

The “Rurbans” of Delhi

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Introduction

The formation of a metropolitan area around a city of several million inhabitants, such as Delhi, is expressed through specific phenomena, in particular through a decongestion of the urban population, a process of peri-urbanization and “rurbanization”,¹ with the formation of suburbs and new residential quarters in surrounding rural zones, the creation of satellite towns, as well as the development of commuting and other forms of circular mobility. These processes have in common the fact that they contribute to an interweaving of urbanized zones and countryside, as well as to a dilution of rural and urban population categories. This progressive fusion is more conspicuously observed at the fringes of the metropolis, but it is also at work in the urban agglomeration by way of the continuous settling of very numerous migrants whose life space extends beyond the urban/rural borders, exceeding the limits of the city to incorporate their native villages. The integration of urban and rural spaces extends beyond the geographic continuum through circular movements of individuals between the different places with which they have relations (Dupont and Dureau, 1994). In this case, the integration of urban and rural spaces is no longer physical, but functional in nature. Many inhabitants of metropolitan areas thus appear to be neither exclusively urban, nor exclusively rural, whether it be a matter of populations in the rural hinterland in the process of urbanization, of new country dwellers, namely city dwellers who have shifted their residences into the surrounding rural zones or, of migrants who maintain relations of a

1. By the term rurbanization, we understand here, according to the definition given by P. George: “the fixation in peri-urban countryside of residences of city dwellers, the interweaving of rural and urban spaces”, that is, “one of the forms of peri-urbanization[...]”, without “continuity between the town and the rurbanized countryside” (1993: 411).

diverse nature (economic, social, emotional, etc.) with their native villages. These are the various population categories which, by their inscription in spaces in the process of transformation, by their mobility or composite identity, attain to a certain symbiosis of rural and urban qualities, and whom we here group together under the neologism “rurbans.”

The analysis of residential and economic practices of these “rurbans”, considered both as witnesses to (at times under constraint) and as actors in the process of urbanization, offers a relevant perspective from which to better understand certain essential dimensions in the development of large metropolises. The example of the Indian capital enables of a particularly clear observation of the processes at work as a consequence of demographic growth and geographic expansion, as well as of the urban morphology and socio-spatial refashioning. Furthermore, in the context of a predominantly rural country (74 per cent of the population lived in the countryside in 1991), the study of “rurbans” in a megalopolis such as Delhi can also add to the understanding of the urbanization process from the perspective of a re-evaluation of the urban-rural dichotomy.²

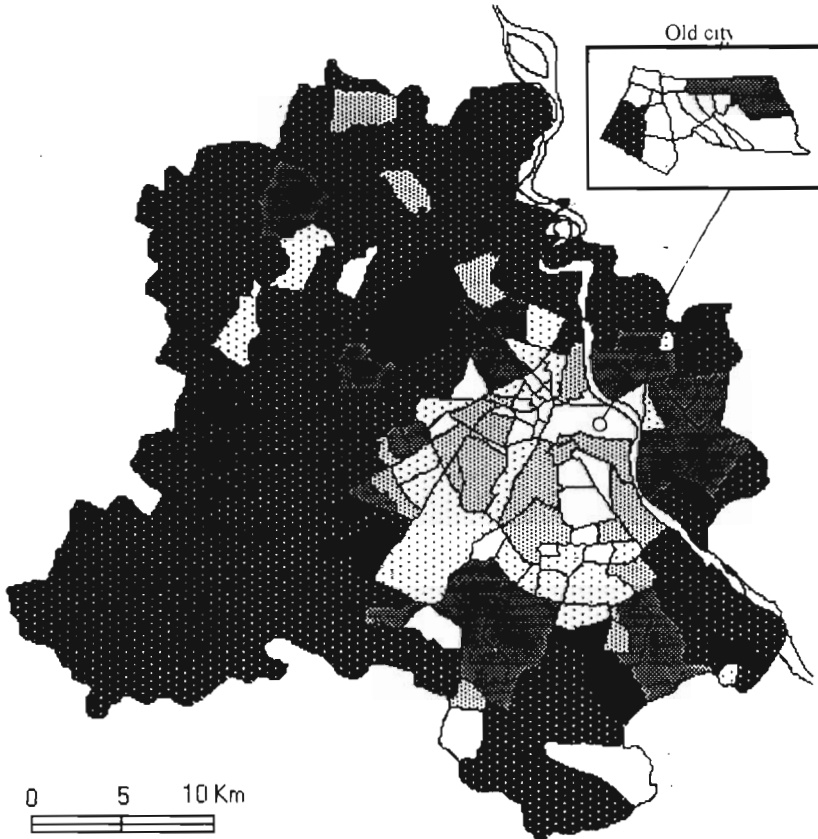
Metropolization and dilution of urban/rural borders

Urban growth

The development of Delhi and its metropolitan area bears witness to a major tendency in the urbanization process in India: an increasing concentration of the urban population in megalopolises of millions of inhabitants, in the context of an urban population which remains very much a minority on the nation-wide scale, despite a remarkable absolute magnitude (218 million urban dwellers in a total population of 844 million, that is, 26 per cent, according to the 1991 Census).³

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2. This study is included in a broader research project on the spatial mobility of populations in Delhi (see Dupont, 1997), financed by the French Institute of Research for Development (IRD, formerly ORSTOM) with supplementary financing by the CNRS in the framework of the Concerted Action in Social Sciences ORSTOM-CNRS and of PIR-Villes. Our research in Delhi also belongs to a comparative programme entitled “Residential practices and impact on the dynamics and the segmentation of large metropolises. Study of the forms of spatial mobility of the populations of Bogota and Delhi”, co-ordinated in collaboration with Françoise Dureau, who directs the research in Bogota (see Dupont and Dureau, 1997). In India, our programme was conducted in collaboration with and logistically supported by the Centre des Sciences Humaines in Delhi (French Ministry of Foreign Affairs) and the Institute of Economic Growth (Delhi).
 3. On the definition of urban areas in India, see the papers by Landy and Racine in this volume.

NATIONAL CAPITAL TERRITORY OF DELHI



Annual growth rate of the population from 1981 to 1991 (in percentage)



Average for Delhi Union Territory: 4.24%

Source: Census of India 1981, 1991

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Figure 8.1: Annual growth rate of the population from 1981 to 1991 in different census charges of the National Capital Territory of Delhi

The demographic evolution of the city of Delhi is, first of all, marked by the country's turbulent history. Promoted to capital of British India in 1911, Delhi became the capital of independent India in 1947, at a time when the city was undergoing a massive transfer of populations after the partition of India and Pakistan. Thus, only shortly after 1947, Delhi, then counting 900,000 inhabitants, had to accommodate 470,000 refugees from west Punjab and from Sindh, while 320,000 Muslims left the city for Pakistan.

Since 1961, Delhi has been the third largest Indian metropolis, behind Mumbai and Calcutta. Furthermore, among the 12 cities counting more than one million inhabitants in 1981, Delhi has experienced the highest demographic growth of the last decades: 5.1 per cent annually from 1951 to 1961, 4.5 to 4.6 per cent from 1961 to 1981, and 3.9 per cent annually, from 1981 to 1991. Its population increased from 1.4 million in 1951 to 8.4 million in 1991, and today probably exceeds 10 million inhabitants.

The general demographic evolution of the urban agglomeration of Delhi, in fact, conceals a depopulation of the central quarters in the Old City, and a rapid growth in the peripheral quarters, as shown in Figure 8.1 for the intercensal period 1981-91 (Dupont and Mitra, 1995).⁴ This centrifugal pattern of population dynamics, first revealed in the decade 1961-71 (Brush, 1986), continued and extended beyond the city limits. Thus population growth from 1981 to 1991 was more rapid in the rural zones of the territory of Delhi than in the urban agglomeration proper: 9.6 per cent, as opposed to 3.8 per cent respectively (in the urban/rural limits of the 1991 Census). These growth rates are to be compared with the natural growth rates during the same period, that is, 2.5 per cent annually in the rural zones and 2.1 per cent in the urban zones, which underscores the contribution of net immigration. Of course, population densities remain significantly lower in the rural zones than in the urban agglomeration (12 inhabitants per hectare, as against 135 in 1991), and while the former covered 54 per cent of the total area of the territory of Delhi, it only accommodated 10 per cent of its total population. Those implicated in migration in the "countryside" of Delhi remain comparatively a minority, but these movements are nevertheless revelatory of a real attraction exerted by the rural hinterland of the capital on populations from other Indian states, or those who have left the urban agglomeration of Delhi in search of less congested and financially more affordable localities in which to settle. This process of peri-urbanization around the capital is also expressed in economic terms, insofar as the sector-based composition of the working population residing in the rural zones of the territory of Delhi appear to be closer to that of the urban population (with only 19 per cent of the working population employed in the primary sector, as compared with 83 per cent for the total rural population of India, and 15 per cent of the urban population at the national level). The rapid growth of the rural population of the territory of Delhi and its economic characteristics underscore the discrepancy between administrative demarcation of the urban agglomeration and the concrete modalities of the urbanization process.

4. It is interesting to recall here that the loss of population in the central quarters of some large urban agglomerations is a phenomenon that has been frequently observed in the industrialized countries (Ascher, 1996; Dogan and Kansar, 1988).

Contribution of migration

Migration has played a major role in the demographic evolution of the capital. The relative contribution of net migration to the total growth of the population of the territory of Delhi (urban agglomeration and rural hinterland) decreased from 62 per cent for the period 1961-71, to 60 per cent for the following period, 1971-81, to then fall off to 50 per cent during the last intercensal period, 1981-91. In 1971, migrants born outside the territory of the capital constituted 50 per cent of the population of the urban agglomeration of Delhi and 40 per cent in 1991. During the five years preceding the 1991 Census, roughly 780,000 migrants settled in the urban agglomeration. Over two thirds of all migrants living in Delhi, in 1991, were from neighbouring states in north India, Haryana, the Punjab, Rajasthan and Uttar Pradesh.

The Indian countryside remains the main source of migrants to the capital: 57 per cent of all migrants (coming from within the country) hail from rural areas. This result is not surprising in a predominantly rural country, but it is worth noting in order to assess the rural ties of the metropolitan population. In particular, persons of rural origin are largely in the majority as regards migrants from states neighbouring the capital (with the exception of the Punjab): 59 per cent for migrants from Haryana, 63 per cent for those from Rajasthan, and 64 per cent of the migrants from Uttar Pradesh. The rural mooring of very many migrants to Delhi will be shown in the case of a specific sub-population with revealing residential practices, but who have only been little studied: the houseless migrants in the Old City.

Spatial expansion and urbanization of the fringes

Delhi's growth also corresponds to a spatial expansion of the urban agglomeration through the annexation of rural zones. From the beginning of the century until 1991, 185 villages were incorporated in the urban limits of Delhi, 25 of which during the decade 1981-91. From 1911 to 1991, approximately 657 sq. km. of rural land were urbanized, representing nearly 95 per cent of the urban territory in 1991 (Diwakar and Qureshi, 1993). Delhi's geographic situation, in the Gangetic plain, and more precisely the absence of any real physical barrier to urban progression (the Aravalli Hills to the west and south do not constitute an effective obstacle), have favoured the multi-directional spreading of the city.

The urbanized villages are subject to very great pressure on land and important transformations of their economic functions, of their morphology and their population (Sundaram, 1978: 115; Lewis and Lewis, 1997: 26-27, 30-31). The habitat is transformed in response to the housing needs of numerous migrants with low incomes who find in the urban villages rent levels which are distinctly less than in the other quarters of the capital. The areas surrounding the fringe villages are also privileged places for the emergence of unauthorized colonies. This occurs outside any town-planning

regulations on agricultural lands where no building is permitted, purchased from the farmers by private promoters. Deprived of access to certain services as a result of their illegality, the price of land and rent levels there are low when compared to prevailing prices in authorized quarters that benefit from municipal services. In consequence, these residential colonies attract chiefly low or medium income groups of the population who do not avail of sufficient financial resources to acquire or rent accommodation in the authorized quarters of the capital (Sidhu, 1995). Some of the unauthorized housing estates, however, can include luxury buildings, in particular in the rural fringes of southern Delhi, where numerous luxurious villas surrounded by vast parks are located; built on agricultural lands they are permissible only within the limitations of the planning regulations meant for farm houses with a view of protecting green spaces and cultivated areas. De facto, these limitations are often overstepped by well-to-do city dwellers attracted by a rural living environment, at the gate of a capital that belongs to the most polluted cities in the world.

Public authorities (represented in Delhi by the Delhi Development Authority, the government agency responsible, since 1961, for the elaboration and application of the master plan) have also played a major role in the urbanization of the rural fringes of the capital. In its planning intentions, the government set aside large land reserves—unique in a developing country—, primarily through the purchase of agricultural lands, in order to introduce various housing development programmes: direct construction of collective blocks of flats consisting of flats for different income categories and sold to private households; development of sites sold to co-operative societies on the basis of long-term leases (99 years) for the construction of group housing; land servicing and allotment of plots for resettlement of inhabitants from the centrally located slums and squatter settlements.⁵

The direct control by the Delhi administration of lands which can be urbanized induced some large private property developers to implement residential housing schemes outside the administrative limits of the territory of Delhi, well beyond the urban perimeter of the capital in the bordering states of Haryana and Uttar Pradesh. Property development companies can acquire there large tracts of building land in accordance with the development plans of the metropolitan region which endeavours to favour the decentralization of the population (N.C.R.P.B., 1988). Some property developers make use of the very outlying character of these new residential quarters to include environmentalist considerations among their selling points to attract city dwellers in search of a better living environment. This process of rurbanization and the residential practices of new country dwellers will be illustrated with the example of DLF Qutab Enclave, a

5. This policy, which resorted to coercive measures, underwent a particular increase in scale during the state of emergency (1975-77), during which approximately 700,000 persons were forcibly displaced, evicted from slums and squatter settlements at the city centre and sent to 44 “resettlement colonies”, which, at that time, were located in very peripheral zones.

recently developed residential complex in the rural fringe to the south of the territory of Delhi.

Development of satellite cities and creation of new towns

The slowing of the rate of growth in the urban agglomeration of Delhi (as specified above), in the absence of a fall in the natural growth rate,⁶ corresponds to a redeployment to the advantage of the development of peripheral towns. This population dynamics extends the trend of population decongestion and spatial expansion of the capital beyond the bounds of administrative jurisdiction, and engenders a heightened circulation of population in the metropolitan area. Thus, the population of the first urban ring around the territory of the capital (consisting of six agglomerations identified as the Delhi Metropolitan Area towns—(see Figure 8.2) increased at a much higher rate than the urban agglomeration of Delhi. The difference appears very noticeably in the intercensal period 1961-71, becomes more pronounced in the period 1971-81 (127 per cent, as opposed to 57 per cent in decennial growth), and is still notable in the period 1981-91 (86 per cent, compared with 47 per cent). The development of peripheral towns, including the formation of new industrial towns such as Noida, also lies within the scope of the wilful planning policy of the metropolitan region, initiated in the 1960s and motivated by the wish to control the growth of the capital and to slow down the streams of in-migration by redirecting them to the towns in the region.⁷ However, the initial stress laid on the development of towns in the first ring reinforced the attraction exerted by the capital and intensified commuting. In 1987, it was estimated that approximately 150,000 commuters travelled daily to Delhi from towns in the metropolitan area (N.C.A.P.B., 1988: 9). By the very reason of their proximity to Delhi, these peripheral towns have not succeeded in developing into self-sufficient centres of growth and most of them can be considered as mere satellite towns, alleviating housing problems in the capital, but exerting a heightened pressure on its amenities.

The example of the town of Noida, located on Delhi's east periphery and a direct product of the town and country planning policy, will enable us to analyze a case of the creation of a new town by annexation of agricultural lands, and to demonstrate the effects on the original populations of encircled villages. Before taking up the third, and final, stage of this demonstrative itinerary across the Delhi Metropolitan Area, we shall return to the point of departure, the historical centre of the capital and its pavements occupied by a population of houseless migrant.

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6. The natural growth rate remained steady in the territory of Delhi as a whole: 2.1 per cent per year from 1971 to 1981 and from 1981 to 1991.
 7. It must, however, be mentioned that a first generation of new towns developed in the 1950s, such as the new industrial town of Faridabad (on the southern periphery of the capital) which was initially planned for the rehabilitation of refugee populations from West Pakistan after the partition of the country.

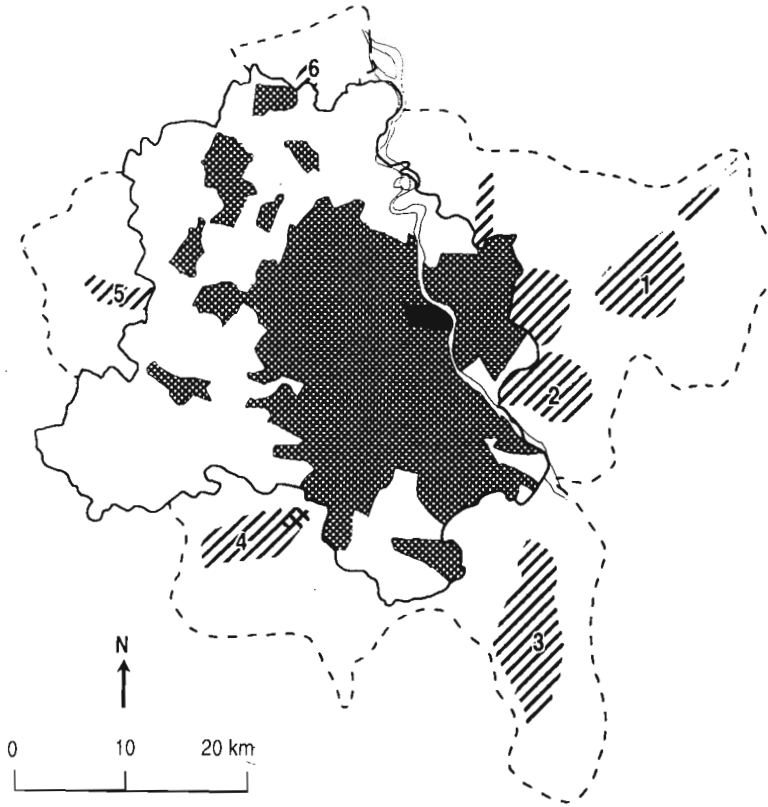
The pavement and the village: live space of the houseless in the old city⁸

The houseless population represents a very specific segment of the urban population, the relative weight of which remains very slight (estimated at 1 per cent of Delhi's total population). Its demographic impact in absolute terms is, however, far from negligible, being approximately 100,000 persons, and its presence is particularly conspicuous in the Old City. The most pertinent characteristic for our purpose is that the houseless population in the Old City is primarily composed of migrants, the great majority of whom are of rural origin (three quarters of the sample surveyed), which illustrates a borderline case of urban integration and a fusion of city and village identities realized at the individual level, resultant of circular migration. Shelterless migrants are certainly not the only ones to practise this form of mobility between native village and city of migration; such type of circular mobility is to be observed also among migrants settled in slums or among those belonging to the higher socio-economic strata (for Delhi, see: Basu, Basu and Ray, 1987; Banerjee, 1986: chap. V). On the other hand, perhaps better than for any other category of city dwellers, the residential practices of the houseless population support a vision of the city reshaped by the migrants' space, "that of movement which suggests viewing the city, not as a place of sedentariness, but as a cross-roads of mobility" (Tarrus, 1993: 51).

The historical centre of the capital, Old Delhi, where we have concentrated our study of the houseless (see Figure 8.2), is characterized by extremely high population densities (on the average of 616 persons per hectare, in 1991), combined with a very high concentration of shops and small industrial enterprises. While a process of depopulation is at work in the old and deteriorating housing stock, economic undertakings are, on the contrary, increasing. This proliferation of commercial activities, manufacturing workshop, services, providers of numerous informal jobs, has attracted a floating population of male migrant workers, frequently unqualified, who come without their families and whose residential integration remains extremely precarious; many of them are to be found at night sleeping at the workplace, beneath verandas at the bazaar, in the night shelters opened by the municipality for the houseless, or simply on the pavements, in parks and other outside public spaces.









The analysis of the conditions of integration in the city of these city dwellers without abode, of their economic strategies, of the relations they maintain with their native place and their projects, enables one to reconstitute their life space and identify its structuring poles.

8. The information and data used in this section result of socio-economic surveys that were conducted in January-March 1996 among a sample of houseless persons in Old Delhi. Two types of observation were conducted: a statistical survey covered a sample of 248 persons selected by area sampling in the main outside concentrations of the houseless and in 6 night shelters managed by the Municipality in Old Delhi; and in-depth interviews conducted simultaneously (with the collaboration of Dhananjay Tingal) among a sub-sample of 36 individuals chosen in a random manner (see Dupont and Tingal, 1996).



V. Dupont

ORSTOM

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|---|--|---|---------------------------------------|
|  | Urban areas of Delhi, as per the 1991 census |  | Limits of the Delhi Metropolitan Area |
|  | Other urban areas in the metropolitan area |  | Limits of the Territory of Delhi |
|  | Rural areas |  | Yamuna River |
|  | Historical centre: Old Delhi | | |
|  | DLF Qutab Enclave | | |

Towns in the Delhi Metropolitan area

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|--------------------------------------|---------------------------|
| 1 - Ghaziabad + Loni (Uttar Pradesh) | 4 - Gurgaon (Haryana) |
| 2 - Noida (Uttar Pradesh) | 5 - Bahadurgarh (Haryana) |
| 3 - Faridabad-Ballabgarh (Haryana) | 6 - Kundli (Haryana) |

Source: Composed on the basis of the following maps:

- "Map of Delhi" in *Census of India 1991, District Delhi, District Census Handbook*, Directorate of Census Operation, Delhi.
- "Land use 1986-87" in: *Regional Plan 2001. National Capital Region*, National Capital Region Planning Board, December 1988.
- "Delhi Metropolitan Area" in: *Master Plan for Delhi, Perspective 2001*, Delhi Development Authority, August, 1990.
- *Eicher City Map, Delhi*, Eicher Goodearth Ltd, New Delhi, 1996.

(Map drawn by R.M.S.I., New Delhi)

Figure 8.2: The Delhi metropolitan area: the central urban agglomeration and its peripheral towns

Conditions of integration in the city

The initial information regarding the living conditions and employment opportunities in Delhi, as well as the assistance received upon arrival in the city, reveals the role of the network of relatives and persons originating from the same village, or the same region, in the circulation of information and integration into the city of houseless migrants—as is currently to be observed in the case of migrants whose residential integration is not so precarious (see, for example: Banerjee, 1986).

Other than the attraction proper to a large metropolis and its multiple employment perspectives, the choice of Delhi is often influenced by the presence of family members, relatives by marriage or fellow villagers, who are already working in the capital and transmitting information pertaining to employment possibilities. Among those who acknowledge having been assisted in their initial integration into the city (representing two thirds of the persons interviewed), in finding work or a place to sleep, the network of relatives and fellow villagers is mentioned in the majority of cases, indicating that the actual condition of the houseless does not necessarily mean that these migrants operate in a familial and social vacuum. During their stay in the city, the workplace and the community of workers in the same type of occupation come to provide the main network of socialization; another significant network which gathers momentum among houseless people is based on village or regional affiliation.

From this perspective, an interesting type of migration among the houseless is to be noted: the migratory channels rooted in familial or village tradition. It is here a matter of, for example, cycle-rickshaw drivers, hand-cart pullers, or also construction workers, working in Delhi on a seasonal basis, thus perpetuating a practice initiated by their fathers or by other villagers. These migrant workers follow a well-established channel, going to the same labour market, to the same garages renting rickshaws, and sleeping at the same places outside. Such groups of villagers are found in the *Khari Baoli* wholesale market, or under the verandas along *Asaf Ali Road*. By way of example, a group of 25 or 30 persons from the same village in Uttar Pradesh could be identified in the aforementioned street, all sleeping side by side, even though belonging to different castes, sometimes cooking together. They also return as a group to the village for the main festivals, and every month one of them returns to take the savings of all to distribute among the respective families. Thus, a community life has been reconstituted on the pavements of the capital, based on the belonging to the same place of origin, and this link transcends caste differences, at least during the temporary stay in Delhi, where earning money is the predominant preoccupation.

Residential logic and saving strategies

Financial constraints and uncertain incomes—primary concerns among these generally casual workers—without doubt represent a major obstacle to obtaining lodgings. Nevertheless, this factor must be considered in relation to the other intervening explanatory factors, forming a system in which elements of choice are often present. Thus, some of the houseless, who avail

of a sufficient saving capacity to rent accommodations (together or shared with others), give priority to sending money to their families, or to long-term saving for future investment projects in the locality of origin. In other words, preference is given to the living conditions of the family in the place of origin, over the migrant's living conditions in Delhi, and to the future, over the present.

The distance between the places of sleep and work proves to be another fundamental element in the economic and residential strategies of the houseless. Most of those without lodgings who sleep in Old Delhi work in the old city itself (78 per cent of the houseless workers surveyed), or in adjacent quarters, within walking distance, often within ten minutes' walk from the place where they sleep.⁹ A location near the workplace or the source of employment opportunities enables the worker to reduce—or entirely eliminate—transport expenses. It also makes it possible to avoid the weariness of daily commuting and to ensure adequate rest, another vital factor for manual workers in activities requiring intense physical effort. Moreover, for day-labourers who have to go every morning to a labour market to get recruited, such proximity increases the probability of obtaining work.

The residential practices of the majority of houseless would, therefore, indicate elements of economic rationality intended to maximize savings and remittances to the family at the locality of origin through the minimization of expenses for housing and transport. When the logic of the situation of the houseless in Delhi is an integral part of family strategies rooted in the native place, priority being given to the economic condition of the family in the village at the cost of the living conditions of the migrant in the city, his shelterless situation is likely to last throughout his stay in the capital.

Relations maintained with the native milieu

In fact, most of the persons without shelter who were surveyed in the Old City have family members in their locality of origin and the majority of them go there more or less regularly to visit—at least once in the last two years—, or, in the case of newly arrived migrants, intend to do so. Furthermore, roughly half of those who have families in their villages (or native town) provide them with financial support, to which is often added the purchasing of clothes or household items when visits are made.

The attachment to family and native place is once again shown by the projected future return to the "village" (in the next years, or much later), a wish shared by the majority of the houseless interviewed. Future investment projects are frequent, in particular many plan to open up a grocer's store or another type of shop in the village, to purchase more agricultural land and, more generally, to invest in agriculture. To carry out their investment projects, the migrants interviewed intend to raise funds from their own

9. Hence, 80 per cent of the houseless workers of the sample surveyed walk to their place of work, the average time of commuting being only 16 minutes each way, with 57 per cent of them taking 10 minutes or less.

savings, supplemented if necessary by family contributions. Some of these investment projects will perhaps never materialize; others appear to be viable, given the saving potential of the concerned migrant workers. This indicates an appreciable degree of economic dynamism among certain shelterless migrants; one can also see therein an economic calculation entailing temporary sacrifice in terms of housing conditions in the city so as to improve the economic situation in the place of origin.

Typology of houseless migrants according to the degree of attachment to their place of origin

At the end of this initial investigation, a typology of shelterless migrants living alone in the Old City can be drawn up, according to the extent to which they are rooted in their native places. In particular, two distinct and diametrically opposed situations can be identified, with the entire range of intermediary situations.

Corresponding to the highest degree of familial integration and attachment to the village, are the seasonal migrants who come every year to work in Delhi for a few months, habitually during the agricultural off season, and who directly support their families in their place of origin. Near this group are the married migrants whose wives and children (if there are any) remain in the "village" with the rest of the extended family, and who regularly send remittances, as well as married migrants who contribute to the family income; these two groups regularly visit their families. These remitter-migrants exemplify a principle of familial solidarity transcending residential unity; this is a current characteristic of the migration process, especially rural-urban migration, both in India and in other developing countries. The point which deserves to be underscored here is that the condition of houselessness of the migrant in the city does not prevent the exercise of this solidarity; in fact, it is precisely this condition which makes it possible for the migrant to financially support his family.

Having the lowest degree of attachment to the community of origin are houseless persons—particularly children—, involved in a process of individualization and anomie, who have fled their homes as a consequence of acute family tension,¹⁰ often accompanied by violence, and who subsequently have severed all ties with their family and native place. Given the circumstances of departure from home, these migrants, or "refugees", cannot rely upon family and village networks for their integration into a new city.

The rupture with the traditional basic institution, the family, however, only applies to a limited section of the houseless. Although living alone in Delhi, the majority of the houseless maintain diverse relations with their families in their native locality, the latter remaining their basic reference. In

10. 24 per cent of the total sample of houseless cited family tension of this type as their primary reason for migrating to Delhi. Furthermore, about one third of the 36 respondents selected for in-depth interviews mentioned similar tensions as significant in their migration trajectory.

fact, the reference to the native village, a structuring pole of the life space, could more particularly be significant for migrants without shelter (excepting, of course, those who have severed ties with their families), compared to migrants whose residential integration is less precarious. In fact, this reference, which also comprises a mythical component, no doubt enables the pavement dwellers to better accept their present living conditions in Delhi and to justify the hardship and degrading aspects of their situation. "City dwellers by compulsion, yet villagers by heart", could thus summarize the double identity of the majority of migrants without abode.

Moving away from the historical centre of the capital and its houseless migrants, whose roots are in the village, the fringes of the urban agglomeration offer the example of another type of integration involving urban and rural spaces.

The city and the countryside, or residential strategies of the new country dwellers¹¹

Requested to offer a solution to the urban problem, French humorist Alphonse Allais once suggested "to put the towns in the countryside." The implementation of his recommendation appears to have been attempted in the region surrounding Delhi. *DLF Qutab Enclave*, presented by its promoters as "the most environment friendly township" of "modern times", "far from the madding crowd" of Delhi, will serve as illustration in the analysis of the process of rurbanization around the capital and of the residential practices of the new country dwellers.

Delhi's spatial expansion, manifested in an anarchic urbanization of the fringes, along with illegal land transactions and unauthorized building, has given rise to the intervention of planners in the border states of the territory of the capital. In 1981, the Haryana government placed vast tracts of agricultural lands around Gurgaon, one of the six towns in the metropolitan area, under the control of a master plan. It is within the framework of this regional development plan that the DLF Qutab Enclave residential complex, and other neighbouring housing estates of the same type, were constructed by private property developers in the Gurgaon vicinity (see Figure 8.2).

Located 23 kilometres from the centre of the capital and covering an area of 1,000 hectares, DLF Qutab Enclave is one of the largest residential estates developed by a single property company on the periphery of Delhi. The ambition of its developers was to build a prestigious 'integrated mini-city' provided with all the modern urban infrastructures and services, while at the

11. The information and analysis contained in this section are based on: interviews with developers of the Delhi Land and Finance (DLF) corporation and a study report by this company (DLF, 1993); direct field observations and a collection of basic information on infrastructure and environmental characteristics of the new housing estate by M. Sidhu (Sidhu, 1995, Chap. 6); a statistical survey covering a sample of 164 households (or 598 persons) carried out in April 1995 in the residential estate of DLF Qutab Enclave; and, in-depth interviews conducted in 1997 by M. Sidhu among a sub-sample of 21 residents (Sidhu, 1997).

same time proposing an ecological alternative. Potential residents can acquire there serviced plots of diverse sizes to construct their own houses—often veritable villas—, or to purchase flats ready for immediate occupation in a block of flats. Several commercial centres were built, as well as a recreational centre. Sites for the construction of clinics and schools have also been reserved in the development plan of the township, and some establishments are already functioning; the presently existing facilities, however, are not yet sufficient to respond to the needs of the residents. The maximum accommodation foreseen is 60,000 dwelling units, of which 46,000 are in individual houses, representing together housing for more than 250,000 inhabitants. Land development began in 1982, but at the beginning of 1995, most of the plots were still unoccupied or under construction, and only 3,500 families had effectively settled there. It would therefore seem that this very ambitious project for the development of an upper and middle class township outside the capital has not had the success anticipated by its promoters, notwithstanding a strategic location at the juncture of three major trunk roads.

The sales argument privileged in the advertizing campaign of the developers emphasizes a better quality of life and, in particular, a select environment offering large open spaces, far from the noise, the crowd and the pollution of the capital. Some slogans and hoardings are intended to give a pastoral image of the new township, such as a cock crowing with the caption, “morning raga at DLF.” Real chickens and their farms are, however, kept well apart from the new country dwellers and their “country” residences. Villages pre-existing the development of the area remain enclaves, which are not integrated in the development plan. The land use plan reserves approximately 10 per cent of the total area for parks and green spaces. However, to date, the environmental alternative extolled on hoardings is expressed on site by large tracts of arid land, parks which are relatively rare, especially in the most recently developed sectors, and a tree cover which on the whole remains rather sparse on account of the recent nature of plantations and their unequal growth. In response to one of the initial slogans of the developers, “The great escape. Get away to a whole new experience”, a bitter critic could well have parodied, “For a return to nature... with one’s back to the villages, and without verdure.”

As shown by the reasons cited by the inhabitants of DLF Qutab Enclave to explain their choice of residence, environmental considerations are certainly not absent. Thus, the search for a better living environment and more space were reasons advanced by 24 per cent of the residents surveyed (most of the time in combination with other reasons), particularly among those who formerly lived in Delhi itself (who represent 65 per cent of the residents). For those who were already owners of houses or flats in the capital, these comparative advantages constitute the main reason for their new acquisition. Some families residing in Delhi even use their villas in the new quarter only (at least until present) as a secondary holiday residence for the weekends. In the case of those having newly acquired property, the choice of DLF Qutab Enclave also responds to financial considerations, as the cost of land and flats are there much more affordable than in the capital

itself. For some, the purchase of a plot or flat in this new estate is thus merely a speculative property investment.

The indispensable condition for having access to real estate outside the capital, without exorbitant cost, and to a better environment, is the possession of a personal vehicle to make possible the daily journeys to distant workplaces and to continue to maintain one's social network through visiting. About half of the economically active inhabitants surveyed in DLF Qutab Enclave work in Delhi proper; at the same time, bus services, either public or chartered by the developers, are not very frequent. From a more general perspective, in the absence of a network of mass public transport efficiently serving the capital and its metropolitan area, the spectacular augmentation of individual transport has made the establishment of medium and high status residential quarters possible in the rural fringes for those who can financially support daily commuting over long distances in cars or on scooters, or who compensate high transport costs by a lower cost of housing.

Similar phenomena of distant and discontinuous urban extension, connected with the diffusion of the use of automobiles, have been observed in the large metropolises of the industrial countries (Ascher, 1995; Bieber and Orfeuill, 1993; Haumont, 1993). In the context of the Indian capital, such developments are of a more recent nature. Transformations on the urban periphery and rural fringes are also more rapid there and can quickly invalidate the term of rurbanization as applied to the process of urbanization consequent to the building of such housing estates as described above. At the inception of their development, the discontinuity of built-up area between the city and these residential quarters in the rural fringes was certainly much more pronounced than today, and the countryside more present. The extension and increasing density of construction alters the panorama, contracts the rural space while encircling the village cores, and in the years to come these housing estates will be progressively transformed into a continuous suburb. The example illustrates, in fact, the difficulty in "demarkating urban and rural spaces" and in "distinguishing what is continuous suburb and discontinuous peri-urban" in a context of rapid urban growth common to numerous metropolises in the developing countries (Steinberg, 1993: 10-11).

New town and encircled villages, or the forced urbanization of farmers¹²

The final example to be examined, that of a new urban satellite town, Noida, reveals a process of integration of rural and urban populations resultant of the planned interweaving of spaces—original villages and new town—, with spectacular effects for the urbanized villages.

12. The information and analysis contained in this section are based on: direct field observations; interviews with town planners and administrators of Noida; a study report by the Noida administration (Noida, 1994); a series of some fifteen in-depth interviews carried out in October and November 1996 (in collaboration with Jay Prakash) in the urbanized village of Harola; and field reports by Sidhu (1995, Chap. 5) and Montezuma (1996, pp. 45-53).

Noida (or New Okhla Industrial Development Authority) was created in the late 1970s in the eastern periphery of Delhi some 15 kilometres from the centre of the capital (see Figure 8.2). The objective of the planners was to develop an autonomous urban and industrial centre. In fact, Noida today encompasses a very important industrial estate, accommodating more than 4000 establishments, and has attracted populations from all income levels in search of employment or less costly housing than in the capital. The demographic growth of this peripheral town was extremely rapid during the 1980s; its population increased at a rate of 13.3 per cent yearly from 1981 to 1991, to reach 146,514 inhabitants in 1991. Its present population is estimated at 250,000 (at the very least). Administratively, Noida belongs to the state of Uttar Pradesh, considered a “backward state” from the social and economic point of view. However, because of its proximity and its good road links with the capital, the town of Noida has become an integral part of Delhi’s metropolitan area.

The territory of the new town was administratively demarcated in 1976 by the annexation of land from a total of 53 villages covering a rural zone of 15,000 hectares; the first master plan up to the year 2001 planned the development of 7,800 hectares, corresponding to the agglomeration of the land of 23 villages. While the development of residential quarters and the industrial estate, as well as various urban services, conforms to rigorous zoning and the roads follow a regular and hierarchical grid layout, the original villages still appear today, more than 20 years subsequent to Noida’s creation, as distinct islands. Whether these villages have retained their rural character, or whether their morphology would have been radically transformed under the impact of urbanization, in all cases they developed in an unplanned manner and their spatial organization offers no continuity with the urban fabric of the planned zones of the new town.

The integration of villages in the urban zone has brought an undeniable modernization in terms of basic infrastructure: electrification, connections to the water and sewage systems and to the telephone network (in the more centrally located villages), the building of service roads—even if the development of some infrastructure facilities is unequal from village to village, and their maintenance is neglected by the town services. For the “urbanized” villagers, however, the creation of a new town obliging them to become city dwellers entailed, first of all, more radical and even dramatic changes in their way of life than the conveniences resulting of the arrival of electricity and water at their houses. The example of Harola, located today in the heart of the industrial zone and the first to be effectively incorporated in the urbanization plan, can serve to illustrate the transformations that have ensued and the actual effects brought about.

The government of Uttar Pradesh acquired all the agricultural land of Harola village in 1976. The state of emergency was in force, and it was upon seeing bulldozers opening the line of roads across their fields and destroying the harvest in progress that the farmers learned that their lands had been expropriated for the erection of the future city. Without any prior information, thus without having been able to prepare themselves for the changes which would affect them, the villagers brutally lost their traditional

means of existence. The farmers therefore had to forsake their cultivation and convert to other activities with the help of compensatory indemnities granted by the government—however, at rates below the real market value of the lands involved. Some of them developed, most often on a small scale, the breeding of cow-buffaloes and milk cows and the sale of milk and dairy produce. Others opened shops, repair shops, workshops to manufacture garments on a subcontracting basis, transport enterprises, etc. However, the majority of commercial activities, manufacturing or services, could not prosper until the industrial zone and new town were themselves developed, offering new outlets. By the same token, when the farmers were suddenly rendered idle, no factory had as yet been set up to hire them. Only a small number of villagers, better integrated than the others in the politico-administrative networks, obtained employment in the Noida administration, either for themselves or for their sons. As for the women who formerly worked in the fields of the family farm, the urbanization of the agricultural land meant falling back to domestic activities, as social convention does not allow them to exercise an economic activity outside the family. This forced evolution was often experienced as confinement.

Nevertheless, the most spectacular economic conversion to occur in Harola, which also entailed the transformation of the village morphology, was the construction of tenements to let. Strangely, the planners of the new industrial town, whose ambition it was to integrate in one and the same project of a model town both a centre of employment and a living place, "forgot" the question of housing the labour force of the factories. The Noida administration indeed implemented an active housing policy, as witnessed by the construction of numerous blocks of flats and individual houses for different income categories, and their allocation to employees in departments of the town administration, to company heads, executives, managers and technicians, as well as to a certain category of workers (those having permanent employment or who have been regularly employed for more than 5 years at the same establishment, or those whose monthly salary is above a fixed threshold). However, the eligible workers represent a small minority (roughly 10 per cent) of the total industrial labour force in Noida; furthermore, the proposed housing schemes are for sale and remain beyond the reach of the majority of workers' purses, even with credit facilities. Public authorities did not invest in the rental sector, and nothing was foreseen concerning the most disadvantaged, the mass of casual workers and day-labourers that have come to work in the industries in Noida. The latter, therefore, squatted unoccupied land in the industrial zone to raise their temporary dwellings, or sought rooms to let in nearby villages. The erstwhile farmers thus found a source of easy income in the need for housing which had been left unsatisfied by the town authorities. Harola is situated in the heart of the industrial area, and requests for rooms to let came spontaneously; house owners in the village began by converting unoccupied rooms in their own houses. As the stream of migrants becomes stronger with the development of industries, the demand for rented accommodations has also increased—and with it the rent level—, and the construction of new buildings has appeared as a profitable investment. Rooms in a row on the ground floor and, above all, tenement buildings of one to three storeys have

also been built—and are still being built today—on unoccupied plots in the village, on the smallest pieces of free land, or on land freed by the demolition of old buildings. These blocks of rented accommodations offer very small rooms (7 to 12 sq. m.) occupied by 3 or 4 adults, or by a couple with children, and generally have but rudimentary sanitary facilities for collective use. The multiplication of such buildings has brought about a radical transformation of the morphology of the village and a very high residential density. This has also entailed a change in the socio-demographic composition of the population with an influx of migrants from other regions, including a high proportion of single men, while the original villagers have been reduced to a minority.

Constrained and forced witnesses of the urbanization encompassing them, the inhabitants of Harola have become agents in this process at the level of their own village: initially victims of authoritarian urban planning, they subsequently contributed to the extreme and accelerated urbanization of their immediate environment. If the spatial expansion of Delhi by absorption of the surrounding villages has engendered several examples of morphological and socio-economic changes in the original village cores (Lewis and Lewis, 1997), in the case of Noida, and notably in Harola, the particularly abrupt transition for the native farmers and the rapidity of consecutive transformations make this example of rural and urban interweaving especially noteworthy.

Conclusion

The rapid development of Delhi and its metropolitan area offers various telling examples of the integration of urban and rural zones. The continuous geographical expansion of the urban agglomeration of Delhi entails, first, a physical integration of urban and rural spaces through the incorporation of villages in the urbanized zone. As shown by the example of the new town of Noida, the process of annexation of agricultural lands can provoke radical and spectacular transformations of the encircled villages. The latter, however, continue to distinguish themselves from planned urban zones by their dynamics of population and their morphology. The process of peri-urbanization and rurbanization around Delhi is also expressed by a functional integration of the metropolis and new quarters established in the rural fringes, without the necessary continuity of built-up space. The daily commuting of the new country dwellers between their “country” housing estates and the centres of employment in the capital manifests the link of economic dependency between the different spaces. Delhi is, moreover, connected to a myriad of villages by the intermediary of its in-migrant population of rural origin. In the life space of each migrant, metropolis and native village are inscribed in a single territory whose degree of economic, social and symbolic integration is dependent upon the nature of the relations maintained by the migrant between these two poles.

This physical and/or functional integration of spaces also engenders a crossing of urban and rural characters of populations and the emergence of composite, nay torn, identities due to the rapidity of transformations at work

and the discrepancy of modes and standards of living between, on the one hand, the capital as a place of accumulation of wealth and power, a place of innovation and "modernity", and, on the other hand, the numerous places in the countryside which have remained apart from the economic development and/or withdrawn into rigid social structures. From this perspective, the process of Delhi's metropolitization must be viewed as a system of reciprocal influences, while the urbanization of peripheral spaces and of rural populations (original residents or migrants) goes hand in hand with a certain ruralization of the metropolis and of its inhabitants.

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