

RESIDENTIAL PRACTICES, CREATION AND USE OF URBAN SPACE: UNAUTHORIZED COLONIES IN DELHI

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INTRODUCTION

The development of Delhi fits in a very interventionist context including the application of an urban Master Plan, regulatory measures specific to land use, ownership and acquisitions, and the implementation of various housing programmes. However, these measures did not prevent high speculation in land and proliferation of 'squatter settlements' and 'unauthorized colonies'. The public housing policies have failed to respond to the demands of large sections of the urban population, in particular the lower-middle classes and the poor who were relegated to the informal housing sector. In this chapter, we shall focus on the unauthorized colonies that have come up on agricultural land in the rural-urban fringe and shelter one fourth of the population of the Indian capital.

This study will allow us to examine several issues related to urban growth and urbanization problems in large developing metropolises:

- the modalities of creation and development of 'unauthorized colonies' in the urban periphery – that will illustrate a case of uncontrolled suburbanization;
- the interactions between the citizens' practices in the use of urban space and the measures of the public authorities;
- the housing and environment conditions in these estates and ensuing problems;
- the residential strategies of access to home ownership or affordable lodging on rent;

the population dynamics of these peripheral neighbourhoods including the migratory and intra-urban residential itineraries.

Some basic issues will be first examined at the level of the Delhi urban agglomeration, on the basis of secondary data provided by public agencies, as well as published reports and studies. This will be substantiated by a more detailed investigation of residential practices and trajectories at the micro level, with a case study of the Mayur Vihar zone in East Delhi. The latter is based on our own demographic surveys on population mobility and housing conditions, completed by qualitative observation and in-depth interviews.

It is necessary, at the outset, to clarify the concept of 'unauthorized colonies' in the context of a planned city and to distinguish this form of irregular settlement from the 'squatter settlements'.

Unauthorized colonies consist of illegal sub-divisions of land sold as plots to individual buyers by private owners or clandestine colonisers.

The subdivision is illegal either because it violates zoning and/or subdivision regulations, or because the required permission for land subdivision has not been obtained. Land may be privately owned, under notification for expropriation, urban fringe agricultural land or common land of a village engulfed by city growth. The sale or transfer of land and hence ownership of the plot may have a legal or quasi-legal status, but because of the illegality of the subdivision, plot holders cannot get permission to build. In addition the area is not eligible for an extension of infrastructure services. (Banerjee 2002: 46)

Thus, they differ from *squatter settlements* where "land (public or private) is illegally occupied and building activity takes place regardless of, and/or in violation of, all development control regulations. Occupants have absolutely no legal rights over land or its development" (Banerjee 2002: 46).

Of course, while using the terms 'irregular' and 'illegal', and as warned by A. Gilbert (quoted by Smets and Hansen 1996: 95) one should realize that "illegality lies in the acts of the lawmaker" and that it "is dependent on the dominant economic, political, and social forces in society" (Gilbert 1990: 17-27).

While in general the squatter settlements shelter the poorest sections of the urban population in the most precarious housing conditions, the

socio-economic status of the residents in Delhi's unauthorized colonies is fairly heterogeneous, as it will be shown below.

THE DEMOGRAPHIC AND URBAN PLANNING CONTEXT

The emergence and growth of unauthorized layouts in the fringes of developing metropolises is a widespread phenomenon, in India (Auclair 1998, Mussania 1997, Ramanchandra 1989, Schenk 1993, Banerjee 2000), as well as in other Third World countries (Durand-Lasserre 1986, Durand-Lasserre and Royston 2002, Dureau et al. 2000). Yet, in Delhi this process has taken place in a unique historical, demographic and urban political context which has contributed to its magnitude.

Historical Circumstances and Demographic Constraints

After Independence in 1947, the capital of the newly formed Indian Union had to face a massive transfer of population following the partition of India and Pakistan. Thus, immediately after 1947, Delhi with its 900,000 inhabitants, received 495,000 refugees from western Panjab and Sindh, whereas 329,000 Muslims left the capital for Pakistan.¹ The interim period between the two censuses, i.e. 1941-51, showed the highest demographic growth in the history of the capital: the population of the urban agglomeration increased from 0.7 million to 1.4 million, representing an annual growth rate of 7.5 per cent which has been unequalled since then.

Nevertheless, in the post-independence era, the population growth of Delhi has been remarkably rapid for an urban agglomeration of this size, oscillating between 4 per cent and 5 per cent per year, to reach 12.8 million inhabitants in 2001. During these last decades, migration continued to have a significant contribution to urban growth although it relatively slowed down in the eighties. Migrants with less than ten years of residence accounted for 62 per cent of the population of the National Capital Territory of Delhi in 1971, 60 per cent in 1981, and it declined to 50 per cent in 1991. In the five years preceding the 1991 census, about

¹ Source of data: Ministry of Rehabilitation, Annual Report on Evacuation, Relief and Rehabilitation of Refugees, 1954-1955 (quoted in Datta 1986).

883,500 in-migrants settled in the Territory of Delhi, almost 90 per cent of whom settled in the Delhi urban agglomeration.²

The Urban Policy: Valuable Intentions and Adverse Effects

At the time of Independence, the capital was not prepared to face such demographic pressure. Because of the urgency of the situation, the central government undertook several urban development programmes from 1947 to 1957, but without co-ordination and planning (Milbert 1998). Thus, strong pressure on land and increasing demand for housing resulted in growing speculation in the private sector, while squatter settlements proliferated in the city, and unauthorized colonies in the urban fringes. By 1962, there were 110 unauthorized colonies, housing around 220,000 people, which accounted for 9 per cent of the city population (Gupta 1992: 37).

The need to formulate a master plan in order to orient and control the future growth of Delhi became evident. In 1957, the Delhi Development Authority (DDA) was established with the mandate to elaborate and execute the Master Plan. Due to Delhi's status as the national capital, this institution was placed under the control of the central government. In order to prevent land hoarding and speculation and to provide the DDA with the legal means to implement the plan, the bulk of agricultural land was notified for acquisition in 1959, and an urban land policy formulated in 1961: the 'scheme for large-scale acquisition, development and disposal of land'. Consequently, all lands (in the Territory of Delhi) which were meant to be urbanized according to the Plan were placed under the control of the DDA, thereby creating government monopoly both in land acquisition and supply (Billand 1990, Jain 1990, Datta 1995, Rishub, 2002). The first Master Plan of Delhi – and also the first of this kind in India – was promulgated in 1962 and is still in force.

The DDA further launched various housing programmes, including the construction of flats for sale to private households of different income groups and the allotment of serviced plots on a 99 year leasehold basis to private households and co-operative group housing societies. On its internet website³ the DDA claims to have 'generated' (directly or indirectly) more than a million dwelling units through these

² For a detailed analysis of the pattern of growth and the migration flows in Delhi, see Dupont 2000.

³ www.ddadelhi.com

two modes since the inception of its housing activities in 1967-8. In the category of built apartments, approximately 276,000 dwellings units were constructed by the DDA from 1966-7 to 2000-01, which in 2001 housed nearly 10 per cent of families of the agglomeration.⁴ Another scheme concerned the development and allotment of land for the resettlement of slum dwellers and squatters evicted from central areas of the city. This last policy which resorts to coercive measures including the demolition of slum and squatter settlements was pursued most actively during the 'Emergency' (1975-7) during which time about 152,300 families were forcibly evicted and sent to 'resettlement colonies', all located —at that time— on the urban outskirts.⁵

However, the restrictive land control measures of the Master Plan did not prevent the persistence of high speculation in land nor the multiplication of non conforming settlements and constructions (including squatter settlements and unauthorized colonies).⁶ On the other hand, the public housing options were not able to fulfil the demand of large sections of the population.⁷ If the extent of the unmet demand should be viewed in relation to the weight of the demographic constraints mentioned earlier, the housing deficit affected more particularly the lower-middle and working classes whose requirements were not satisfied and that were forced to resort to the informal housing sector.

Although the initial objective of the DDA's housing policy was to promote social equity through the allotment of a majority of plots and apartments to the low income groups and economically weaker sections, in the last analysis, the public sector housing schemes benefited much more the middle and upper income groups (Pugh 1990, Billand 1990, Gupta 1992, Milbert 1998). The major reason is that "the poorer people sell their housing rights for cash in order to meet the more pressing needs of food and other basic necessities" (Pugh 1990: 178). The target populations are often not touched, because the initial cost is too high,

⁴ For a detailed study of the DDA flats and the residential practices of its inhabitants, see Dupont 2003.

⁵ Source of data: Delhi Development Authority (see Jain 1990: 173).

⁶ The case of unauthorized colonies is detailed below. As for squatter settlements, their population was estimated to be approximately 3 million in 2000 – or nearly 25 per cent of Delhi's total population (source of data: Slum and Jhuggi Jhomprri Wing, Municipal Corporation of Delhi). The numerous evictions of squatter settlements in 2000-2001 are however likely to have affected the population figure for 2001.

⁷ For instance, until 1981, the DDA was able to satisfy only 50 per cent of the demand for its built apartments (Billand 1990); in 1990, only 45 per cent of the demand was met (Misra et al. 1998). In 1999, the DDA acknowledged that there were some 48,000 applications for its apartments on the waiting list (DDA website).

the access to credit too difficult and, lastly, because the market price of the plots and apartments is much higher, inducing people to sell at a profit. The misuse of public sector housing schemes is a general tendency, also seen in other Indian cities and in other developing countries (Milbert 1986, Durand-Lasserve 1986).

To some extent, the proliferation of unplanned and illegal settlements can be seen as a perverse effect of the government policies for urban land and planning, and a consequence of the limitations and implementation failures of the Master Plan (Billand 1990; Gupta 1992). The Delhi land policy had excluded the private formal sector from the land delivery process. In such a context, the time lag between notification and actual acquisition of land, combined with the sluggishness and inadequacy of land development and housing programmes by the DDA, led clandestine colonisers to develop unauthorized colonies in the rural fringes to respond to the unmet demand for residential places. In addition, the adoption of high standards of development and construction by the Master Plan has favoured a model of elitist urbanism, at the expense of the housing needs of the mass of lower income groups (Milbert 1998, Rishub 2002). Thus, as stressed by R. C. Gupta: "Ironically, the Master Plan of Delhi, which was to control and direct the development of Delhi, saw the proliferation of unauthorised colonies at a pace faster than before" (Gupta 1992: 59).

Yet, from its inception, the Master Plan envisaged the development of Delhi within its regional framework, with the identification of a Metropolitan Area and subsequently a much larger National Capital Region, provided with a Planning Board since 1985. Planning policy laid emphasis on the promotion of peripheral towns and regional urban centres located beyond the metropolitan area through the strengthening of their economic base, in order to slow down the inflow of migrants in the capital by reorienting them towards other towns in the region (National Capital Region Planning Board 1988). One expected outcome was to ease the population pressure on Delhi and on its housing problems. Although the ring towns in the metropolitan area did grow at a much faster rate than the Delhi Urban Agglomeration,⁸ the measures for developing them had in fact increased the attraction of the whole metropoli-

⁸ The differential of population growth between the ring towns as a whole (Gurgaon, Ghaziabad, Loni, Noida, Bahadurgarh and Faridabad-Ballabgarh) and the Delhi Urban Agglomeration proper reached a maximum during the 1971-81 decade (8.6 per cent per year as against 4.6 per cent), and it still was remarkable in the next two decades (6.5 per cent as against 3.9 per cent during the 1981-91 period, and 6.4 per cent as against 4.3 per cent in the 1991-2001 period).

tan area, including the capital and its hinterland. The spatial expansion of Delhi forms now a near-continuous urban spread encompassing the peripheral towns and the uncontrolled urbanization of the rural-urban fringe of the capital has continued unabated.

EMERGENCE AND DEVELOPMENT OF UNAUTHORIZED COLONIES

The modalities by which unauthorized colonies in Delhi emerged and developed is well documented, therefore this section will attempt to provide a synthesis of published studies and reports, drawing in particular from A. Bose (1980), A. K. Jain (1990), C. Billand (1990), R. C. Gupta (1992), B. Banerjee (1994) and N. Rishub (2002).

In the post-independence period, the development of unauthorized colonies in Delhi is related to the massive influx of refugees into the capital, and thereafter to the shortage and inadequacy of housing options in the formal land and housing market. Initially, these settlements were set up around refugees' rehabilitation camps, taking advantage of existing infrastructure and of a lax government control over land on humanitarian grounds, while others were located along major access routes, for easier commuting to workplaces. Subsequent colonies emerged as extension of existing ones and around the nucleus of urban villages (Gupta 1992). More recently, the emergence of unauthorized estates has extended beyond the urbanized limits of Delhi, towards the rural hinterland, affecting the periphery of village settlements (Jain 1990). The proliferation of unauthorized colonies has contributed in a decisive way to the urbanization of the urban-rural fringes of the capital.

The foundation of unauthorized colonies has followed a more or less fixed pattern over time: the sale of agricultural land, after illegal subdivision, to individual households, either directly by the landlord or through a clandestine coloniser (Gupta 1992). The layouts are illegal because they do not conform to land-use zoning, sub-division and building regulations. Moreover, following the enforcement of the government policy of large-scale land acquisition, development and disposal, many colonies were located on land that was in various stages of compulsory public acquisition (Banerjee 1994: 1). Long delays between the notification of land and its actual acquisition by the DDA favoured transfers of notified land on power of the attorney (a procedure that allows a land owner to pass on the use rights of his property to someone without actually transferring its ownership). In order to ban such practices, the Delhi Lands

(Restrictions on Transfer) Act was enforced in June 1972. Yet, transfers of notified land continued through other arrangements such as gifting away the plot (Banerjee 1994: 12). Although unauthorized colonies show an urban morphology with a planned layout, they lack basic amenities, at least at the initial stages of their formation. The illegal status of agricultural land sub-division into a housing colony makes them ineligible for municipal services.⁹

Being aware of the illegality of the colony, and that municipal sanction for constructing a house cannot be obtained is, however, not a deterrent factor for many potential buyers who speculate on the future regularization of the settlement or who, in any case, cannot afford housing options in the formal market.

Illegality and Patronage

The development of unauthorized colonies in the periphery of Delhi represents at the same time a process of informal and uncontrolled suburbanization and the outcome of a very organized – though clandestine – system involving “a nexus of property agents, officials and politicians” (Jain 1990: 172). Furthermore, it is often associated with “a whole range of malpractices: municipal corruption, political nepotism and, above all, plain and simple swindling” (A. Bose 1980: 225). Land mafia,

⁹ An evocative and detailed account of the formation of an unauthorized colony is given by A. Bose (1980: 226): “A typical illegal colonizer buys agricultural land from village on the outskirts of the city, does a superficial levelling of the land, places a row of bricks along the boundaries, demarcates the plots with chalklines, gets a simple blue print (very often not to scale) prepared for the colony, hires a tent, a table with a glass-top, half a dozen of chairs and puts up a signboard indicating the name of the colony. He then pitches his tent, puts in his tables and chairs, the blue-print under the glass-top of the table, and he is ready for business. He also hires a taxi to fetch customers. Sales are brisk, for the prices are fantastically low compared to the prevailing market rates in Delhi.

Clerks, school teachers, small traders and the like are all attracted – they dream of building their own house in Delhi and getting out of the clutches of landlords. When they buy the land, they are given receipts, the transaction is even registered and a stamp duty paid and the purchaser returns home greatly satisfied with the world. Perhaps it is his life-time's savings which he has invested in the land.

Very soon his trouble begin. He learns that the colony where he has bought land will get no water, sewerage connection or electricity – because the plan for the colony did not have the prior approval of the Municipal Corporation. Very often he learns that he cannot even build a house on his plot because area of Z Colony is in fact not a residential area.”

land grabbing, corruption, the "shady nexus between land sharks, slumlords, property owners, government officials and politicians" (Kanungo 1999: 13) are regularly denounced by the press (see also T. Bose 1998). "The dynamics of patronage" seems to be inherent to the development of illegal settlements in Delhi like in other cities (Smets and Hansen 1996, Schenk 1993). The role of intermediary agents is crucial from the stage of formation of the colony and thereafter for its development: contacts with bureaucrats and politicians are needed to safeguard the settlement, to have access to civic amenities and lobby for its regularization (Banerjee 1994).

Regularization of Unauthorized Colonies

Although this chapter does not intend to present a thorough analysis of the government policies for unauthorized colonies and their regularization, some outlines need to be given at this point to better understand the process of development of these settlements, their population and social dynamics, and to highlight some significant issues at stake. For a detailed policy analysis and a presentation of the technical aspects and institutional framework of the regularization procedure, one can consult in particular the works of B. Banerjee (1994, 2002) and N. Rishub (2002) that will be primarily referred to in this section.

The lack of adequate infrastructure in unauthorized colonies and the pressure from politicians who are receptive to the demands of an important electorate, can create untenable or explosive situations for the town authorities. Therefore, government repeatedly introduced subsequent regularization procedures to legalise the unauthorized colonies. This attitude, combining *laissez-faire* and *a posteriori* regularization, does not exclude limited demolitions of offending structures. According to B. Banerjee (1994: 8): "It can be said that the public intervention in unauthorised colonies has followed a pragmatic approach, accepting the reality of the situation but at the same time not approving of its principle." It is recognized that the total demolition of the unauthorized colonies would entail a gross national waste, whereas regularization, by allowing for the provision of proper civic amenities, would contribute to maintain the conditions of hygiene and health in the city. Yet, for environmentalists, "regularisation has come to mean gaining legitimacy without substantially improving environmental conditions" (Rishub 2002: 72), and has provoked the opposition of some NGOs to the regu-

larization process, as illustrated later in this chapter. Subsequent regularization and the absence of large-scale deterrent action has also been perceived as an indirect encouragement for the development of new unauthorized colonies, since prospective buyers hoped their settlement would obtain a regular status in the future, thereby guaranteeing the long-term economic profitability of their investments (Billand 1990, Rishub 2002).

When the first policy of regularization was initiated in 1961, it concerned around 110 colonies, and "was in response to political pressure exerted by plot holders under threat of losing their land through public acquisition" (Banerjee 1994: 15). A new regularization operation took place in 1969, for colonies that came in existence before February 1967; it covered 64 additional colonies. In 1977, government announced another regularization policy taking into consideration 612 settlements (Jain 1990: 172).

The regularization procedure is always subject to a cut-off date and to a series of conditions, including fitting the structures in a conforming layout plan and the payment of regularization and development charges by the residents. The entire process is a cumbersome and lengthy one, facing the resistance of the plots holders to comply with all the requirements. Thus,

despite almost four decades of regularization operations, only five colonies, out of about 800, have been fully regularized in terms of layout, lease deeds, services and facilities and payment of regularization and development charges. [Yet,] the mere announcement of official policy or local government resolution to regularize settlements leads to immunity and lobbying for infrastructure provision. (...) Irrespective of whether a settlement is regularized or not, inclusion of the settlement in the 'list' is projected as a guarantee for regularization. (Banerjee 2002: 52-3)

A policy which aims at regularising unauthorized colonies that came into existence before 31 March 1993 is again on the agenda of the town planners with reference to a list of 1071 settlements identified by aerial survey. The implementation of this policy was delayed by judicial intervention, following a Public Interest Litigation filed in 1993 against the regularization move, on environmental grounds, by an NGO called 'Common Cause'. The Delhi High Court eventually ordered in 1998 that the regularization policy should be finalized and 'Common Cause' lost its

case. Divergence between the Union Government (that is involved in the town and planning decisions affecting the national capital) and the Delhi Government over the conditions for regularization and the list of colonies to be taken into account further delayed the finalization of the procedure.¹⁰ In particular, the Union government has ignored the demand of the Delhi government in 1998 for inclusion of settlements that appeared between 1993 and 31 December 1997. In February 2001, the Union Government submitted in the High Court the comprehensive guide lines for regularization, including more severe and restrictive provisions than in the previous policies.¹¹ For example, in addition to development charges at the cost of the residents, rates with penalties are also imputed, while certain categories of colonies are excluded from the regularization process.¹² Three and a half year later, the decision on the regularization of unauthorized colonies and its implementation were still pending matters.

How Many People Live in Unauthorized Colonies and Who are They?

In addition to nearly 800 unauthorized colonies that were declared for regularization in the 1960s and 1970s, another 1300 unauthorized colonies have come up in the following two decades (Government of National Capital Territory of Delhi 1996: 11).¹³ In 1998, the population of these new settlements was roughly estimated at almost three millions by the NGO 'Common Cause', which would amount to one fourth of the total population of the capital city.

Beside the significant increase in numbers of unauthorized colonies, a twofold process of spatial expansion and densification has contributed to the growth of these settlements. Most of the existing colonies have increased their areas since their origin while, at the same time, sub-division of the plots, incremental construction and renting part of the houses raised the population density (Gupta 1992).

¹⁰ The Union Government was led by the Bharatiya Janata Party and the Delhi government by the Congress party.

¹¹ *Civil Writ Petition No. 4771/93 – Common Cause (Regd) Society Vs Union of India and others.*

¹² See the above-mentioned CWP; and for a synthetic presentation of the official guidelines, see Rishub 2002: 69.

¹³ This figure is quoted for the year 1995; it includes the list of 1071 colonies considered for regularization under the current proposed policy.

Initially, unauthorized colonies appealed to low and lower-middle income groups, households whose need to construct their homes so outweighed the lack and bad quality of the utilities and services provided, that they were willing to accept the minimum available (or even the deplorable conditions). Since some savings for initial investment in the plot is needed, the inhabitants of unauthorized colonies are better off than those residing in squatter settlements, but they are not well off enough to afford investment in the legal land market. The payment schedules proposed by the colonizers were also staggered to attract such potential buyers. Often, in order to make their investment profitable, the new house owners rent out one or several rooms, or one storey, in their habitation. Thus these settlements also supply a rental sector with relatively cheap lodgings, as compared to the rents in the formal housing market. According to sample surveys conducted by the DDA between 1981-6, unauthorized colonies (including those under regularization) provided accommodation mostly to low-income groups¹⁴ (65 per cent) and to lower-middle income groups¹⁵ (18 per cent). The same survey revealed that only 3 per cent families had piped water, 30 per cent depended upon public hydrant; sewage was available to 5 per cent of the families, while 60 per cent depended on septic tanks (Jain 1990: 172).

Nevertheless, the uncontrolled urbanization of the outskirts of Delhi is also, to a lesser extent, the effect of the residential strategies implemented by high-income groups. The construction of luxurious 'farm houses' in the southern rural-urban fringes of Delhi is a well-known case. As they are located within agricultural lands and were initially genuine farms, the civic authorities (the Municipal Corporation of Delhi and the DDA) continued to apply the rules governing farmlands to such zones, seeking to limit the built-up area in relation to the natural green and cultivated spaces. The agricultural nature of such lands is, however, often distorted. Luxurious, sprawling villas, surrounded by large parks and protected by high walls, have become the fashion instead, not to mention swimming pools which are filled even at times of water scarcity – as farmers do not have to pay for water and get subsidized power for tube-wells. Usually, 'farm house' owners are people from the top income bracket who have been able to build veritable havens of tranquillity and peace on the outskirts of one of the most polluted capitals of the world. When urban norms are flouted, the mushrooming of such estates in a specific area leads to the formation of unauthorized

¹⁴ Households with Rs 500 to 1000 per month in 1981-6.

¹⁵ Households with Rs 1000 to 2000 per month in 1981-6.

colonies of very high standing, benefiting moreover from a certain immunity owing to the efficient network with politicians and bureaucrats, maintained by the rich villa owners.¹⁶

Interestingly, the existence of 'rich' unauthorized colonies is recognized explicitly in the proposed policy of regularization that has introduced for the first time a distinction between 'affluent' and 'non affluent' colonies. Thus, in the guidelines for regularization of unauthorized colonies that the Union Government submitted in the High Court, section 1.8 reads as follows:

In the case of unauthorized colonies on public lands, occupied by non-affluent sections, the cost of land as per notified rates of L&DO¹⁷/DDA together with a penalty of 10 per cent of the total land cost would be recovered. In cases where the unauthorized colonies on public land are inhabited by affluent sections, the cost of land at the current market value plus a penalty of 50 per cent on the same will be recovered. The affluent/non affluent colonies have been categorized on the basis of following parameters: (a) location of the colony, (b) average plot size, (c) quality of construction, and (c) standard of living of the average inhabitant of the colony based on indicators such as use of air-conditioners, cars, etc.¹⁸

It is important to underline that unauthorized colonies are far from constituting a homogenous category, they present a wide range of housing standards and different socio-economic statuses. Moreover, these settlements are subject to considerable physical transformations and socio-economic changes over time. At the initial stage, the unauthorized

¹⁶ For instance, A. Soni (2000: 76) denounced the process at work in the Mehrauli countryside: "Sainik Farms (South of Mehrauli-Badarapur Road), Ruchi Vihar (behind Vasant Kuni), Andheria Bagh (at the location of the ancient mango orchards of the same name, near Mehrauli), are arrogant complexes of palatial mansions with gardens, enclosed behind tall boundary walls. They are, from the point of view of civic authorities, none other than unauthorized colonies, built illegally on agricultural land. But somehow, this derogatory definition is never applied to them. Rather, they are regarded as 'farmhouses'. Their denizens are celebrities of the city's cocktail circuit, and have the means to arrange their own electricity, water, drainage and sewage disposal services. They often indulge in massive power theft with the connivance of law-enforcement agencies."

¹⁷ Land and Development Officer.

¹⁸ Civil Writ Petition No 4771/93 - *Common Cause (Regd) Society Vs Union of India and others*.

colonies are poorly equipped; their infrastructure and urban amenities improve gradually due to the concerted actions of the residents and their 'patrons'. Increase in land prices follows the process of consolidation of the colony, its infrastructure and commercial development, as well as regularization prospects, and eventually entails changes in the residents' socio-economic profile. As noted by C.J. Billand (1990: 2.26): "These trends in land markets are paralleled by similar trends in populations served. Increased trading activity in unauthorized colonies (...) resulting from rising prices forces low and in some cases middle-income groups out of these markets". The regularization of the colony further stimulates the trend toward its gentrification. Yet, there seems to be some reaction to this process, and when prices become unaffordable even for middle-class families, the process of plot subdivision and sale starts so that plots become smaller and more affordable (Mitra 1983, Banerjee 1994: 30, Rishub 2002: 72).

The subsequent case study of Mayur Vihar (East Delhi) provides a detailed illustration of the housing conditions in unauthorized colonies and the socio-economic characteristics of their residents, as well as their practices to cope with their illegal status.

MAYUR VIHAR IN EAST DELHI: A CASE STUDY

The zone selected for this case study,¹⁹ Mayur Vihar – Trilokpuri, forms a widespread area located in the eastern periphery of Delhi – the Trans-

¹⁹ This case study is part of a larger research programme on spatial mobility and residential practices of Delhi's population, and its effect on the dynamics of the metropolis (see Dupont 1997, Dupont and Prakash 1999). The programme was financed by the *Institut de Recherche pour le Développement* (ex-ORSTOM) with additional funding from the CNRS within the framework of *Action Concertée en Sciences Sociales* ORSTOM-CNRS and of *PIR-Villes*. In India, our programme was conducted with the collaboration and support of the *Centre de Sciences Humaines* of New Delhi (French Ministry of Foreign Affairs) and the Institute of Economic Growth (Delhi).

The methodology applied combined quantitative and qualitative approaches and different sources of information to integrate the following:

- an analysis of secondary data and information available on Delhi and its metropolitan area, including a press-review;
- a statistical survey of population samples from 7 zones in the metropolitan area, supplemented by in-depth interviews of sub-samples of individuals;
- the formation of a data base of background information on each zone studied, by the compilation of data and existing documents, direct observation and interviews (Sidhu 1995).

Yamuna sector. This zone is characterized by average to very high residential densities, and rapid population growth during the last 20 years (during the 1981-91 decade: 5 per cent to 13.8 per cent per year as against 3.9 per cent for the entire urban agglomeration within its 1991 boundaries). Various modes of urbanization are found which exemplify urban expansion in the peripheries of the capital and the outcome of the interactions between institutional and non-institutional actors. This allows us to better appraise the conditions of the unauthorized colonies as compared to other neighbouring settlements.²⁰

The original villages of the zone are nowadays hemmed in by the new residential neighbourhoods that gradually developed from 1970-5:

- unauthorized (and *a posteriori* regularized) colonies;
- a large resettlement colony (Trilokpuri) set up during the emergency state (1975-77) to relocate the slum dwellers evicted from squatter settlements in the inner city;
- many blocks of flats of three to four storeys built by the Delhi Development Authority in the late 1970s and early 1980s for the middle-income and low-income groups (the 'DDA flats');
- many other blocks of flats built since 1985 by co-operative group housing societies;
- and, in the interstices of the urban fabric, slum pockets, or more precisely squatter settlement clusters with very precarious housing, sometimes just adjoining upper-class apartment blocks.

These different types of settlement correspond to very distinct segments of the housing stock in terms of housing standards and equipment; this variety also reflects directly the composition of the population that shows a juxtaposition of different socio-economic groups.

Mayur Vihar - Trilokpuri was one of the selected zones, located in the eastern periphery of Delhi. The statistical survey conducted in March 1995 in this zone covered a sample of 342 households, out of which 60 households in unauthorized colonies (or under regularization) corresponding to 282 individuals. In-depth interviews in this zone focused on the various factors influencing the choice of residence and the environmental conditions; most of them were conducted by Mriga Sidhu in 1996 (Sidhu 1996). The system of investigation was completed by new field visits in March 1997 in April 1999, in order to appraise the physical transformations at work in the studied areas.

²⁰ This chapter does not intend, however, to present a systematic differential analysis of the various types of settlements and their socio-economic profile; for this purpose, see Dupont 2004.

Environmental and Housing Conditions

The unauthorized colonies were the first housing estates to emerge around the villages, according to the formation pattern common to this type of informal settlement (as described above). Like elsewhere in Delhi, since these housing estates came up in ignorance or disobedience of all urban planning norms, they are not recognized by the municipality and therefore do not have the benefit of its services (tarring of roads, drinking water connection, sewage disposal system, street cleaning and waste collection). It is therefore left to the residents to organise themselves in order to remedy the deficiencies: to install water hand-pumps, septic tanks, storm water drains, etc. Residents' committees were formed with elected representatives to lobby the concerned public authorities and ministries for provision of civic amenities. In that way most of the unauthorized colonies of Mayur Vihar have managed to obtain electricity supply for their houses, and in some sections also street lighting. In those blocks that were not electrified, the inhabitants tap the electricity illegally by hooking on wires to nearby poles. Through collective actions, the inhabitants try to have access to more urban services, the final objective being the status of an authorized colony for which they need to put pressure on the government officials.²¹

Due to political patronage and as part of the policies of regularization implemented by the Delhi Development Authority (see above), some unauthorized colonies in Mayur Vihar, or in some cases only certain sections of these colonies, have been recognized for regularization (in the sample households for this type of settlement, 21 per cent live in a regularized colony or block).²² Since the regularization procedures are not systematic nor uniform, even within the same colony (which is due to criteria of eligibility, in particular the cut-off date), this entails an unequal access to urban services and basic amenities among the residents of the same neighbourhood. The colonies or sections still unauthorized are generally more recent than the regularized ones, and they undergo a continuous process of urbanization and consolidation.

The unauthorized colonies of Mayur Vihar cater mainly to lower to middle income groups. Thus, in the sample population living in this type

²¹ In some other unauthorized colonies, the residents have also resorted to public demonstrations.

²² However, for simplification purpose, in this section, and, unless otherwise specified, the general term 'unauthorized colonies' will refer both to the unauthorized colonies without any official recognition and to those at various stages of the regularization procedure.

of settlement, 73 per cent of the employed declared a monthly income below 3000 rupees (in 1995), whereas in the DDA and co-operative group-housing societies apartments blocks, the corresponding proportion is only 13 per cent. The characteristics of the housing stock surveyed in 1995 reveal clearly not only the lack of comfort, but also the precariousness of many dwellings units in unauthorized colonies:

- 18 per cent of the structures were not fully consolidated,
- 66 per cent of households lived in a single room,
- 57 per cent had no separate room for the kitchen,
- 36 per cent had no bathroom,
- 18 per cent had no private toilets in their home nor shared toilets on the premises,
- 13 per cent had no access to drinking water in their home,
- and if only 3 per cent had no electricity, this is due to illegal connection when necessary.

For a general comparative perspective, it can be recalled here that, according to the 1991 Census, 45 per cent households in Delhi lived in single-room dwellings and 33 per cent had no access to toilets on their premises.²³

Some sections of unauthorized colonies in Mayur Vihar are difficult to distinguish, in terms of housing as well as environmental conditions, from the adjoining squatter settlements. For example, there is no visible demarcation or space between the unauthorized colony of Shashi Garden and the squatter settlement of Jawarhar Mohalla. As a matter of fact, this squatter settlement benefited initially from a better provision of urban services (in particular, piped water and public toilets) as part of the 'environmental improvement of urban slum' and 'urban basic services' programmes implemented by the Municipal Corporation. Eventually, after repeated requests of the residents from the unauthorized colony, the Municipal Corporation extended the piped water connection from the squatter settlement to the unauthorized colony. Furthermore, those inhabitants of the unauthorized colony whose houses were not equipped

²³ The census data pertaining to access to drinking water are not comparable with the results of our survey. According to the census, only 4 per cent of households did not have access to drinking water in 1991, the broad definition being: "If the household had access to drinking water supplied from a tap, hand pump or tube well situated within or outside the premises, it is considered as having access to safe drinking water". In our survey, 'having access to drinking water' meant 'from a tap, hand pump or tube well situated *within* the premises'.

with private toilet and septic tank made use of the public toilets located in the slum.

The characteristics of the dwelling for each type of settlement in the Mayur Vihar zone are given in Table 1. This shows the relative position of the unauthorized colonies. On the one hand, the housing conditions are considerably worse-off than in co-operative group housing societies apartments and DDA flats; on the other hand, they are clearly better-off on average than in squatter settlements, but not necessarily better than dwellings in urban villages and in resettlement colonies.

Table 1: Characteristics of the dwelling by type of settlement in Mayur Vihar (East Delhi)

Characteristics of the dwelling unit (d.u.)	TYPE OF SETTLEMENT						
	Resettlement Colony	DDA flats	Co-operative group housing societies	Urban villages	Unauthorized or regularized colonies	Squatter settlements	All types
No. of yrs since built	percentage distribution for each type of settlement						
< 5	1.5	-	28.2	2.2	33.9	-	10.2
5 - 9	7.5	-	71.8	11.1	32.3	4.8	18.7
10 - 19	91.0	100	-	11.1	27.4	85.7	59.4
> = 20	-	-	-	75.5	6.5	9.5	11.7
No. of living rooms	percentage distribution for each type of settlement						
1	35.3	-	-	37.2	66.1	78.3	35.7
2	50.4	-	17.9	30.3	19.4	13.0	29.8
3	7.5	85.7	41.1	11.6	9.7	8.7	21.9
> = 4	6.8	14.3	41.0	20.9	4.8	-	12.6
Status of occupancy	percentage distribution for each type of settlement						
owned	92.5	80.9	51.2	62.2	58.3		70.4
rented	6.8	16.7	48.8	26.7	36.7		20.5
other	0.7	2.4	-	6.7	5.0	100 (squatted)	9.1

Characteristics of the dwelling unit (d.u.)	TYPE OF SETTLEMENT						
	Resettle-ment Colony	DDA flats	Co-operative group housing societies	Urban villages	Un-authorized or regularized colonies	Squatter settlements	All types
% of d.u. with precarious or semi-precarious structure	9.0	0.0	0.0	11.6	18.3	91.3	13.8
% of d.u. without separate kitchen	78.9	0.0	0.0	46.5	56.5	96.0	53.2
% of d.u. without bathroom	80.4	0.0	0	32.6	35.5	96.0	48.2
% of d.u. without toilet	85.0	0.0	0.0	32.6	20.2	96.0	47.1
% of d.u. without drinking water	12.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	13.3	82.6	12.6
% of d.u. without electricity	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	3.3	8.3	1.2
Total No. of d.u.	133	42	41	43	60*	23	342
Row percentage	38.9	12.3	12.0	12.6	17.5	6.7	100.0

Note: Out of 60 dwellings, 47 are in unauthorized colonies or sections (=76 %), and 13 in regularized colonies or sections (= 21 %).

Source: ORSTOM-IEG household survey - 1995.

Residential Strategies and Mobility

Financial constraints of economically weaker sections of the population limit them in the housing options and the selection of the locality. Yet,

an approach in terms of residential strategies seems relevant even for residents of irregular settlements, since "if the notion of strategies presupposes the availability of choices, the hold of strong constraints presupposes also to resort to specific strategies, aimed precisely at loosening these constraints" (Gautman 1990: 30).

For households who purchased a plot of land in an unauthorized colony (58 per cent of the households surveyed in this type of settlement in Mayur Vihar were owners), the first reason put forward was land price, which was much cheaper than in legal housing estates. The illegal status of the residential colony did not prevent the new plot holders building their own houses to get a feeling of residential stability and security. The new occupants were confident about the future regularization of their colony by the government, as this had happened several times for other such irregular settlements. To ensure immunity of their settlement, before a regularization operation is effectively announced, the residents use practical strategies like building places of worship²⁴ or showing electricity bills and even house tax receipts as an evidence of legitimate residence.²⁵ As a whole, investing in an unauthorized colony proves to be rational and safe in the long term. Often, house owners rent out one or several rooms to make their investment more profitable.

For tenants in unauthorized colonies (37 per cent of the sample households), the availability of a rental sector that was not saturated and most importantly offered cheaper options was the first pulling factor for choosing a peripheral residential location like Mayur Vihar. The cooperative housing societies' apartment blocks, which adjoin the unauthorized colonies and let almost half of their flats on rent (the highest proportion among the different types of habitation in Mayur Vihar, see Table 1), cater for much higher income groups. Yet, many tenants consider themselves transient and hoped to be later in a better economic position enabling them to settle in a better neighbourhood or, preferably, purchasing their own plot of land and build their own house.

²⁴ The following example quoted by B. Banerjee concerns an unauthorized colony in the Mayur Vihar zone, Shashi Garden: "Inside information revealed that a major road was proposed to be constructed through the colony. Overnight the residents built a large temple within the proposed alignment, with near certainty that the government would not dare to touch religious sentiments by demolishing it, and instead realign the road" (Banerjee 1994: 19).

²⁵ The Municipal Corporation of Delhi did collect house tax in some unauthorized colonies, and until 1983 the Delhi Electricity Supply Undertaking provided connections on demand irrespective of the legal status of the colony (Banerjee 1994: 12).

As found out through in-depth interviews, several residents complained about the unpleasant or even deplorable environmental conditions in their colony, heaped garbage in the streets and parks, pools of stagnant dirty water due to the lack of a draining system, and the inevitable proliferation of flies and mosquitoes.

Thus some inhabitants aspire to move to 'better' and 'more decent' localities, with a cleaner environment. If such a residential trajectory looks possible within the rental sector, access to property ownership for low-income households means resorting to buy a plot in another unauthorized colony, often further away on the outskirts, where cheap land is available. There, they will be able to build up gradually their house, at the pace of their savings, but they would probably have to renounce to their expectation in terms of infrastructure and environmental quality. The same type of outward residential mobility affects households which already own their house, but would need more space to accommodate their increased family. To afford a bigger plot and house, the only option would be to move away to another unauthorized colony in a more peripheral area.

Access to home ownership (despite the ambiguous status of the tenure) and cheap lodging on rent are the first two reasons reported most frequently by the residents of the Mayur Vihar unauthorized colonies to explain their last change of residence within the Delhi urban agglomeration and their present location: 55 per cent and 24 per cent respectively of the concerned persons in the sample.²⁶ It is however important to note that, in the choice of a specific locality among the affordable options, other factors also count, in particular better proximity to the workplace, or good facilities to commute to work as well as other places in the city, and the presence of relatives.

The 1995 survey on spatial mobility highlights the population dynamics of the unauthorized colonies. It is clearly based on migrant households,²⁷ who account for 92 per cent of the households surveyed (as compared to 83 per cent in the entire Mayur Vihar zone) and who represent the highest proportion among the different types of neighbouring settlements (Table 2). Among the migrants residing in unauthorized colonies, 44 per cent arrived directly from a town or village situated outside the capital (in whatever State), and 56 per cent resided previously

²⁶ These proportions take into account the persons who were earlier living within the Delhi urban agglomeration; dependent members who moved with their family are excluded from these statistics (essentially the children).

²⁷ By 'migrant household' we mean household whose head is a non native of Delhi.

in another locality (or several localities) within the Delhi urban agglomeration. Moreover, if we appraise the residential trajectories at the level of the households (migrants or not), the three fourths of them appear to have occupied another dwelling in Delhi before settling in the present one. The unauthorized colonies of Mayur Vihar prove to be mainly a place of resettlement within the urban agglomeration (as part of a strategy of access to home ownership or in a search of cheaper rents), rather than a place of initial reception for new migrants.

The initial formation and subsequent transformations of unauthorized colonies tend to generate a certain pattern of residential mobility, as suggested by the observations carried out in Mayur Vihar and other studies (Mitra 1983, Billand 1990, Banerjee 1994). At the first stage of their development, these settlements appeal to low or lower-middle income groups, in search of affordable land to build their house or cheap rental accommodations. At a second stage, the severe environment conditions and the lack of adequate urban services induces departures, in particular among tenant households who have improved their economic situation and thus can afford to live in a better developed residential area. Eventually, when the colony is officially recognized for regularization, the provision of civic amenities follows. Improved environment and living conditions, combined with legal status, provoke increase in property values and rents which tends to induce the displacement of low income families towards more affordable unauthorized colonies, and the arrival of richer ones.

Table 2: Migration status and place of last previous dwelling by type of settlement in Mayur-Vihar (East Delhi)

	TYPE OF SETTLEMENT						
	Re-settlement colony	DDA flats	Co-operative group housing societies	Urban villages	Unauthorized or regularized colonies	Squatter settlements	All types
	All usual residents						
MIGRATION STATUS	<i>Percentage distribution for each type of settlement</i>						
Migrant	39.0	47.8	52.2	34.8	53.6	44.4	43.5

Non migrant: - Same dwelling since birth	45.2	28.9	24.7	58.2	30.7	49.5	40.9
- Other previous dwelling in Delhi UA	15.8	23.2	23.0	7.0	15.7	6.1	15.7
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
No. of valid cases	721	228	178	256	280	99	1762
Chi-Square test	Pearson Chi-Square: 101.42 df : 10 Significance : 0.000						
	Usual residents: household heads						
MIGRATION STATUS	<i>Percentage distribution for each type of settlement</i>						
Migrant	80.5	87.2	89.7	66.7	91.9	84.2	82.8
Non migrant: - Same dwelling since birth	0.0	0.0	0.0	31.1	0.0	0.0	4.2
- Other previous dwelling in Delhi UA	19.5	12.8	10.3	2.2	8.1	15.8	13.1
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
No. of valid cases	133	39	41	45	60	19	337
Chi-Square test	Pearson Chi-Square: 103.162 df : 10 Significance : 0.000						
	TYPE OF SETTLEMENT						
	Re-settlement colony	DDA flats	Co-operative group housing societies	Urban villages	Unauthorised or regularized colonies	Squatter settlements	All types
	All usual residents						
PLACE OF LAST PREVIOUS DWELLING	<i>Percentage distribution for each type of settlement</i>						

Same dwelling since birth	45.2	28.9	24.9	58.2	30.7	49.5	40.9
In Delhi U.A.	39.9	53.5	67.8	19.1	45.7	22.2	41.4
Outside Delhi U.A.	14.8	17.5	7.3	22.7	23.6	28.3	17.7
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
No. of valid cases	721	228	177	256	280	99	1761
Chi-Square test	Pearson Chi-Square: 158.261 df: 10 Significance : 0.000						
	Usual residents: household heads						
PLACE OF LAST PREVIOUS DWELLING	<i>Percentage distribution for each type of settlement</i>						
Same dwelling since birth	0.0	0.0	0.0	31.1	0.0	0.0	4.2
In Delhi U.A.	88.7	84.6	97.4	35.6	74.2	57.9	77.7
Outside Delhi U.A.	11.3	15.4	2.6	33.3	25.8	42.1	18.1
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
No. of valid cases	133	39	41	45	60	19	337
Chi-Square test	Pearson Chi-Square: 129.024 df: 10 Significance : 0.000						
	TYPE OF SETTLEMENT						
	Re-settlement colony	DDA flats	Co-operative group housing societies	Urban villages	Unauthorized or regularized colonies	Squatter settlements	All types
	All migrants						
PLACE OF LAST PREVIOUS DWELLING	<i>Percentage distribution for each type of settlement</i>						
In Delhi U.A.	61.9	63.3	85.9	34.8	56.3	36.4	59.3
Outside Delhi U.A.	38.1	36.7	14.1	65.2	43.7	63.6	40.7

Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
No. of valid cases	281	109	92	89	151	44	766
Chi-Square test	Pearson Chi-Square: 60.65 df:5				Significance : 0.000		

Notes: The percentages appearing in *italic* have to be interpreted with special caution given the very small size of the sample in the category under consideration.

U.A.: urban agglomeration.

Source: ORSTOM-IEG Household Survey, 1995.

Anticipations about the regularization of unauthorized colonies combined with unavoidable land speculation (given the general context of insufficient housing supply by the public sector while the private sector has been excluded from the formal land delivery process) create the conditions for another type of residential mobility. This is the mobility enforced on the first occupants of some unauthorized colonies when they constitute an economically weaker group without any access to the political and administrative machinery. The case of Ashok Nagar, an unauthorized colony located at the fringe of the Mayur Vihar zone along the south-eastern border of the National Capital Territory of Delhi, provides a good illustration of this phenomenon. The presentation of this case draws from an article by Mukul (1996) that deserves to be summarized here for its exemplary value.

The creation of Ashok Nagar dates back to the early 1970s. The first buyers belonged to lower class families who built there their homes. Escalation in land prices in Delhi, coupled with the prime location of this settlement at the border of the new industrial town of Noida and near the main road leading to the capital centre within about 10 km., attracted covetous land developers and unscrupulous real estate agents. These people employed hooligans (*goondas*) to threaten the residents, destroy their hand-pumps and even to attack them physically. The welfare association founded by the residents proved to be ineffective against the economic power of property dealers who were moreover backed up by a nexus of local leaders, politicians, corrupt bureaucrats and conniving policemen. In this way about 500 families were forcibly displaced from their land and houses in the 1980s, and had to move to other places in Delhi, in rented accommodations. Most of them lost also the hope of buying again a house for their own. In spite of many protests and demonstrations organized by the residents' association, and many cases of property spoliation brought to the court of justice, most

families have not yet received any compensation for their loss. After having been 'cleaned' from their first occupancy in this manner, some sections of the initial colony were sold to a co-operative group-housing society belonging to a much higher income group and who were better connected to the political and administrative machinery. Collected evidences suggest many irregularities (including at the level of the Delhi Development Authority) in the procedure of land acquisition for the co-operative group-housing society.

This example demonstrates the strong interests at stake in land matters of a capital like Delhi, as well as the role of land 'mafia'. The irregular or illegal status of so many colonies – considered by the planners as non-cities, and hence defined by default, negatively, as 'unauthorized' colonies – *de facto* pave the way for intermediary agents, patron-clients relations, political connivance, administrative corruption and distortion of rules.

CONCLUSION

The development pattern of Delhi highlights the magnitude of informal urbanization. Among irregular settlements, the unauthorized colonies founded on illegal land-division played a major role in the process of suburbanization of the capital. Despite regularization policies implemented in the 1960s and the 1970s, the unauthorized colonies that have emerged in the following decades provide today shelter to about one fourth of the population, mostly low and lower-middle income groups. The case study of Mayur Vihar, in East Delhi, reveals that the population dynamics of unauthorized colonies result mainly from intra-urban moves, motivated by the objective of accessing home ownership. Yet, the opportunities for cheap lodgings on rent attract also a significant numbers of settlers, including new migrants.

Although demographic growth and the resulting strong pressure on housing demand have undoubtedly contributed to the extent of the problem, the proliferation of unauthorized colonies in Delhi is also the consequence of a failure in town planning and housing policies, both at the conception and implementation levels. The persistent conflict about the regularization issue reveals again a failure in urban governance, if we adopt the UN-Habitat definition of urban governance as "a continuing process through which conflicting or diverse interests may be accommo-

dated and co-operative action can be taken".²⁸ The case of Delhi's unauthorized colonies is indeed a complex situation involving various conflicting interests. It is not only a conflict between town planners – or civic authorities – and city dwellers indulging in 'illegal' residential practices, but also a conflict between two different sections of the civil society, opposing the environmentalist NGOs and the residents of unauthorized colonies and their associations.

In a broader perspective, this illustrates the opposition between the advocates of the 'green agenda' (who give priority to ecological issues in a long-term perspective) and the advocates of the 'brown agenda' who are more concerned with social justice and the immediate needs of the urban poor (McGranahan and Satterthwaite 2000). The blockage of the projected regularization policy for unauthorized colonies further points out the specificity of Delhi as the federal capital. This status exacerbates the complexity of the case as well as power games and conflicts among government agencies and different levels of power (Union government, State government and Municipal Corporation) that may be led by opposing parties. Lastly, in Delhi like in other Indian cities, the judiciary has emerged as a decisive actor in urban governance.

Since the public and private formal land and housing delivery systems cannot respond to the needs of large sections of the urban population, the government and planners should acknowledge the twofold role of unauthorized colonies in the making of the city:

- their direct contribution to land development and production of the housing stock,
- and the provision of an important rental sector for the working class, as both the public and the capitalist sectors are not able (or not willing) to respond to this demand.

The process of clandestine land division and informal housing activities is to be considered as a response to the persistent urban housing and planning crisis. This informal channel of access to land and housing may well constitute the most appropriate response for a large section of the urban population, given its socio-economic conditions, and the most realistic alternative from the planning point of view (Durand-Lasserve 1986, Durand-Lasserve and Royston, 2002). As recommended already in 1986 by Durand-Lasserve in the broader context of Third World cities,

²⁸ Referred to in the introduction of this volume and found at <http://www.uninhabitat.org/campaigns/governance/principles.asp>.

the role of the town planners and urban governments should be more to facilitate the production of the city than to regulate it by imposing a rigid planning frame and strict (often inadequate) rules. Thus, the priority objective should be to induce a dynamics based on the existing forces (Durand-Lasserve 1986: 169) – without neglecting, however, the environmental issues. The case study of unauthorized colonies in Delhi confirms the relevance of this assessment.

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