for prioritising the needs of the poorest as might be assumed.

Another important paradigm for thinking about development is Sen’s (1985) ‘capabilities approach’, an approach for evaluating welfare which has a strong foundation in feminist thinking. The capabilities approach helps us conceptualise people’s capability to function, highlighting the difference between means and ends, and between substantive freedoms (capabilities) and outcomes (achieved functionings) (Robeyns, 2005). Importantly, in relation to feminism, at its heart is the notion of a person’s right and ability to choose a way of living (Sen, 2004).

The approach was further developed and utilised in relation to women’s lives, by Nussbaum (2000, 2003), who identified a list of central human capabilities. Although this conflicted with Sen’s original intention to avoid such lists, which might constrain and confine the approach, Nussbaum’s extension of the original theory remains consistent with Sen’s epistemological grounding. It is valuable in expressing the findings of research in terms of broader goals of social justice and equitable development. Moreover, as (Robeyns, 2003) argues, ‘More than any other normative approach to social justice, it is able to accommodate both issues of redistribution and recognition.’ Particularly because of its emphasis on social justice it is useful as a framework for poverty alleviation. For example, the capabilities approach is central to the *Kudumbashree* programme in Kerala, which has consolidated and focused both resources and activities in the state towards successful poverty alleviation (Jose, 2006).

However, Kuklys (2005) has cautioned that:

the capability approach is not a theory that can explain poverty, inequality or well-being; instead, it rather provides a tool and a framework within which to conceptualize and evaluate these phenomena. Applying the capability approach to issues of policy and social change will therefore often require the addition of explanatory theories.

The fact that it requires additional theories to help translate it into social and urban policy makes it less appealing as a tool for planning practitioners.

While there is an element of feminist philosophy in all the above approaches, and each is valuable, they also have limitations in relation to framing physical or spatial planning decisions, supportive of the urban poor. They can be too easily misappropriated, thus prioritising the desires of those in power, too abstract to result in practical actions or too narrowly focused to encompass rich and complex lives. What is needed is an approach which truly understands and translates the lived experience of the urban poor in a manner suitable for policy development. As Long and Long (1992: 6) note, an actor-oriented approach to development requires a research methodology which 'accords priority to an understanding of everyday life'. Similarly, Chabal and Deloz (1999) argue that politics and policy directing change and modernity in the Global South must be understood in the appropriate socio-cultural contexts which govern everyday life. It is this emphasis on understanding socio-cultural contexts and everyday life which points to a need for a framework based on a feminist approach because it suggests that there is a valid knowledge specific to the urban poor which policy makers may not hold.

Feminist researchers and ethnographers have developed and utilised the concept of 'everyday life' in various forms for many years (see for example Smith, 1988; de Certeau et al. 1999). The concept demands attention to the interaction between the material and social worlds and actors within them. Healey (1997) sees the concept as a relational network, through which human existence is managed across time and within space. Despite this, it remains little used in urban policy research in the Global South.

An understanding of everyday life suggests value in a framework which is specifically focused on the physical, social and emotional domains within which everyday life is conducted. Gilroy and Booth's (1999) development of the approach is particularly valuable in this respect as it presents a series of very clear domains of everyday life, which can be adapted for use in different contexts. Moreover, their domains are, arguably, relevant to all, regardless of gender, income, age, status or cultural context. They label these elements as: enjoyment; home and neighbourhood; making ends meet; sources of support and having a say. Within this work, these translate as follows:

- Enjoyment – sources of and facilities for social interaction, socialising, religion and cultural activity;
- Home and neighbourhood – the dwelling and the surrounding neighbourhood, its environment, facilities and services (e.g. retail, medical services) opportunities for making ends meet;
- Making ends meet – affordable daily life services and goods (e.g. food, transport etc.) income generating opportunities/employment;
- Sources of support – friends and family, social networks, statutory services, voluntary and community groups;
- Having a say – opportunity for voicing desires, preferences, making choices, participation in decisions affecting the individual, household and community.

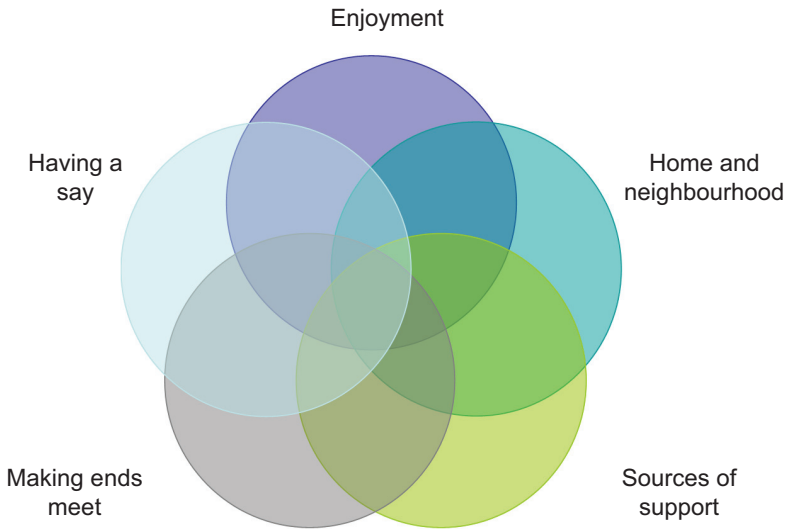


Figure 1. The everyday life framework

Source: Gilroy and Booth, 1999

Within this, the individual (or household) with its inherent characteristics (age, gender, health, socio-economic status) is central. The framework provides a mechanism for understanding the relationship between these inherent characteristics and the five key domains, which can be thought of as equal, discrete but interlocking elements, which together support quality of life (see Figure 1).

However, Gilroy (2008) further develops the framework by suggesting that for many people the domains of making ends meet, enjoyment, having a say and sources of support are embedded within the overarching domain of housing and neighbourhood (see Figure 2). This is because for some people, living environments provide so many of the resources necessary for the other domains. This resonates with human ecology approaches, which recognise that people are both shapers of and shaped by their environment (Keating and Philips, 2008). It also reveals its origins in feminism as it makes central the physical location in which many women play out their daily lives, excluded from the perceived ‘economically productive’ world of the wider city.

For many the world is an expanding arena of high mobility, global networks and electronically facilitated social relationships through which to earn and manage money, participate, give and receive support and be entertained. Nevertheless, others, particularly the poor, are reliant on their immediate physical surroundings – housing and neighbourhoods – for all such activities (see for example Speak and Graham, 1999). Locating other domains within that of housing and neighbourhood is particularly valuable for the purposes of this work, as it highlights the way in which planning of housing and neighbourhood impacts on other areas of life. For that reason, Gilroy’s second iteration of the framework is used in this paper.

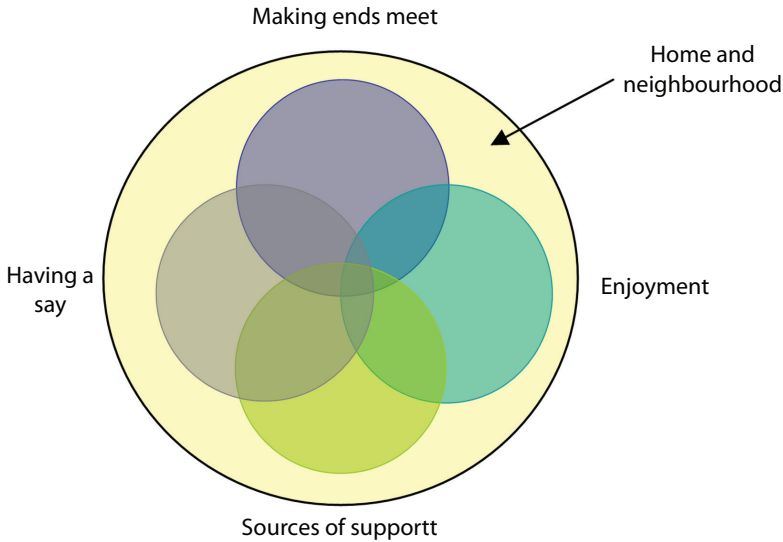


Figure 2. Gilroy's 'four in one' approach— Centrality of neighbourhood within the everyday life approach

Source: Gilroy (2008)

Methodology

This paper focuses on Bhalaswa relocation colony in Delhi. It has grown out of fieldwork in India, for a number of different projects, over a 10-year period. Initial fieldwork included data collection for a nine-country study of homelessness² in 2000 for which the author was the senior researcher.³ As part of that study, she conducted interviews with households in slum settlements in India (as well as other countries). Data was collected through household interviews and focus groups in Kusumpur Pari, a 30-year-old, informal but now 'official' slum⁴ in Vasant Vihar, Delhi and other slums along the banks of the Yamuna River, from which some of the current residents of Bhalaswa were evicted. Those interviews used an everyday life framework for exploring people's coping strategies and housing choices. Questions were asked about social networks, support, income generation, quality of life and participation in social and political life and in decisions affecting the household and community.

Since 2005, the author has visited the relocation colony of Bhalaswa four times. This work draws on six focus groups with households and with Bhalaswa Lok Shakti Manch, a campaigning community group, five interviews with representatives of NGOs and interviews with two project officers and planners from the Municipal Corporation of Delhi (MCD). All interviews and focus groups adopted a semi-structured, everyday life framework. The work also draws on analysis of documentation and master plans for Delhi and Bhalaswa relocation colony, in particular the Municipal Corporation of Delhi's resolution No. 577 (2003) outlining the planned development for Bhalaswa Jahangirpuri.

Background to relocation and Bhalaswa settlement

By 2000 nearly 50% of the housing stock in Delhi was composed of illegal, informal development, much of it erected by migrants. To the authorities, the most 'offensive' of this informal development was the city slums. Quite apart from their occupation of commercially valuable land, they represented the Municipality's inability to manage urban growth, to fulfil its own objectives of being the major developer and to provide adequate housing for the poor (Jain, 2003).

Delhi was is a city with a booming economy, in competition with Mumbai for inward investment, preparing for the international scrutiny that accompanies events such as the Commonwealth Games, and, importantly, proclaiming in its master plan 2021 vision that it intended to become a 'world class city'. In this context, such visible pockets of abject poverty could not be allowed to remain. In addition, private owners of centrally located city land were making frequent demands on the Municipality to evict informal settlers from their increasingly valuable land plots.

It is in this context that, in the late 1990s MCD acquired 193 acres of land for a relocation settlement at Bhalaswa Jahangir Puri, around 25 km from the site of central slum clusters. The land is low lying, poor quality and prone to flooding. In November 2002, before any dwellings or services had been developed, the MCD moved the residents of several slum settlements on the edge of the Yamuna River to Bhalaswa, allocating them dwelling plots. The relocated households had to spend time and money levelling the land and raising it with rocks and rubble before they could erect makeshift dwellings. Plots are not owned but households were granted a licence to occupy them for 10 years at a cost of around Rupees 7,000 (£106), a considerable sum for the urban poor to pay. Owing to the lack of official identity papers, some still do not have a licensed plot at all, but are living unofficially on the land, in rudimentary shelters having no greater security than they had in the now demolished city slum. Tipple and Speak (2009) note that documented citizenship, in the form of identity papers, can be critical to accessing housing in many countries of the Global South.

The site is split into two parts with a large wasteland between them. The environment is extremely poor. There is no functioning drainage and the area becomes waterlogged in the rainy season, when sewer water contaminates the ground. Following campaigns by the settlers blocked drains are now being pumped regularly. However, standing water remains a significant health hazard and MCD must fumigate frequently to kill malarial mosquitoes.

At the time of writing, almost 10 years after the first people were relocated, services for the site remain extremely basic. Water is limited in supply and poor in quality. Although after some campaigning taps were installed, (1 tap to 30 households, approximately 150 people) groundwater remains contaminated by the adjacent landfill site. Water is also delivered by tankers, which are not regular, and people fight amongst themselves for water when it arrives.

With no form of dry waste collection, rubbish litters the site. Over the years residents have campaigned successfully for a school and a very small medical clinic. No formal retail facilities were included in the settlement and even the settlers' own plans to develop informal retail were initially quashed. A note from the Office of the Executive Engineer

calls for the demolition of the makeshift, informal retail market made of planks of wood, which the early settlers erected on the roads around the site (Executive Engineer MCD, 2003). The quashing of informal retail activity in a location where the formal market seeks not to provide seems futile.

Dwelling plot sizes are between 18 and 12 sq m each, too small to offer adequate accommodation to an average household of six. To accommodate the required density of dwellings, the initial plan was to construct 16,987 walk-up flats of the same size. However, at the time of the author's last visit, in March 2010, none had been built. There is an as yet unsubstantiated suspicion amongst several parties, including a major NGO working in the settlement, that they will never be built. To one side of the settlement a major park is being developed and to the other side, a golf course is proposed. In conjunction with the development of a major highway running past the settlement, the site is now of significant development potential.

Bhalaswa and the everyday life of the urban poor

In the following section, the everyday life framework is used to explore the consequences of the planning of Bhalaswa. The following analysis is structured by domains. As discussed above, the domain of home and neighbourhood can be seen as an encompassing one, incorporating all others. The overlap between the domains, and the wisdom of Gilroy's suggestion, will become evident as this discussion unfolds.

Making ends meet

Making ends meet is a complex, innovative process for low-income households. It includes getting a cash income and other forms of exchangeable resources and also using and managing those sparse resources and income effectively. It is often a juggling act bringing together employment, self-employment or small-scale enterprise, reciprocation within social networks, and borrowing, all generally outside the formal economy (Reardon, 1997). These mechanisms for making ends meet have been severely disrupted by the relocation.

The very location poses major difficulties. Relocation settlements are invariably sited on the outer periphery of cities (Viratkapan and Perera, 2006). This is in part because that is where large areas of currently low value land exist but also because those peripheral locations are less visible, thus helping to remove the stigma of poverty from the modernising city (Atkinson et al., 2008; Tipple and Speak, 2009). Newton (2009) argues that the major housing and relocation project of the 'Breaking New Ground' strategy in Cape Town could be seen as a beautification project ahead of the 2010 FIFA World Cup, as much as it is an effort to adequately house the urban poor. In the Delhi context, the relocation of households from city slums certainly supported efforts to improve the city's image in advance of the 2010 Commonwealth Games (Hazards Centre, 2005).

Additionally, Bhalaswa was developed following the same logic used for zoning other large-scale residential suburbs (or sub-cities) in Delhi, for example Dwarka or Noida. These areas are then served by adequate infrastructure, new highways, the Metro, and

formal commercial and retail provision. This may well suit their residents, who, despite the difficulty in commuting caused by Delhi's traffic congestion, prefer to be out of the city, and can afford cars or public transport to commute. Jain (2003) considers the planning system in Delhi to be inflexible and certainly this singular approach, compartmentalising productive and domestic arenas, does not work for the poor who cannot afford cars and for whom public transport is inadequate and too expensive.

Residents of Bhalaswa came from slums within easy access of work in the city, where they worked as drivers, rickshaw cyclers, rag and waste pickers, maids and labourers. They were once poorly paid but gainfully, if informally, employed; they provided valuable labour building the city, and services to booming higher class residential and commercial areas of Sundar Nagar, Kaka Nagar and Bapa Nagar. However, Bhalaswa Jahangir Puri offers no employment locally and was zoned exclusively for residential development. The bus journey into central Delhi takes well over an hour on a good day, of which there are few as congestion increases. Given their low earnings potential, settlers cannot afford either time or money to commute to the city for the work they used to do. Now, so far from the city, many have had to abandon their work (Hazards Centre, 2005) as this woman noted:

The men don't work, they just sit about, some drink, others take drugs, they won't help in the house...we are all worried for our men

This lack of opportunity to engage in paid work makes home-based enterprises (HBEs) crucial for economic survival. They are particularly valuable for women, often offering their only means of income generation given their other domestic duties and, for some, lack of freedom to leave the home (Tipple, 2005). In the context of Bhalaswa, they are equally vital for male income earning. However, HBEs are curtailed by the size of the dwellings and the lack of usable, external space.

At least on the current housing plots some people are able to build more than one storey to provide extra space for HBEs. If the proposed apartments were to be built, no such extension could be developed. This has major implications for the 'making ends meet' domain. How can one utilise the space outside or outside the dwelling for any form of economic activity if there is none? The small size of existing plots, and the proposed overlaying of planning's preferred urban housing style in the form apartments, shows a disregard for diversity of living styles and different values relating to home by compartmentalising domestic and productive realms (Nippert-Eng, 1996).

Food security is the greatest priority for the urban poor. To this end many residents expressed a desire to grow crops, or keep small livestock for household consumption, income or exchange. However, their plots are too small, and the land on which Bhalaswa was established too poor to support such activities. When asked if the settlers might benefit from the ability to grow some crops or keep small livestock, one MCD official noted:

[Bhalaswa] is an urban extension, not a rural place, it's not appropriate, they can go to the market to buy their food, they don't need to grow it, beside[s], the land is not good.

The poor were moved from their city slums because planning privileged modernisation of the city, towards the capture of inward investment for macro level economic development. However, at the same time, entrenched ideas about informal economic activity, inappropriate urban behaviour and land use mean that it has constructed for the poor a domain of housing and neighbourhood unsupportive of the domain of 'making ends meet'.

Sources of support

This domain includes notions of giving and receiving care through formal services, for example health facilities but also informal social networks and family relationships. All forms of care are increasingly commercialised and marketised for the growing middle classes in India. Children go to paid nursery and medical treatment is in private clinics. The decline of traditional extended families means that older people are increasingly housed in care homes (see, for example, Bhat, 2001; Mackintosh, 2003). The poor, however, continue to rely on support underpinned by strong social capital and a web of relational resources within and between households and communities. The relocation has had dramatic impacts on these.

For example, some people have continued to work but they cannot realistically return home at night, or afford accommodation in the city. This has weakened family support networks, as expressed by this woman's concerns:

[My husband] only comes here sometimes and brings some money. He sleeps on the road with his cart so he can work...We are not a family any more. I don't know people here and I am afraid. He should be here to look after us...I don't like it.

Others spoke of how the move had fractured the social networks which enabled them to work. This not only increased the household's poverty but undermined any independence and esteem women might have gained from having an independent income.

The physical layout of a settlement can facilitate the development of informal support networks. Wu (1999), for example, identifies the need to maintain the attributes of physical environments which engender human reciprocity. In informal settlements, this reciprocity happens as like-minded, religiously or ethnically similar households collaboratively utilise and shape spaces. In Bhalaswa, the large-scale grid pattern offers few opportunities for collaborative appropriation of space. A number of larger public parks are planned but remain unbuilt.

Much of Indian domestic life in informal settlements is conducted outside the dwelling, in the immediate surroundings. The security associated with organic spaces in informal settlements means that they become a safe domain, usable for a range of caring activities. As Keating and Phillips (2008) note, older people and children particularly benefit from the social engagement public space can provide. Children are supervised by adults and older people can receive care, find company and a role to play in 'policing' the neighbourhood. The less human scale of the formally planned neighbourhood does not provide this supportive landscape.

In the city, formal support (for example, hospitals, clinics, maternity care and advocacy through NGOs) was relatively accessible, often, importantly, within walking distance. Given the adverse public health implications of high density housing, overcrowding, poor environment and stressful climate (see, for example, Riley, 2007; Sclar and Northridge, 2003), it would be reasonable to expect that a relocation settlement would seek to improve public health and provide formal health facilities. However, in Bhalaswa, formal support for health and social care are minimal. There is now a small clinic, open a few days each week, which serves the wider area, not only Bhalaswa. A number of NGOs work in the area, providing advocacy but they are not encouraged or supported by the authorities.

The relocation has significantly weakened access to formal sources of support. Informal support networks are diminished as households are fractured when some stay in the city for work. Reciprocal arrangements between households have been damaged. The layout of the settlement has done nothing to encourage new support networks. The proposed walk-up flats, if built, will potentially isolate those who cannot leave them and weaken their role in the community and within their own support networks.

Enjoyment

The enjoyment domain includes issues of social engagement, cultural activities, religious and spiritual celebrations and opportunities to simply have fun. Planning's support of 'enjoyment', however, is increasingly through the development of the commercialised social activities of the middle classes – cafes, shopping malls, leisure centres and cinemas – paid for and accessed by private car or public transport. In Bhalaswa, there are no such facilities, which would, in any case, be beyond the means of the urban poor.

Enjoyment is facilitated for the poor largely through the vibrancy of street life (Edensor, 1998; Kellett and Bishop, 2006) and access to mosques and temples, community buildings, public spaces, squares, playgrounds and parks. None of these exist in the settlement. From their previous city slums, however, residents could attend, for free, the many temples and mosques of the city and access the numerous festival sites, parks and urban forests. Younger residents in Bhalaswa highlighted their sense of boredom and isolation, noting that in the city slums from which they came they could even access (and afford) city internet cafes for fun and education. Rangaswamy (2007) notes that internet cafes can be found in the heart of bustling city slums in India.

For planning to support the enjoyment domain for the poor, it must first be acknowledged as justifiable in its own right and not in its potential connection to economic development.

Having a say

The domain of 'having a say' incorporates all forms of participation in decisions affecting the individual, household and community. This can be formal participation, through voting, or informal participation through community groups or residents' associations. Planning is increasingly recognised as a form of governance and a feminist ethic within

planning emphasises the importance of enhancing the community's capacity to self-govern and plan for its own needs (Hendler, 2005).

Planning can support this through both processes and product. Participatory processes, engaging communities in decisions affecting them, help strengthen networks for local governance. Supportive product includes physical infrastructure, buildings and layout, which facilitates community meetings and engagement at all levels.

However, from the outset, and against a growing tide of good practice in participatory settlement planning the relocation process was far from participatory. Settlers and NGOs report that the slum dwellers were coerced into moving by false information given to them by some of their local leaders, who were paid by the authorities to discourage resistance:

They [city officials] gave money to the community leaders, some of them, to tell the people that it was a good place, that they should go... The people trusted them. [The leaders]... got money but they didn't go to Bhalaswa, they fled.

Plots were allocated without regard for previous community hierarchies, effectively fracturing networks of trust and power which facilitated settlement governance. Having fractured existing networks, removed local leaders and broken community trust, nothing was done to help rebuild either a physical or social infrastructure for local governance. Avritzer (2002) notes the value of public space as a building block of neighbourhood associations and larger democratic movements. However, even the physical layout of Bhalaswa, with its limited usable public space or community buildings, defies the development associations and collaborative public action.

An indication of MCD's reluctance to engage with the community can be seen in the locating of its small site office. The concrete building is located in isolation, away from the allocated plots and staffed, only occasionally, by a city engineer. It does not act as conduit between the residents and any city authorities.

Conclusions: Feminism, planning and accommodation of difference

The guiding principles and original epistemology of feminism are essential in planning in the Global South to accommodate difference, validate a range of knowledge and address inequality in that context. These principles are central to the consensus seeking processes currently promoted as a means of arriving at justifiable planning decisions. They are embedded, to a greater or lesser extent, in the dominant frameworks within the development profession, as discussed earlier. However, given the continued spread of poverty and inadequate shelter, it would appear that the principles of feminism get lost somewhere between conceptualisation of inequality and practical action to address it.

It is not enough for feminism to be a guiding principle of urban planning; if it is to claim any real value to the Global South, it must be a practical tool for action also. Feminist ideology must not only describe the world to be built but must provide the tools with which to build it. This paper has presented one feminist-inspired framework which goes some way towards this. It has shown that a feminist-inspired everyday life framework *can*

provide a fuller tool for not only conceptualising difference and inequality at macro levels but for placing that conceptual understanding in a very real world setting, from which to draw policy.

Using the everyday life approach we have seen how ideological changes have overlaid upon the residents of Bhalaswa a set of normative ideas of appropriate behaviour and use of land, home and neighbourhood which are not only inappropriate in that context, but damaging. These ideas compromise livelihoods, undermine capabilities and disregard, if not abuse, rights. We can also see the way in which these changes, translated into planning practice in the form of settlement planning, impact in very real terms, in space and place, on the lived experience of the urban poor. What this paper has not had space to do is to continue its own argument and develop policy suggestions from the case study. That is for a further work.

Notes

- 1 'Informal development' is commonly used to refer to development without planning permission, which does not meet building regulations and may be on land to which the developer has no legal title.
- 2 India, Bangladesh, Indonesia, China, Egypt, Ghana, Zimbabwe, South Africa, Peru.
- 3 UK Department for International Development (DFID) ESCOR Research Grant, No.ESA343, 2001–2003.
- 4 In India, the term 'slum' is an official one, indicating that informal settlement has been acknowledged by the authorities and designated for upgrading or relocation.

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