

# EXPECTANT URBANISM

## TIME, SPACE AND RHYTHM IN A SMALLER SOUTH INDIAN CITY

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## Statement

*I hereby state that the thesis contains no material accepted for any other degrees in any other institutions. The thesis contains no materials previously written and/or published by another person, except where appropriate acknowledgment is made in the form of bibliographical reference.*

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## Abstract

Even more intense than India's ongoing urbanisation is the expectancy surrounding it. Freed from exploitative colonial rule and failed 'socialist' development, it is loudly proclaimed that India is having an 'urban awakening' that coincides with its 'unbound' and 'shining' 'arrival to the global stage'. This expectancy is keenly felt in Mangaluru (formerly Mangalore) – a city of around half a million people in coastal south Karnataka – a city framed as small, but with metropolitan ambitions. This dissertation analyses how Mangaluru's culture of expectancy structures and destructures everyday urban life. Starting from a movement and experience based understanding of the urban, and drawing on 18 months ethnographic research amongst housing brokers, moving street vendors and auto rickshaw drivers, the dissertation interrogates the interplay between the city's regularities and irregularities through the analytical lens of rhythm.

Expectancy not only engenders violent land grabs, slum clearances and the creation of exclusive residential enclaves, but also myriad individual and collective aspirations in, with, and through the city – future wants for which people engage in often hard routinised labour in the present. The relationship between regularity and irregularity reveals the mechanisms, possibilities and contradictions of Mangaluru's expectant urbanism. Groups such as brokers, vendors and drivers are cast as disorderly, irregular or 'out of step', and yet their backstage routines are the rhythmic edifice upon which the comforts of others are predicated. Moreover, whilst the upkeep of regular patterns can enable urban inhabitants to turn irregularities that come their way from volatilities into possibilities, these same regularities – strengthened by the myth of widespread upward mobility – keep such groups forever displaced from the city of the future.

Navigating the city in a way that finds and maintains regularity is increasingly difficult. India's ongoing urbanisation is re-timing and re-spacing the city through the process of expansion, concentration and differentiation. This feeds into and from dominant social imaginaries of smooth flow, accelerated progress and friction-free consumption, and makes the city's rhythmic modes increasingly asynchronous, incoherent and omnidirectional. In order to navigate within the expectant city, brokers, vendors and rickshaw drivers employ various

rhythmic strategies including street level conducting (linking, mediating and synchronising others' rhythmic modes), anticipation (creating future temporal depth and belonging), and rhythmic dissonance (injecting tension through refusing dominant norms). The dissertation not only contributes to our understanding of smaller cities during India's urban moment, but, in advancing a culturally-rooted diachronic and synchronic analysis of everyday urban life, it extends urban studies' increasingly sophisticated spatial and historical analyses of cities, by bringing these works into dialogue with the anthropology of time, ultimately offering a rhythmic re-conceptualisation of the urban.

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## List of Abbreviations

BJP	Bharatiya Janata Party
BPO	Business Process Outsourcing
CDA	Coastal Development Authority
CREDAI	Confederation of Real Estate Developers' Associations of India
IDSMT	Integrated Development of Small & Medium Towns
IT/ITES	Information Technology/Information Technology Enabled Service
JnNURM	Jawaharlal Nehru National Urban Renewal Mission
KIADB	Karnataka Industrial Area Development Board
MCC	Mangalore City Corporation
MLA	Member of the Legislative Assembly
MRPL	Mangalore Refinery and Petrochemicals Limited
MSEZ	Mangalore Economic Zone
MUDA	Mangalore Urban Development Authority
NASVI	National Association of Street Vendors of India
RTO	Regional Transport Office
SC	Scheduled Caste
SEZ	Special Economic Zone
ST	Scheduled Tribe
UIDSSMT	Urban Infrastructure Development Scheme for Small and Medium Towns

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## INTRODUCTION: RHYTHMIC EXPECTATION

Cities, even smaller cities like Mangaluru, throb with people's futures. Take Sriram, Saleem and Raj.

*Sriram* wants his daughter, Savitha, to be a doctor. There is no hospital or medical centre in their village in rural Tamil Nadu, but there is one about thirty minutes away. The nearest medical college is three buses away in the city of Salem. Her mum, Pavithra, used to work in Mumbai as a tailor before marriage, whilst Sriram still works away as a head loader and street vendor in Mangaluru, some 17 hours travel away in the neighbouring state of Karnataka. His own father died when he was a child and Sriram had very little schooling, leaving him almost illiterate. He is close to completing two decades of work in Mangaluru, after which he will return to his village to be nearer to his son, who he worries is growing up soft and lazy. The money he has earned – by moving a wholesaler's goods on his head each morning before moving street to street hawking tender coconuts – has helped him build his family home, and is putting his children through private English-language education. He hopes it will be worth it and that Savitha, still only thirteen, will one day be a doctor.

*Saleem* has a small electrical goods shop just outside Mangaluru city limits, and wants to strike it rich with a big land or housing deal. In the last few years, the area around his shop has seen increased activity. A new super bazaar owned by a relative has just opened, a dispute between brothers over land was overcome paving the way for a ten storey apartment complex, an IT-exclusive Special Economic Zone (SEZ) has been set up, and nearby colleges are gradually increasing their student numbers. The area is fast becoming a mini higher education zone in a region already known for its colleges. Business is lean in his shop now but, he tells himself, things will pick up soon. Aside from his shop, he also works as a part time land and housing broker – bringing buyers/sellers or landlords/tenants together and making commission on the deal. He has also tried his hand at setting up a local lotto with two of his friends and, for around a month, attempted door-to-door sales of furniture and water filters in small towns north of the city. Thus far his fortune has eluded him. His pride, as well as his pocket, push him on each day. As does the knowledge that his brothers

and friends from his community have, in their own ways, found their place in the city. Saleem has seen what a big and bold city offers, as he spent much of his twenties working as a shop-floor salesman for a multinational company in Dubai, and he talks up Mangaluru's prospects as a mini-Dubai in waiting.

*Raj*, who works as an auto rickshaw driver at the edge of the city, is not waiting for a fortune. He spends his days moving passengers from one part of the city to another, visiting a 'wine shop' to drink cheap whiskey, and sitting and joking with friends at auto stands. But he does not have to. Five years previously his family land became suddenly valuable due to a proposed mega-project and his two older brothers, against his wishes, agreed to sell the land. The project, a six lane ring road, aims to remake the city's waterfront, turning the old port area into a multi-purpose residential and commercial zone. Whether or not the project will be realised is yet to be seen, but *Raj*'s family sold up and left for a village outside the city. His brothers have moved into diverse businesses, but *Raj*, for the most part, spends a majority of his days as a driver. Drawn into the male sociability of auto stands, and uncomfortable with the role envisioned for him by his family, he refuses to seize what others consider to be an opportunity.

Three men, all in their thirties, a vendor, a broker and a driver, and three very different entanglements with the city and its futures. But in all cases it seems expectancy – at once material, abstract and creative – weighs heavily upon the here and now of their and their families' lives. This suffusion of expectancy is reverberated through and is heightened by a city like Mangaluru. Not only because the population of the urban agglomeration has grown from 539,387 to 623,841 in ten years (Government of India 2011); not only because from 1972-1999 the region's population increased by around 54 percent with 'developed land' increasing by 142 percent (Sudhira, Ramachandra, and Jagadish 2004, 32–33); and not only because between 1983 and 2008, the 'built up' area in the surrounding district tripled, with the population increasing by 215 percent (Bhagyanagar et al. 2012). This is part of it, but not all. Expectancy is tangible because Mangaluru is a city in between: it is a 'tier two' city with the transport connections of a metropolis; a 'provincial' city with the diversity and density of a State capital; an out of the way city with some of the highest literacy rates in the country; and, most importantly, a smaller city tightly enmeshed in India's urban moment.

Indeed, it can be said, that even more intense than India's ongoing urbanisation is the expectancy of it. Freed from exploitative colonial rule and failed 'socialist' development, Indian cities supposedly lie at the heart of the country's much heralded and long postponed 'moment'. It has been claimed by a prominent public intellectual that in 1991 India was 'unbound', launched onto a path of a 'social and economic revolution', a chance passed up at independence (G. Das 2000); it was announced by a buoyant government in 2004 that India was 'shining', indeed so much so that it's shining needed national and international advertisement (see: Brosius 2010); and it has been said by numerous commentators, newspapers and state actors, that India has finally 'arrived on the global stage', as an enterprising, prosperous and technologically adapt country, populated by highly educated middle-classes (see: Kaur and Hansen 2015). Unbound and shining, India's arrival is not just to the global stage, but also to the city. Or rather the city of the future.

The expectation is that the Indian city of the future will be a very different city from the Indian city of the past. Indeed, if it could once be said of the Indian psyche that the journey from the village to the city was “a journey from a disowned self to a self that cannot be fully owned up” (Nandy 2001, 24), then we might say that the journey from the city of the 'developmental era' to the city of this neoliberal period is a journey from a disparaged self to a self that cannot wait to get where it is going. It is a journey that, according to a widely heralded report by consultancy firm McKinsey, could (and should) lead to an 'urban awakening' in which the economic potential of cities is fully realised (Sankhe et al. 2010). Moreover, if the utopian cities of the past were industrial townships where 'producer-patriots' laboured in newly developed nation spaces separate from the backwards country around it (S. Roy 2007, 133–156), then the utopias of today are the planned 100 'smart cities', driven by the 'rhetoric of urgency' in which urbanisation is refracted through business models (Datta 2015).

In terms of numbers however, India's urbanisation is not quite as epochal as the rhetoric surrounding it suggests. Although it is a little eye watering to note that “there are 67 cities with over 500,000 people in India” (LSE Cities 2014), or that between 2001 and 2011 the urban population increased from 27.81 percent to 31.16 percent (Government of India 2011), it nevertheless remains the case that the same numbers show that 68.84 percent of

people (still) live in rural areas. Moreover, although it is tempting to situate India's urbanisation within the statistical celebration of the 'urban age' – the fact that now more people live in urban areas than rural areas across the globe – the urban age 'thesis' is not only a methodologically flawed statistical artefact (what 'urban' means varies drastically), but it also suggests a boundedness of 'rural' and 'urban' places that belies the interconnected process of urbanisation (Brenner and Schmid 2014). India's urban expectancy then, is not solely about numbers. It is not only quantitative, but qualitative too.

Contemporary capitalist urbanisation in India is a process of brutal, violent struggle in which people's 'informal' or 'illegal' housing is threatened and destroyed (Datta 2012; Srivastava 2015), land at the edge of cities is expropriated by the state for SEZs (Levien 2011; Cook, Bhatta, and Dinker 2013) and dominant groups seek to cleanse the other from their midst (Appadurai 2000). Groups negotiate, struggle and fight against such processes, often successfully, with the outcome of contestations far from resolved (Shatkin 2014). For instance, 'empty' cleared land is occupied and used in ways that subvert the flow of global capital (S. Benjamin 2008), organised groups thwart attempts by State governments to impose unwanted SEZs (A. Roy 2009), and 'unruly' users of public places organise and fight back attempted ordering, often with local state support (L. Fernandes 2004).

However, beyond these struggles, Indian cities are the home of people's dreams, hopes and wants. The city is pulled between the violence of development and desire for development (Baviskar 2003), with contemporary urbanism so persuasive, pervasive and compelling because it seemingly offers unlimited chances, opportunities and possibilities. India's economy is one built on anticipation of future greatness, in which aspirations and potential futures are keenly felt in people's everyday lives, even as the promises offered by capitalism are continually deferred (Cross 2014). As elsewhere across the so called Global South, the dreams offered by capitalism are at once both wide and very narrow (Mitchell 2002, 275–



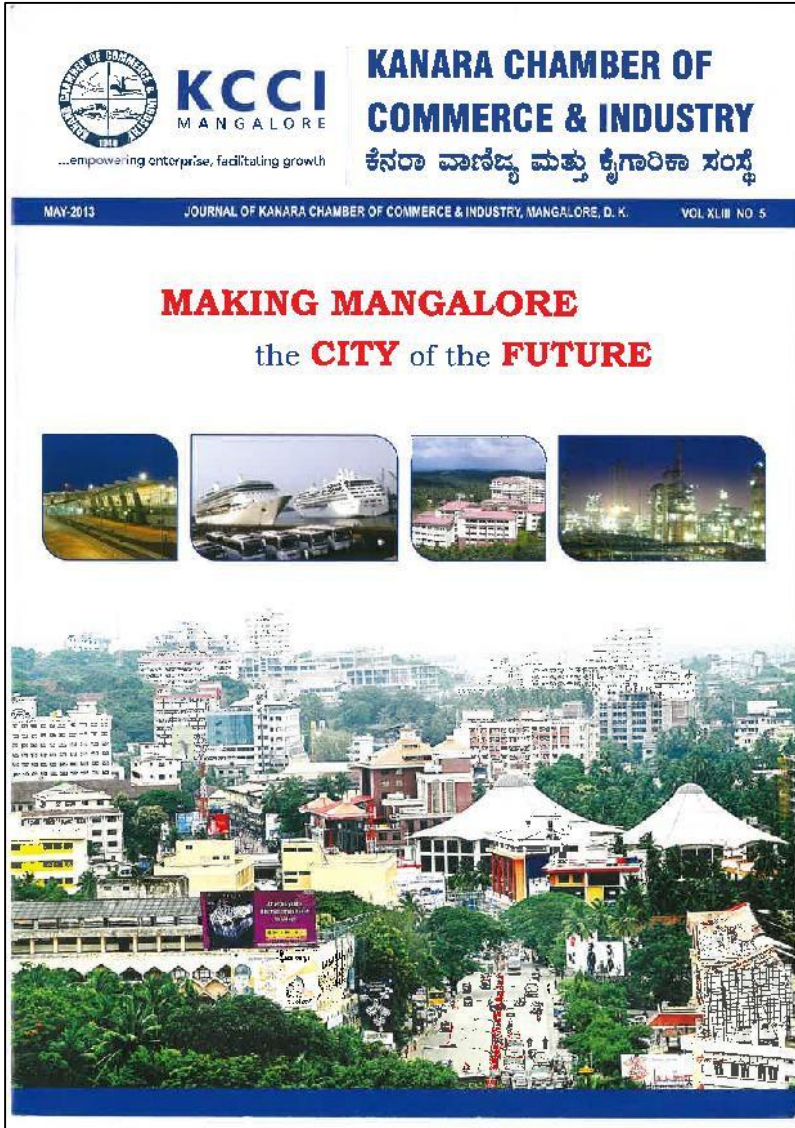


Figure 1: Kanara Chamber of Commerce's Dream for the Future. Photo credit Satish Ira.

is not only the “ways in which people imagine their social existence, how they fit together with others, how things go on between them and their fellows, the expectations that are normally met, and the deeper normative notions and images that underlie these expectations” (Taylor 2002, 106), but also one that has change and the desire to change woven into the very act of imagining. In which emergent, dominant, and residual collective imaginaries compete, collide and struggle with one another<sup>1</sup> (cf. Williams 1989; see: Poovey 2002). It is a work of imagination that is creative, material and abstract. It “is located and

303), and premised on one of the myths of modernity: continued development and progress (Ferguson 1999).

In Mangaluru (formerly Mangalore), a smaller city of around half-a-million located on India's western coast in the southern State of Karnataka, these dreams, myths, aspirations, imaginations, plans, violent struggles and desires produce a feeling of *expectant urbanism*; an urban culture that moves with a prospective gait.

It is a social imaginary that exhibits many continuities from the colonial and early independence years, yet is anxious to get to its future. As such, it is a social imaginary that

1 Williams was referring to ideologies not imaginaries as being 'emergent, dominant, and residual'. See Poovey (2002) for a productive combination of Williams and Taylor.

continually reproduced through... orienting acts... grounded in material space and social practice” (Cinar and Bender 2007, xii). The imaging of the city of the future is not something created solely in the mind, divorced from the world around it, but rather intimately tied to perception of and acting in and upon the world around us; what is perceived is bred through the imagination, it is a way of living creatively in the world (Ingold 2012). Expectant urbanism is a social imaginary of a city yet to be, but, crucially, one with an enveloping presence in the present.

It draws on Western colonial notions of modern urbanism that asserted the power of the material form to shape the 'moral development' of a city's inhabitants. Such projects were attempted through zoning, secular institutionalised governance and the concentration of commerce and industry in the service of the regional or national economy (Glover 2008, xiv). It further draws on post-colonial urban imaginaries, in which citizens (no longer natives) were to be improved along with the slums in which they lived (variously demolished, moved and saved) (Srivastava 2015). In which the ideal urban figure was the 'producer patriot', a manufacturer not just of industrial products but of the new nation itself (S. Roy 2007, 133–156). It draws on these, but it also strongly rejects the failures of the past in its eagerness to reach the future.

Contemporary Indian cities are celebrations of newness, novelty and youthfulness. Modernity relishes the newness of the new (Appadurai 1996) and across India there is a heightened awareness of the 'politics of time' (Kapur 2013), with the positioning of places or people as 'under-developed' helping ferment an individualistic and precarious race against time: a catching up from past backwardness and a headlong rush towards the shining future. Such expectant jubilations are accentuated by India's much touted demographic bulge – with 33 percent of people in India below 15, and 50 percent below 24 (Lingenheld 2015). Within unbridled commitments to newness, linear progression and the rejection of the past, is the identification of the other – the ones who must be improved or improve themselves (cf. Ludden 1992). Indeed, development – the expectation that there will be an improvement in life, and the various projects aimed at doing so – “is one of the most important objects of desire, imagination, and struggle in contemporary India” (Pandian 2009, 8).

This novelty and youthfulness, encased in a furious and unbound desire for development, has a strong class dimension as newness entwines with elite imaginaries of the urban. Indian cities, no longer 'held back', are in the process of finally becoming bourgeois (Chatterjee 2004), with 'middle-classes' and elites helping drive anti-poor and land liberalisation policies (Gandy 2008), through new urban governance experiments that open up space for 'gentrification' of the state (Ghertner 2011). Cities are being remade for 'new' types of people: for 'global' or 'cosmopolitan' inhabitants there are gated communities and secluded enclaves (Bose 2014), for 'professionals' 'empty' land is turned into luxury real estate development (Searle 2013), and for the 'middle classes', places are privatised and homogenised (Donner 2012). This entails a 'bourgeois environmentalism' in which the aesthetic sensibilities of clean and green are used to efface, displace and discipline (Baviskar 2003), in which a sanitised image of the city free from unruly elements is sought (L. Fernandes 2004), and in which regulated sites of consumption are celebrated (Srivastava 2015).

However, even as Indian cities are re-imagined along new bourgeois contours, cracks appear under seemingly smooth surfaces. Cities, as socially imagined places, are marked by disjunctures between ideas of order, media representations of order and the financing of that order (cf. Appadurai 1996). These disjunctures stem from unresolved tensions between colonial and post-colonial ideas of order, in which conceptions of the public, crowds and the common unhinge dominant imaginaries (Arabindoo 2011). Moreover, contradictory and destabilising images sit side by side, with cities simultaneously imagined as both degenerating Third World 'unruly slums' and as active productive sites packed with call centres and global businesses (Anjaria and McFarlane 2011). This co-existence inspires and constrains the urban middle classes, as they see themselves pulling India into a shining future, whilst haunted by neo-orientalist and neo-colonialist discourses rooted in a lacking past (Brosius 2010). Committed to change and impatient to catch up, embarrassed by the past yet unable to shake off its baggage, Indian cities are re-made with the re-making of its people in mind. This is a re-imagining of the Indian city in which the future abounds.

It is a rhythmic imagining of the Indian city as a site of *flow*. An urban imaginary in which city streets circulate smoothly, unimpeded by hawkers, traffic and the poor (Anjaria 2013); in

which city housing markets induce capital with promises of infrastructure-enabled fluidity (Rouanet and Halbert 2015); and in which manufacturing zones are freed from entanglements with red tape, tax and labour unions (Cross 2014, 24–52). In Mangaluru the flowing city is imagined in the planned construction of a six lane ring road – the *Mangalore Corniche* – that will 'unlock' the windy streets close to the river for comprehensive residential and commercial development and help inhabitants freely circulate round and round; in billboards that have shot up across the city announcing 'out of this world' residential enclaves that tap into global living ideals; and in the SEZs for petrochemicals and IT north and west of the city<sup>2</sup>.

It is also a rhythmic imagining of the Indian city as site of *accelerated progress*. An urban imaginary in which large scale projects such as Jawaharlal Nehru National Urban Renewal Mission (JnNURM) can fast-track development (Nandi and Gamkhar 2013); an urban imaginary in which temporary 'states of exception' can be implemented as parastatal bodies engender rapid development at city peripheries through land speculation (Goldman 2011); and an urban imaginary in which parts of cities are turned over for the exemplary modern and much hyped IT, Information Technology Enabled (ITES) and Business Process Outsourcing (BPO) sectors (Kennedy 2013). In Mangaluru, accelerated progress is felt through its yearning for smart city status – the latest big Central funding programme – which it looks all but certain to get; through the move by real estate developers to have building irregularities regularised or the attempts by parastatals to clear farmers from fertile land for Mangalore Special Economic Zone (MSEZ); or through the need for rural-urban migrants to labour in the streets and construction sites, whilst the higher educated local urbanites work in offices, shops or the emerging BPO, IT and ITES companies.

Finally, it is also a rhythmic imagining of the Indian city as one with *friction-free consumption*. An urban imaginary in which shopping malls appear as temples and temples as shopping malls, as both poor and rich alike are tempted by the transformative offerings of consumption (Srivastava 2015); an urban imaginary where informal street trade is cleansed from the

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2 Special Economic Zones first started to be set up in India in 2005. Although a few Export Processing Zones have existed since the 1960s, they were not deemed to be working efficiently, and so the government – inspired in part by China's SEZ induced export levels – reformulated and repackaged them as SEZs offering export duty exemptions, tax holidays and smooth bureaucratic procedures. It is hoped these zones will increase exports, attract domestic and foreign investment, create employment and improve infrastructure.

public places of the city (L. Fernandes 2004); and an urban imaginary where the city is a place through which inhabitants can aspire to be cosmopolitan global Indians and experience this in cafés, pubs and malls (Brosius 2010). In Mangaluru, this is evidenced in new extravagant shopping malls that burst into the 'biggest in India' top ten lists, only to be replaced by shopping malls elsewhere, only to proudly enter the list again with the next big mall; in the threats, harassment and destruction of vendor's stalls by Mangaluru City Corporation; and in the slew of new expensive pubs, cafés and high end hotels.

However, this dissertation is not about those for whom such an urban imaginary is a current tangible reality, nor is it about those upon whom brutal violence is enacted with the goal of bringing about such a reality. Rather it is about those for whom present reality is laden with the expectancy that they will forge a meaningful life in such a 'city of the future'. Those such as housing and land brokers, street vendors and auto rickshaw drivers who, along with their families, are often framed as being from the old India, the backwards or the so called 'informal', but for whom the flowing, smooth progressing city is not so far away. Groups who, because they move within Mangaluru, a smaller city framed as being on the cusp of greatness, find themselves caught up in a collective active moment of hopefully expectancy – an “active, intersubjective, and therefore inherently social variety of hope” (Pedersen 2012, 146)<sup>3</sup>, a reorientation of knowledge (Miyazaki 2004) that allows for the outcomes of different possibilities to form the reimagining of the present (Miyazaki 2006). This expectancy, to a large degree, is what these groups order their everyday lives around.

Expectant urbanism is also producer of disorder – a disorder from above. The order of the smooth-flowing, progress-accelerating and frictionless consumption in the city of the future is the promise for which disorder is created in the present; in its headlong rush for the future, the Indian city embraces informality as a necessary by-product in the present. This is a type of informality that allows for an ongoing 'state of deregulation', in which cities are 'unmapped' to make way for future land acquisition, and ongoing distinctions between what is legal/illegal or authorised/unauthorised are employed as a rational system of urban expansion (A. Roy 2009). Modernity's ordering project does not define itself against disorder, or even ambivalence (e.g. see: Bauman 1991), but rather urban modernity's promise of a fantastic

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3 One of two types of hope Pedersen distinguishes between, the other being a type of daydreaming.

ordered future quells ambivalence, and creates disorder in the present. One of the ironies of this future-orientated imaginary is that vendors, brokers and drivers are discursively framed as the unordered and informal, the ones who hold back the realisation of the urban dream. However, as will be seen below, it is they who seek order and formality.



Figure 2 Online depiction of Mangaluru's changes. Source: Kukkaje.com

Figure 3: Online meme from Facebook page Kodial - Mangalore -Kudla

The supposed 'backwardness' of groups like vendors, auto drivers and brokers are awkwardly juxtaposed with the daily practices of those middle-class and elite inhabitants for whom the city of the future seems closest. Indeed, the modern city resists totalising narratives, throwing up a multiplicity of images (see: W. Benjamin 1999), with the collective urban imaginaries diffused and collapsed even as state actors or popular media seek to produce coherence (Cinar and Bender 2007). It is within these cracks that groups like those analysed in this dissertation move. Movements that are of both absence and presence. A strong narrative paints them as being from the unruly past, but in the everyday present, these same groups provide middle-class comforts: they are the vendors entering the gates of residential enclaves to deliver fresh fish to the doorstep each morning, the auto drivers taking and dropping off children to private schools, and the brokers helping silently uphold the class and jati barriers needed to maintain of proclamations of being 'progressive'. Such groups are both in and out of step with the city's dominant beat.

This dominant imaginary is not hegemonic however. Its contradictions and its apparent

impossibilities are reflected upon by many. There are people who hail Mangaluru's shopping malls as a sign of progress, but never visit them; who eat Domino's Pizza as a treat, and then spend the evening throwing up; or who organise and protest against changes in the city that they see as being anti-poor, anti-environment and corrupt. As such, cities are key sites through which expectation is refracted, as they proximately entwine different groups, offering glimpses of what might be, whilst reminding people of the barriers that restrict such attainment. It might then be said that the Indian “city itself is like a gigantic shopping mall – full of goods one hopes to possess, but requiring constant calibration of desire in order that it aligns with the actual capacity to consume” (Srivastava 2015, 284).

It is not only individuals and groups who are reminded of their position within India's urban moment, but cities too, not least in relation to their size and accompanying assumed levels of urbanity or cityness. Such is the case for Mangaluru. Located at the edge of the states of Karnataka and Kerala, the city is squeezed between the Western Ghat mountain range and the Arabian Sea but also, due to its size, stretched between the village and the metropolis. Bigger than nearby Bantwal and Moodbidri, but smaller than Bengaluru and Mysuru, Mangaluru is materially and discursively positioned in relation to settlements across the country and across the sea: framed as lacking the urbanity of the true sites of urban modernity, the Londons, Dubais and Mumbais of the world. However, in spite of urban scholars' tendency to overlook smaller cities in India and elsewhere, cities such as Mangaluru, precisely because of their in-between positioning, are key sites for understanding the sorts of questions that India's urban moment throws up: *in what ways does the expectancy of the city-yet-to-be affect contemporary everyday life? How does this ongoing process of urbanisation structure and de-structure urban inhabitants' lives? How can and do those 'out of step' with India's urban future navigate the city as they seek both a livelihood and a meaningful life?*

The answers to such questions lie not only in a focus on urban spaces, as has been the norm in urban studies for the past decades, but equally in a focus on time. Or rather, in thinking through how people make both the times and spaces of their cities, a focus on patterned movement: that is *rhythm*. As I will argue in depth below, the city is an agglomeration and aggregation of heterogeneous rhythmic modes (or patterns). These are

variously in relation with each other, moving the city between synchrony and asynchrony, coherence and incoherence, unidirectionality and omnidirectionality. Together they produce streams of irregular *regularities* and regular *irregularities*. Navigating the city for brokers, vendors and drivers is about carving out regularities in their own lives in a way that allows them to – or at least allows them to believe that they can – utilise the unexpected irregularities of the city in a meaningful way.

People such as the above mentioned Sriram, Saleem and Raj – as they move through the city in the course of their everyday lives – act on, with and through predictabilities as well as chance happenings. Mediated by class, *jati*<sup>4</sup> (caste), gender, age and religious community, navigating the city is about turning regularities from grinding, binding mundanities into comforting, reliable dependables, about switching irregularities from disorderly, confusing volatilities into exciting, galvanizing potentials. As such, and with India's expectant urbanism in mind, vendors, brokers and drivers must not only be pragmatically attentive to the various movements of the city, but must also choose carefully when to act with intent, not only to materially advance, but also to cultivate certain images of themselves as they seek to find their place within the new paradigm.

Understanding how the future of the Indian city flows through the lives of those such as brokers, vendors and auto drivers in a city such as Mangaluru, is important if India's urbanisation can ever be directed in such a way as to realise its critical, radical and transformative potential. Urban research in India has been overwhelmingly drawn to extremes, from 'slum dwellers' in Mumbai to the elites in gated luxury highrises of Delhi and its surroundings. But somewhere between the slumdog and the millionaire are millions of urban inhabitants about whose lives we know very little. Mangaluru is relatively free from both slums and luxury gated highrises (though this is changing fast) and the sorts of people inhabit this dissertation, whilst richer and poorer than one other, live in neither. In a world in which the future is increasingly framed in terms of *probability* (a way of thinking about the future through numbers, accounts, the worst sorts of casino capitalism), uncovering how

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4 The word 'caste' is now used in India, both in English and the vernacular languages, but I think it confuses analyses as it can be used to refer to both varna (the ancient ideal textual distinction between Brahmins, Kshatriyas, Vaishyas and Shudras – priests, warriors, merchants, and labourers) and jati (the thousands of distinct groups, often based on profession, found across the subcontinent).



people create their lives to be filled with *possibility* (a way of feeling, thinking and acting that produces greater equality, increases the “horizons of hope” and expands the “field of the imagination”) is one of the key contributions anthropologists can make (Appadurai 2013, 295) . Such inquiries then must go beyond an analysis of explicit political actions, and look into the everyday lives of everyday people in everyday cities like Mangaluru.



Figure 2: Map of Mangaluru in India. Source BBC

## The Rhythmic City

Not much has changed in Mangalore [pause] change is inevitable. The city never changes, people change. Cities remain the same throughout the world, but people change – as science and technology advances people change. Now it’s all change. Man is becoming more and more brilliant. In 20 – 25 years people will be two times as brilliant. When Adam and Eve came nothing was there and the science and technology developed, man improved – moved from place to place – shifted from culture to culture...

Like this we learn things. I am adjusting to places and the city. If I go to Bangalore then I behave like them. If I’m in Dakshina Kannada [district] then I behave like this – we have to adapt ourselves and adjust.

Prakash, Magazine Vendor

## I: Movement

Mangaluru derives its name from the temple dedicated to the goddess Mangladevi, one of the oldest temples in the city. But most people in Mangaluru will not call the city Mangaluru. Tulu speakers, the majority, call it Kudla (which derives from the word for junction, as the city lies at the confluence of two rivers and the Arabian Sea) and Mangaluru/Kudla is the largest city in the cultural region of Tulu Nadu. Konkani speaking Catholics and Gowda Saraswat Brahmins (amongst others) were forced to migrate from what is present day Goa, and call the city Kodyal, which is also the name of a central part of the city in all languages. The largest Muslim jati, the Bearys, who speak a language of the same name, refer to the city as Maikala, whilst the numerous students and 'medical tourists' from the neighbouring state of Kerala speak Malayalam and refer to the city as Mangalapuram. When I speak Kannada I say Mangaluru, but in English I think of the city as Mangalore, which is how it was anglicised by the colonial rulers and how it was officially called right up until 2014, when 10 cities across the State<sup>5</sup> of Karnataka, in which Mangaluru resides, had their names changed to reflect how they were spoken in the State language Kannada. How you think of the city, depends very much on your jati, your native place (*urru*), the historical period in which you are, and the language you are speaking at the time (and many Mangaloreans speak many languages). If names *for* the city speak to migratory patterns, linguistic affinity and one's place within it, then names *inside* the city speak to old and new rhythmic patterns that keep changing.

For instance, you can take a bus to a stop called *Big Bazaar*, which is just before (or after) the central bus station. But Big Bazaar is only the largest sign for a shop on the side of a shopping mall, called *Bharath Mall*, which was set up in 2006. Opposite Big Bazaar, there is row of flower sellers. They hail from a village in Mysuru district, and came to Mangaluru about three years before the shopping mall was built. Most Mangaloreans do not do this type of moving street selling any more, as many prefer indoor or better paid work in the Gulf. As will be seen in Chapter One, Mangaloreans are relatively highly educated, and have been for many generations.

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5 Throughout the dissertation I will use the upper-case S when referring to federal States (like Karnataka or Kerala).

One of these rural migrant flower sellers, Natesh, breaks expectations however. He tells everyone, though many do not believe him, that he has a humanities degree from the University of Mysore. Natesh does not work in the evening because, by his own estimation, he is a much better seller than the others. Over ten years he has worked out a morning route along which he sells garlands of flowers for *pooja* (ritual offering) in people's homes or workplaces. Carrying the flowers in a basket on his head, his route is so expertly worked out, in terms of being in the right places at the right times, that it brings him enough money to spend the rest of the day relaxing, whilst his fellow sellers work well into the evening.

Then there is also a place in the city known as *Morgan's Gate*. There is no gate at Morgan's Gate however, and people disagree about where exactly the gate was and when it went away. The Morgans, British coffee traders and tile makers, have long gone, but their old bungalows and factory still stand in the locality that bares their name. Their factory has since been turned into a 'tech park' used by the BPO company Mphasis. At Morgan's Gate auto stand, a little down from the tech park, drivers sit and wait for their customers. Some sit in their autos, but most gather under a tree at the front of the queue.

One auto driver, Shekhar, works every day of the year from morning till evening. He joined the state pension scheme, is slowly paying off the loan he took for an auto with permit, never drinks and drives and never stops work during the day to gamble at cock fights (*kori katta*) as some other drivers do. However, despite his professed correctness, he was once in trouble with the law. On the day his daughter was born, caught up in the joy of the birth, he missed the news declaring a citywide curfew, which was imposed by the police after a group of Hindu nationalists attacked a church. He needed to go home to get some items for his wife. Not far from the hospital, starting to wonder why the streets were so empty, he was caught and hit twice by a policemen before he could escape (something he reminds his daughter about, whenever she is naughty).

Finally, there is also a place in the city called *Bunder*. On ancient maps what is now called Mangaluru was marked as Bunder, from the Persian word for port or haven. Nowadays however, the name locally refers to the old port area of the city. A majority of trade now

passes through the large all-weather port opened north of the city in 1974. Meanwhile at the smaller older port in Bunder, small traders, recyclers, lorries and houses all pile up atop one another right up to the edge of the water, with the natural harbour formed by a spit of land that juts out into the Arabian Sea. It allows, during the nine dry months of the year at least, smaller ships to dock, just as they have done for centuries. Behind the waterfront, coffee, fish and cashew are moved round the city and eventually round the world.

In one of the medium-sized cashew traders, the elderly Mr. Pai can often be found sitting by the door, talking with his friend and the establishment's owner. Though he comes from a family of traders, he himself works as a full time land and housing broker. These stops he makes in Bunder – at a friend's one week, at a relative's the next – are part of what has kept him a successful broker since the 1960's. His links are deep and wide, and he is always looking out (or rather listening out) for potential deals. Though he dresses well, and has sizeable savings in the bank, he lives alone in modest bachelor accommodation in an old tiled house.

Natesh, Shekhar and Mr. Pai move – to places with new names and old names, through a city with changing names – and, as they move, in regular repeating yet slightly different patterns, they make the city. They make the times and the spaces of the city through their interactions with the buildings, weather, vehicles, school children, trees, animals and uncountable other moving beings with recognisable patterns who variously fall in and out of synchrony with one another, with more or less mutual coherence, and have occasionally common and divergent directions. Moreover, the movements of brokers, vendors and drivers are the backstage mechanics that allow the urba social imaginary of flow, consumption and progress to unfold – their movements are of the 'past' in the 'present' that enable the 'future'.

Starting with movement is important because there is still a tendency in social sciences to depict things as happening 'in' times or 'in' spaces as if times and spaces were containers in which people lived their lives. Prakash, whose quote opened this section, hints at this problem. To rephrase him slightly: change is inevitable, yet at the same time within all these changes, things seem the same. And, moreover, as people move about and experience new

places through their movements, they themselves change.

To reword Heraclitus – no person ever steps into the same city twice. There is always change, but change and sameness are inextricably connected; flux is incessant, but (some) things can only remain the same by changing, sameness is predicated through constant metabolism, flow is a condition of constancy (see: Graham 2015). If the cityscape is static, if nothing moves, it ceases to be a city. The city's changes make it what it is. Such a 'flux first' argument is to suggest that *change is prior to time* – that time is derived from change (Barker 2015). Movements do not take place *in* time or space, but rather conceptions of time and space are predicated on movement.

In a similar vein, Munn argues that people “do not simply go on in or through time and space, but they form (structure) and constitute (create) the spacetime manifold in which they 'go on'” (1983, 280). Seen in this way, time (and space) is a “process continually being produced in everyday practices. People are in' a sociocultural time of multiple dimensions (sequencing, timing, past-present-future relations, etc.) that they are forming in their 'projects'.” (Munn 1992, 116). To inhabit the cityscape is to create its multiple times and spaces through movement and in relation to other movements. As these movements are gestured and repeated in a sequence they become knowable and learnable by others, they can be conducted in certain ways, predicted, and waited upon. At the foundation of this lies rhythm<sup>6</sup>.

To understand the different movements and how they form, or not, into rhythms in a city like Mangaluru requires a non-teleological account of change. This is because, although the city seems pulled expectantly forward by the call of progressive linear time, it contains multiple divergent movements that make its multiple divergent times and spaces. The philosopher Henri Lefebvre's posthumously published *Rhythmanalysis* is a good starting point to think

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6 Accordingly, the call for anthropologists to be explicit about the philosophical origins of their epistemologies of time (Bear 2014) or to separate out objective non-human time, the individual phenomenological experience of time and a social framing of time (Gell 1992) are misplaced. Such critiques are correct in highlighting the problem of drawing unreflexively on philosophical models of time or muddying together different 'types' of time. However, the focus on time is to start at the wrong point. The ongoing focus on space or spatiality in the social sciences is similarly hampered by its choice of analytical foundational primacy. Not only is space an empty abstract concept that is “detached from the realities of life and experience” (Ingold 2011, 145), but even dynamic conceptions of space are often stunted in their work by an unhelpful dualism created around space and time that prioritises spatiality (May and Thrift 2001).

through this. In conceiving of the city as an ensemble of rhythms and analysing those which dominate or are dominated by others, he opens up the possibility for plurality without effacing structure. However, despite its poetic evocations, the book remains theoretically thin in parts (see below). Nevertheless his inspirational move, along with his unique use of triadic dialectics, are insightful here not only for their non-teleological pluralities, but also because they integrate the material, abstract and creative aspects contained within urban movements. Such an approach is important because it captures the contradictory elements found within a city like Mangaluru, in which the dominant social imaginary seems to leave little space for alternative trajectories.

The Lefebvrian triadic dialectical model is worth briefly explicating as it is often evoked by many urban scholars but is usually not fully understood. Arguing against what he terms classical thought, which separates out two objects and their interaction for analysis, Lefebvre utilises three terms in his dialectical model. Unlike in some models, the dialectical interaction of these three terms does not lead to a resolution: thesis and antithesis do not result in synthesis (Lefebvre 2004, 12). In the dialectical triad there is a sublation (in Hegelian terms *aufheben*), but crucially *aufheben*/sublation has two contradictory meanings – on the one hand it means an abolition, yet on the other a preservation. Thus it is both a negation *and* an overcoming (see: Schmid 2008). There is no final state reached through sublation: there is no synthesis. Rather the triadic remains as it sublates, in preservation and negation; within the 'resolution' is the seed of the new contradiction. Accordingly, this is a fundamentally non-teleological dialectical model in which linear progression is possible, but not inevitable. Life moves, but it does not always move in a straight forward manner. It is packed with contradictions, about turns, circularity and inventive acts. As social life progresses dialectically there emerges a possibility: an opening that sits at the heart of the doubly-understood sublation. This is the possibility for becoming, but also the possibility of failure. It allows for the unexpected as well as the foreseeable – in which material routine-like practices, abstract representations, and lived creative acts collide; a framework in which both domination and animation make sense<sup>7</sup>.

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7 It is movement that animates the triadic dialectic. Accordingly, it is not a temporal dialectic *a la* Hegel. It is also not a spatialised dialectic – which is how both Soja (1989) and Shields (1999) problematically interpret Lefebvre's triadic dialectic from the *Production of Space* (see: Elden 2004; also Schmid 2008). Rather, following the Heraclitian mode of understanding as movement being as prior to both time and space, the triad is a dynamic dialectical model through which it is possible to analyse the 'production' of times and spaces, and yet not be bound by any pre-given spatial or

Lefebvre uses many different triads of terms in his dialectical models (see: Lefebvre 2003a, 50–56 [1980 Triads and Dyads]). For example language is understood through the triad of form-structure-function, for rhythm it is time-space-energy, for space it is perceived-conceived-lived and for music it is melody-harmony-rhythm. Broadly speaking the various three points used in Lefebvre's dialectical models can be categorised along three different routes: firstly the material world, secondly abstract knowledge and finally symbols or meaning (Schmid 2008). We can term these three points as simultaneous moments of the *material, abstract and creative*<sup>8</sup>.

Lefebvre's proposed triad for rhythm – time-space-energy – is considerably analytically shallower when compared to the rich spatial triad in the much utilised *Production of Space*<sup>9</sup>. Whilst it might be possible to make a case for time (as material practice), space (as abstract thought) and energy (as poetic creativity), the complementary triad that makes the 'production of space' argument so usable (perception, conceived, and lived space), does not fit so easily. Moreover, 'time', 'space' and 'energy' are all extremely abstract categories; it is possible to imagine them being applied in other triads or for them to mean quite different things. Finally, Lefebvre does not flesh out these points on the triad in any meaningful way. Whilst time and temporal categorisation are explored a little in *Rhythmanalysis*, space is rarely mentioned and energy only noted in a cursory fashion<sup>10</sup>.

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temporal categorisations.

- 8 Schmid argues that “Lefebvre attains a renewed, three-dimensional dialectic that has no parallel in philosophy and the history of knowledge... At a general level, the fundamental dialectical figure in Lefebvre’s work can be understood as the contradiction between social thought and social action, supplemented by the third factor of the creative, poetic act” (Schmid 2008, 33). His exploration of Lefebvre's evolution of these models, reveals three sources for these three points. It is argued Lefebvre draws on Marx for his foregrounding of material social practice, on Hegel for a conceptualisation of abstract thought and language, and on Nietzsche for an understanding of the desire for creative poetic acts. Hegel's dialectical mode has great promise, but the abstract primacy of thought is problematic as it confuses acts with thoughts of acts, thus it is reworked through the concrete material historical geography of (late) Marx and mixed with the human desire to 'overcome' and the poetic, artistic acts of life as described by Nietzsche (see also: Elden 2004, 27–39). These three thinkers are in many ways paradoxical as Lefebvre himself states, but can be combined in a generative fashion.
- 9 This productive combination can be maybe best seen in Lefebvre's famous theory of social space (1991), his most widely used triadic dialectical model (e.g. De Neve 2006). Lefebvre argues that social space is produced through: 1) spatial practice or perceived space (e.g. daily routines); 2) representations of space or conceived space (e.g. urban plans); and 3) representational spaces or lived space (e.g. of images and symbols) (Lefebvre 1991). This is a dialectic in which neither spatial practice, representations or representational space is given primacy, but rather space is produced through the interaction of the three.
- 10 Indeed, I am confused what 'energy' might mean for Lefebvre in this context. For a while I thought it might be analogous with movement/change, as he writes, “Time and space without energy remain inert in the incomplete concept. Energy animates, reconnects, renders time and space conflictual.” (p. 60) . However, if this were the case,

It is possible to develop a conception of rhythmic movement that is premised on a triadic dialectics in which the three points broadly correspond with the *material*, *abstract* and *creative*, whilst also gesturing towards the categories of perception, conceived, and lived. But these points are not time-space-energy (though rhythms are both temporal and spatial). Accordingly, I depart from Lefebvre quite quickly below, though return often to his generative ideas throughout<sup>11</sup>.

Analysing the rhythmic relations of the city is a way into understanding how India's urbanisation is structuring and destructuring everyday city life. By structure I mean something very specific – the type of internal rhythmical structures that can be found in musical systems. Such structures, multifariously termed rhythmic mode, pattern or, in Western music, metre, allows a piece of music to have a common direction, a sequential coherence and a repetitive synchrony.

## II: Urbanisation

An intriguing way to think through rhythm is by selectively drawing on the use of rhythm in Karnatic music (south Indian classical music). This is not to say systems of rhythm in other musical traditions may not also yield interesting insights, they most probably would. However, this is not the place for a survey of different uses of rhythm in music. Rather it is the selective use of one rhythmic system that happens to be from south India, a system that I also spent some time learning as a *mridangam* (a two sided drum) student during fieldwork, and that helped me understand how rhythms structure city life more generally. To be clear, I am not suggesting that the rhythmic cycles of this particular classical, devotional and often

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then it undermines the notion that there is an equivalence in the points in the triad, as it would posit that time/space are apart from the animating energy (that there would be no dialectic without energy driving it). Certainly this is sometimes how the 'third' point of Lefebvre's dialectics is interpreted – as an animating 'other' to conceived/lived or melody/harmony etc. But as Schmid argues and I agree, this would be to remove the dynamism from the three-dimensional dialectic, and is out of keeping with Lefebvre's most successful application of triadic thought. Moreover, at times energy is relegated to something posterior to time/space, for instance when Lefebvre writes, “An energy is employed, unfolds in a time and a space (a space–time).” (p. 65).

11 There are a growing number of works that seek to understand Lefebvre's diverse oeuvre. I do not directly contribute to these debates. My primary goal is to better understand a particular smaller Indian city, not to better understand a particular French philosopher.



upper-caste style of music mirrors the everyday rhythmic modes of Mangaloreans, rather I use Karnatic music as a heuristic device. Furthermore, I am utilising just some select aspects of an immensely complex rhythmic system, which itself is just one aspect of music<sup>12</sup>.

To pre-empt the argument slightly, I will detail below that the city is a collection of rhythmic modes (patterns, cycles or *tala* in Karnatic music). When in relation with one another, they produce moments of varying degrees of synchrony, coherence and direction. This leads to questions of power, domination, solidarity and so on. However, if the city is a collection of rhythmic modes, then we first must address the question about the wider structuring of structures – that is, urbanisation. The difference in Karnatic music between rhythm (*laya*) and rhythmic mode (*tala*) can help here. *Laya* is the underlying, inherent, primeval rhythm found in everything and everywhere, whilst *tala* are structured rhythmic patterns or modes (metre or cadence are the closest equivalent terms in Western music). I suggest that the relationship between urbanisation and the city is in some ways similar to that as the relationship between *laya* (rhythm) and *tala* (rhythmic mode) in Karnatic music.

*Laya*/urbanisation times and spaces the *tala*/city. *Laya* gives *tala* a relative speed – indeed it is often referred to as speed. Indeed, because of its speed producing properties it is “*laya* that gives space within a rhythmic structure by creating intervals” (Krishna 2013, 61–62). The intervals and the beats exist in relation to the other, with *laya* also meaning 'to adhere' or 'to cling' (*ibid*, 62). *Laya* not only spaces a rhythmic structure through creating intervals, but also measures the intervals – determining how many notes (*svaras*) fit in each interval. TM Krishna (*ibid*) explains this through the analogy of two people taking the same amount of time to walk the same distance, but one person doing so with more steps than the other. Though identical in the amount of time taken, one would feel faster than the other. In regards to urbanisation, the double action – the spacing and the timing of the spacing – can be seen in particular cities at particular historical moments (see below). This takes the argument a little away from Lefebvrian triads for the moment, but the relationship is important to specify early on in the analysis as it restates global/local macro/meso relationships in slightly

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12 The use of Karnatic rhythms as a thinking tool is not just a post-fieldwork fancy. Experiencing the rhythms of Karnatic music continually informed the more traditional aspects of the fieldwork. I did this both as a regular attendee of local performances, and as a student of the mridangam (a two sided drum) under the tutelage of my guru Yogeeshha Sharma Ballapadavu.

different terms than is usually done, that is, as a structural relationship as found in music that sets the speed and the broad contours within which other elements can unfold, that structures spaces, but also the timing of those spaces (and thus also times and the spacing of those times).



*Figure 3: One of Mangaluru's new buildings. Authors' photo.*

On the most general level, the distinction between urbanisation and the city as being one akin to the relation between rhythm and rhythmic mode (*laya* and *tala*) allows for a bridging between the work of urban theory concerned with global flows of capital, people, goods etc., on the one hand, and scholarship that seeks to understand how the urban is experienced, often on a micro- or meso- level, on the other. For instance, Brenner and Schmid's (2015) thesis on planetary urbanisation argues that urbanisation is made up of “three mutually constitutive moments— concentrated urbanisation, extended urbanisation and differential urbanisation<sup>13</sup>” (p. 166). Concentrated urbanisation is the tendency towards the formation of agglomerates and the gathering of the means of production and populations in certain

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13 This model draws heavily on Lefebvre's conception of ‘implosion-explosion’ in *The Urban Revolution* (Lefebvre 2003b [1970]) where he writes that ‘implosion-explosion’ is “urban concentration, rural exodus, extension of the urban fabric, complete subordination of the agrarian to the urban” (p. 15)

places; extended urbanisation is the use of non-urban places in the support of urban life, the construction of infrastructure, and the appropriation of land; whilst differential urbanisation is the ongoing creative destruction of spaces under capitalism. These three dialectically related elements should be understood together as one historical process (*ibid*). Understood as *laya* (the spacing and timing of cities) such a concept of urbanisation can enter into a dialogue with the currently popular theory of urban assemblage.

Urban assemblage theory, most sophisticatedly expounded by McFarlane (2011b), conceives of the city as relational, mobile, unequal and processual. He argues that 'socio-material' assemblages, constituted by both human and non-human elements, are occasionally stable, occasionally precarious and can structure the ways in which the city is inhabited, e.g. the materials used to construct informal housing can both enable new ways of being in the city, but also produce dangerous living conditions. Moreover, whatever the produced structural confines are, assemblages can nevertheless *exceed* these – through a surplus of certain 'fields of possibility' or unforeseen juxtapositions.

A city constituted by rhythmic modes, as I am putting forward in the dissertation, is similarly relational, processual, structuring and open to possibility, but significantly diverges from assemblage theory. The rhythm/rhythmic mode distinction overcomes the critique that assemblage theory ignores the 'contexts of contexts', i.e. the production of urbanisation under conditions of global capitalism (see: Brenner, Madden, and Wachsmuth 2011), as the distinction allows for an understanding of the relation between the possibility-filled excesses of juxtaposed randomness that can characterise everyday urban life (the city), and the structuring processes of capital (urbanisation), as being one of spacing and timing of spacing (or timing and spacing of timing). Furthermore, by starting from movement and thinking through the times and the spaces of the city, a rhythmic conceptualisation of the urban is not bound by abstract notions of spatiality (or for that matter temporality). Rather it follows the various gestured, repeated sequences and their relation to other gestured, repeated sequences in the production of the city (see below).

In India, rhythmic timing and spacing (or *laya*) can be classified along three broad historical periods: colonial (various-1947), developmental (1947-1991) and neoliberal (1991-ongoing),

with overlaps between the three periods<sup>14</sup>. Each period's dominant *laya* sets cities' temporal and spatial arrangements, but also opens up different spatio-temporal possibilities. As I argue below, whilst there are attempts at producing rhythmic order in certain historical periods, these are always undermined. Accordingly, this periodisation is inherently unstable.

During the colonial period export-orientated extraction was the dominant timer and spacer of cities, and at least two new types of settlements emerged: cantonment or administrative urban settlements on the one hand, and cities and towns important for international commerce or trade on the other. This external spatio-temporal arrangement of urban places was married with an internal spatio-temporal divide, as the colonial authorities planned the city into zones. For example the large port cities central to the colonial economy – such as Bombay, Madras and Calcutta – all have similar spatial arrangements: separate residential areas for Indians and Europeans, military and manufacturing zones at the margins of the cities, a European fort, an esplanade and a central business zone (Kosambi and Brush 1988). Aside from the smattering of cantonment/administrative towns, smaller urban place formation was repressed by the hyper primacy of the large coastal cities (Heitzman 2008b).

Mangalore was not deemed worthy of industrialisation or urban infrastructural development by the colonial authorities, as the fertile land yielded a good income through taxation (M. Rai 2003). Nevertheless during this period missionaries and colonial traders built factories (e.g. for making tiles) or processing plants (e.g. for coffee) (Raghaviah 1990) (Miley 1884 [1875]). Moreover, a number of missionary education institutions were set up (P. Shetty 2008), and this, along with the reformist responses to it, played some role in the city and the surrounding region later developing into an education hub.

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14 Chakravorty (2000a) has suggested the terms 'colonial economy' 'post-colonial (or command) economy' and 'post-command/reform economy' for roughly similar periods and in relation to the spatial formation of Calcutta.

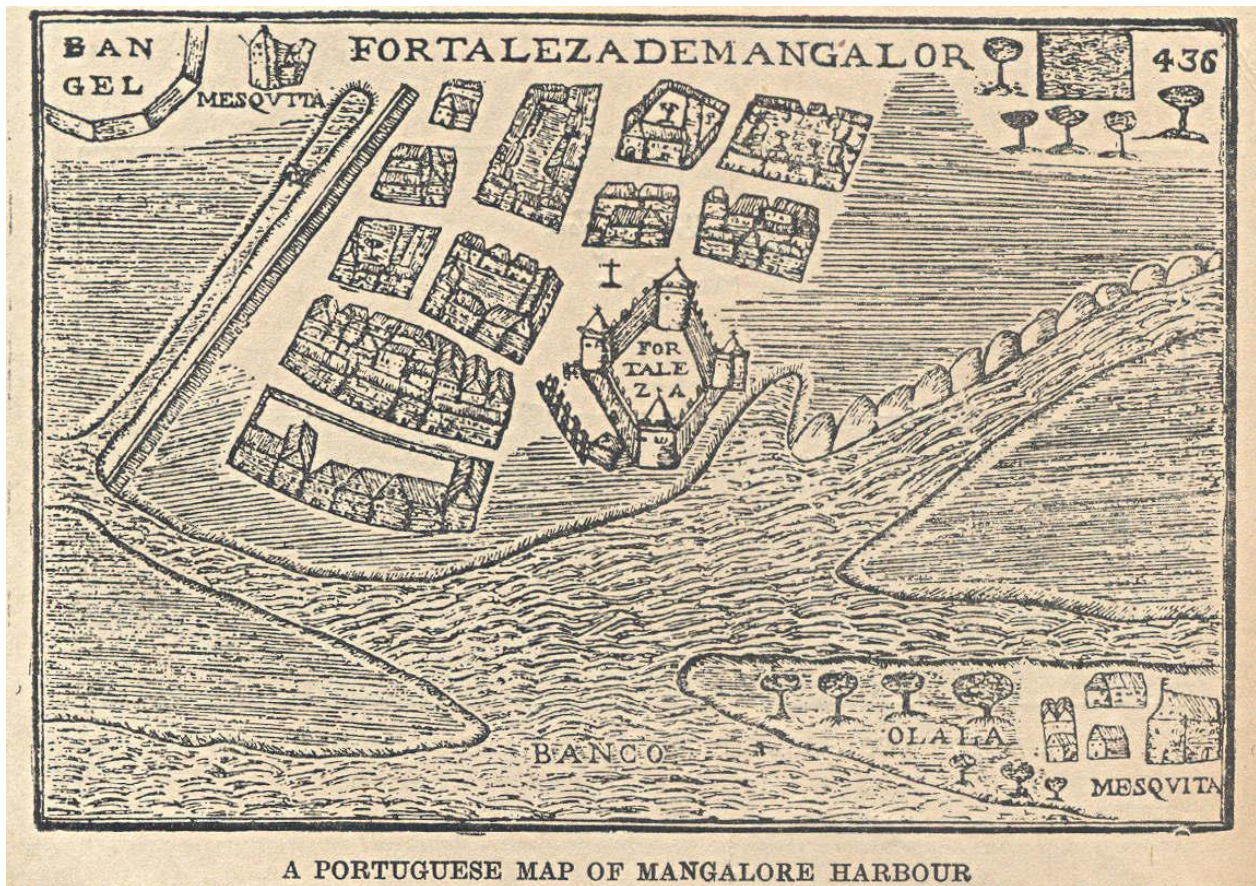


Figure 4: Source: *Mangalore: A Survey of the Place and Its People*

During the developmental period, the general timers and spacers of cities were import-substitution, industrial protectionism, evenly spread growth, and large scale infrastructure projects. State-led attempts at ensuring regional evenness was enmeshed with internal market demands and this, coupled with a strong belief that urbanisation and development went hand-in-hand, propelled urban growth (Patel 2006). Smaller cities and towns during this period grew as central places in rural areas; as clusters of related industries (both low-skilled poverty-driven and high-skilled technologically-advanced, the latter usually due to government intervention); as settlements close to metropolises; as counter magnets to prime cities (often administrative centres); or as parts of 'urban corridors' stretching out from larger cities (Heitzman 2008b). There was also the construction of new townships centred around production (S. Roy 2007, 133–156).

Mangalore's trajectory crucially changed during this period as the central state made large scale infrastructural interventions. These included a civilian airport (1951), the first road-

bridge across the Netravathi River (1965) and an all weather port (1974). The port induced industrialisation north of the city, with both state owned and private companies clustering around the new port on what was once fertile agricultural land. The state also invested in education, such as the National Institute of Technology set up in Surathkal north of the city in 1960 and this, along with the country's first private fee-paying medical college, a little further north in Manipal, entwined with colonial-era institutes, and grew the region's reputation for education.

During the current neoliberal period there has been an 'opening up' of India's economy, with the urban now timed and spaced as part of the increasingly global phenomena of urbanisation – a process that concentrates, expands and differentiates (see above). In Indian cities, as elsewhere, urbanisation is peopled, political and defined by local specificities. Kennedy (2013), building on the 'state spatial rescaling' approach (Brenner 2004), argues that the subnational state space is of growing importance in India – this development a historical process shaped by the actions of embedded groups who utilise local resources. There has been significant decentralisation of power<sup>15</sup>, but state rescaling goes beyond formal decentralisation, with new regulatory apparatuses employed in a strategic manner. For instance, rather than seeing the current economic paradigm as being externally enforced by the International Monetary Fund – who stepped in to offer 'help' after India's foreign currency reserves reached crisis levels in 1991 – Kennedy instead argues that India's politic elites, operating at different state spatial scales, mobilised state institutions to push for and mould the contours of economic governance. On the urban scale, this has included the setting up of sub-municipal bodies, reforms in service delivery, the establishment of greater metropolitan regions, and the promotion of sections of cities for the IT sector. Crucially, unlike in the West, Kennedy finds that city governments are not the main drivers of change – cities remain more 'managerial' than 'entrepreneurial' (see: D. Harvey 1989 for the distinction) – with the entrepreneurial actions undertaken by actors at higher state spatial scales.

In the next section I will explore in a little more detail how an urbanisation consisting of simultaneous concentration, extension and differentiation is realised in Mangaluru, and how

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15 Through the 73<sup>rd</sup> and 74<sup>th</sup> Constitution Amendment Acts in 1992.

this relates to the rhythmic modes of individuals and others in the city, specifically in a city whose imagined future of flow, accelerated progress and friction free consumption, weighs heavily in the present<sup>16</sup>.

### III: The City

Mangaluru has a Muslim population of around 17 percent<sup>17</sup> and there are mosques dotted throughout the city. At the five proscribed times a day the *azan* (call for prayer) can be heard in many different places. For a Muslim such as Saleem, the broker mentioned in the opening section, this is the call for him to close his shop and pray. For some Hindutva (right wing Hindu nationalist) groups, the same repeated call is a source of irritation and, occasionally, protest outside the district administration office. For drivers meanwhile, the call for Friday evening prayers is a reminder to avoid Pumpwell junction, as worshippers attending the large mosque there cause traffic jams.

This was not always the case. Pumpwell used to be outside the city, but as Mangaluru has expanded south (and more people from villages south of the city travel in to work) it has become increasingly busier. This is not helped by the increased concentration of housing and commercial activity inside the city, an upcoming luxury enclave close to the junction, and the delayed completion of an extra three lanes on the road bridge across the close-by Netravathi River.

Making a meaningful life in such a city is increasingly complicated. Urbanisation expands the city and into this expansion flows a greater concentration of continually differentiating rhythmic modes. This process feeds from a heavily future-orientated urban imaginary of smooth flow, accelerated progress and friction free consumption. Finding a common

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16 Most of this dissertation is concerned with contemporary Mangaluru, but this three period distinction is important for understanding how the city has changed and is especially relevant in Chapters One and Four. Although there is not the space to properly address the question in depth here, it is nevertheless interesting to note the importance of events in altering wider structuring forces (Sewell 1996) that, at least in our retrospective analysis, changes the timing and spacing of cities. The events being the first colonial invasions, Independence and 1991's economic crisis.

17 According to the 2011 Census, religious following in the city is as follows: Hinduism 68.99 percent, Islam 17.40 percent, Christianity 13.15 percent, Jainism 0.21 percent, Sikhism 0.08 percent and Buddhism 0.08 percent, with 0.12 percent stating 'No Particular Religion' (Government of India 2011).

direction with others in such a city, making a life which has a consecutive coherence and aligning one's routines with another's becomes increasingly difficult. This, of course, is not just to make an argument that the city is busier or more chaotic than before, but rather to suggest that a greater plurality of rhythmic modes, which are often but not always premised on idealised futures, make coherence, direction and synchronisation increasingly complicated – especially for those whose *rhythmic modes* out of step with dominant imaginaries.



Figure 5: City Centre Shopping Mall. Source: Author.

It can be simply said that there is a rhythmic mode when something is repeated in a sequence, however, if an analysis of a city's rhythmic modes is to say something about the culture of a city, then this simple definition must be extended. Abraham (1995) argues an object cannot have a rhythm (read rhythmic mode) by itself. Traffic, buildings, calls for prayer or road bridge construction do not have rhythmic modes in and of themselves. A moving thing with a regular pattern may have a periodicity, but this is different from a rhythmic mode.



He suggests that an object becomes rhythmic when a conscious subject 'intentionally appropriates' its movements. A type of internalisation of external rhythms, which he terms a rhythmization of perception. However, this Husserlian phenomenological analysis is too narrow as it ignores non-intentional rhythmic relations, collapses different types of rhythm into one frame and ignores the possibility of rhythmic movements between non-conscious beings. His useful insight however is the periodicity/rhythmic mode distinction, which we can more broadly rephrase as – *rhythmic modes are relational*. A corollary of this is that if a rhythmic mode comes into being through its relation then, as Abraham points out, a single object can have many different rhythms depending upon the subject and their perception of it. For Saleem the azan is a call to prayer, for others a regular nuisance, for others a weekly traffic problem, and so on. What makes a rhythmic relation and for whom is, in many respects, the key to what structures everyday life in the city.

For those who I researched amongst in Mangaluru, as is probably the case for urban inhabitants in many parts of the world, the most important rhythmic modes were those pertaining to the *spheres* of work, family and religion. Rhythmic modes relating to these spheres operate at different *scales* – home, city, national and global – and yet inhabitants experience them simultaneously in their everyday lives. To a certain degree, this is what makes rhythmic relations occasionally fraught, as the different scales can operate seemingly independently from one another. Saleem's prayer times are global, his customers' times drawn from the city's different working patterns, his own working times from home considerations and so on. The struggles between rhythmic modes deriving from different scales are what we might call the politics of rhythm making.

For example, take working hours, a powerful rhythmic mode that sets the terms around which many other rhythmic modes must be synchronised. In Mangaluru close to Morgan's Gate, where the auto drivers Raj and Shekhar work, there is a BPO with many foreign clients. For those who work in such BPOs with US, UK or Australian clients (and thus have working times synchronised with the days and nights of their customers), aligning work and family rhythmic modes is troublesome, and workers often complain of feeling detached from local social life (Mirchandani 2004). Moreover, although it is often assumed without much evidence in India and elsewhere that life is 'speeding up' (S. Sharma 2014), it might be more

correct to say that within the neoliberal period there is a greater multiplicity of different rhythmic modes that people try to synchronise (see: Southerton 2009). Indeed, for drivers, vendors and brokers, synchronising their working patterns with their family life was one of the most often discussed aspects of the working day, especially if both husband and wife worked. Unlike those who work in BPOs, other office or factories however, auto drivers had a considerable amount of what they called 'freedom', especially if they owned their own vehicle. They were free to run errands, take their wife to the doctor, attend a wedding for an hour, and then work a bit longer in the evening to make up for it. Drivers generally kept set hours, but most also had daily targets in terms of income. So whilst there was not a complete rejection of 'clock-based' labour, the particularities of their job allowed them flexibility – i.e. if they made their target they could allow themselves some freedom to synchronise different spheres of their lives.

By synchronicity, I do not mean everybody strictly doing the same thing at the same time. Whilst cognitive scientists have developed sophisticated ways of analysing joint behaviour in controlled settings (e.g. Sebanz, Bekkering, and Knoblich 2006), here synchronisation rather refers to people's coordinated coalescence, after drifting away from a rhythmic relation during the course of a day or a week. For example, in Mangaluru college students might return to their parents' house in villages once a week, or if their parents work in the Gulf, during the time they are back, and so on. Or, in the case of Karntatic music, drummers may drift away from the flow of the tala during solos (see below), but when they finish their solo they must end at exactly the last beat of a tala, so as to allow the other musicians to move forward as one at the start of the next cycle of beats (to not do so would suggest a lack of virtuosity) (Nelson 2000).

Importantly, once rhythmic modes are set in place they can continue, even once that which set them in motion has ceased doing so. A good way of thinking of this is through some of the foundational ideas of chronobiology – the study of temporal characteristics of biological phenomena (see: Palmer 2002; Koukkari and Sothern 2005). It is generally believed that beings have evolved internal, biological rhythms that, whilst open to external environmental modifications, remain relatively constant. Endogenous biological rhythms can be observed at the molecular and cellular level right through to whole organisms, and include such

phenomena as hibernation, migration, menstruation and so on. If you take a being out of its 'natural environment' it continues to exhibit the same patterns for a certain amount of time: there is a 'free-running' of rhythmic modes.

Free-running is not without its complications however, as cycles or signals in the environment act as entraining (adjusting) synchronisers to internal biological patterns. For example in circadian sleep/wake cycles, light is such a synchroniser. When beings are removed from their entraining cyclical environment, they display abnormal functioning: internal clocks need environmental regularity to function optimally. Though not phrased in the terms of 'free-running' or 'optimal functioning', one of auto drivers' regular complaints was stomach trouble caused by irregular eating habits, for which many of them had visited the doctor. Most drivers wait in queues for customers. If they leave the queue, they cannot return to the same spot. It follows that whilst they might have ideal set times for their meals, they can only eat at these times if they do not have passengers or are not in a queue at that particular moment. Doctors advised drivers to carry water and biscuits to avoid this problem. For drivers, along with vendors and brokers, what made 'optimal functioning' on an individual bodily level was the attainment of regular eating times.

Of course there are not only individual but also group rhythmic modes, and such collective cultural patterns when 'free-running' in new settings should not be viewed as something normatively 'problematic'. In Mangaluru Konkani speaking Catholics celebrate the History of the Feast of Nativity of Blessed Virgin Mary, also known as Monti Fest, on September 8<sup>th</sup> each year. Konkani Catholics were converted by Portuguese colonisers in what is now Goa. The date of the feast coincides with a harvest festival practised by many Hindus in the region, and is widely considered to be adopted from Hinduism into Catholic practice – it remains vegetarian only and contains many similarities of practice to the Hindu festival, such as the distribution of fruits. However, many Catholics were forced from Goa by the colonisers in spite of converting for refusing to give up their 'heathen' ways, and migrated south to Mangaluru and its surroundings. Mangalurean Konkani speaking Catholics continue to celebrate Monti Fest and, as such, it can be conceived as a 'free-running' rhythmic mode, taken out of its Goan setting.

There is an immense multiplicity of rhythmic modes deriving from jati, community, nation, labour unions and so on, which cross-cut multiple spheres and emanate at different scales. For instance the plurality of jatis and religious communities in Indian cities, whose rhythmic modes are scheduled by different calendars and routines, feed into education, transport arrangements, local markets and many other areas. To take the last example, jati-based associations often act as 'regulators' of the market and jati/community clustering is commonplace (Harriss-White 2003), and thus during holidays or festivals certain businesses in certain parts of the city might close. For instance, moving flower vendors in Mangaluru nearly all hail from the same village in Mysuru district, and all return home for the same *jatre* (localised Hindu festival/fair procession) each year, and door-to-door flower delivery is temporarily suspended. Or, to give another example, with a gendered dimension, many Catholic women do not go to church on Sundays like the rest of the family, but rather on Saturdays, because on Sundays they have to prepare a big family meal, not least because it is the only day most people are not working or in school.

Moreover, public group rhythmic modes can be read as performed claims of belonging in the city and, especially in a city like Mangaluru that has seen considerable tensions between religious communities, seen as boundary-making or aggressive acts. As such, on the one hand whilst jati or community centred celebrations inside the city can, through their regularities, induce collective memories of longevity and belonging (Srinivas 2001), on the other hand processions can serve as political strategies to claim 'spaces' and the future directionality of these spaces for dominant communities (Deshpande 1998). As such, repeated processions or public celebrations in localities are not only experienced in the present, but suggest temporal depth into the past and point towards a common shared direction for a group or locality into the future.

By directionality here I mean the ability of individuals or groups, through their repeated gestures, to induce collective directional movements (and thus create both time and space). For example in Mangaluru there has been a considerable increase in Hindutva (right wing Hindu) activity over past decades (Assadi 1999; Assadi 2002; Tolpady 2003). Through regular attacks on cross-community couples, on girls in 'Western clothing' and other forms of so-called 'moral policing', Hindutva groups are contributing to a feeling that the public

places of the city are increasingly becoming places where a narrow vision of Hindu morality must be adhered to. As such, these regular repeated actions speak to how seemingly cyclical practices are related to linear processes.

The relationship between the 'cyclical' and the 'linear' can be explicated with the help of Karnatic music. Different sections or beats in a tala are given meaning through their place in the rhythmic pattern; a beat or a gesture does not exist in isolation, but in relation to what went before and comes after. Indeed, the way the mridangam as usually taught in the Karnatic tradition reveals the importance of relational sequentiality. Before a new pattern is played on the drum it is first verbalised using syllables, whilst the tala is simultaneously gestured with hands. Only once this has been learnt does the student then learn the strokes to play on the drum. A phrase of syllables is called a *matra* and there can be many *matra* within one beat (*aksara*), though there are usually only four. For example, a very common *matra* I learnt was *tha ri ki ta*. If my guru utters a syllable in isolation – e.g. if he tells me to play *tha* – then it is usually clear which part(s) of the drum he refers to. However, once patterns start to become verbalised as *matras*, different syllables may refer to different strokes of the drum depending upon their place in the sequence. In this way the sequence renames the isolated strokes in relation to their position in the pattern. What we can learn from this is not only that the order that things happen is important, but also that a thing's linear place within a cycle can change its meaning<sup>18</sup>.

As such there is contingent relationship between cyclical and linear rhythmic modes and the 'beats' within them, and this resonates with a long standing discussion in anthropology. A division between linear and cyclic time was posited by both Geertz (1966) and then later, with differences, by Bloch (1977), who in their own ways suggest that there is a linear pragmatic universal mundane time on the one hand, and a cyclical ritual immobilised time on the other (for a discussion see: Gell 1992). Bloch suggests that the ritualised present is open to change because it draws on concepts from the pragmatic linear past. Appadurai (1981), in his ethnography of a south Indian temple, builds on Bloch's ideas, but delineates how change might take place by proposing a third type of temporal ordering: a framework

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18 Whilst this might seem confusing, attempts at changing it have been resisted by most drummers. Nelson (2000) argues that this is because many drummers feel that the combination of strokes is conducive to fast playing with hands, whilst spoken patterns are organised in such a way that allows fast recitation by the tongue.

that regulates how the past works in the 'present'. He claims the framework is regulated against: 1) authority: what is a permissible source; 2) continuity: linkages that give credibility; 3) depth: value association with deepness of time; and 4) interdependence: relations to other pasts. This is something that throughout the dissertation I will call coherence, by which I mean the sequential coherence of an act which makes it understandable for others.

Authority, continuity, depth and interdependence are all at play in state projects that bring together common direction – forward movement – with everyday synchrony and sequential coherence. For instance Kalpagam (1999) has shown how British colonial rule, via historiographical and administrative practices, produced certain rhythmic linearities premised on notions of development and progress. Struggling to order various calendrical systems, British colonial historians – as part of a wider trend of 'oriental empiricism' in which colonial knowledge was transformed into 'factual reality' (Ludden 1993) – worked within a dominant chronology, and set about placing 'events' from India's 'pasts' into an empty linear homogeneous framework (Kalpagam 1999).

This progressive, developmental thrust entwined with various colonial rhythmic regularities. For example, the British colonial state had designs on the labouring efficiency of the working class. This extended not just to regulating the working hours of factory labourers, but also making sure that they had spare time and used it in an appropriate manner (Chakrabarty 1989). Such impositions can be conceived of as part of a general historical shift concomitant to industrialisation, in which 'task time' (the organisation of work around when something needs to be done) is replaced by 'clock time' (abstract measured organisation) (Thompson 1967). However despite the general tendency towards such clock-based rhythmic regulation, this imposition was and is far from total, with other rhythmic modes undermining regimes. This was true of colonial-era ports elsewhere in the Empire, in which such attempts were tenuous and narrowly confined to the place of work (Cooper 1992), and is also true of contemporary factories in India's SEZs, in which foreign managers fail in attempts at enforcing new working practices (Cross 2014, 92–126).

Accordingly, Appadurai's (1981) above mentioned framework (authority, continuity, depth and interdependence) suggests some useful ways in which we can begin to think about how

seemingly cyclical and linear times are represented in speech and writing in coherent manners, however we need to add to the argument in three ways. The first is to think again about rhythms (as temporal *and* spatial movements) alongside discussions about time. For instance I will argue in Chapter Three that repeated gestures do not need an idiomatic framework through which to bring about change; the making of time and space, the creation, anticipation and the improvisational act are all found within the directions of the gestures themselves: the cyclical is anything but static.

The second addition is to note that it is not only the linear that informs the cyclical, but also the cyclical that informs the linear. This has been explored by Sahlins (1981), who looked at the way practices affect history. In a discussion about the interaction between internal and external cultural forces, Sahlins made two useful points to aid our understanding of rhythms. The first is that the things people do and create can have quite different meanings for others in any given culture; there is a disconnect between what he calls 'conventional' and 'intentional' meanings. Secondly, whilst people might act with certain cultural conceptions, other beings with whom they are in relation do not necessarily have to follow.

Pulling these two threads together – 1) that people draw on mundane concepts from linear time for the renegotiation of cyclical practices and 2) that cyclical practices can be variously understood, enforced and open to influence from outside forces leading to linear change – it can be argued that these two types of rhythmic mode – cyclical and linear – are in fact entwined in an unbreakable relationship. To return to the terminology of Karnatic music, “a tala is linear, in the sense that it allows the melody to move forward, but cyclical in order to hold together the whole linear melodic movement within one repeated rhythmic matrix” (Krishna 2013, 63); tala engenders movement in forward direction through its cycles<sup>19</sup>. Lefebvre makes a similar point through an analogy with the cyclicity and linearity found on

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19 Tala's usually consist of a combination of three different parts (*angas*), categorised by the internal organisation of beats within these parts. Each of these parts has associated gestures. Tala's are not written down, but are indicated through movements. The most common *angas* which combine to form talas are: *anudrutam* – a single beat (often indicated with a clap of the right palm into the palm of the left hand), *drutam* – a two beat element (often indicated by clap of the right palm into the left palm, and then the back of the right hand into palm of the left hand), and finally *laghu*, a section with varying numbers of beats depending upon the family of the tala (which is usually counted by fingers of the right hand into the left hand). In a standard four or five piece Karnatic ensemble the tala is gestured by the singer, and also by many members of the audience who, with requisite knowledge, move their hands in time as per the arrangement of *angas*.

a clock face; a clock face is both cyclical in its roundness and linear in the tick-ticking of the hand. “The relations of the cyclical and the linear – interactions, interferences, the domination of one over the other, or the rebellion of one against the other – are not simple: there is between them an antagonistic unity. They penetrate one another, but in an interminable struggle: sometimes compromise, sometimes disruption” (Lefebvre 2004, 76).

The third addition to make is that, in the case of Mangaluru and the other expectant cities of India's urban moment, it is not only the linear-cycles of the past that inform the present, but also the linear-cycles of the future. The *authority* about what will come for the most part resides in those who have the ability to dominantly live as if they were already within its futures or to create the representations of it – billboards for new residential or commercial enclaves, television adverts, media depictions and so on. The *continuity* with the past is cut, or at least there is an attempt to cut it, as part of a wider celebration of novelty and newness (Kapur 2013). The *depth* of the future is at once shallow and timeless – the city of the future is just around the corner, but once that future is reached the city promises possibilities in perpetuity. Finally, the *interdependence* of the future is global – India is now a player on the global stage and its cities, it is hoped, will follow similar trajectories to those 'successful' cities of modernity in the West.

The expectant culture that winds through Mangaluru cuts across different spheres (family, work, religion) and different scales (home, city, national, global) pulling at the politics of rhythm making, as different rhythmic modes seek to dominate one another. At once cyclical and linear, these multi-sphere and multi-scalar rhythmic modes are timed and spaced by the expanding, concentrating and differentiating process of urbanisation, and informed by and informing the social imaginary of the city of the future, in which there is smooth flow, friction free-consumption and accelerated progress. Because these rhythmic modes are socially relationally produced (they do not exist in isolation, but unfold through relations) they have a *directional synchronised coherence*. With the triadic dialectical model in mind, we can say that *gesture-sequence-repetition* is the internal composition of a rhythmic mode, whilst *direction-coherence-synchrony* is its externalities. However, cross-sphere, cross-scale rhythmic modes in a city undergoing rapid urbanisation and being re-imagined along elite futuristic contours, makes it a struggle for people and groups to find coherence, synchrony



and direction. The flowing together of these modes imbues the city with an unresolvable tension – thus the city is also a place of *omnidirectional asynchronous incoherence*. For brokers, vendors, and auto drivers, the foundation of meaningful navigation within such a city – especially when they are often framed as 'out of step' with an urban culture that is over-loaded with expectancy – is to forge regularities so as not to be overwhelmed by irregularities. It is to this that I now turn.

#### IV: Navigation

I lost count of the amount of times people complained to me about brokers, vendors and auto rickshaw drivers when I told them about my research. Brokers, I was told, make huge sums for little work and are dishonest; vendors cheat in measuring the goods they sell and block pavements; rickshaw drivers charge too much at night or refuse to take passengers to villages outside the city. As I argued above, the 'city of the future' is dominantly imagined as one which flows smoothly, which always progresses, and in which clean, fair and formal consumption is celebrated. One of the contradictions contained within this dominant imaginary is that it is predicated on the effacement of those backwards groups whose productive labour is needed for the city to flow. Brokers, vendors and drivers then, are often ambiguously positioned by others in the city, and, moreover, this intersects with gender, age, jati, class and religious community in various ways.

When auto-rickshaw drivers enter into discussions about a fare late at night, when brokers speak to a landlord about their preferred tenants or when flower sellers measure a garland against their arms, there are a whole host of concepts, learnt from past experiences, that mediate their experiences at that moment. Sarukkai (2012b) argues that experiencing and knowing are concurrent. His brand of phenomenology, which draws on different Indian philosophical schools, sits in stark contrast to many Western theories in which individuals appear to experience in a similar fashion no matter their subjective position, and in which the empirical and rational are clearly demarcated. For Sarukkai, knowledge and experience coincide and cannot be separated from the experiencer<sup>20</sup>. He argues that in most Indian

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20 The English word 'experience' is misleading, however, as it suggests a separation between what is felt and what is

philosophy, experience takes place through the body and mind as one, that we feel the world through sensory organs including the mind, which in many Indian traditions is not considered to separate from the body, but rather as 'matter' and the sixth sensory organ (p. 49). Thus thinking is a sense, along with smelling, seeing, touching, tasting, hearing; “thinking functions like perception, a perception through the 'mind'” (Sarukkai 2012a, 139) <sup>21</sup>. Direct, immediate non-conceptual experience is most probably very rare – even when intoxicated conceptual awareness of what it is like to be intoxicated shapes the experience of it (p. 140). The consequence of this is that big questions about property, morality and modernity – the sort of questions that will come up often in this dissertation – cannot be separated from the experiencing subject; *even when acting through mediating concepts, there is no suspension of experience.*

The moving, experiencing, conceptually-mediating subject is of course complex, not always behaving in the same way, but rather changing depending upon the context. Indeed, because people are gradually constituted over time, they are liable to emphasise different aspects of themselves depending upon the situation (Venkatesan 2012). Relating to this, Holland and Leander (2004) have suggested that our complex subjectivities are formed through a process similar to making musical instruments. The layering or winding different substances onto one another in the production of certain percussion instruments like cymbals or drums, results in instruments with different sounds depending upon where they are struck. In a similar fashion people are positioned (as either individual or groups) into various categories (e.g. by class, ethnicity, gender or as 'troubled', 'disabled', 'backwards') through a wide range of variously powerful means (arrangements of places, media, everyday discourse). These “positionings leave traces and bring forth different presentations of the self that draws on self-understanding, other understanding, resonances, scales of belonging and social possibilities thereof... [thus] subjectivity... is simultaneously emergent

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thought. As Sarukkai points out, in most Indian philosophical writings the word closest to experience is *anubhava*, but this word differs from the English (Latin-derived) word in two senses: firstly, *anubhava* is tied to a notion of the self (it is not possible to talk about experience without the self – i.e. the experience needs an experiencer) and secondly, *anubhava* has an integral relation to knowledge (it is impossible to think of experience without knowledge – i.e. knowledge and experience coincide).

21 See also the anthropological research of Alter who argues “modern Hindu concepts of self and society... [that] are not guided by a simple notion of Cartesian mind-body duality. Rather, the whole person is regarded as a complex, multilayered indivisible synthesis of psychic, somatic, emotional, sensory, cognitive, and chemical forces” (1993, 49).

and yet shaped by prior encounters and positionings...” (Venkatesan 2012, 417). Depending on when, and where we are struck – i.e. the all important contexts – we resonate differently.

These *layers*<sup>22</sup> of subjectivities are not only contingent on past positionings, but also on concurrent multiple positionings – they are not static, but open-ended and dynamic. Thinking through the mridangam (two-sided drum) can help develop this metaphor. The drum's body is made from hollowed out wood, with moulded *layers* of leather placed on the two heads of the drum, fastened in place by leather straps. The right head has three concentric layers of different leathers, and a black mixture (often of iron and rice) that is ground and applied layer by layer in the centre of the head. The left larger head has two layers and a thick glob of semolina paste. As the drum ages its sound changes and the black mixture or semolina paste will need to be replaced. These different layerings allow for different sounds depending upon what part of the drum is struck. Unlike the north Indian tabla, which separates out the two heads into separate drums, the mridangam is made from a single block of wood. Accordingly it has a single resonator with an acoustic coupling between the left and right heads. The moulded leathers on each side have separate tensions, but the sound produced always comes from both. Similarly, an inhabitant of Mangaluru might be female, scheduled caste (SC) and flower seller at once. When one layer of subjectivity is being highlighted by a particular position, it always resonates – acoustically coupled as it is – with other layers<sup>23</sup>. This layering has a certain rhythm. Or to put it the other way round, as people enter into various rhythmic relations in the city (and by extension with or through the city), layers of subjectivity are developed or deepened. Subjectivities – through repeated, sequenced gestures – are wound into peoples' moving, changing lives.

For example, take Sriram the moving tender coconut vendor discussed above. In Mangaluru, when he sells his coconuts to Brahmin housewives he might, at first at least, be positioned as a Tamil man (someone from the neighbouring state with a different mother tongue), who does non-prestigious street work, is from a 'low caste' and poor. Over time, as he becomes better known to them, he might then become someone who is known as

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22 Holland and Leander and Venkatesan both prefer the metaphor of lamination.

23 Drums are usually made from wood from jack, coconut, margosa, sandal or blackwood trees. For the process of making a mridangam see: [www.youtube.com/watch?v=yBQ8AT4ip0w](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=yBQ8AT4ip0w) for more information on the drum and other instruments in Karnatic music see (Sathyanarayana 2004, esp. 138–140)

reliable, or as a family man (there is a certain amount of telling people what they want to hear of course). Sriram's conceptually mediated experience of the city is one in which he is structured by its various rhythmic modes and subjectively positioned in different ways as he moves through it. As such, in selling his coconuts, he must skilfully navigate the urban landscape. I suggest that such skilful navigation has three elements – attention, intention and cultivation. Again Karnatic music can help as a thinking tool in regards to this.

Mridangam players learn two very different rhythmic forms as they develop as a player. The first is 'time flow' (*sarvalaghu*), in which through smooth patterns the drummer “reinforces the flow of the tala” (Nelson 2000, 153). The second is calculation (*kanakku*) in which drummers introduce different rhythmic shapes, which are almost mathematical in their patterned construction, and through pauses and switches in gait, can introduce elements of tension into the tala. When flow is being employed it is much easier to discern the tala, but when calculated forms are used, it can be much more difficult. If the player leans too much towards the use of flow, then she might be seen as not being able to develop rhythmically complex ideas. However, the inverse is also problematic, for if she utilises too much calculation then the beauty of the tala can be lost, and the performance might be unenjoyably complex (*ibid* p. 148). Certain players are known for developing different styles throughout their playing lives<sup>24</sup>.

An analogy can be made here with how brokers, vendors and drivers navigate the city. Employing a certain degree of calculation is to act with *intention*, following the flow of the city is to act with *attention*, whilst developing a certain reputation or style refers to the *cultivation* of oneself. This dialectal triad of attention, intention and cultivation works simultaneously as inhabitants skilfully navigate the city. Crucially, their successful navigation is predicated on regularities which, in turn, allow them to take advantage of the irregularities of the city (or at least believe that will one day be able to).

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24 The kind of conscious thinking that goes into inventing these rhythmic compositions sets Karnatak drummers apart from percussionists in most other musical traditions. The use of the intellect to compose music for drumming is encouraged and actively *cultivated* among South Indian drummers. A teacher may give a student a... [cadential design] for one tala and assign its recomposition for other talas, requiring the student to shorten... or lengthen it... The effect on the student's mind is one of creative destabilisation. No material is fixed, but can be transformed to fit circumstances. As the student's mind becomes accustomed to the fluidity of rhythmic structures, it goes beyond the first stage, permutation and combination... of known material, into a state in which really new music arises. (Nelson 2000, 154–155 my emphasis)

For instance Sriram pushes his cart of coconuts along the same route at the same time of day most days of the year, he does not do so 'unthinkingly', but rather closely attentive to the city around him: the wheels of his cart and the bumps they might encounter, the cars, bikes and lorries that share the street, the contours of the paving, the size and shape of potholes, the feel of the fruit in one hand, the knife in the other, the deepness with which he has to cut and the shape of the hole he makes to let the water out. He has an absorbed and relationally attuned orientation towards the unfolding rhythmic modes that envelope him as he moves. He is attentive of the process itself, as much as he is with the outcome of the process (its final form). As such, we might draw parallels with desireless action, discussed in various schools of Indian philosophy, in which desire for something concrete out there in the world is not a prerequisite of action, but rather perception/beliefs coupled with purpose are enough to bring it about (see: Framarin 2012).

As such Sriram is a purposeful being, attentive to affordances (possibilities for action) in the environment as he makes his way through it producing it as he goes (Ingold 2000). Accordingly, the flowing rhythmic modes of the cityscape are produced by the flowing purposeful actions of Sriram. Mangaluru is attended to by him as he moves from street to street and carries out his tasks of cutting and slicing coconuts. Such tasks have what Ingold (*ibid*) terms 'social temporalities' – but what, in the terms set out above, we might think of as synchronised, coherent directions – as Sriram performs his tasks relationally in attendance to others. The city's heterogeneity of rhythmic modes makes such attention to flow a highly skilled practice.

Sriram decided to come to Mangaluru after speaking with an older man from his village who already worked in the city selling coconuts. In his late teens at the time, Sriram weighed up in his mind the amount of money he was earning as a head-loader in a nearby town, against the money he might make from selling in a city with new languages far away from his widowed mother and his friends in the village. He came to the city and learnt the route from the older man, who himself soon left to return to the village. Sriram then set about making improvements on the route to maximise selling and saving up for his own cart so as to avoid rental costs. These acts of intention are embedded in multiple flowing structures, draw on a

habitual past (cf. Bourdieu 1977), have a “practical evaluative” present and a “projective” capacity to envision alternative futures (Emirbayer and Mische 1998).

These flowing structures – which I have conceptualised above as multiple relational rhythmic modes – overlap, thus, “as actors move within and among these different unfolding contexts, they switch between (or “recompose”) their temporal [read *rhythmic modal*] orientations—as constructed within and by means of those contexts—and thus are capable of changing their relationship to structure.” (*ibid* p. 964). The coconut wholesalers from whom Sriram brought his wares could offer him early morning work, and so he shifted his timings slightly to accommodate this. He later got married, brought his family to Mangaluru, but then they moved back when his oldest child (whom he hopes will be a doctor) reached school age as he wanted her to be educated in Tamil and English, not Kannada, leaving Sriram to stay alone. Intentional acts can also be 'agentive' moments when people explicitly act in relation to social structures, often in ways that contradict social reproduction (cf. Sewell 1992) – for instance when people choose a cross-community love marriage in defiance of their parents, or when 'low-caste' Hindus set up a temple with non-Brahmin *poojaris* (priests) (see: Chapter Four).

Each evening once Sriram gets home to the room he rents in the garden of a house outside the city, he washes, cooks and then calls his wife, Pavithra. It has become a joke between them that he tells her each day that he did not drink and he did not visit any women. He does neither, unless the many women he meets along his route count. These women know him as someone polite and friendly, who jokes with their kids, gives them the 'best' coconuts and so on. As such his actions are part of an ordinary ethics in which everyday actions (including speech) generate criteria through which people can be judged (Lambek 2010b). Regularity is key here, as the formation of criteria is, to some degree, predicated on doing things long enough and often enough to become predictable and thus open to evaluation (*ibid*). This is a cultivation of certain ethical sensibilities rooted in the habits of the everyday.

If Sriram's regularity – being in the same place at the same time each day – helps to cultivate certain performed ethical criteria (i.e. that he does what he has always done and does what he says he will), then the differentiating of particular actions within his routine behaviour,

such as when he gives customers his 'best coconuts' or when he ask about someone's children, allows for what Das has called a 'detecting of the human' (2012). This is a delicate regard for others and their particularities (or differences) based on past experience, and thus is built on repetition and habit (*ibid*). These differences nestled within everyday life often surge up at people unaware, appearing as moments of affective stillness, jumping out from the sameness (cf. Stewart 2007). Indeed if, as Lefebvre (2004) claims, “when it concerns the everyday... there is always something new and unforeseen that introduces itself into the repetitive: difference” (p.6), then acknowledging this difference is one of the ways in which Sriram cultivates a certain sensibility as a caring human. As such, within the calculating structure-challenging intentional acts and the flowing purposeful, affordance-led attentional acts, there are also these delicate 'human' acts of remembrance that cultivate Sriram in the eyes of others as he moves forward in time.

The city and the lives of its inhabitants are changing as they repeat. Sriram is not the same man walking the same streets each day, but a slightly different man walking slightly different streets. Small changes and also larger changes take place. Transforming, structurally altering events (à la Sewell 1996), such as the end of colonialism or the start of economic reforms, along with life-course events such as births, deaths and marriages are absorbed into his everyday life and, through such absorptions, Sriram is changed (Ibañez-Tirado 2013).

Urban navigations then are skilled practices that involve attention, intention and cultivation, that are based on conceptually-mediated experiences of the city, that are enabled and constrained by subjective positioning and that change over time as the city and individuals move through the city and through their lives. Whether acting with a little more attention (in relation to the moving environment), intention (in relation to social structures) or cultivation (in relation to ethical sensibilities) the relationship between the regular and the irregular is ever present. For instance, by repeating his route Sriram becomes better attuned to the contours of the street allowing him to avoid possible pitfalls, learns the routes of fellow vendors allowing him to act with intention and temporally take part of their route if they are away from the city, and to cultivate a disposition of delicate care and remembrance allowing sociability to pop up out of his routine behaviour in the interactions with customers. To

skilfully navigate the city is to move with a sameness that allows for difference, with regularity that accounts for the affordances of the irregular. Stepping back through the argument developed in the Introduction so far, we can now piece together how such regularity-seeking navigations relate to the rhythmic modes of the city and how groups such as vendors, brokers and auto drivers find a place within an urbanising city in which they are cast as out of time within the dominant social imaginary.

Mangaluru's expectant urbanism is produced through the triad of capitalistic urbanisation (concentrating, expanding, differentiating), the city's agglomeration of rhythmic modes (synchronising, coherent, directional) and a future-heavy urban imaginary (of smooth flow, accelerated progress and friction free consumption). Within such a city groups like brokers, vendors and auto drivers – who are framed backwards or disorderly – see their stands demolished and have their wares seized in the name of an orderly future. A way of navigating in a city which casts them as being from the past is to be strictly 'in time', or regular, in present. Through the upkeep of routines (Chapter Two), through becoming an anticipated part of urban life (Chapter Three), and through daily waiting practices (Chapter Four), inhabitants from these groups create *regularity* in their lives not only to find a place in a city in which they are 'out of time', or only to create a meaningful life for themselves and their families, but also as a means to reach the expected future. The search for regularity amongst such groups are not acts of backwardness or a 'living in the present', but rather future-oriented navigations as “concerns for permanence, endurance, and continuity... support notions of indeterminacy and contingency. They are neither less future-orientated nor simply embedded in the past, but are an essential part of the epistemic, social, and political context of human responses to situations of change” (Ringel 2014, 68).

The expectant city circulates hopes, dreams and wants that do not seem entirely out of reach for these groups. Even though they cannot afford to shop in malls or drink lattes in coffee shops, they nevertheless work hard in the hope that one day they or their children will be able to more readily avail themselves of the city of the future. Moreover, the navigations of brokers, vendors and drivers are the backstage mechanics that allow others to smoothly flow, enjoy friction-free consumption and accelerated progress in the contemporary city; their regularities induce the expectant social imaginary – their labour of



the 'past' in the 'present' enables dreams of the city of the 'future'. As such, their everyday regularities are not antithetical to India's newness celebrating, change-laden and possibility-heavy urban moment, indeed they are a key component of it. The power of the myth of a shining unbound urban future is that it gives hope to even those who cannot (yet) touch it – even if they may never touch it – and keeps them working in the present. However, we should not so easily dismiss people's dreams. Indian cities in spite of the violence, suffering and poverty that has been well documented in both academic and popular accounts, remain places through which people entwine their individual and collective hopes. Moreover, they are places through which people realise their wants and goals. Expectancy keeps people labouring in the backstage of the present, but it also allows them the chance of accessing the differences of the future. Against the disorder of India's urban moment, brokers, vendors and drivers seek order; it is only once the stability of the regular is established that life in the city can move from being one overly concerned with probability, and begin to be one resplendent with possibility, even if the regularities needed to search for these possibilities helps construct the very system that curtails them.

## **Methodology**

I spent 18 expectant months in Mangaluru, most of the time accompanied by my wife, Alexa, a trained anthropologist – with whom I was able to better access the parts of everyday life that a single man would find difficult. At first, we lived in a flat on the outskirts of the city, next to a building site that was pushing the city into the village, before moving into a room above a family house in one of the oldest neighbourhoods in Mangaluru. My close contact with this family allowed me to better understand the domestic rhythmic modes of urban inhabitants – especially from a female perspective, something which I found difficult throughout. In spite of these attempts to mitigate such gender imbalance, the analysis is, for the most part, based on what I learnt from research amongst men. There are four main sources of data used for the following analysis: informants' accounts from semi-structured interviews; what I saw, smelt, heard, felt, spoke about and tasted as participant observer; documents, books and dissertations found in an archive and various libraries in the city; and novels written about Mangalore or the surrounding area.

In total I conducted 116 semi-structured interviews in Kannada, English and very occasionally Tulu or Konkani (these last two always with an interpreter) and had numerous informal talks with both 'informants' (with whom I conducted long-term participation observation) from the chosen groups and 'experts' (whom I usually only met once or twice to speak about a certain issue). For a number of the interviews I was accompanied by my 'research assistant', Prathiksha, who was much more of a 'guide' than an 'assistant'. She painstakingly explicated many different aspects of everyday life, advised me on how my questions sounded and explained the reactions of interviewees. Fluent in Tulu, Konkani, Kannada, Hindi and English and well versed in the skills of urban navigation, she opened up the research in new ways.

The semi-structured interviews with experts and informants were a constant feature of the fieldwork, however it was the daily participant observation that forms the backbone of the ethnographic data gathered. The focus on everyday life, daily rhythmic modes and the ongoing formation of the cityscape led me to spend a lot of time with people, as they went about their everyday lives. In the case of moving vendors, this type of research involved walking the streets with them as they sold their wares and, wherever possible, cutting coconuts, carrying flowers and trying to persuade customers that the fish were fresh or the magazine subscription necessary. In the case of auto drivers, most of the participant observation took place waiting on the stands (driving took me away from drivers, and there is only space for one driver in an auto – though I did of course accompany them as they drove on many occasions). Waiting at auto stands was a fruitful way of getting ethnographic data, as there is a steady mix of regular and non-regular drivers who stop at the stand waiting for customers. In the case of housing brokers, I observed their everyday lives as they searched for opportunities around the city, as they waited for work, as they called numbers, as they visited buyers and sellers or tenants and landlords and when they arranged paperwork.

With all the informant groups, I was not only interested in their everyday work, but also in all aspects of their lives including important weekly, annual or one time life events. Accordingly I accompanied them on trips back to their 'native villages' if they were migrants, during

festivals, for visits to 'wine shops', to temples/churches/mosques, at family celebrations such as weddings or birthdays or to watch films, eat food at home or simply to 'timepass'. Occasionally Alexa accompanied me for these events when appropriate.

The interest in rhythms and experience led me to shoot around 40 hours of film. This included following vendors, drivers and brokers as they went about their everyday lives, semi-structured interviews and place-based shots (e.g. fish market, shopping centre or park). The footage was analysed post-fieldwork, but due to format restrictions is not included in the dissertation.

I also spent time in the libraries of Mangalore University and St. Aloysius College reading unpublished PhD dissertations, locally published books and other useful secondary sources that broadened my knowledge of the history and culture of the region. I conducted some further research in the Basel Mission Archives and associated churches with primary and secondary sources when piecing together certain historical threads (e.g. the Morgans, see Chapter Four). Three works of fiction written (in English) about Mangalore or the surrounding area were also highly informative.

This dissertation makes considerable use of individual lives as a means through which to analyse the city. Because I did not want to work within pre-selected places/spaces, but rather explore how inhabitants' movements made the city, this led me to accompany people, as either individuals or as groups, as they went about their lives. In writing about these individuals' lives I experiment by writing through different temporal frames that capture some of their many different rhythmic modes in Chapters Two, Three and Four. The different temporal writing frames are not meant to represent wider analytical categories – e.g. daily routine as labour relations or festivals as moments of freedom – rather they artificially highlight certain aspects of brokers', vendors' and drivers' lives in a way that allows us to understand how their particular skilled urban navigations speak to wider questions relating to property, morality or modernity (which are the foci of Chapters Two, Three and Four respectively). Of course in everyday life, inhabitants do often represent and separate out time in their own lives as well e.g. with calendars, pension plans, routines (see: Zerubavel 1981).

This micro-historical and biographical mode may seem to sit awkwardly with the focus on rhythmic relations, as relations are often (problematically) represented as durable or stable. However, it has long been acknowledged in the social sciences that relations unfold in a dynamic and contingent fashion (Emirbayer 1997; for smaller city urban relationality see Monterescu 2015). The individual stories then do not only rhythmically enliven abstract categorisation and analysis, but also represent relations as experienced – relations that change, that differ in terms of length, depth, importance, that modify understandings of the self, and that alter as people cultivate themselves.

### **Structure of the Dissertation**

This dissertation analyses how urbanisation structures and destructures everyday life through a detailed exploration into the lives of three groups – housing and land brokers, moving street vendors and auto rickshaw drivers – in Mangaluru, a smaller city in coastal south India. It argues that the key to forging both a livelihood and a meaningful life is predicated on being able to live through regular rhythmic modes. Three skilled practices, or urban navigations, are analysed – conducting, learning and waiting – as a way to uncover some of the specificities, complexities and difficulties involved in being regular. Three concepts are advanced with this in mind – street level conducting, anticipation and rhythmic dissonance – along with a fourth conceptual tool of city size, which is discussed in depth in Chapter One, but remains a theme throughout.

Although urban anthropology and urban studies more generally have developed increasingly sophisticated analyses of space often alongside historically grounded case studies (e.g. Arabindoo 2011; Dickey 2000; De Neve 2006; Legg and McFarlane 2008; Molotch 1976; Monterescu 2015; Srivastava 2015), the multiple temporalities of everyday life have received far less attention. As such, this dissertation adds to work that analyses urban time not just diachronically but also synchronically (e.g. Edensor 2012; Hall 2012; Mareggi 2013; Mulíček, Osman, and Seidenglanz 2014; Smith and Hetherington 2013) by thinking through the contemporary city alongside anthropology's long-standing interest in

time (see: Bear 2014; Gell 1992; Hodges 2008; Munn 1992). Moreover, through a case study of a smaller south Indian city, it adds to the small but growing literature on non-metropolitan urban life (e.g. Kudva 2013; K. Sharma 2012; R. N. Sharma and Sandhu 2013) as well as contributing to our understanding of groups such as brokers, vendors and auto drivers about whom some (e.g. Anand and Ravi 2003; D. Mohan and Roy 2003; Hyrapiet and Greiner 2012; Anwar 2013; Sud 2014; Anjaria 2011; Bhowmik and Saha 2012), but not much, is known. Finally, the dissertation is inspired by and adds to a growing interest in the anthropology of the future (e.g. Appadurai 2013; Cross 2014; Pedersen 2012) by adding a specific urban dimension to this emerging field.

In Chapter One I analyse city size, specifically how Manglauru's relative smallness creates an urban image defined by one of lack – a lack that is fuelled by the expectancy of India's urban moment. The importance of the port, education and particular land arrangements are explored through the lives of four women who share the same house in the centre of the city. Housing remains important in Chapter Two, although here the focus is on brokers who match potential buyers/sellers and landlords/tenants in a market characterised by expectancy. The importance of routine is highlighted along with the concept of *street level conducting*, a skilled practice through which brokers like Saleem and Mr. Pai synchronise people within the market. The skilled navigation analysed in Chapter Three is learning, specifically as practised amongst moving vendors like Natesh and Sriram. Here *anticipation* and the delicate ethics of everyday life are explored as vendors' regularities regularise their place in the city. In Chapter Four questions of modernity are discussed in relation to auto-rickshaw drivers, especially Raj who has refused the opportunity the city has spun his way. This is analysed through a discussion of the skilled practice of waiting and advances the idea of *rhythmic dissonance*. Finally in the Conclusion, I bring together the three urban navigations analysed (conducting, learning, waiting), discuss Mangaluru's river-like character, and briefly reflect on what anthropology can bring to our understanding of India's urban moment.

## 1. SIZE AND THE CITY

During the first week of my research a local businessman, who liked to tell me many elaborate stories, told me the following rumour,

When Indira Gandhi came to Mangalore to open the all weather port in 1973, she spent her time on the flight buried in reports. As they came towards the city, one aide said to her they were soon to land, and so she looked out of the window. She saw the Netravathi River flowing down from the Ghats, she saw the Arabian Sea, she saw the hill-top airport, but she was confused. She turned to her aide and said, 'but there's no city!?'

We might suppose that a city in the erstwhile Prime Minister's imagination should break the tree line; but Mangalore then, unlike Mangaluru now, was a city hidden from above. The recent boom in highrise constructions; the setting up of SEZs; the fledgling arrival of IT and ITES companies along with BPOs; the rush to launch new colleges; the first signs of traffic congestion; unaffordable rents; shopping malls; air conditioned cinemas; Dominos and KFC; land grabs; and foreign investors – surely this means that even those who fly down from Delhi would recognise a city? Maybe, at a push, social scientists might see a city there too?

This chapter uncovers some aspects of a smaller city's urbanism; aspects of cityness that are usually considered to be the preserve of global metropolises. It is ironic that work that calls for an urban studies that looks beyond the West (Robinson 2006) and work which calls for an urban studies that looks beyond the metropolis (Bell and Jayne 2006) have, for the most part, failed to cross-influence those who have attempted to follow these leads. It seems especially strange as Robinson's 'ordinary city' argument and Bell and Jayne's 'beyond the metropolis' argument dovetail in that they both identify the problematic privileging of world cities as the sites from which urban theorisation flows. This hierarchical theoretical divide places both smaller and non-Western cities in a state of constant under-development, forever the poor relation of the true sites of urban modernity – the Chicagos, Londons, and New Yorks of the world.

But what exactly do we mean when we talk of a smaller city? One method that social scientists have used has been to take a certain class or classes of city, and declare these to be 'small', 'medium', 'large' or whatever terms they choose to employ, with categorisations based on population the most common. For instance, according to the latest Census of

India, Class I settlements have a population above 100,000 people; Class II a population between 50,000 and 99,999; Class III between 20,000 and 49,999; Class IV between 10,000 to 19,999; Class V between 5,000 to 9,999 whilst Class VI settlements have a population below 5,000. As per the 2011 census there were 468 Class I settlements, in which 264.9 million people reside (about 70 percent of the total urban population). 53 of these settlements have a population of more than 1 million. It is clear from even this cursory glance at the Class I categorisation that it is far too broad to hold much meaning. In the last census this would have included both Mangalore and Mumbai. It is thus unsurprising that, in India, researchers have developed different categorisations of city size (see: Raman et al. 2015). However, whilst population of the area of a city is certainly important – not least to fit into central state schemata that open or close possibilities of funding – comparing cities in such absolute ways obscures as much as it reveals for qualitative research. Moreover, cities, towns or smaller settlements are always changing size<sup>25</sup>. As such, I choose not to place Mangaluru into a certain class or tier based on a comparative set of criteria.

How then, to measure the city? How small is Mangaluru? It is certainly smaller than Bengaluru, Mumbai and Mysuru but then it is also certainly bigger than Udupi, Bantwal, and Chikkamagaluru. Bangaloreans will tell you that Mangaluru is small, “like a village almost”, but for those from Bantwal, Mangaluru is a city with shopping malls, prestigious colleges and an international airport. It would be wrong to call it a small city, as it would be wrong to refer to it as a big city. Its size relates to its position in the state, national and global hierarchy of cities, an imbricated hierarchy which is highly contextual – put Mangaluru in Hungary and it would be twice as big as the second biggest city, and yet it is only the fourth largest city in the State of Karnataka. City size is best understood relationally and as dependent on particular contexts (Bell and Jayne 2009), accordingly, I argue it is not useful to think of Mangaluru as a 'small city' but rather a 'smaller city', as using the comparative adjective reflects the relationality of the categorisation.

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25 With each census in India there are a host of new 'Census Towns' declared: these are settlements that have grown to have a population of more than 5000 with a density of 400 people per square kilometre and with 75 percent of the male workforce not employed in agriculture. To be declared a Census Town means that such settlements have not yet been declared a Statutory Town, i.e. a town with the accompanying relevant municipal structures. In the 2011 in total there were 7,935 towns or cities identified in India, 4,041 of these were Statutory Towns, 3,894 of these Census Towns.

It could well be argued that such a label reflects a bias towards larger cities – why not refer to Mangaluru as a larger city, when its population of 484,785, makes it the 93rd largest city in India (Government of India 2011)? Especially, when, if we count the urban region population of 619,664, the city is pushed up to 83<sup>rd</sup> largest. Should we also factor in the population density of the surrounding district of Dakshina Kannada, which at 457 people per square kilometre is more than that of the State (319) and the national (382) averages (GOI 2011), making it the second most densely populated district in Karnataka after Bangalore Urban district? To do so, however, would miss that smallness/largeness is about more than just numbers; calling Mangaluru a larger city would miss how smallness is related to its very cityness: “the ways in which [city] smallness is bound up with particular ways of acting, self-images, structures of feeling, senses of place, aspirations” (Bell and Jayne 2009, 690). It is this that I seek to uncover in this chapter.

As with any place, Mangaluru is embedded in different administrative, cultural, regional, linguistic and national contexts which shift across time as kingdoms rise and fall, state's re-organise their internal and external borders and movements succeed or fail. Since 1956 Mangaluru has been part of the linguistically defined Karnataka (though named the State of Mysore until 1973) (for the State's creation see: Nair 2011), located in its far south-west corner just a few miles away from State border with Kerala. Karnataka (population 64.06 million) has 30 districts, with Mangaluru the administrative headquarters of the district of Dakshina Kannada (population 2.08 million). The city, region, district, State and the national state, as delineated bounded places can overlap and there is no neat dividing line between where the city starts and stops, with the 'city-region' stretching way beyond the official administrative bounds. Nevertheless such official boundaries have real consequences and are also the containers for state-produced statistics. In the case of Mangaluru, statistics pertaining to land, labour and literacy give a fuller picture at a district level and reveal that Dakshina Kannada<sup>26</sup> has greater population density, more people in the labour force and

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26 Dakshina Kannada name derives from the colonial name for the region, Canara, a corruption of Kannada, the name assigned to the coastal region of modern day Karnataka by European traders. Once Canara came completely under British rule following the defeat of Tippu Sultan, it was attached to the Madras Presidency, unlike much of the rest of what is the southern part of present day Karnataka, which went to princely Mysore. However, Canara was split into north Canara and south Canara in 1862 because cotton traders – whose profits were hit by the American Civil War – wanted a new port so they could avoid the expenses associated with the port in Bombay (Havanur 2000). Carwar (now Karwar) was selected as the site for the new port. However Carwar was in Canara, and the Madras Presidency were not so keen to pay for the building of port, thus Canara was bifurcated and northern part was passed



much higher literacy rates than the State averages (see Table One).

**Table One:** Demographic profiles Dakshina Kannada, and Karnataka

Details	State	Dakshina Kannada
Total population	61,130,704	2,083,625
Decadal population growth rate ( percent)	15.67	9.80
Area (in sq. km)	191,791	4,866
Density of population (persons per sq. km)	319	457
Literacy level (percent)	75.60	88.62
Percentage of workers to total population	44.30	50.00
Net district total income 2007-08 (in 100,000s) at current price	2,11,66,253	9,69,984
Per capita income (in 100,000s) 2007-2008 (at constant price 1999-2000)	36,945	47,151

Data from Government of Karnataka and Government of India (2010; 2011), table adapted from Bhatta (2013)

Mangaluru is also the largest city in the 'cultural region' of Tulu Nadu – the land of the Tuluvas, a linguistic-cultural group whose members can also be found in Udupi district and Kasaragod district (the latter district in northern Kerala). Whilst there have been some attempts to make Tulu Nadu a separate State since at least the 1940s, for the most part the immediate demands of separatist groups are more modest – such as renaming the airport. There is a small Tulu film industry, whose films are also released for the diaspora in the Gulf, and a television station *Namma Kudla* (Our Mangaluru) which started broadcasting in 2005 (M. L. Shetty 2008). In spite of Tulu's widespread use and cultural moorings, Kannada was and remains the primary language of officialdom, education, public discourse and the press. Moreover, there are many migrants who move to Mangaluru from other parts of Karnataka and never learn Tulu (such as the flower sellers in Chapter Three), as almost everyone

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over to the Bombay Presidency. Later the American Civil war ended, cotton started flowing and Bombay traders put pressure on the government not to build the port (*ibid*). There was no new port, but there was now a North Canara and South Canara (sometimes spelt Kanara). The two Canaras became part of the newly formed Karnataka State in 1956. North and South Canara were unsurprisingly signalled out for a name change quite early after independence, but rather than give new names that reflected how the regions had been locally known before the colonial period, they were instead transliterated and de-corrupted into Dakshina Kannada and Uttara Kannada (South and North respectively). Many businesses however, including the famous Canara Bank, keep the colonial-era name. In 1997 Dakshina (south) Kannada was bifurcated, with the northern part of the district renamed Udupi, after the largest town there.

speaks Kannada as a second or third language, if it is not their first.

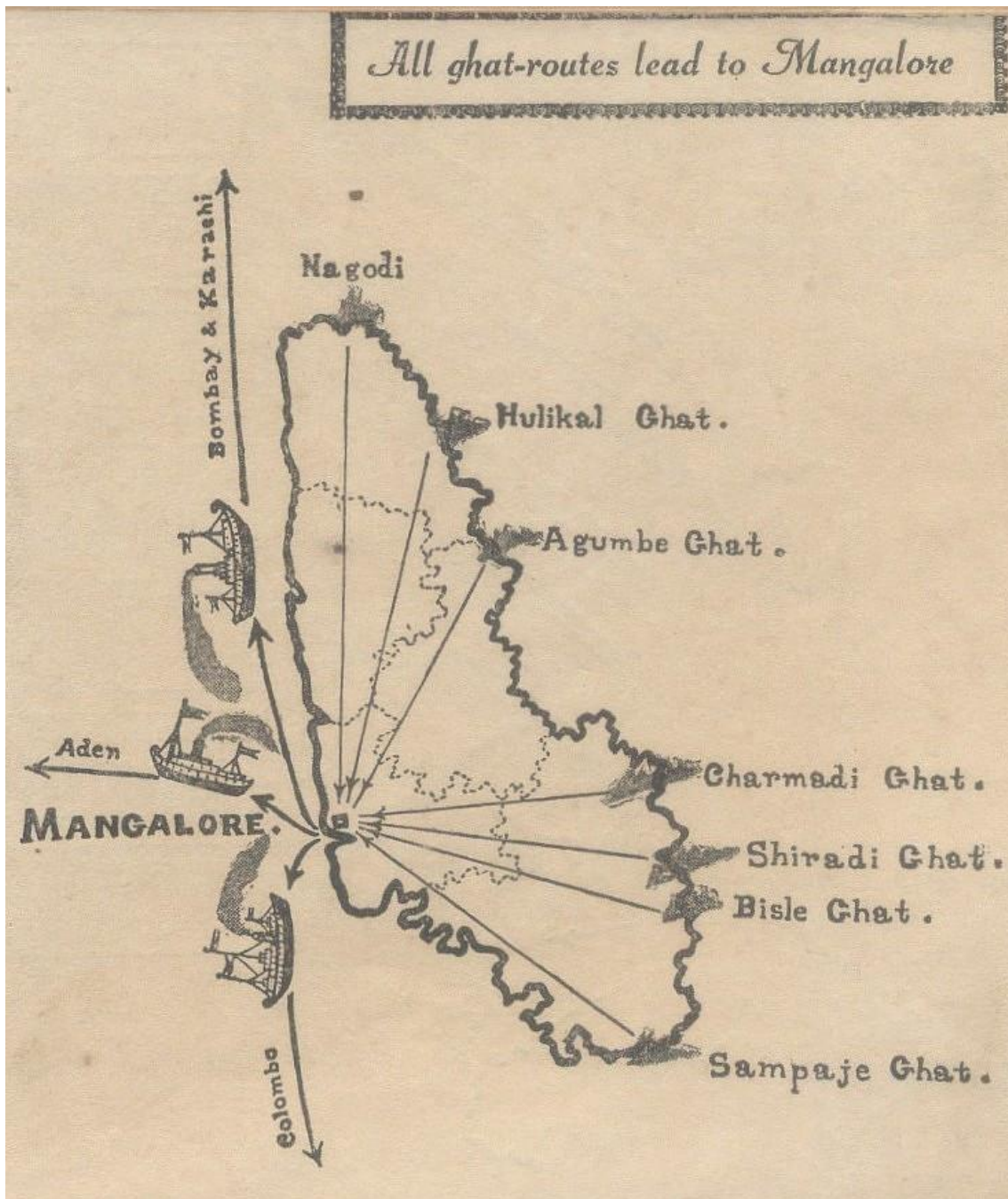


Figure 6: Source: *Mangalore: A Survey of the Place and Its People*

The city is also imbricated in jati relations which are shifting as the city changes. Some of these relate to feudal landholding patterns, for instance the traditional landowners such as Bunts, Jains and Brahmins remain relatively dominant in the city, both in terms of business

and symbolic power (e.g. for Bunts see: S. B. Rao 2010). Meanwhile Dalit (once so called 'untouchable') jatis are still over-represented in outdoor and low paid work, and some (such as Nalkes, Paravas or slightly higher placed and 'non-polluting' Pombadas) perform 'traditional' ritual functions as mediums in the widely practised spirit worship discussed below. Trading communities, such as the Gowda Saraswat Brahmins or Muslim Bearys, remain active in trade, with many members of the later group involved in circular migration to the Gulf, the saving from which they invest in businesses in the city. Meanwhile amongst the largest Christian jatis, Konkani speaking Catholics are relatively prosperous in comparison to Protestants, most of whom were 'low-caste' Billivas before conversion. However as will be seen throughout the dissertation, jati relations are dynamic and unstable – for instance Billavas, erstwhile toddy tappers and largest single jati in the region, are commercially strong and upwardly mobile, whilst members of the Mogaveera fishing community, whilst often still involved in fishing, have also diversified into numerous fields with great success. Meanwhile, Dalit groups in the city have seen some intergenerational social mobility, mostly through government reservation schemes in education and employment (Pais 2004). Of course, there are numerous other jatis and tribes in and around the city, some of which will be mentioned below. Rather than attempting to create an exhaustive (and colonial state mimicking) list, it is more pertinent to note that despite changes, jati remains an important part of everyday urban life in Mangaluru. As Kudva's ongoing research into jati and Mangaluru reveals, caste is written into mobility (2015) and labour markets (2013), and whilst malleable and dynamic, “patterns of constructed difference that reinscribe inequality and underscore lost opportunities... lie at the heart of how the region and the city are generated and thrive” (Kudva 2015, 149).

With the various layers of jati, linguistic community and state formations in mind, in this chapter I argue that the sizing of Mangaluru is in part produced through a rhythmic presence of smallness – through rhythmic modes that speak to the city's *niche* positioning as a port or education hub, that indicate it *lacks* a certain urbanity in comparison to larger cities, and that highlight its *dense intimacy* of relations engendered through closeness. In the final two sections of the chapter I explore this in two ways. Firstly through the three most prevalent ways in which Mangaluru is usually imagined – ports, education institutes and moral policing (attacks and other actions by right wing, usually Hindu, vigilante groups). Secondly by

looking briefly into the lives of four women who, in different ways, are entwined with Mangaluru's smallness – Bavitha, a housewife and after-school tutor, her 18 year old daughter Tiny, a struggling pre-university college student, and Jaya and Roicy, two 'paying guests' (lodgers) at the end of their studies at two of the city's higher education institutes. Prior to this, I will first argue that despite smaller cities in India being 'forgotten' by both central state policies and academics, they remain important sites for understanding contemporary urbanity before moving on to analyse how smallness feeds the imagination of cities both in India and elsewhere.

### 1.1. The Twice Forgotten City

But why did you come to Mangalore? You should have gone to Bangalore if you wanted to research urbanisation

*English Lecturer at a local college*

Smaller cities have, in part, been sidelined in central state policies. Alongside the economic reforms of the last twenty years there has been significant decentralisation of power to urban centres, but such decentralisation has not always come with the means to substantively influence local development trajectories (K. Sharma 2012). Moreover, the central state has both decreased its level of intervention regarding the reduction of unevenness, and promoted selected metropolitan regions for investment, leaving the sub-national states to compete to capture resources (S. Chakravorty 2000b). This shift is reflected in the elitist discourses and practices of urban planning, in which the bigger cities and their elite spaces of consumption are proclaimed as the 'champions of urbanity' and the pre-reform attempts at redistribution are forgotten, resulting in a “rescaling of the 'urban' imagery and... [a] redundancy of smaller cities and towns in the urban planning agenda” (Banerjee-Guha 2013, 26–27).

The renewed primacy given to larger cities can be clearly seen in the reorganisation of central state funding allocations, leading to “a prevailing viewpoint that smaller urban settlements are officially neglected and disadvantaged areas” (Shaw 2013, 50). For instance, the Integrated Development of Small & Medium Towns (IDSMT) programme,

which was initiated in 1979-80, was subsumed into the much more limited Urban Infrastructure Development Scheme for Small and Medium Towns (UIDSSMT) in 2005 as part of the flagship Jawaharlal Nehru National Urban Renewal Mission (JnNURM), a massive funding programme aimed at larger cities and state capitals (*ibid*)<sup>27</sup>.

In spite of smaller cities relegation in central state policy priorities, there is a strong policy case for understanding and harnessing the 'economic dynamism of middle India' (Harriss-White 2016). Dated, yet nevertheless illuminating statistical analyses from the National Sample Survey (NSS) revealed that smaller cities evidenced proportionally higher rates of poverty than larger cities in the years 1987-2000 (Kundu and Sarangi 2005). However, the same set of data also shows that poverty has come down faster, purchasing power is greater and inequalities less severe in smaller and medium towns (Himanshu 2006)<sup>28</sup>. As Harriss-White (2016) notes, economists who have hailed metros as the driver of India's remarkable economic growth (e.g. Kunal Sen, 2014 quoted in Harriss-White, 2016), are perplexed that GDP has accelerated as metro growth has slowed. In turn, she argues that it is the unacknowledged and often disparaged informal economy in India's smaller cities and towns that is one of the drivers of this growth. However in spite of this, research into smaller cities – both from state actors and from academic scholars – has been significantly lacking in comparison to the attention given to larger cities. We should not overstate the size of the lacuna however. There are pockets of literature that, whilst not always explicitly dealing with questions of city size, nevertheless provide fascinating insights into smaller cities – namely some of the early anthropology in newly independent India; development studies in the 1970's; and isolated texts/edited collections associated with the upturn of interest in urban India in the last decades.

Vidyarthi (1978) argues in his review of urban anthropology in India that three types of urban studies have emerged since independence – firstly, those driven by practical government

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27 The JnNURM launched in 2001 promised Rs. 5,00,000 million from 2005-12 for infrastructure and improved urban governance in the 35 cities with more than a million inhabitants, along with all state capitals and other cities important for national development. The UIDSSMT is only for civic projects, not economic uplifting, and has mostly been used for water supply and has disproportionately gone to the better of states (Shaw 2013).

28 These two analyses are based on the NSS that gathered data categorised along settlement size – large towns (more than a million), medium towns (50,000 – million), small towns (less than 50,000). As I will argue below, there are limitations with numerical categorisations, but these cannot be avoided with such statistical analyses.

concerns over population increase, housing, employment etc.; secondly, those funded by UNESCO's research into industrialisation in South Asia; and thirdly, those inspired by the Chicago School's cultural approach to urban life. It is from within this last group that a number of studies on smaller cities arose that reveal such places as key sites for exploring the interplay of 'tradition' and 'modernity'. This includes Vidyarthi's (1961) own work on the north Indian ritual centre, Gaya, and the interplay of different types of tradition, and Desai's (1965) study on different types of 'jointness' within joint families in the town of Mahuva exploring how migration, not long-term urban living, dissolves jointness. Most interestingly for our case is Chekki's (1974) study of Dharwad (now one of the twin cities of Hubli-Dharwad) in northern Karnataka, which explores whether urbanisation in 'developing nations' followed a similar trajectory as in the West. He analysed this through the prism of kinship relations amongst the rural-orientated Lingayats jati, who lay stress on hard work, individual achievement and gender equality, and the Brahmins, whose focus on education and developing a profession opened up more opportunities with ongoing urbanisation.

The second group of relevant literature emerged from the dashed hopes of development in the years following decolonisation. In the 1970s, smaller cities were given much international attention across what was then termed the 'Third World', with many governments in 'developing countries' placing their hope in smaller urban centres as they became dismayed by growing rural-urban economic polarisation and the failure of economic policies built around large-scale industries in select centres. Spurred on by development theorists (i.e. Rondinelli 1983), governments in various countries actively sought to develop small cities as means of balancing out unevenly developed regions, bringing about rural development in their hinterlands, and offering an alternative to rural-urban migration to larger cities. It was also argued that smaller urban centres might offer the benefits of economic development whilst maintaining a local sense of identity, thus avoiding the anonymity of the 'ungovernable' Third World metropolises (Dix 1986). However, this hope for smaller urban places was soon shown to be naïve and often based on unfounded and unresearched assumptions (Southall 1988), with one of the harshest critics noting that, “[s]mall cities... constitute, in a very real sense, parasitic islands of privilege in a sea of rural poverty and contribute little to the development of their respective hinterlands” (Schatzberg 1979, 186).

Such dashed hopes have further resonance in India, as they chime with the creation of new towns conceived in the first decade of independence. There was an optimism surrounding the planned new towns (see: Koenigsberger 1952) and, as Srirupa Roy details (2007, 133–156), these “cities of hope” were promoted as 'new places' lived in by 'new types of people' – the ideal 'producer patriots' of the new nation (also, see: Introduction). Roy links these new towns into wider post-colonial state practices of 'de-centering' – creating and celebrating new, previously insignificant, elsewhere – dream-worlds of the new nation-state that sat in contrast to the undeveloped, backwards country around it. However, by the 1970s these same towns had become sites of residential segregation, labour unrest, crime, corruption and communal riots; it was argued that they had seen too rapid and badly implemented planning, and were thus held up as exemplars of the failure of the nation building project. Outside these new places, smaller cities and towns grew in the decades following independence round pockets of industrial development, in urban corridors or serving rural areas (Heitzman 2008b).

The third useful collection of studies comes from the recent upturn in urban studies in India, much of which utilises a spatially sensitive approach. This has for the most part mirrored urban studies in and of the West in focussing on larger cities and interrogates how cities are changing under global capitalism in Mumbai (e.g. Appadurai 2000; Björkman 2014; Harris 2012), Delhi (e.g. Datta 2012; Ghertner 2011; Srivastava 2015) or Kolkata (e.g. S. Chakravorty 2000a; Bose 2014; Donner 2012). The important insights gained from utilising approaches that attempt to understand how (often global) capital flows reorganise urban spaces need not be limited to the usual suspects however, since smaller city urbanisation is not totally dependent upon its relationships with the closest metropolises (Denis, Mukhopadhyay, and Zérah 2012). For example, spatial transformation in smaller Indian cities is in part being driven by internal actors, such as local entrepreneurs buying up land and thus pushing urban expansion (Raman 2014).

Identity characteristics such as class, jati, community and so on flow into the spaces and times of these smaller cities, possibly in a more pronounced or clearly delineated way than in larger cities. Upwardly mobile jatis in 'provincial' cities can reconfigure city spaces, for example by relocating industrial units to their part of town in a way that consolidates caste

and neighbourhoods affinities (De Neve 2006). Indeed, jati, occupation and community clustering is common in smaller cities (Harriss-White 2016), including Mangaluru (see: Chapter Two and Kudva 2013). This is not to suggest, however, that smaller cities are necessarily less diverse over all; many smaller cities, especially those located at cultural/regional borderlands, exhibit immense diversity (Hasan 2011), with multi-ethnic diversity and struggles coming to shape the very understanding of such cities (McDuie-Ra 2014).

The potential growth of smaller cities in part dovetails with the dream of smart cities. The smart city craze is a global one, yet the newly elected central government's promise of 100 smart cities in India seems unmatched in scale and ambition. At the time of writing it is not yet clear how smart cities will be realised in India; whether they will be dystopian metropolises (see: Datta 2015) or smart upgrades to smaller cities which are in need of infrastructural investment. Nevertheless the excitement of becoming a smart city (or at least the funds associated with it), made Mangalore City Corporation crave largeness as it was suggested at one point that one of the criteria for smart city funding was for a city to have a population of more than half a million. Officials in Mangalore City Corporation, whose city was a few thousand people short, suggested adding a few villages from the surrounding metropolitan region to push it over the threshold. Interestingly, the episode echoed Mangalore becoming a City Corporation in 1980. The year before locals appealed to be upgraded to a Municipal Corporation, but as there were not enough people living within the city limits the city was extended to include 14 surrounding villages to realise their wishes<sup>29</sup> (Javeed 1988). In the end Mangaluru – with its size unchanged – was nominated by Karnataka state and was approved for 'smart city' funding in August 2015.

The dream of potentially becoming a smart city, the side-lining of smaller cities in policy frameworks, the perceived failure of 'new towns' to help drive development, the ability of smaller cities to serve as lens to understand changes in 'traditional' structures and the distinct presence of group characteristics in smaller cities all speak, in different ways, to how the city is imaginatively positioned by its inhabitants and those who reside elsewhere. It is

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<sup>29</sup> Elections were not held until 1984 however, with the city being run by the administration until then. The elections took place under the rules of the Karnataka Municipal Corporations Act 1976.



to this that I know turn.

## 1.2. Imagined Positions: Niche, Lack and Intimacy

Time now is faster than what it used to be – relatively – the way people experience it. If you go to Tibet, some remote village there, then everything moves slowly because nothing is happening... In bigger cities time is faster. In a village time is slower. There a day takes a long time. In small cities like Mangalore it's a little faster, but in big cities like Bombay then time goes even quicker. In places like New York a lifetime is like a day. You're born and then you die. That's it. The bigger the city the faster time flows.

*Prakash, Temple Manager*

In the Introduction I argued that Mangaluru's urbanism is expectant. Part of what drives this expectancy is the way it is imagined vis-à-vis other cities. Such urban imagination is both individual and collective (Cinar and Bender 2007), as well as being fractured internally along jati, religious community, gender and age lines. For instance parts of Indian cities are sometimes imagined as 'dangerous for women' (see: Phadke 2013) or as being strongly associated with a certain jati (Kudva 2013; 2015). Moreover, the city is imagined internally and externally in relation to wider society, an imagining that positions the city as, for example, part of a colonial regime, within a large empire, or as an important (or unimportant) city of the nation (King 2007).

In such ways, cities are imaginatively positioned vis-à-vis other places. Accordingly, in terms of both inter-city and rural-urban relations it is useful to think about a place's 'position in relational space/time' (Sheppard 2002). This refers to the relational inequalities that exist between different places within shifting global hierarchies and how the relations between places can affect future prospects of places. Places' relations with other places are embedded in regional, national and global scales, but are not only defined vertically (i.e. city, state, national state) but also horizontally (*ibid*). Imagination is key to this positioning because although the governance of urban places is to some degree structured materially through capitalistic urbanisation, certain economic imaginaries bring about particular developmental trajectories (Lorentzen and van Heur 2012). There is a co-development of

both material and discursive processes in the joint modification of social relations, with both the ungraspable, messy sum of economic relations and the smooth, coherent narrative that develops around it important in assigning positions and structures of governance that institutionally regulate these positions within the global political economy (van Heur 2012).

Stepping down from higher state scales, and into the rhythmic modes of everyday life, imagined smallness can also be found in the routines and vernacular concepts of everyday life, engendered by the often tight proximity of people and places. In such ways the dense intimacy of smaller cities comes to the fore. For example, being from a smaller city can produce a heightened sense of awareness for and of place amongst young people, as smallness mixes with a sense of 'living on the margins' as teenagers mark out territories in the city as part of their everyday lives (Waitt, Hewitt, and Kraly 2006). Or, everyday gay life in a smaller city can often be imagined as an inauthentic copy of life in 'gay mecca' metropolises (Myrdahl 2013). Such tightness of relations can also be observed amongst the upper strata of society. For instance, in Indian cities, local elites can reproduce and consolidate their position in smaller urban settings by assigning themselves important public positions or residential places in the city (K. L. Sharma 2003), allowing them a greater range of possibilities to influence the local administrative and political offices. As research from elsewhere has shown, industrial elites, whilst primarily concerning themselves with advancing policies for their local capital investments, also become involved in parochial politics in ways that go beyond quests for immediate returns (Adamson 2008), with 'social issues' spilling over into spheres of city life that affect them more directly (Buse 2008). However, in well connected port cities like Mangaluru, tensions between horizontally connected emerging mercantile elites and vertically rooted local traditional elites can keep commonality of elite interest unstable (Morillo 2008).

Entwining particular conceptions and representations, smaller cities are usually imagined as fulfilling niche functions by policy makers, politicians and planners, whilst bigger cities are usually imagined as agglomerations, opening up and closing off certain directions and actors from possible alternatives (van Heur 2012). Finding a city's niche is not easy and is often marked by failure. As such, smaller cities (like other cities) rely on the careful creation or maintenance of certain types of images about themselves. For instance, a small town in

America can become a 'temp-town', living almost exclusively off a biannual furniture market that has both produced local wealth and insecurity as bigger cities attempt to draw their business (Schlichtman 2006); smaller cities in Europe attempt re-branding as 'survival strategies' (Allingham 2009); smaller former industrial cities in the UK embark on (failed) endeavours of 'cultural regeneration' (Evans and Foord 2006); and, more successfully, a city like Weimar manages to keep itself looming large in the German public imagination through cultural activities<sup>30</sup> (Eckardt 2006).

Bringing the above discussion back to the conceptual language introduced at the start of the chapter, we can see how smaller cities are pushed and pulled into *niche* positions (from furniture markets to cultural centres), no matter how problematic it might be to do so; how smaller cities are often framed as *lacking* certain aspects of cities (from authentic gay culture to criteria for central funding); and how the *dense intimacy* of smaller cities (from young people hanging out to elites making money) can be keenly felt. In the next section of the chapter I analyse Mangaluru's smallness, historicising and contextualising certain aspects of the city. Though it has no pretence of completeness, it does nevertheless serve as an introductory overview to the city that will help frame discussions on property, morality and modernity in the remainder of the dissertation.

It is difficult to write an overview of a smaller city like Mangaluru, as smaller cities, at least in India, have an ambivalent relationship with existing historical or sociological accounts. First of all we know much less about them: fewer materials exist with which to construct pasts, there is little assumed knowledge to work from and researchers are less keen to research in them. Thankfully, Mangaluru has a large number of local scholars who have worked on various aspects of the region, though little about the city and surroundings are known outside. This necessitates a more detailed account of the city. In order to avoid disrupting the flow of the argument in this chapter, I included most of these details in the footnotes. Secondly, and related to the lack of knowledge and desire to know, it is often assumed (rightly or wrongly) that important things happen only in big cities – that big cities

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30 Academics also join in, producing representations which help ferment an image of decline or lack, especially in Europe or the USA. They explore how 'small German cities' 'cope with peripheralization' (Weck and Beißwenger 2013); how labour migration from small Russian cities is a 'survival strategy' (Florinskaia 2007); how small American cities are 'coming back from economic despair' (Mayer and Greenberg 2001); or offer suggestions how to 'save our shrinking cities' (Rybczynski and Linneman 1999).

are the seats of rulers, hotbeds of revolutionary struggle and cutting-edge culture. However, as will be seen below, Mangaluru has long been both simultaneously the centre and the periphery of world affairs. Finally, and linked to this, large cities are often seen as 'epochal' cities, through which we can understand historical eras; indeed “[e]xplaining the form, function and meaning of the [large] city at different times — variously described as modern or post-modern, industrial or post-industrial, Fordist or post-Fordist — has been the key aim of urban writing for over a hundred years” (Bell and Jayne 2009, 685). Accordingly, when writing about Mangaluru it is hard to shift the big city from the reader's imagination. For instance the contemporary Indian city might well be imagined through the slums of Mumbai (after all it draws inordinately large numbers of researchers, journalists and film-makers), whereas Mangaluru has only a few, small and contained areas of slum housing<sup>31</sup>. Mangaluru and its surroundings – including the joint districts of Dakshina Kannada and Udupi – are renowned primarily for three things – its ports, numerous and high quality education institutes and widespread moral policing.

### 1.3. Ports, Education and Moral Policing

#### 1.3.1. Ports

War, storm and flood have each played their raucous interludes and ruffled the otherwise calm current of commerce that has flown with our twin rivers from the sources of time itself.

*T.W Venn, Mangalore (1945, 128)*

Sea-links have long been at the core of the city's positioning in relation to the regimes within which Mangaluru has been enveloped. The Alupu dynasty, who ruled Tulu Nadu from the second to the fourteenth century – though subservient to the larger Kadambas, Chalukyas, Rashtrakutas, Hoysalas and Vijayanagara Rayas at various times – used Mangalore as a key port, and at a time made it their capital (Kamath 1980). Accordingly, in spite of its size,

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31 In Mangaluru and its surroundings 7,726 people reside in slums (1.55 percent of the total population). This can be compared with Bengaluru 712,801 (8.39 percent of total population) or Hubli-Dharwad 184,745 (19.57 percent of total population).

the city was known amongst traders in the Middle East and Europe. Mentioned as far back as in the works of Pliny and Ptolemy, the port saw the arrival of rich Arab and Jewish traders in the 12th century (Ghosh 1992), which gave the city a supposed population of 4000 Muslims by the time the 14th century traveller Ibn Battuta visited it (Lambourn 2008). The Persian Ambassador Abdul Razak arrived in 1488 as he travelled to meet with the rulers of the Vijayanagar Empire, and various European traders and colonisers arrived from the 1500s onwards variously trading and fighting (N. E. Rao 2006, 89–96) – including the Portuguese who struggled against the locally famous Rani Abbakka Chowta, who held the town of Ullal south of Mangalore, until eventually being defeated in the latter part sixteenth century. The city eventually came under control of Hyder Ali and later Tipu Sultan after the collapse of the local Keladi dynasty, going on to become one of the sites of struggle between the Kingdom of Mysore and the British.

Mangaluru was transferred to direct British rule as part of the Madras Presidency after the defeat of Tipu Sultan in 1799, unlike much of the rest of what is present day southern Karnataka which became the princely state of Mysore. The former rulers' actions were key in the new ruler's narratives as they justified colonial rule in South Canara, praising themselves that they had saved the region from a despot and brought about prosperity and peace (S. B. Rao 2003a). The reality was quite different, and British rule was marked at first by series of revolts – such as the early resistance of local feudal chiefs and later the 'Koot Rebellion' of 1830-1831 (see: S. B. Rao 2003b) – and then, once the region was secure, developmental neglect. For instance, although there were calls to improve the port and other infrastructures, the city and its surroundings witnessed very little industrialisation or development during colonial rule, as the British believed that due to the wet climate and fertile land revenue from agriculture was more profitable (D. Fernandes 2006). This under-investment was symptomatic of a general trend in Mangalore – especially during the first decades of British rule – as the colonial rulers kept expenditure on local development to a minimum (M. Rai 2003)<sup>32</sup>.

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32 Mangalore became a Municipality in 1866, and with the 1871 Local Funds Act the city was moved from police to municipal rule. The Madras District Act of 1884, led to the decentralisation of minor powers and limited autonomy for local municipalities like Mangalore. The Municipal Act of 1920 increased the proportion of elected officials and, interestingly, the Municipal Act 1930 introduced a system of reservation for city officials for the first time including places for Christians, Harijans (Dalits), Europeans, Anglo-Indians and women (Javeed 1988).

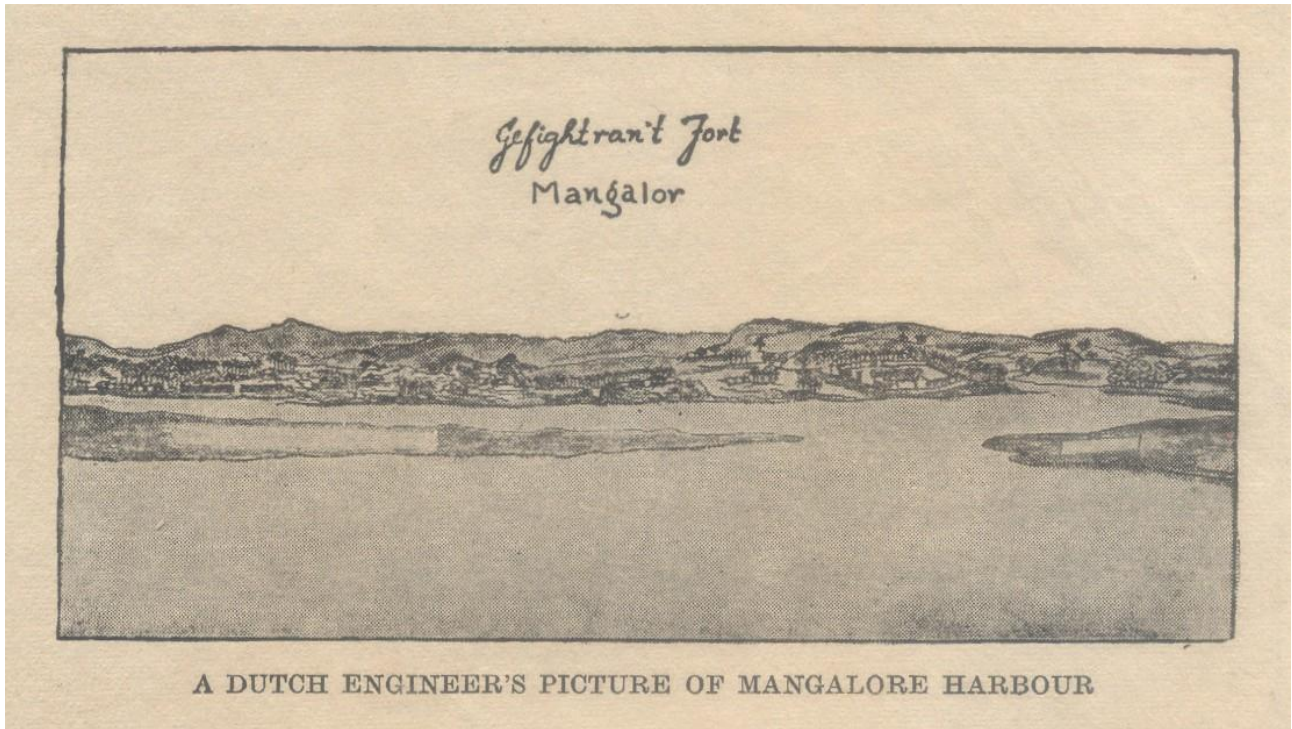


Figure 7: Source: *Mangalore: A Survey of the Place and Its People*

With independence came the desire for the sort of infrastructural development that was denied during colonialism, not least in terms of connectivity. It was construction of a road bridge across the Nethravathi river in 1965 for National Highway 17 and the opening of the hilltop airport for civilian use in 1951 with Jawaharlal Nehru as the first passenger, rather than colonial-era investment – bar railway expansion and certain ghat roads – that gives today's Mangaluru its impressive connectivity. Maybe the most important development however was New Mangalore Port's opening in 1974/75. It was hoped by the Central State that building a new port would help even out the unevenness of colonial trade and urbanisation, which was centred around a handful of coastal metropolises (see: Heitzman 2008a). Mangalore's selection to be the Ninth Major Port of India promised to “[usher] in a period of development to the hinterland of the port consisting mainly of Karnataka State and a portion of Kerala.” (Panditaradhya 1977, 29).

Inaugurated by Indira Gandhi in 1975 the port was tied up with industrialisation from its inception, opening itself to limited traffic a year early to bring in equipment for the state backed Mangalore Chemicals and Fertilisers (Erdman 1989). In 1994-95 Mangalore

Refinery and Petrochemicals Limited<sup>33</sup> (MRPL) was set up north of Mangalore and now a large proportion of the district's industrial activity is also concentrated close to the port on the road to Udupi – part of an envisioned corridor of industrial development stretching up the coast (Government of Karnataka 2009; Bhatta 2013). The establishment of the highly controversial MSEZ in 2005 - the largest of seven formally approved SEZs in Dakshina Kannada<sup>34</sup> - furthered industrialisation around the port<sup>35</sup> (see: Cook, Bhatta, and Dinker 2013; Mody 2014). Backed by a nexus of state and private interests at various scales, MSEZ's formation is in line with such paradigmatic reform-era developments in Indian cities that involve State actors more heavily than those operating at the city government level (cf. Kennedy 2013)<sup>36</sup>.

Mangaluru has then throughout its histories served as port for various empires, local kingdoms or colonial powers and is currently the only major port in Karnataka. Actors at higher state scales regard Mangaluru and its development potential primarily through its role as a port. The concomitant industrial development has resulted in angry and occasional ferocious local opposition due to environmental degradation, loss of livelihood from fishing and violent land acquisition (see: Adiga and Poornananda 2013). Mangaluru's ports probably also induced the regions' healthy banking sector, with the region known as the 'cradle of Indian banking' due to five major banks being founded in or close to the city (Syndicate, Canara, Corporation, Vijaya and Karnataka). Whereas the city's niche

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33 Mangalore Refinery and Petrochemicals Limited is a subsidiary of the Oil and Natural Gas Corporation (ONGC), and displaced around 930 households from 1850 acres of crop land when it was set up (see: Aranha et al. 1996). There are currently 22 large scale and medium scale industries and 18,009 small scale industries in the district, with Baden Aniline and Soda Factory (BASF), Kudremukh Iron and Steel Company the other major large industries, aside from the aforementioned MCF and MRPL.

34 Since the 2005 SEZ Act was passed there have been 588 SEZs formally approved, a further 49 approved in principal with 386 of these notified. In Karnataka 62 have been formally approved (seven of these in Dakshina Kannada), 1 has in principal approval, with 41 of these notified.

35 Acquisition took place in two phases. Phase One, of the now expanded venture, comprised of around 1800 acres; the land required for this was acquired by the Karnataka Industrial Areas Development Board. Phase Two was to comprise of 2035 acres in four villages, but after a strong campaign from locals, civil society organisations, farmers associations and religious heads of the region the state stopped the process of land acquisition and withdrew the notification.

36 MRPL-ONGC was originally planning its own SEZ, and the Karnataka Industrial Area Development Board (KIADB), whose function as a state body is to acquire land for industrial use, published a notification to acquire land for the venture. However, whilst the acquisition for MRPL-ONGC was underway, Mangalore Special Economic Zone Limited was formed at the invitation of Kanara Chamber of Commerce, with MRPL-ONGC joining this larger project. The share holding pattern is, as of 31st March 2010, ONGC 26 percent, KIADB 23 percent, Infrastructure Leasing and Financial Services Ltd 50 percent, ONGC Mangalore Petrochemicals Limited 0.96 and Kanara Chamber of Commerce and Industry 0.04.

positioning as a port has been driven by various state actors one of Mangaluru's other niches, that as an education hub, has largely been undertaken by private individuals, often acting through jati frames.

### 1.3.2. Education

How is Mangalore educated? The obvious answer is “Really fine.” The accolades and encomiums every visitor offers to its citizens speaks of the educated progress achieved by its people.

*M Rajiva, “How is Mangalore Educated?” (1958, 115)*

The city, or more precisely the joint districts of Dakshina Kannada and Udupi, are increasingly imagined as an 'education hub', with the districts gaining a reputation for education above what one would expect from a 'provincial' region. For instance commission agents (who work to bring in students to colleges) can bring potential students from as far as Gujarat on the promise of securing them a seat at 'a college in Mangalore' and, when I spoke to such students, a number reported that they knew just the name 'Mangalore' and not the college itself before arriving in the city. Moreover, many Non Resident Indians (NRIs) and foreign students from Asian countries enrol in prestigious institutions, such as Manipal University near Udupi, whilst the National Institute of Technology in Surathkal north of the city is another big draw for students from across the country.

The current mushrooming of private colleges follows in the footsteps of the long-standing business model of education in the district, which dovetailed with the relatively early move in Karnataka towards privately run colleges, even before general policies of liberalisation and the Supreme Court Ruling in 1993 that granted legitimacy to private higher education institutes (Agarwal 2009; Chakrabarti 2010). The pioneer for private colleges in the region was local doctor, banker and educationalist TMA Pai, from the Konkani speaking Gowda Saraswat Brahmin community, who set up the Kasturba Medical College in Manipal north of Mangalore in 1953 – the first fee-paying self-financing medical college in India. It has since grown into the prestigious Manipal University. The institution managed to avoid the then existing ban on capitation (admission) fees, by claiming minority status privileges granted



by the constitution, arguing that Konkani speakers were a linguistic minority. Though there were some suggestions that they were motivated by the lack of opportunities for Brahmin students to attend medical colleges (Kaul 1993) (at the time the district was part of the Madras Presidency and there was a strong anti-Brahmin movement especially around university seats), the linguistic community angle was, according to a former Vice Chancellor I spoke with, just to bypass government rules.

Nevertheless, Mangaluru's education landscape is dominated by jati/community/linguistic cleavages and there are now numerous colleges in the district with minority status tags, some of which, such as the AJ Institute of Medical Science, utilise the peculiar situation that the most widely spoken local language Tulu is a minority language in the mostly Kannada speaking State of Karnataka. These different colleges are not exclusively for the different groups however, and many of them are highly mixed, though there is higher representation of certain groups in certain colleges partly due to (changing) rules around reservations. This claim notwithstanding, more generally it can be said that jati organisations have been able to use private colleges to strengthen their economic, social and political base in Karnataka through private education institutes (Kaul 1993).

Aside from community considerations, the large amounts of money that can be made from education also drives expansion. As the Administrator of a recently set up Catholic medical college explained to me, their institute moved into education in steps from 1989 (the medical college opened in 1999), in part as a way to fund their hospital, with the higher fees charged to NRIs also subsidising other students. Indeed many of the new and successful colleges are not run by educationalists, but by business people – for example hoteliers or industrialists – who have expanded their interests. A former Vice Principle of a medical college, who now works advising newly establishing colleges, told me how vast amounts of 'black money' is helping further drive the profit seeking businesses, with institutions running at a loss in terms of 'white money', at least at first. Much of the 'black money' comes from students informally paying for seats, something enabled by agents who also help grow new colleges without strong reputations, by bringing in students (sometimes it is rumoured by the bus load<sup>37</sup>).

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37 The situation is highly lucrative for the agents. It is claimed that they take money from the students and promise to

Higher education in the district also builds on the long-standing tradition of 'modern' primary-level education, which stretches back to the colonial period. Many of the schools were set up by religious institutions, with the Jesuits, Brahma Samaj<sup>38</sup> and the Catholic Church all taking a lead in spreading their own vision of learning. However, it was probably the Basel Mission who had the biggest effect here. The Basel Evangelical Missionary Society first came to India in 1834 and, as part of their attempts to spread Protestantism, opened up schools soon after, taking advantage of the relaxing of attitudes by the British towards missionaries. The missionaries' impact was far reaching as they sought to provide not only schooling but also employment options for their converts. Furthermore, to fund their activities they industrialised the local tile production business (see: Chapter Four), introduced the fly shuttle into the weaving process and possibly invented the now world famous khaki coloured cloth<sup>39</sup> (Raghaviah 1990). Schooling was especially important, as they tried to find ways to preach their religion away from the influences of the largely Hindu society and established Catholicism they encountered (P. Shetty 2008). In doing so they started the process of replacing old education institutes, muddled existing gender and jati hierarchies by admitting all students (Brahmin parents were keen for their children to acquire English language skills) and helped to ferment – along with their printing press (1849), book shop (1855), and first Kannada newspaper (1857) – a new class of educated literate people who wrote, discussed and debated publicly (*ibid*).

Although Mangaluru's education institutes draw on the district's reputation for education, this sits awkwardly alongside one of the region's offer reasons for renown. As the head of a college explains,

The district has been a hub of education from the beginning. But recent events suggest we are not educated. The pub attack, the homestay attack, what happened just last week at Pumpwell junction [attack on a Muslim man giving a lift to his female Hindu colleague]... Last year I got a lot of phone calls from parents, asking 'is my daughter safe?' 'Can I come?

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pay the right person to make sure that their application is accepted. If it is, then the agent has been seen to do good work, whether or not they had any influence over the decision or not.

38 A Hindu reformist monotheistic society.

39 It is locally asserted that the master weaver John Haller created the colour from the sap of the bark of the semecarpus tree, and the dye was quickly taken up by the local police. Later Lord Roberts of Kandahar was taken by the colour upon visiting Mangalore and recommended it for the British forces. The other possible origin is Sir Henry Lumsden who dyed his pyjamas with plant extract when he commanded a British regiment in Punjab in 1846.

Is it safe?’

These events he refers to – commonly known as moral policing – loom large in the public imagination, and are the third and final aspect of Mangaluru discussed here.

### 1.3.3. Moral Policing

At that time I heard loud noises downstairs. The girls were screaming in confusion. I came outside. All of them were hitting the girls. By the time I started climbing downstairs, around 5 or 6 people were behind me. I ran upstairs and closed the door behind me. They broke open the door, pulled me out, stamped me, pulled off my tee shirt and gave me a good beating.

*Birthday party attendee, quoted in the Fact Finding Report produced by the Forum Against Atrocities on Women (2012, 2)*

The region is locally and nationally well known for its high number of incidents of 'moral policing' – the vernacular name given to the practices of vigilante groups who attempt, often with violence, to ethically order the city's inhabitants based on a conservative Hindu moral order. In Manglauru such groups do so regularly, and often with the implicit support of police, politicians and many locals. Acts include: the famous 'pub attack' where a group of women who had met in a city centre pub were beaten and chased into the street; an attack on a Muslim boy talking to a Hindu girl at a juice bar; the stoning of a bus full of students from different religions who were going on a trip together; harassment of Muslim café-owners; enforcing parties' advertised finishing times; and, in an incident that even made it to a Pakistani news channel, the stripping naked of a Muslim man who was then tied to a post in the street and whipped for allegedly trying to seduce his female Hindu workmate<sup>40</sup>.

The most infamous case was the so called 'Homestay Attack' in 2012. Unmarried young men and women were holding a joint birthday party at the Morning Mist homestay at the edge of the city. One version of the event goes that the locals were upset at the noise from

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40 Analysis of newspapers reveals that from 1/8/08 to 15/02/09 there were 45 instances (PULCK, 2009). Videos of the attacks are shared on social media and posted online. For example: 'Pub Attack': <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IEbD2aXs-XU> accessed 18/08/2014; Man tied to a pole and beaten: <http://www.ndtv.com/india-news/man-stripped-and-beaten-by-moral-police-in-mangalore-1210717> accessed 15/09/15; and 'Home Stay Attack': <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ngCaju1TCtc> accessed 18/08/2014.

the party. They contacted the police, and the police did nothing, so someone contacted the Hindu Jagarana Vedike (HJV). The HJV agreed to intervene because it was rumoured that they were expecting to find Muslim boys with Hindu girls at a 'rave party' (as it turns out everyone was Hindu). The HJV stormed the party and beat, groped and partially stripped those present. Once the actual police arrived, along with a local politician, the HJV attackers spoke freely with them both (as they seemed to know one another), with the police eventually taking away the youngsters who had been partying. A journalist was present with a video camera during the attack and the striking images of 'scantly clad' women and shirtless men being beaten whilst trying to hide their faces, were repeatedly looped on 24 hour news sites in the following days. The morality of Mangaloreans – both the attackers and the attacked – became a nationwide discussion point.

The attackers were eventually arrested and jailed, and locals (including many students) held a series of protests against the events in the following weeks. One of those involved in the protests, the Forum Against Atrocities on Women, received a typed letter in English through the post,

My Dear So Called Women Protector,

...You have a lot of concern to women. You have full confidence your boys and girls in Morning Mist enjoying Bday party with least or no dress, of course per... [you] they have the right to do whatever they want.

Bloody because of you people these things happen and you provoke Sangh Parivar [family of Hindu nationalist groups] people and boys with hot blood will sure attack and trash. You people too deserve that sooner or later. Don't think you have huge support. This is Mangalore dear madams remember. We will not hide or hesitate to act. Please stop your ugly comments and activities inside four walls. Otherwise you too get same treatment however without media. This is warning to each one of you and think about this. You will better stop all your anti hindu activity before you realize the taste of slap or something else which will be done in well planned manner.

FROM SANGH PARIVAR<sup>41</sup>

Such acts of moral or cultural policing are of course not unique to India nor Mangaluru, and relate to the nationwide rise of Hindutva groups (see: Hansen 1999), but are given their local intensity by material changes in the district and the coordinated political efforts of the Hindu

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41 Of course there is no way of knowing exactly who sent this.

right. Changes in land ownership and employment patterns have shaken up jati relations across Dakshina Kannada. As detailed in the following chapter, colonial feudal capitalist land arrangements were finally removed with the land reforms of the 1970s. This freed the 'backward castes' from outright dependency on 'upper-caste' landlords, further de-structuring long standing jati relations that were being challenged by concurrent industrialisation and migration to the Gulf during this period. As Assadi argues (1999; 2002), this provided the material conditions for communal tensions between the poorer jatis in the region to arise, as groups now found themselves in competition with one another for resources (see also: PUCL-K 2009). Into this changing landscape, there has been a concerted effort on the part of Hindutva groups to move into Karnataka, especially its coastal belt, as they seek to expand their support from their traditional heartland in central and north India. Tolpady's (2003) research into the strategies of Hindutva groups in Dakshina Kannada in the mid and late nineties reveals the efforts of such groups to enter into education, including by establishing schools, attempts to shift the ideological tone of the local media as well as their joining the cooperative sector and environmental movements (p. 178-179). To this we can add their involvement in popular cultural programmes and charitable giving, along of course with the moral ordering of public places<sup>42</sup>.

Mangaluru's positioning as a port with concomitant industrial activity, the region's continued renown for education, and the high number of high profile incidents of moral policing are felt in different ways in the everyday of Mangalureans. In the following section, with these three aspects of Mangaluru in mind, I explore the lives of four members of one household.

## **1.4. A Small Yet Expectant Household**

### **1.4.1. Land**

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42 The strategy has been, in part, successful with the political and moderate manifestation of Sangh parivar, the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP), coming to power in Karnataka in 2008; the BJP's first state victory in south India. They subsequently lost control in 2013 after numerous scandals and infighting. However the BJP soon came into power at the national level in the 2014 elections.

Bavitha is happy with the second storey on her family home, but it was not what she originally wanted. She and her family planned to join together with their relatives-cum-neighbours to sell their land to a developer, construct a highrise, and live on a floor each. But they could not agree with one another about the details, and fell out accusing one another of being greedy. The families remain in two rows of four houses – each now with a new storey – with the houses divided down the middle by a narrow road, encroachment onto which is often a source of disagreement between the two sides. “It’s like India and Pakistan,” Bavitha likes to say, “we’re India, they’re Pakistan!” Bavitha’s storey is now rented out to a professional couple. As for the rest of the household, her daughter, who her family call by the pet name Tiny due to her slender frame, lives in a small room with two ‘paying guest’ lodgers, Roicy and Jaya, whilst her husband, Ganesh, spends little time at home, working long hours in his nearby tailoring business.

In spite of the ongoing hostilities between ‘India’ and ‘Pakistan’, the two sides come together for the annual *bhuta kola* (spirit worship) in honour of the bhutas (spirits) who live on their land. There are five bhutas jointly worshipped on Bavitha’s, Tiny’s and their relatives’ land. Bhutas or *daivas*<sup>43</sup> are divine beings including cultural heroes, animal spirits, ghosts or anthropomorphic deities worshipped all over Tulu Nadu. They might reside and be worshipped in a number of places including trees, stones and shrines, and they are usually tied to a geographic area such as the *magane* (domain), *seeme* (region), village, *guttu* (manor) or family (Gowda 2005). The bhutas who reside on Bavitha’s land are worshipped in a shrine at the centre of the eight houses. During the annual worship (*kola* or *nema*), when mediums possess the bhutas, the bickering families in the eight houses come together for the extensive arrangements as well as the worship itself. Nema/kola vary, but they are usually loud affairs that run through the night during which the medium is made up to look like the bhuta. Kolas usually contain such elements as the installation of ritual treasures, singing of *paddanas* (oral narratives), a dance with a burning torch, the invocation of the bhuta, the tying of a halo like structure to the head of the medium, the wielding of a ritual sword, the wearing of a bhuta mask and offering of sacrificial food, which in the case of two

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43 Whilst *daiva* and *bhuta* are often used interchangeably, the use of the term *daiva* can imply a spirit that is higher placed. Such hierarchical ordering is a fairly recent development, with *daivas* sometimes referred to as *Rajan-Daivas* and honoured with gold plated ornaments (Gowda 2005, 20). For more on *bhuta* worship see (Brückner 2009; Carrin and Tambs-Lyche 2003; Claus 1984; Gowda 2005; Ishii 2013; V. B. A. Rai 1996; S. B. Rao 2010).

of the bhutas on Bavitha's land was a live cock.

The year I attended Bavitha, Roicy, Jaya and Tiny were all there as well, whilst Ganesh, who was tired from work, flitted between sleep and the celebration. I was surprised he could sleep because the worship, which began in the early evening and ran until eight in the morning, was so loud. I mentioned this to Bavitha, to which she told me, "It's not his celebration is it? This land is mine and Tiny's. He goes to his mother's side to celebrate." Bavitha was referring to the region's matrilineal kinship system – *aliyasantana* (nephew-line), the system followed by most non-Brahmin Tulu speaking jatis in Tulu Nadu (e.g. Billava, Bunt, Mogaveera, Jain and so on). Aliyasantana is practised alongside the Dravidian kinship system, which is widely prevalent in south India and within which it is permitted to marry a cross-cousin but not a parallel cousin<sup>44</sup>. The aliyasantana matrilineal practice was later explained to me by Bavitha through the myth that tells how the local king *Bhutala Pandya* claimed the throne through his mother's line. Different versions of the myth circulate, but Bavitha's version contained most of the main elements. She told me that the king prior to Bhutala Pandya was about to send out an important cargo fleet out to sea when the lord of demons, Kundodara, asked for his son as a sacrifice in exchange for protection. The king's wife refused, but the king's sister offered her son – Jaya-Pandya – in his stead. Impressed with the offer, the demon spared Jaya-Pandya's life, and demanded that the king should disinherit all his sons and place Jaya-Pandya, whom the demon renamed as Bhutala Pandya, on the throne instead. From then on the myth goes that Bhutala Pandya declared that property should be passed on as per the aliyasantana system, through the nephew, as set out by the demon lord.

As Ishii (2014) explains, it was not a demon but colonial British judges who gave aliyasantana a firmer legal footing. A version of the Bhutala Pandya legend along with considerable information about the workings of the aliyasantana system was laid out in a pamphlet used by British courts from the middle of the 19<sup>th</sup> century onwards and, through a series of rulings, the colonial judges codified a particular interpretation of aliyasantana into

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44 In the Dravidian system for example, one can marry one's mother's brother's children or one's father's sister's children, but not one's mother's sister's children or one's father's brother's children, as they are considered siblings. Many would consider the 'perfect' marriage between cross-cousins – the closest kin who is considered 'marriageable' (see: Busby 1997) – as this keeps property within the family. Of course in reality many different marriage arrangements take place, including increasing numbers of 'love marriages'.

a type of modern family law, with the principles of keeping the property in the female line, undivided and centred around a joint family at its core. With independence came new laws<sup>45</sup> that attempted to allow individual family members to make claims for the partition of joint family property. However, the joint family remains strong, not only upheld by colonial legal judgements, but also symbolically through bhuta kola which centres around joint family land passed down through the female side.



*Figure 8: A bhuta prepares. Source: Author*

#### 1.4.2. Work and Leisure

At the particular bhota kola I attended, *Jaya*, one of the two paying guests, was looking a little bit bored. From Bengaluru (the State capital) and a Brahmin, she does not worship bhutas, but came to watch because it was too loud to hear the television back in the house.

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<sup>45</sup> The Madras Aliyasantana Act No IX of 1949 and later the Madras Aliyasantana (Mysore Amendment) Act of 1961.



This might be her final chance to attend such a spirit worship as she had decided to leave the city, and was currently working her final months at a small IT firm just outside Mangaluru's city limits. She has been in the city for three years of study and thought about staying longer, but was not impressed with the job prospects on offer. Accordingly, she was soon to leave back to Bengaluru for a much better paid job at a start-up company. Her decision was not unusual, as Mangaluru, in spite of its numerous colleges, lacks the IT sector employment opportunities of the metropolitan cities.

This lack is recognised by those in the industry. For instance the *KIG Mangalore 2020* report (2013) is rather mixed in its assessment of the links between education and IT businesses. It presents the city and its surroundings as being on the cusp of greatness, missing just a few ingredients to realise its education-induced potential. The report, written in English, states,

Mangalore is one of the upcoming & fast developing emerging cities in Karnataka. While a significant pool of IT/ITES eligible engineers [are] coming out from this region every year, due to lack of infrastructure & existence of big IT firms, this region contributes meagre <1% of the total export revenue from Karnataka. With the current pool of available talent (approximately 5000-6000 IT/ITES eligible every year), this revenue can be significantly increased, to 5% of the Karnataka revenue by 2020...

...Mangalore is also a vibrant city with high literacy & focus on education... Due to lack of opportunities... [a] talent drain...[has been] happening for the last 10-15 years and... a good no [number] of percentage of these moved talent would want to come back and set up shop... if they are provided with basic infrastructure & required government support. (p.5)<sup>46</sup>

Jaya attended one of the recently opened colleges where she studied software engineering. I always got the impression that she did not enjoy her studies much, and once told her so. She told me in turn that, "every Indian parent wants their child to be either a doctor or an engineer, but at least it is still one more choice than the Gandhis get!" Now that her studies are behind her and she has a little more money, she spends a lot time with her friends at

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46 The report was signed by the local head of Infosys and the chairman of the Kanara Chamber of Commerce and Industries and produced by the Karnataka Information Communication Technology Group. In their own words, "The Karnataka ICT Group (KIG) was constituted to examine the global changes being driven by a knowledge economy and to realign Karnataka's ICT policies to meet the challenges of the future and sustain its growth. The KIG comprises stakeholders who have witnessed the transformation of Karnataka from a 'Pensioner's Paradise' to the 'Technology/Outsourcing Capital of the World' (p. 5).

what was, at the time of research, the city's largest shopping mall, *City Centre*. Like most people her age, she bought very little from the four floors of shops – which bar one or two exceptions were often empty and expensive – and usually headed straight for the food court and supermarket on the top floor. The shopping centre always has a fair share of students from the nearby Jesuit St. Aloysius College, skipping class to roam in groups.

Jaya also started, albeit tentatively, to sample some of the city's bars and pubs. She was a little worried about the moral policemen but, as an outsider, was not so worried about her reputation as the local girls often are. In Mangaluru, like in many smaller places, gossip spreads quickly. As a young man who lived just round the corner from Jaya told me, “on Saturdays I've seen them come out of [the pub], carried between two guys, [having] taken so many drinks that they'll go home and do anything with them. Then I'll see the same girls the next day with their parents going to the temple!” Inside the pubs, the BPO and IT workers nag the barmen for closing 'early' in comparison to places in Bengaluru, which stay open much later. The bar owners close on time however, as they do not only fear fines from the local authorities, but also visits from moral policemen who have been known enforce closing times through threats.

There is no closing time enforced for the bhoota kola however, and as it reaches one of its climaxes in the early hours of the morning – during which two of the bhutas run bare foot across hot embers – Roicy, the other paying guest in the house looks a little stressed. A Catholic and so also not usually an attendee of bhuta kola, Roicy comes from a village about an hour's bus ride from the city, and is coming to the end of her studies. She is stressed, not only because of her exams but also because of her future. She hopes to secure a job as a chemical engineer at MRPL, but she knows this will require more studying as applicants are required to sit a company-set exam.

She does not want to leave the city. If she can secure work locally she will, but is also prepared that she might have to move elsewhere in India or even abroad. Many in her family already have left the country, including her father whom for most of Roicy's life has lived and worked in Dubai. This is quite unexceptional as Mangalureans can be found all over the world. Similar to Keralites, Mangalureans of various jatis and classes have been working in

different parts of the Gulf (especially Dubai, Muscat, Iraq, Saudi Arabia and recently Israel) for decades, in both skilled and unskilled work (on Gulf migration see: Osella and Osella 2000a; 2009; 2011; Vora 2013). Within India meanwhile, Mumbai has traditionally been the locally favoured destination for labour migration, and the city still has a strong Mangalorean (or rather Tulu) community, much more so than Bengaluru or Chennai/Madras, the current and erstwhile state capitals. Madras was, until Mangalore and the wider region began to start its own higher education institutes, the choice for university or college studies. Meanwhile Bengaluru has only really become an important destination for outmigration in the last decades, with the rise of the city as an ITES and BPO hub.



*Figure 9: Two bhutas. Source: Author.*

### 1.4.3. Family

The afternoon after the bhuta kola I visited Bavitha to check the names and spellings of the bhootas against photos I took the night before. In the midst of the excitement and tiredness

I thought I had confused two of the spirits. I was still bleary-eyed, but Bavitha did not seem tired at all, in the midst of giving after-school tuition to eight children, helped by her 18 year old daughter Tiny. The children come to the family home each evening and cram themselves onto the verandah and into her living room as she or Tiny help them with their school homework. Aged between five and ten, some of the children come from nearby schools and others from the surrounding streets. Whilst some of the children's parents were relatively wealthy, others had much more limited income, yet nevertheless chose to spend on tuition. One family had particularly acute money problems. They had moved to the edge of the city from northern Karnataka with the father working as a fruit vendor and the mother a domestic helper in the city. I asked once why they chose to spend on tuition, "The government schools are no good. So we send them here as well. Our children can do better at exams and get a better job," replied the father. "I didn't go to tuition and I turned out okay," I said. "Yes," he replied, "but I didn't go to school<sup>47</sup>."

Bavitha is modest and reflexive about her role as an educator. She often mentioned that for some parents, especially if they both work and lived in a nuclear family, she was more of a childminder than a tutor. There is a long but slow moving trend in the city towards nuclear families in which both parents work (see: Abhishankar 1973), which in part is driven by the increasing diversity of employment opportunities. There are new jobs for working class women in the growing service sector or in new retail and fast-food outlets and the large number of colleges and other education businesses, along with growth in the IT and ITES sectors, provides employment for those women with college education. However it is easy to overstate this trend. Often relatives live close by, or between two places – i.e. the mother/grandmother might spend weekdays living with and helping her children by looking after the grandchildren. Moreover, many working class working women roll *beedis* [leaf cigarettes] (see: Kushe 1977), which they can do from home and whilst keeping watch over the children<sup>48</sup>.

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47 To find parents with no schooling would have been quite unlikely amongst those born in Mangalore, as evidenced by the high literacy rate. Dakshina Kannada district has the highest literacy rate in Karnataka (88.62 percent); 93.31 percent amongst men, 84.04 percent amongst women. With the literacy rate in urban and rural areas 92.20 and 85.34 percent respectively, significantly more than the Karnataka (75.6 percent) and India (74.04 percent) levels (Government of India 2011).

48 In general there is a tendency for gender parity in Dakshina Kannada, especially its urban areas such as Mangaluru,

That evening, after the tuition had finished, Tiny climbed up the stairs at the side of the house carrying some of her own text books. She did not open them however, but furiously messaged away on her phone, occasionally staring across at the strip of land that divided the two warring factions of the extended family and occasionally politely answering my questions. She might go to college, as her parents wanted, but she knows that she will not get the grades to do so. Maybe, if her dad decides the expense is worth it, they might pay for her to get a technical training in something. Maybe. She shrugged her shoulders, I left her, and went back to speak with her mum. Bavitha fretted over Tiny's lack of academic prowess, something that she thought was only accentuated by the success of the two paying guests with whom she shared a room. "She just spends all day on her phone," she complained, "she doesn't even speak to me!"

## 1.5. Sizing the City

Sometimes in my moments of day dreaming I anthropomorphised the city, wondering if Mangaluru's smallness engendered actions that befitted a much bigger city – a sort of over compensation for its size or desire to punch above its weight. For instance, as mentioned in the Introduction, there is a proposal to build a city changing six-lane riverside ring road called the Mangalore Corniche, which apes Mumbai's famous Marine Drive (see: Chapter Four). Then there is the desire to build more and more shopping malls which, though I could get no hard data, seemed to only be used for their supermarkets, food courts and cinemas, with many of the expensive shops sitting empty. *City Centre*, built by local developers, was the fourth mall to be built in the city in 2010, but more impressively it was the fifth largest in India

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when compared to other parts of the State and country (though there are some important caveats). A review produced by Noronha et al (2011) based on the 2011 census data and contextualised through qualitative research is informative in this regard. In terms of pure numbers of women, the district has had a consistently higher ratio of women to men over the last 120 years – there are currently 1018 women for every 1000 men – indicating a higher survival rate of women. This is in contrast to Karnataka where there are 968 and in India where there are 940 women for every 1000 men. However, there is an increasing tendency for lower numbers of females aged 0-6 in Dakshina Kannada, indicating sex-selective abortion (or possibly foeticide). Each year, of the around 31,000 children registered in the district (between 2005-2010), there are somewhere between 950-1000 less females registered than males (ibid p.17). The district also has high levels of local female political representation. The zilla panchayat (District Council) currently has 18 women to 17 men, whilst Mangaluru taluk panchayat (Area Council) has 20 women representatives to 17 men. Though women have 33 percent of seats reserved through the 73<sup>rd</sup> constitutional amendment, it nevertheless indicates that women are competing for, and winning, seats outside the reserved category.

at the time. It has since been superseded by *Forum Fiza* in 2014 (ninth largest in India) and will soon be dwarfed by *Lotus Mall* which is scheduled to open in 2015 and will be the fourth largest in India. There are also plans underfoot to build an 18-hole golf course on the peninsular that forms Mangaluru's natural harbour, which will be the city's second golf course if completed<sup>49</sup>. When I think through such acts – acts which draw on the desire for a city with *flow, accelerated progress and friction free consumption* – I see a small city with a pining for largeness.

Such daydreaming is of course to collapse the multiple types of acts working at different scales and with different intentions into one anthropomorphic entity, but such thinking also points towards how the city's smallness intersects with its expectancy. Pushed into a niche function as a port with surrounding heavy industry by actors at higher spatial scales, local elites imagine a more diverse city with money to be made from colleges and shopping malls which, even if not full yet, will fill up in the future. Elites take advantage of the dense intimacy of the city – often they dine at the same exclusive clubs as politicians and are invited as VIPs to the same public events – and the city's intimate smallness is also felt in acts of moral policing, with young couples worried to be seen together in public and bars closing strictly on time. Such early closings, the young 'techie' crowd complain, reveal Mangaluru's lack when compared with party metropolises like Bengaluru, cities which also offer more varied job choices to the software engineers and other graduates from Mangaluru's colleges.

If Indira Gandhi flew into Mangaluru today she might see something more like what she considered to be a city – skyscrapers, industry, pollution – but when she got down on the ground she would realise that this city, whilst straining at the confines of its smallness, is still framed by its niche function, still is considered lacking certain urban attributes and still wound within densely intimate relations. If she stayed long enough, she would also find smallness and expectancy woven into the land and housing markets. It is to this that I turn in the next chapter.

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49 The golf course is a public-private-partnership between Karnataka State Tourism Department and a private investor (who has already constructed a wall for the resort despite not having clearance needed for a building within the Coastal Regulation Zone much to the dismay of locals who live and fish on the peninsular).



*Figure 10: The extended family watches on. Source: Author*

## 2. CONDUCTING THE CITY

### *Property, Links and Routine amongst Housing and Land Brokers*

In Mangaluru, there is a broker on every street. These intermediaries are the ambiguous skilled figures who know how the city works, who have contacts across town and can mediate between different worlds. They might not be full time brokers, indeed they might only complete a handful of deals in their lifetime, but they utilise their connection to one person (who has land to sell, or housing to rent) and their connection to another person (who wants to buy land, or rent housing) and bring the two together, making commission on any deal that might come about thereafter. Distinct from real estate developers, land aggregators, estate agents and the various other people who populate land and housing transactions, brokers share many similarities with the ubiquitous intermediaries that appear in all walks of Indian life whenever a profit can be made for getting something done.

Mr. Pai, one broker whose life will be explored in depth below, was keen on telling me that broker work is 'link-work' – making, breaking and stimulating links with various parties. As I spent time with Mr. Pai and other brokers, I came to realise that links function as a type of property themselves: they have monetary value, could be 'owned' and are in part 'transferable' when brokers collaborate on deals. These links have distinct, sometimes asynchronous rhythmic modes, with the brokers stretched by the different temporalities of fussy buyers, the vast numbers of fellow brokers vying for work, the contours of their own lives and the need to maintain good relations within a pool of potential sellers/landlords.

Ongoing urbanisation, in timing and spacing the rhythmic modes of the city, is increasing the number of links and the turnover of property deals, but it is also complicating the character of these links, blurring old and establishing new categories of class, jati (caste), religious community and age. The immense value of links and ease in which people can become brokers, pushes existing brokers to continually seek out new deals and close current deals as quickly as possible, invigorating the land and housing market and hastening the commodification of property relations.



This chapter builds on the rhythmic theoretical apparatus of the Introduction along with city smallness discussed in Chapter One, by advancing the idea, with apologies to Lipsky<sup>50</sup> (1980), that we can think of brokers as *street level conductors*. That is brokers conduct the housing and land markets similar, in some ways, to how a musical conductor conducts an orchestra (or even how an electrical conductor conducts electricity). One of the fundamental jobs of a conductor is to allow synchronicity between different parts of the orchestra – their gestures allow musicians who cannot hear each other play in time. As we will see below, in a similar fashion brokers must synchronise buyers/sellers with landlords/tenants. Moreover, whilst conductors do not write or compose the music/city, they do give it their own interpretation – in the brokers' case they interpret jati, class, gender, religious community and age specificities into the cityscape. Crucially, conductors, both of the musical and electrical kind, are the link between different parts of the whole. We might also want to think about how wires conduct electricity through a building, providing the circuit which allows lights, washing machines and televisions to work within the routines of our everyday lives. As such, the conductors form part of the rhythmic architecture of the house – in a similar way, brokers can be said to be part of the 'temporal architecture' ( S. Sharma 2014) of the city, in that their labour forms part of the apparatus of the land and housing market, allowing, at times, for the market to flow. Unlike the conductors of orchestras, street level conductors like brokers are not directing the changes in land and housing from above, but rather bringing synchronicity, their own interpretations and forming part of the rhythmic architecture from the ground.

## 2.1. Intermediaries in the City

Changes in housing, land and real estate relations are fundamentally altering the times and spaces of Indian cities. Hann (1998), writing about wider global trends, has suggested that with the economic liberalisation of erstwhile closed economies there is a temporal re-ordering of property relations. In such societies the 'disembedding' of property relations with the spread of capital results in the increase of shorter-term property arrangements, whilst

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50 Lipsky's seminal study into street level bureaucrats detailed the discretionary power of front line workers when interpreting legislation.

not completely overwriting pre-existing longer-term structures. Such a process can be evidenced in India, and the transactions that are constitutive of these changes are highly peopled, mediated by a range of different actors operating at different scales and stages of transaction.

Ongoing economic liberalisation is opening up new state spaces and territories, with India's political elites mobilising state institutions to push for and mould the contours of economic governance (Kennedy 2013). This enables real estate developers, empowered by the inflow of foreign capital, to lobby various scales of the state for regulatory changes, and reshape cities through developments that often undercut city's master plans and push their own ideal-type representations of desirable 'fluid' urban futures (Rouanet and Halbert 2015). However, there are 'conflicts and commensurations' between these foreign financiers and Indian developers (Searle 2014) and the 'flow' of capital must be directed, with real estate developers (along with the planners, advertisers and architects who work with them) creating value and demand by forging links between new highrise projects and the imagined and existing 'professional' buyer (Searle 2013). Accordingly, rather than seeing such changes in property relations as inevitable, we should rather examine property in terms of "how this concept works, who uses it, for what purposes, and with what effects" (Verdery and Humphrey 2004, 2).

Indeed, various state actors at different scales act as enablers for the ongoing commodification of urban land (Shatkin 2014). For instance, the close contacts between elite business leaders and politicians paves the way for the formation of local state-sponsored, but largely autonomous, coalitions that push for certain types of urban development (Sami 2013a). The state also assists capitalists who struggle to enter into rural land markets due to the large number of smallholding peasants, by expropriating land via extra-economic methods (Levien 2011). Meanwhile local brokers, land-mapping NGOs and the Board of Revenue in cities like Karachi, compete and collaborate with one another as state bodies attempt to formalise control over erstwhile agrarian-pastoral land at the urban periphery (Anwar 2013).

Drawing on some of these studies and her own research into land deals in and around

India's largest cities, Sud (2014) suggests a topography of the various 'men in the middle' including: *land aggregators* – who aggregate smaller plots into larger areas, the biggest players in the brokerage chain; *land brokers* – similar to aggregators, but working on a smaller scale; *local brokers* – the 'anchors' dealing with other buyers and sellers, paid on a deal-by-deal basis; *musclemen* – who (literally) push through a deal; *consultants* – employed by the aggregator/buyer to offer advice on legal, regulatory or other state matters; *party representatives* – useful politicians who can help get matters cleared; *government representatives* – those in designated roles that concern land; and *touts* – “officious hangers-ons” that sit outside those offices to which they claim to have privileged access<sup>51</sup>.

These various middlemen do not only have to negotiate India's economically 'liberal' landscape however, but also a multitude of rhythmic modes. As argued in the Introduction, urbanisation is an expanding, concentrating and differentiating process (Brenner and Schmid 2015) that times and spaces the city by opening up spaces and then setting the timing within them (and opening up times and setting the spaces). Although it can be broadly said that the city expands outwards, eating up farmland for housing and industry, that there is a concentration of residential and commercial activity in the crowded city centre and that jati, class, community, age and gendered norms (such as clustering, or the joint family) are differentiated through urbanisation, it would be too simplistic and deterministic to stop the analysis here. Contemporary urbanisation sets the beat to which this process unfolds – the timing of the space and spacing of the time – but it is driven a future-celebrating social imaginary and realised by inhabitants' actions. In regards to housing and land, brokers play a crucial role – they are the *street level conductors* of the city, synchronising different groups and individuals, interpreting concepts and linking disparate actors. I will return to this more directly in the concluding section.

Recall Sud's classification of mediators. In Mangaluru there are some small differences. Firstly, there has not been much violent pressure to sell land, and musclemen, as far as I am aware, have only been consistently used to attack agriculturalists during the creation of MSEZ (Cook, Bhatta, and Dinker 2013). This is probably due to the high financial incentives

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51 If we were to extend the above classification to also include the 'men in the middle' involved not only in land, but also real estate and housing, then we also need to add those involved in selling and the creation of value, mentioned above in relation to Searle's research (2013).

offered to landowners through partnerships with developers, and thus the continued availability of land within the city. Secondly, in Mangaluru there is not a noticeable distinction between what Sud terms 'land aggregators' and 'land brokers', probably because of the smaller geographical scale of the land deals. Thirdly, 'local' also takes on a different meaning in a smaller city, as most of the real estate developers are local themselves. Many are from the city, a few are from Bengaluru and a small but growing number are from further afield. The strong presence of local developers is probably due to the city's hilly terrain, which limits the size of available plots within the city (thus limiting profit), the trust between local sellers and developers (a result of smaller city dense intimacy) and the long established links between local land brokers and developers (again due to smaller city size).

In this chapter, I analyse in depth those that Sud would term *local brokers*, but I call just *brokers*<sup>52</sup>. It is my contention that these ambiguous, skilled, relation-altering individuals offer a unique angle for understanding property relations. There are of course many different types of 'men in the middle' in Mangaluru, but what makes brokers interesting, aside from their high numbers, is the difficulty in clearly defining their place in the city: they slip in and out of brokerage work, are variously 'formal' and 'informal' in their practices and stand out against a backdrop of growing 'professionalisation' in the land and housing markets. Intermediaries are not only active around flash new developments (Searle 2013; Searle 2014), in the ongoing financialisation of real estate markets (Rouanet and Halbert 2015) or at the edge of SEZs (Levien 2011), but are also active in the unglamorous, often ignored small-scale land and housing deals that take place every day in smaller cities like Mangaluru.

I want to make a further distinction here between what I will term agents and brokers. Agents work exclusively for a single developer and have quite different practices than the brokers who are the focus of this chapter. Agents work from offices, have air-conditioned sparkling white four wheel drives with which to transport clients, do not need to search to find property, and sell independent houses or flats within newly built properties. Because they are often selling property that has yet to be built, their work involves transporting clients to building

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52 It should be noted, that these brokers are, in fact, referred to by different names, and in Mangaluru probably most often by the English word agent, though broker is also used. As the term agent can also refer to those individuals who work for one developer in the exclusive selling of that developer's properties, I will use broker for clarity.

sites and then selling with the aid of brochures or videos. They are not only selling the property, but also the developer, as people must trust that the construction will be completed (and within a certain time frame). These agents dress in a way that adheres to 'global' conceptions of 'smart' and, because they work a lot with those from outside the city, they usually speak fluent English.

The brokers, whose work will be analysed below, have quite different profiles and practices. For the most part, when it comes to property they are not mediating the sale of new builds, or if the property is newly built, then it is usually small scale – e.g. an extra floor on a house, or a single independent house. Mostly they work with selling or renting property that has had previous owners and nearly always for property that has not been independently advertised elsewhere (i.e. direct from the seller). Whilst some can make large amounts of money through brokerage, their job is far from prestigious and people often loudly complained about brokers and their 'unscrupulous' practices. As such, these housing and land brokers share many similarities with a wide range of other intermediaries encountered in everyday life in India. Brokers that can, for example, arrange driving licences at the Regional Transport Office, get access to local politicians, or help secure a seat in a college (see: Chapter One). These figures have three interesting common traits pertinent for analysing the work and lives of brokers.

## **2.2. Reputation, Interpretation and Ability**

Firstly, intermediaries are ambiguous characters for whom the cultivation of *reputation* is especially important; they are simultaneously praised and scorned as they straddle (in)formal divides. For instance, economic brokers in rural areas are often held in contempt (Neale 1983), whilst political fixers might be figures of fun (Manor 2000). However, other intermediaries can elevate themselves into positions of informal leadership, for example those who operate in newly formed slums where residents need access to bureaucrats and politicians for state resources (Jha, Rao, and Woolcock 2007). Moreover, fixers can even go on to become local 'big men' (Mines and Gourishankar 1990), powerful individuals that can use resources instrumentally and transcend state sovereignty (see: Hansen 2005).

Writing about development brokers in various societies, Lewis and Mosse (2006) argue that, “[b]rokers deal in people and information not only for profit in the narrow sense of immediate reward, but also more broadly in the maintenance of coherent representations of their own social identities” (p. 16). Intermediaries' roles then are informally institutionalised in everyday life – they are an accepted (if often disliked) facet of getting things done, whose standing amongst those with whom they work is susceptible to change as they attempt to improve their image and cement their role in various state and market structures.

Secondly, intermediaries' mediations are *interpretations* of different cultural categorisations that can strengthen or destabilise existing structures. This can be well seen in two different assessments of the work of development brokers in rural Karnataka. Manor (2000) contends that they offer important services and political access to otherwise marginalised groups, whilst Pattenden (2011) forcefully argues that they are thieves who accumulate wealth to sure up their class position in structures of domination. In other settings we can observe how political fixers help spread ideologies (such as Hindu nationalism) as they offer backward castes new avenues to state resources (Berenschot 2011) or how student exam and college entry fixers undermine collective student political mobilisations (Jeffrey and Young 2012). In spite of the diversity of settings, we can see that in all cases intermediaries' practices are not neutral bridges between people, the state and market, but rather are transformers of relations (cf. Lewis and Mosse 2006).

Thirdly, intermediaries need a diverse range of *abilities*. These abilities are presentational, linguistic or organisational (Lewis and Mosse 2006, 16), but above all are relational: the abilities needed to develop relations with and between different parties. The movement between different types of people necessitates that the intermediary is adaptable, as is the case with fixers in rural Andhra Pradesh who change “strategy to suit the client, the administrator, the scheme, and the time” (Reddy and Haragopal 1985, 1153). This adaptability can be seen with rural brokers in Maharashtra who respond to the ongoing commercialisation of development by merging roles traditionally associated with the 'market broker' or 'political fixer' (Simon 2009). Intermediaries must also become skilled in reading and adapting to changes at various scales, as is the case with labour contractors in a smaller city in Tamil Nadu, who respond to shifts in global production networks (De Neve 2014).

Flexible and adaptable, intermediaries must cultivate a broad range of abilities that allow them to form relations with a wide array of people and respond to changes at various scales.

Pulling these strands together, we can talk more generally about the skill of being a broker in the city – *the skill of conducting*. This requires *cultivation* of a certain reputation, *attention* to the various categories exhibited by clients, and the *intention* to search out deals (more on these below).

In keeping with the other chapters, the structure follows the theoretical concern and ethnographic material in attempting to capture, to some degree, the most important of the rhythmic modes analysed. Accordingly, the following analysis of two brokers' lives is written through two different entwined temporal modes: a day-in-the-life and the life-story. Similar to labour market intermediaries in another south Indian city analysed by De Neve (2014), these brokers face vulnerability and instability in their lives, with their fortunes changing, contingent upon the vagrancies of global markets, individual decisions and chance happenings.

Brokers' labour is one that shifts between different social spheres and between seemingly different periods of the country's development. The new work cultures that have emerged within the current neoliberal period – from call centre workers (Mirchandani 2004) to IT professionals (Upadhyya 2008) to factory labourers inside SEZs (Cross 2014) – are all similar in that they are closely wound into global flows of capital and emblematic of India's new and confident economic path. Such work is often presented in contrast to the so called 'informal' sector, which is marked by jati or kin structures (Harriss-White 2003) that are often evoked by both employers and employees in different situations (De Neve 2008). Brokers in Mangaluru feed off India's new bold economy – that which also courses through the *expectant urbanism* found in the city– yet exhibit working habits of older-style intermediaries. Following their daily routines reveals how they slide between these different worlds, whilst their life stories gesture towards the ways in which brokers themselves attempt, with varying degrees of success, to align themselves with India's new hyper-capitalist and seductively expectant path.



*Figure 11: Mangaluru's new and old buildings. Source: Author.*

Because so much of the brokers' success is contingent upon them being known as reliable, dependable and even flourishing individuals, but is also contingent upon them on closing (or dropping) deals as quickly as possible, a relational asynchrony arises in their lives. Long term image cultivation, and short term business deals in which they must be attentive to subtle cues and act with occasionally ruthless intentions, produce tensions in their personal and working lives. Moreover, because brokers' links to those selling or letting their land or property come more often, but not exclusively, from jati, community, family, friend, neighbour or work networks, and because the potential buyers or tenants come more often from newspaper advertisements or word of mouth recommendations, brokers must be carefully aware of which links to foster and which let go cold. Following this, brokers' own jati can lead them to working more in one part of the city than other, as there is a certain amount of jati clustering. Aside from clusters formed through the division of family land, some of this is based on jati profession, for instance Mogaveera, a fishing community, have long had housing close to the shore, and trading jatis, such as the Muslim Bearys, Gujaratis or Gowda



Saraswat Brahmins and *Saraswat Brahmins* can be found around Bunder, the old port. These last groups can also be found around their large temple on Car Street, and indeed clustering around places of worship is also common. For instance Protestants are often clustered around erstwhile missionary land and churches, and there are smaller clusters of groups such as *Tulu Shivalli Brahmins*, who sometimes can be found around temples. As the city has grown, rural land has become urban, but some old rural land-holding patterns can be observed, for instance with the 'manor houses' of one traditional land-owning Bunts still found in what is now considered the city. I will discuss how jati intersects in the housing and land market more below, but for now it is also important to note that although there are rapid changes in the city, jati based patterns persist. Furthermore, although quite a lot of the changes in jati clustering are recent, for instance driven by the the influx of migrants including transitory students, other changes were brought about by older processes, such as the building of the road bridge in the 1960s, which made it easier for Muslim jatis who live in large numbers south of the river Netravathi to move into Mangaluru.

Saleem and Mr. Pai, the two brokers whose lives will be explored in depth, to some degree represent ideal types. Saleem is a part-time and 'informal' broker, whilst Mr. Pai is a full time and erstwhile 'formal' broker (he once had an office and staff). However, as their situations change and as there are numerous variants that affect brokers' work, these are unavoidably slippery categorisations.

After reading about these two brokers, the reader may be left wanting more traditional sociological data – some over-arching class, community, jati or other criteria into which to place brokers. However, during research brokers refused all my attempts to push them into such boxes. Whereas I can place different groups of moving vendors and auto drivers under sociological categories, brokers, apart from in terms of gender, elide them. They are 'upper-caste' and 'lower-caste', involved in petty trade and from families of doctors. Probably because of the chance entry into the work for many, the large financial rewards and the ability to be a part-time whilst involved in various other lines of work, almost any man could, and potentially was, a broker. I knew a full-time auto driver from a poor Protestant family who for two weeks a year arranged all the accommodation for new batches of workers at the ITES firm Infosys' SEZ, I knew others who came from rich well connected families who

did little in life apart from collecting money from their inherited businesses and then arrange the occasional brokerage deal. Then there are those like Krishna Palemar who, it is claimed, went from bus conductor turned broker, to land aggregator, to real estate developer to become a Member of the Legislative Assembly (MLA) at the Karnataka State level, for the then ruling Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP).

Saleem, in his mid-thirties, is from the Muslim Beary community, has a wife and three daughters, runs a small shop aside from his brokerage work, has constant money worries and generally struggles to close deals. His nickname around his work place reflects his professed piety and religiosity, but I choose not to use it here to protect his anonymity and because I found its use to be gently mocking, though Saleem did not consider it to be so himself. Mr. Pai, in his early seventies, is from the Hindu Gowda Saraswat Brahmin (GSB) community, lives alone in rented bachelor accommodation, works full time as a broker and likes to be known as someone who gives to charities, temples and poor families. Nobody I knew outside his family used his first name, but rather an affectionate or respectful version of his family name; accordingly I do the same (although of course Mr. Pai is a pseudonym).

The remainder of the paper is ordered across three sections: early-morning/early-life, mid-day/mid-life and late in the day/late in life. I will also touch on some of the ways Mangaluru has changed in recent decades: the increased pressure on land, the partly distributive land reforms, an upturn in the use of land and property as an investment, the arrival of large numbers of students, and the presence of some IT/ITES and BPO workers. This will allow a further examination of how the dominant urban social imaginary feeds the expectant urbanism of the city, especially in regards to how it flows through the land and housing markets. Three aspects of brokers working lives will be highlighted – *chance* entry into the work, the wide *variety* of brokerage work available and the importance of *collaboration* amongst brokers. From this I delineate three elements of the work itself – *searching* for deals, *reading* clients' characteristics and wants, and *closing* the deal.

### 2.3. Early-morning/Early-life

Saleem wakes each morning before the sun to the sound of the call to prayer, but he admits

to me during his more candid moments, that he occasionally fails to get out of bed, much to the chagrin of his father. On the days in which he does get up, he crosses the road to enter the mosque, where he prays along with other male members of his family, before taking coffee at a local hotel and catching up with his friends. He often talks with relish about these moments of group male sociability.

He returns to the house and joins his wife as they try to contain the daily chaos of readying their three daughters for school. On the few mornings when I visited Saleem this early, I would sit and watch the whirlwind of activity, but not be able to understand what was being said, as everyone speaks in Beary, the language of their jati. I would see Saleem's mother and his younger sister leave the main room to join his wife in the kitchen to prepare the day's food, spooning it into metal containers just as the auto, packed with the girls' schoolmates, turns up at the door and I would hear the driver, impatient as ever, pressing down on his horn incessantly until Saleem would go to angrily plead with him to wait. Indeed, the driver was often the first thing Saleem would complain to me about when I met him in the mornings away from his home (as I realised it was best to do). Finally his daughters would scurry from the family house and squeeze into the auto that shoots off down the street, the driver still cursing Saleem. As for himself, Saleem changes into a bright shirt, pleated trousers, closed shoes and leather belt. He swings onto his scooter and rounds the corner to the nearby petrol station, putting 50 rupees worth of petrol in the tank, just enough to allow him to reach his place of work<sup>53</sup>.

He leaves the densely packed streets of the Muslim-majority neighbourhood Kudroli, bouncing along the road bridge that spans the Netravathi River and turning towards the small shop he rents. Santhosh, his friend who works in the shop next door, often informs him that he missed potential customers, who curse him if he is not open by 9 am as promised. At such news he smiles ruefully, swings up the shutters to his electrical goods shop, and settles himself behind his desk, scanning the newspaper for potential deals that he might be able to attach himself to as part of his part-time work as a broker.

Mr. Pai, rises each morning before the sun, "unable to sleep because of age", and leaves

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53 1 Indian rupee is equal to about 5 Hungarian forints.

the room he rents alone to buy his morning cigarettes. He walks along the straight, wide, planned British-era roads before returning to the small tiled house he shares with three other bachelors. On the mornings when I wanted to accompany him, he would stress that he must leave his house again at 7 am if he is to make the bus he takes to pray to Mangladevi at her temple, a goddess who he says has brought him great fortune, and so I should not be a minute late. Outside the temple he buys four flowers and two newspapers – The Hindu and Udayavani – before entering the temple grounds to perform *pooja*. The exactitudes of the *pooja* change according to various temporal criteria, but what does not change is the fast clockwise circle he makes around the temple stopping at the surrounding deities before reaching Mangladevi herself.

He exits the temple exactly fifteen minutes before bus 24 leaves, claiming his seat at the front of the slowly filling bus. Soon there is standing room only. In the meanwhile Mr. Pai has been greeted respectfully by school children (he gives them sweets on his birthday), has seen his paper passed around the bus, and has entered into a few half-conversations with fellow regular passengers. I am always amazed not only at how well known he is, but even I become well known in my short time with him. Smaller city dense intimacy and public transport schedules engendering sociability.

Once home Mr. Pai performs *pooja* to the collection of deities he has arranged on a table in the corner of his room, lighting an incense stick and laying the flowers he brought from the temple atop the gods. He then applies cologne, smooths his hair with coconut oil, takes out his small notebook from a desk draw, and is finally ready, at just after 9 am, to start his working day as a broker.

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Saleem, now in his late 30's, remembers his childhood and teenage years fondly. His father was a successful coffee trader and he grew up along with three brothers and a sister in a large house in the centre of the city. Saleem is the second oldest and recalls, "Every day we were out playing cricket on a patch of land near our house. No *kiri kiri* [annoying things], just cricket." As school came to an end however, he was pushed into making decisions. "I

finished 10th standard, but I failed in one subject. So I decided I didn't like studying any more, okay?! I wanted to go to the Gulf. My father and mother were shouting at me, 'no, no, no, you have to study!'... [but] I said, 'no, I'm not going to study, I want to go [abroad]'."

Mr. Pai, now in his early 70's, also remembers his childhood and teenage years fondly; as it was then that he *chanced* upon brokerage work. Even as a child he commanded a certain amount of respect from the local community, coming as he did from a rich, landowning and trading GSB family.

In 1963 I got my first business. At that time the land was very cheap... I went to my [family] estate, we had 300 acres... [a fellow land owner] met me there [by chance], I didn't know him but he said he knew me. He said, 'I'm a sick person, please arrange the sale of my property.' He was a TB patient. He was working in the Commonwealth Tile factory at that time, he was an old man... [There was] no light in that area. No current... Only lamps, kerosene lamps. The bus only came once per hour, nowadays every ten minutes there is a bus. He told me 1000 rupees for the 25 cents<sup>54</sup> of land and an old tiled house...

Then what happened, I went from my estate and then the next day my neighbour [from the same jati in a heavily GSB populated part of the city] told me to find him some land... So by bicycle we went up to [my estate]. We went on one cycle, double-riding. At that time there was a mud road, no? At that time there were only mud roads...

So I saw it on the first day, and then the second day I showed it to him, and on the third day my business was complete. He was bargaining and said '900', and then the other guy said, 'okay give me 900 rupees'. Then the very next day, the fourth day... in the afternoon, at 11-12 o'clock the registration was done... Then after we went to the Taj Mahal hotel, Hampankatte... We had *halwa* [sticky sweet], *masala dosa* [savory lentil pancake with spicy vegetable filling] and some tea.. The bill was paid by the buyer... and it was damn cheap. And then I was given my commission: 25 rupees. That the seller gave to me and the buyer gave me 5 rupees. There was no percentage at that time, but nowadays there is a percentage. That was my first business. 1963! I was very young... [it] was a huge amount [for me], it would cover me for 3 months. Food and all. At that time it was *money*...

## 2.4. Three Relational Features of Brokerage Work: Chance, Variety and Collaboration

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54 A cent is an Indian measurement of land equal to one one hundredth of an acre.

Mr. Pai's *chance* entry into the housing/land business is common amongst brokers. None I spoke with started as young as Mr. Pai, but they all reported that they made their first deal when asked by acquaintances if they knew of land/flats/housing for sale or rent. Most were in a line of work that required them to meet with a large number of people from different backgrounds – one with numerous *links*. For instance Rohit, a friend of Mr. Pai and a fellow GSB, used to work as a micro-deposit collector for Syndicate Bank (run by a famous GSB business family), and thus knew people all over the city. It was his own boss who first gave him the chance of entering into brokerage work, when he asked Rohit if he knew of anybody selling land. Rohit asked about along his route, and soon had put his first deal together. He realised it was much more profitable for him to search full time for deals, than to keep the daily work of micro-deposit collection. He now has an office, website and small staff.

Another quite different example comes from Aparna, one of the few female brokers in the city. As a widowed grandma without male relatives, she works across many fields and thus has many *links* in her neighbourhood. Her mainstays are selling packaged food to college students that pass the side of her flat and cooking meals for migrant bachelors who live in the vicinity. It was one of these fleeting relations who first asked her to find a house to rent. She knew an established broker close to her home and asked him to collaborate.

... he told me, 'even if it is difficult you should do it. Let's see. I'll be with you'. Like that, I did my first house near Chilimbi. After that, at Silverline I did one. After that this came [opens palms] 'Ah... I can do it.' After that I had contact with the big big brokers.

As can be seen through Aparna's phrase 'big big brokers', and the different working lives of Rohit, Saleem and Mr. Pai, there are a wide *variety* of brokers in the city, with variously hierarchical relations between them. At one end of the spectrum is RP Shetty, described as “dull” by other brokers. He also paints a very miserable picture of his life,

Real estate is not a profession. Real estate is the job I do. This needs luck and funds. At the same time contacts. The monthly income can be zero in one month.... [Some] can get plenty – they are the cream of the profession. But for those like me?! I started working in real estate because I had no alternative. It's not a recognised job. He, himself, selects it. It's not a job. If you have no profession then how can you get on in life?!

RP Shetty is a broker who other brokers turn to only if they have a menial job that needs doing, such as paperwork at a government office. He works full time, but is a broker more in

name than in practice, as he rarely manages to secure a deal. Brokers then are not just differentiated in terms of how many hours they work, but also the types of work they do (e.g. paperwork, looking for new contacts), their level of infrastructure (e.g. office or staff), their degree of formality vis-à-vis the state (e.g. paying tax) and how they advertise their services (e.g. through word of mouth, online, in newspapers, etc.).



Figure 12: Mangaluru described as an Educational City. Source: Author.

The *chance* entry and *variety* of brokerage work relates to its *collaborative* nature. Collaboration is not of course exclusive to brokerage, but collaboration is one of the most discussed and contested aspects of the work, and it is crucial for understanding links as a form of property. Brokers often form temporary working relationships with other brokers on a particular deal and then divide the resultant commission. For example if someone comes into Saleem's shop asking if he knows about a property, he will always tell them he does (even if he does not), and then call other brokers asking if they know of any land for sale or house/flat for rent. They will then all travel together to the property. If the client is not happy, and the second broker does not know of any more properties, then the second broker might

call a third broker and so on, each time reducing the final commission that each broker receives. Usually commission is split equally amongst the brokers, but as certain brokers are more reliant on joint deals than others, some brokers, like Saleem, may be forced to accept less than half. On land deals there can be numerous participating brokers, attracted by the large amounts of money involved.

Collaboration is needed for a number of interrelated reasons. First, as discussed more below, people on both sides of the transaction have numerous demands (relating to age, jati, religion and so on). This can make it hard for brokers to have the right selection of properties available for buyers/renters and vice versa. Secondly, because owners usually want to deal with only one broker, a lot of properties are 'closed' to other brokers who may have links with the buyer/renter. Thirdly, there are a lot of brokers – anyone can become one and lots do because of the potential large profits, even if only for one deal. The large numbers of potential and existing brokers produces a situation in which firstly, a lot of property is 'tied down' to brokers who do not have many links to potential buyers/renters, and secondly, brokers with links to tenants/buyers need to rush to close deals in case the client decides to try another broker. Most of the time brokers do not want to lose links, accordingly if they do not have links to a buyer, seller, renter or landlord at one particular moment, they will often turn to their 'partner' or 'friend'.

As brokers often complained to me, these alliances are shaky; there are countless accusations of double-crossing and cheating, and even amongst those who seem close there are frequent arguments, often leading to the permanent termination of relations. Bemoaning the 'cheating' nature of agents, Rohit, the former deposit-collector and close collaborator of Mr. Pai, reflected over lunch with the two of us,

I have 15 years experience and I am only contacting 20 brokers. Number One is Mr Pai. He's my senior, so I respect him, but he's cheating. No, not cheating, cunning. Yes, cunning [he laughs]. Last week I asked where he was and he said, Udupi [a different city], but I saw him in Kodiabail [part of Mangaluru]! Why? Because he was doing some business and didn't want me to join in.

Mr. Pai doesn't remember me for 10 days, then when he thinks of money he remembers



me. But I'm not his friend, it's just business, so it's okay.

Throughout this description Mr. Pai grinned, but did not dispute Rohit's choice of words. Although collaboration is important, the competition between brokers is of course fierce. The speed in which deals can happen and the sheer number of brokers keeps the market highly competitive – not just between brokers regularly engaged in brokerage, but also between brokers and anyone of the thousands of potential brokers.

## **2.5. The Market Expects**

The increased chances for starting broker work, the wide variety of different types of brokers, and the need for collaboration have intensified with the changes in the organisation of property relations. Changes in jati land arrangements and increased pressure on land has induced many to build housing for rental or sale. This intersects with a re-conceptualisation of property as the city integrates into international real estate markets. There is a widespread expectation, propagated to a large degree by real estate developers and their friends in the press, that a smaller city like Mangaluru is on the cusp of something great. Joint ventures between developers and owners of small and medium plots of land, the discursive work of value creation by developers and their friends in the press, and the use of property to mark class/jati status all feed this expectant market.

Whereas previously locals or migrants might have bought a house, or flat (or land on which to build a house), now Mangaloreans vie with those from Mumbai, the Gulf or further afield in search of investments in real estate in and around the city. Many locals have a material interest in these changes, either through partnerships with developers to build on their land (see also: Susewind 2015), or through the investment of money saved during labour migration to the Gulf (cf. Osella and Osella 2000a). As seen in Chapter One, due to the relatively successful land reforms, there are a comparably large amount of people in Dakshina Kannada with a small amount of land and, as the city has expanded into formerly rural areas, this land has become valuable. Joint-builds take place when real estate developers and landowners come together, usually through a broker who makes a commission, to develop new housing. The developers fund the new construction and in

return get a majority stake in the new property. The family get the remaining percentage of the housing to use as they wish. Joint-builds and the buying of flats for investment are one of the most important processes implicating large numbers of people in the construction boom.

Another way in which people have become part of the housing boom in Mangalore, even those who have nothing to gain from it materially, is through witnessing the creative work that constitutes part of the urban imaginary, such as that needed to produce value in newly constructed buildings. As such, even those who have not directly materially benefited from the 'boom' in real estate are caught up 'in the moment' as works of imagination – such as billboards advertising new houses, press articles urging people to invest<sup>55</sup> and praising local developers<sup>56</sup> or extravagant building launches which can attract crowds of thousands – announce the new property paradigm for all to see: flowing, consuming, progressing.

As De Neve (2015) shows in another smaller city in south India, investment in real estate is a way for locally dominant groups to mark jati and class status and secure wealth accumulation. Middle-class and elite understandings of affordability, quality and lifestyle set the tone of the housing market, with these groups exhibiting certain 'international' tendencies in their housing choices (Srivastava 2015) that chime with the cultural projects of an increasingly aspirational and globalised middle-class (see: Heiman, Liechty, and Freeman 2012). In Mangaluru, such changes are realised on a grand scale with housing activists alleging that the local building elites manipulating the city's Master Plan for their own benefit, constructing 'world class' luxury flats that then sit empty<sup>57</sup>. Despite the increase in rental costs in the city and the empty buildings, there is little opposition outside this small group of activists.

Changes in the land and housing market naturally intersects with the law. There are many complex and illuminating facets to this, including rules about Floor Aspect Ratio, reserved Dalit *manna* land and the aliyasantana system discussed in the previous chapter, but maybe

55 e.g. Mangalore: Land Trades - Going strong with slew of ongoing projects, *Daijiworld*, November 18, 2013 [http://www.daijiworld.com/news/news\\_disp.asp?n\\_id=202111](http://www.daijiworld.com/news/news_disp.asp?n_id=202111) accessed 26/08/2014

56 e.g. 'Mangalore Realty - Set to Soar Higher', *Mangalore Today*, May 7, 2013 <http://www.mangaloretoday.com/opinion/Mangalore-Realty-Set-to-Soar-Higher.html> accessed 26/08/2014

57 For a detailed critique of the Master Plan see Mohan and Sastry (2007)

the legal aspect that best captures the expectancy in the city is the proposed abolishment of the *mulageni* system. An explanation of the system, whilst needing some lengthy contextualisation, also served as an introduction into how jati and religious community cross-cuts land and housing arrangements in the region.



Figure 13: An Upcoming Development. . Source: Author.

In the centuries preceding independence, land in Tulu Nadu was held in private hands with 'upper caste' landlords (usually Brahmins, Jains or Bunts) paying tax to sovereigns who rarely interfered in land arrangements, except when granting *inams* (gifts of land) to Brahmin or royal families. The landlords often rented out their land to 'middle castes' (e.g. Mogaveeras, Ganigas, Billavas, Devadigas) for subsistence or commercial farming and living. Meanwhile labourers, who were often held in bondage, came from the low and 'untouchable castes' (e.g. Holeyas, Meras, Madigas, Mansas, Koosas, Paravas, and Pambadas).

The 'renting' arrangement was usually either on a *mulageni* (permanent) or *chalageni* (temporary) basis (other types of arrangement, such as for the length of one crop cycle were also in existence). Those under the permanent-renting *mulageni* agreement could not be evicted unless they failed to pay the agreed rent, and even then not unless they were compensated for any improvements they made on the land. Moreover, it was possible for *mulageni* tenants to sub-rent or mortgage the land and, most crucially, once an agreement was entered into, the rent could not usually be revised. Meanwhile the *chalageni* tenants' agreements were either under the landlords directly or under *mulagenigars* and usually only lasted for one year. Despite the annual nature of the *chalageni* agreement these families often tilled a piece of land much longer, sometimes for many generations. Unlike for *mulageni* tenants, *chalageni* tenants' rent could be increased each new lease period, putting these families at the mercy of landlords (see: Damle 1993, 35–42). This system was far from stable and poverty was widespread leading to immense strains and tensions, which heightened under first Tipu Sultan and then British Colonial rule<sup>58</sup>.

Land reform was high on the political agenda in the decades following independence. Undivided Dakshina Kannada, as part of the newly formed Karnataka state was subject to the Karnataka Land Reforms Act 1961, Amended in 1974, which focussed on 1) the abolition of tenancy, 2) land ceiling regulations and redistribution of surplus land and 3) the conferring of homestead rights (see: Judge 1999, 138). The 1961 Act did little to lessen land-based inequalities however, in keeping with the experience of most of the rest of the country, as many absentee landlords became active upon learning of the Act, exploiting the ignorance of those who worked on their land; in some parts of the district nearly three quarters of tenants were evicted under the provision of 'personal cultivation' before the 1974 Amendment came into force (Damle 1993, 228).

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58 Deteriorating conditions under Nayakas of Ikkeri from 1618, and the increase in land revenue under the rule of Hyder Ali and Tipu Sultan forced many peasant proprietors to give up their land and become labourers (Damle 1993). The British administration, upon seizing the region in 1799, recognised the burden of high revenue but, after an initial token reduction, kept the tax rate crippling high leading to further impoverishment. Thomas Munro, the first collector of the Province of Canara and Sonda, was impressed by the system of private ownership he found in place and so ignored the directive to install a class of intermediaries and instead adopted the *raiyyatwari* system. This formalised and strengthened the role of the landlord with whom the authority dealt exclusively, whether or not they tilled the land. From 1820 the settlement price for crops was higher than the market rate and so many landlords, after becoming indebted to the government or the newly emerging class of money lenders, lost their land, which was in turn either passed on to new wealthier landlords or the moneylenders themselves (Bhat 2000, 52–55). The banking crisis during the Second World War led to intense investment in land, with urban based landlords buying it up from those in debt and renting it out (often back to the original landlords), further increasing tenancy rates (Damle 1993, 43–44).

In spite of the earlier setbacks, the land reforms carried out in the 1970s did have a profound effect on land distribution in the district: eradicating intermediaries, absentee landlords and tenancy agreements, as well as handing over considerable amounts of land to the previously landless. Furthermore, the Act blocked the entry of capitalists into agriculture as individuals above a certain income limit (at the time 65,000 rupees per annum, now 200,000) could not acquire agricultural land. In general however, whilst they were nowhere near as radical as claimed by politicians at the time, land reform in Karnataka was considerably more successful than elsewhere in India. Even if the changes did not always help the most exploited, it did consolidate the position of the mid-level peasant (Judge 1999, 171) and eradicate the big landlords in the exploitative subsistence setting (Damle 1993, 235–236). However, the possibilities for, and the ways in which, land was transferred were in part dependent on the landlord's jati and the related system of land use. For instance Brahmin land had often been subdivided down the generations and this, along with the growing tendency amongst Brahmins for absentee landlordism as they took up urban employment, made the acquisition of land by the tillers relatively easy. However Bunts often kept land undivided, occupying a central *Guttu Mane* (erstwhile manor house that was traditionally responsible for collecting taxes in rural settings) and cultivating sections of the land themselves. They then rented out other sections for subsistence or commercial farming to those from the 'lower castes'. When the time came for transfer, some of these Bunt landowners were able to intimidate those who had tilled their land, especially those who had given free labour, as "the subordination of tenants had been socially legitimated and psychologically established" (Damle 1993, 232).

Throughout all of these upheavals the permanent-renting mulageni system (and many individual mulageni agreements) remained in place, however the system now seems close to abolishment with ongoing urbanisation. Not only has erstwhile farmland been covered by the expanding city, but land is becoming much more valuable. Many tenants have had families living on the land for centuries, thus they pay extremely low fixed rents – for instance one auto driver tells me he pays two rupees and a chicken a year. Some tenants, acting through a recently formed organisation have pushed for an end to the system. The main organisers of the group are relatively wealthy, educated and articulate. When I asked them

why poorer tenants were not so active, they said it was because they were afraid of the churches or temples, as many of the largest 'owners' are Hindu temples and Christian churches (who were 'gifted' supposedly 'empty' land during the colonial period in what was then outside the city). Whilst I agree with this assessment, I would also add that changes to the system would also most benefit those with larger amounts of *mulageni* land, who tend to be the wealthier tenants. They estimate that up to 30 percent of land in Tulu Nadu is *mulageni* and have pushed for a bill in which they would compensate the 'owner' with either five hundred or one thousand times the annual rent<sup>59</sup>.

## 2.6. Mid-Day/Mid-life

Saleem, the part-time broker, sits in his shop each morning awaiting customers, who occasionally drop in for light bulbs or a fan. His profit margin is low and his stock is meagre; some days not a single customer enters his shop. Indeed, this is how I spent most of my time with Saleem, in his shop waiting for something to happen and practising my Kannada on him. However throughout the morning there is a steady trickle of cousins (his father is one of eight siblings, his mother one of eleven), friends, locals, shopkeepers and worshippers at the local mosque, who come and sit on the other side of his desk and talk. Most visitors are from the same Beary jati as Saleem. Beary Muslims are a caste unique to Tulu Nadu and are known as business people – indeed their caste name is a corruption of the Tulu word for business [*byara*]. As one of Saleem's cousins told me during Prophet's birthday celebrations at the family house, “we all have to do business here. There's not one cousin who works for someone else.”

Occasionally, a potential tenant is sent his way, and he tries to find them a room, flat or house. It is then that his sleepy mornings burst into life. He immediately calls those fellow brokers he trusts for *collaboration*. Although Saleem gets to meet a lot of people interested in buying/renting, his 'static' job does not allow him to learn about many potential properties first hand.

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59 Meanwhile 'landlords', have not opposed the abolition of the system, but are rather seeking to be compensated, or gain land if a tenant cannot pay the level of compensation, at a percentage of the current market value. 40 percent of the market value has been suggested at one point. Needless to say, this is a massive difference in price and, as of the time of writing, the issue is being debated in Delhi.

If he gets a lead he jumps on his scooter, implores the buyer/tenant to follow and takes them to meet his 'partner', before they travel together to the property in question. The first few times this happened when I was with him, he left me behind to watch his shop (he once left me for more than six hours), but realising I was not learning much about brokerage, I persuaded him to start letting me come along. Saleem's shop sits on the road that runs up to the university and new private colleges. Lecturers often move in from out of town to take up work in the area, and therefore need family houses or apartments. One such potential renter was a fellow Muslim, but not a Beary, and was worried that the owners of houses Saleem was arranging for him to see might have a problem with his religion. Mangaluru has a reputation for having large numbers of active Hindu nationalists (see: Chapter One). Saleem kept repeated to him, "no problem for you, you're educated with a high class job!" In nearly all cases, those from out of town do not speak the mostly widely used local language, Tulu, and certainly not Beary, the language of Saleem's eponymous caste. Saleem is a *skilled* polyglot who speaks Arabic, Beary, Kannada, English, Hindi and Malayalam very well, and a wide smattering of other languages in parts.

Saleem takes his lunch each day at 1 pm in a newly opened canteen run by members of the Beary community. I knew he had money problems, as he was often asking to borrow money from me, so I asked him why he chooses not to bring his lunch from home, to which he said "having a lunch carrier doesn't look good. It's for poor people only". It is more than just pride that keeps Saleem eating out each day, it is also the need to ferment his *reputation* as a successful broker.

After lunch he buys the afternoon paper and returns to his shop, sitting again behind his desk. The heat, food and lack of customers usually pulls him into a light doze. A friend and fellow Beary who lives close by to his shop used to always comment on this to me as a sign of his laziness, as he always found him asleep. As I tried to convince his friend, it was simply that he was often visiting him at the same time of day, just after lunch – it was not that he was always sleeping.

Once Saleem wakes from his slumber around 2:30 pm he often becomes restless and

forlorn due to the day's lack of business. At these moments his nervousness would spill over into his possible deals and his *skill* at and bringing people together would falter. For example he would tell a family he had a house close to the college where they were due to start work, although it was far away. He would then lead them there, and when they refused to take the property, he would plead with them, usually unsuccessfully, and lose the link. At these times he would often ask me to find him work in the UK or Hungary, to which I would patiently explain that work visas were not as easy to come by as they are for some Middle Eastern countries. I was never sure he really believed me.

Mr. Pai, the full time broker, spends the early part of his mornings on one of his two phones. He places adverts in two daily papers promoting his services, and this, along with the links built up through his fortyfour years of work in the city, constitutes most of his *searching* work for potential clients. In his younger days he was more independently mobile, but now relies on a younger broker with whom he regularly *collaborates* to transport him around the city as he follows up on his various leads (or, for a year or so, a young anthropologist with a dubiously acquired motorcycle licence). Some days he was as quiet as Saleem, and we would sit in the park and talk for a few hours, but most days when I was with him I was always struck how busy he was. If he did not have an ongoing deal, he would nevertheless have many possibilities that he wanted to keep alive.

He visits his potential renters/buyers in their homes or place of work. If they are not immediately available to see properties, he will ask their requirements – price, area, size, type, dietary – and agree to meet them later in the day or the following day. After these visits, he then might meet landlords/sellers and speak with them to ascertain their requirements.

For example, on one of the days that I was driving Mr. Pai instead of his regular collaborator, we visited a Brahmin bank manager who had seen his advert in the paper. He had just been transferred to the city, and could not leave his workplace until 4:30 pm. He told us that because of his *jati* he did not want to live in the same building as non-vegetarians, which limited his options to either an independent house or a shared house with Brahmins or Jains. He also had a very low 'maximum rent' in mind. Mr. Pai, a fellow Brahmin, albeit from a caste that eats fish, assured him that he empathised, *interpreting* the potential *jati* requirements



into potential deals. However, he warned him that his expectations on price were unrealistic. Seeing that the manager did not quite trust Mr. Pai's claims about the price for such a smaller city, Mr. Pai called upon other members of the office to back him up.

Promising to call him later in the day, we then moved on to visit a distant relative of his who had a three-room property above his own house to rent. The landlord, who like many GSBs was a trader, also owned a small retail outlet on the bustling Car Street, where many other GSBs also reside. As we sat in his shop, the landlord told Mr. Pai that he only wanted male tenants, claiming that 'girls bring trouble' – boyfriends and drain-blocking sanitary products. Like most landlords he wanted ideal tenants, which to his mind were IT professionals – or 'Infosys workers' as they were usually termed, after the Bengaluru-founded and world famous IT company. Mr. Pai promised to bring him such clients, helping *interpret* relatively new characteristics into the property market.

Aside from his fellow brokers, with whom he has long-standing relations, Mr. Pai is only in contact with most clients for a day or two. He rarely keeps in touch with potential tenants for longer than this, because if he finds people 'too fussy' he quickly drops them. For example, one day he told me about a different bank worker who came to him via a recommendation,

He came from Mysore. A transfer. He wanted a house for himself and his family. He refused to look at flats, only at independent houses. So I found him a house, a beautiful house close to Pumpwell, but he said 'I can't live there it's too far from the city', so then I found him another house in Valencia, and he said 'I can't take this house because there's only a mud road.' And so on. We saw five or six places. So I told him, 'It's the same as choosing a wife. You can't find the perfect girl. 90 percent perfect is okay. There will always be a flaw.' In the end he wanted to go back to the first house, so we went, but it was already taken. The next day he called me, but I told him 'I'm sorry, I cannot work with you any more'.

Mr. Pai believes that his short term attitude towards certain people is part of what has helped him stay a full time broker for so long. He tries to avoid relationships that he considers to be a "waste"; they are to him a waste of time, and therefore money. However, when it comes to buying and selling land, and certainly when it comes to relationships with certain other brokers, he maintains relations even when it does not lead to immediate profit. As we saw above, these often intermingle with jati, and many of his closest contacts are also GSBs.

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Saleem, against his family's wishes, left Mangaluru for Saudi Arabia before he turned 20 years old. His migration was far from exceptional. There are many from coastal south India working across the Middle East. It was an expensive investment on the part of his family (visa and plane ticket costs), which they hoped would pay off in the long term, however, Saleem found the work difficult and returned to India within one and a half months. After long fights with his father, he again persuaded his family to pay for his migration, but this time to Dubai. Saleem stayed in Dubai for seven years, first working as a helper for a disabled manager in an office, before moving on to becoming a salesman for Sony working inside a French multinational retailer.



*Figure 14: View from atop a new building outside the city. Source: Author.*

Now that he was working in a well paid job for an international company abroad, his father told him to get married. An offer came from a prestigious family and, after returning home to meet his prospective wife Sulagna, a date was set for a year hence. They were married, and Sulagna gave birth to a daughter each year for the first three years of marriage. Whilst Sulagna was expecting their third daughter she moved along with their youngest two daughters to be with him in Dubai.

Saleem used to talk fondly to me about his days in Dubai. He was good as his job, which he considered to be prestigious due to the rich, and occasionally famous, clientèle. He had an active social life playing cricket with fellow Indians, and enjoyed living with his wife and children. The family only lived for a year together in Dubai however, as Saleem lost his job during the last global economic crisis. They moved back to Mangaluru and into the small room attached to the family house. The meagre amount of money he had saved during his trip was soon spent on the expected presents for relatives and his family's day to day living costs.

Sulagna's father owned a small electrical shop outside the city, and Saleem reluctantly agreed to work there. Whilst it was acceptable for him to work for somebody else in Dubai, in Mangaluru it brought him shame. As a Beary from a successful trading family, Saleem considered it to be unseemly to work for others. After his father-in-law missed a rent payment on the shop, Saleem agreed with the owner that he would take over the rental agreement. He borrowed some money against his wife's gold to buy his own stock, and began running the business as his own.

Tensions between Sulagna and Saleem's mother led Sulagna to start spending more and more time back at her parents and pushed Saleem to find them a place of their own. Searching for the means to provide for his immediate family, impressed by his older brother's success as a housing broker and now widely known in the area around his workplace, Saleem started to *search* for land and housing deals of his own. According to Saleem, he entered into a *collaborative* agreement with his brother and cousins over which parts of the city 'belonged' to them for brokerage work, and his was now the immediate area around his shop.

Mr. Pai also left Mangaluru early in his adult life, not to travel abroad, but rather up the coast to the enticing metropolis of Bombay. His father, who had been a landlord and a sugar trader, had died, and his own brokerage business was slow. In the 60's and 70's there were no highrises, little industrial activity and only a few higher education institutes. Accordingly he left for Bombay, and started working for a British pharmaceutical company. He enjoyed a fun-filled bachelor life. He fell in love with a girl from north India whose father was in the army, met people from all over the world and had money in his pocket. However, after a few years his mother called him home. His brothers had married and moved out and she was living alone. Agreeing to his mother's wishes, he left the job, left the girl and moved back to Mangaluru, living with his mother until she died at the age of 94. Upon his return, he says he was at the time one of only three brokers in the city, and busied himself *searching* for deals, *assessing* people's wants and *closing* deals.

He slowly built up his business. As the all-weather port, heavy industry, private colleges and hospitals began to arrive to the city, so did migrants and Mr. Pai was now one of many brokers vying for their custom. Busier than he could manage on his own, he took a young apprentice under his wing. In Mr. Pai's words, "I taught him everything. He knew nothing before. Nobody. No connections. I showed him the entire business." They opened an office together in the city centre, advertised their services widely and made considerable profits as the city grew. One particularly large land deal came their company's way, but Mr. Pai's partner cut him out of the deal at the last moment. They have never spoken since, though Mr. Pai's erstwhile junior's office is a just a few streets from his house.

## **2.7. Three Elements of Brokerage Work: Searching, Assessing and Closing**

Much of a broker's daily working life involves *searching* for land/property and potential buyers/tenants. This includes more passive searching, such as advertising in newspapers and online or putting up posters around the city, as well as more active searching such as waiting at the station for college students to arrive at the beginning of the school year, overhearing conversations in hotels, or knocking door to door. As the ex-deposit collector Rohit explains as Mr. Pai looked on,

Now I'm full time. Mentally it's 24 hours, it's my bread and butter, in the morning and the night I'm thinking. Physical work is from 7-9. After 7 I am calling the owners and land developers. From 7-9 I'm working in the office, by phone. I'm not only doing rentals, but also land selling, flat selling. ... from 2-4 fieldwork, daily. Myself and my boy, my office boy. We are searching, calling "anything for rent", "anything for sale", with watchmen, flat secretaries.

[Then he points to Mr. Pai] He's not doing it! [as he does not need to]

The work also involves *assessing* client's wants, so as to match buyers/sellers and tenants/landlords accordingly. This includes asking about a clients' practical needs (number of rooms, air conditioning etc.), but also reading the spoken and unspoken requirements pertaining to gender, jati, community, age, occupation and class. The weight given to these different factors varies depending upon the situation. For example, many Hindu families will not rent out a room to a Muslim family. They usually object to the eating of beef in their building. They will, however, more often than not accept Christians, with whom there are generally less antagonisms both locally and nationally (however see Susewind (2015) for a more nuanced account of community clustering). Dalits also face problems renting accommodation, though brokers reported that they face less discrimination than Muslims. However, it is not uncommon for Dalits with relatively high-status occupations that are transferred to the city to report that they cannot find rental accommodation, and therefore sometimes need their employer to step in.

In general these jati/community relations matter more in rental agreements than in sales, yet people still consider such factors when buying or selling. As one Catholic informant explained, "I was offered slightly more by a Muslim family [for the flat he was selling], but I refused. I had a duty to my neighbours. Once one Muslim family is in, then there's more and more of them and they take over the whole building. Their cooking smells, they are always leaving children's toys in communal areas". Class and occupation can, in some instances, lessen jati/community considerations. For instance in the rental market, the above mentioned "Infosys worker" is often seen as the ideal tenant; they are imagined as being free from 'communal tendencies', educated, hard working and well paid. Moreover, they are often 'upper-caste'.

There is also much importance given to less definable traits such as 'honesty', 'trustworthiness' or 'genuineness' which are often tied up with jati/community/class categorisations. The importance of these relational ethical characteristics is not unique to land/housing interactions of course, and we should take brokers' claims to be able to tell if someone is an honest person with a pinch of salt. Nevertheless, many brokers assert their skill in this area. The daughter of the female broker Aparna explains,

My mum is only dealing with genuine people. She has an understanding of a person by looking at her face... She does six to eight sales and ten to twelve rentals in a year. For rent you can tell if the person is right. If females come then it can be a problem if they bring guys home. If it's only guys it can also be a problem, if big groups come. She's experienced so she can tell. While talking she can feel a lie, like if they are talking about where they are from and they change the name. Or if they say first that they are working for Mphasis and then change to Infosys, or if they say Bangalore and then Mysore. When speaking she can feel, by seeing and talking it will come.

Once the searching and reading has been done, the broker's final job, aside from paperwork, is *closing* the deal. After bringing the two groups together, the broker's role is to make sure everyone is happy and the deal goes ahead; they will usually avow themselves of any future trouble between the two parties. This might involve reminding clients of certain characteristics, such as a high level of education or a prestigious job. There might also be negotiations over the size of the deposit. Once any issues have been ironed out, the broker will collect personal details from both parties, take responsibility for the preparation of paperwork, and then receive her fee from both parties. The paperwork might not always be done by the actual broker who sealed the deal; if they are busy they might collaborate with a broker who specialises in paperwork. This work should not be underestimated however. Whereas rental agreements are quite easy to prepare, sales are more difficult and there are numerous legal requirements, which may or may not be followed. As such the brokers make the law digestible to those who want to buy or sell land, providing their experience and expertise.

## 2.8. The Expected People

As discussed in Chapter One Mangaluru and the surrounding towns and villages are known nationally, and increasingly internationally, as a place for higher education. The students stay in hostels (private and college run), as 'paying-guests' (lodging with meals) in the spare rooms of family homes, or rent apartments in groups. Many of these students are from different parts of the country and thus do not speak Kannada or Tulu and tend to cluster in linguistic groups when looking for shared accommodation.

There are also a small but growing number of new businesses in the 'knowledge economy' – namely an IT SEZ used exclusively by the IT giant Infosys, and a number of smaller BPO and other IT based companies. These industries employ some local people, but also many outsiders. For example, the majority Hewlett-Packard owned company Mphasis has a training facility in Mangaluru, bringing through a steady stream of young, college-educated workers. Such professionals have great symbolic significance in contemporary India due to their perceived high salaries, 'global work' and often hyped role in bringing international fame to the Indian economy (Upadhyaya 2008). Those married with children will usually stay in apartments, whilst the younger workers might stay as paying guests or group rent property.

So called 'gated-communities' are also starting to appear in Mangaluru in greater numbers. These range from small pockets of independent houses hidden from view behind large gates, to multi-towered apartments with on-site amenities. It should be noted that these are considerably smaller than those found in the country's larger cities, but nevertheless sit in stark contrast to the traditional houses of the 'old' rich and middle classes (bungalows), the much more common 'loosely' gated apartment buildings lived in by the middle class, and the mud walled 'tiled houses' lived in by the working classes and the poor.

Writing about Delhi and Gurgaon, Srivastava (2015) has argued that those who live in these gated communities are 'consumer-citizens', no longer tied down with the baggage of being post-colonial, but emerging as global cosmopolitan 'post-nationals'. Certainly in Mangaluru some of the top end properties are specifically marketed at such elites, purportedly offering them the type of lifestyle they have grown accustomed to abroad. Those buying flats in such buildings usually do so through agents who work directly for the developers and certainly there are some people, especially those who work abroad but have family ties in the region,

that welcome and use such housing. However, there are also many buildings that, at least at the time of research, had sold all the individual units, but had not yet seen residents – an entire building sitting empty. One explanation is people investing in the expectancy that the city will grow and they will get a return on their investment – developers I spoke with were keen to push the line that 'tier two' and 'tier three' cities were the places with the highest potential for profit. However, many of the developers also told me that luxury buildings in Mangaluru are places for politicians and the nascent underworld to wash 'black money', with the more modest new developments aimed at middle-class professionals like doctors or college lecturers.

The middle-classes are those for whom lines of credit at banks or lending agencies are readily extended. For those not in the city work contracts from the Gulf are accepted as guarantees of income in many of these places. For those buying new-builds, some developers allow buyers to purchase in stages – for example a 44 storey building that was aiming itself at MSEZ/MRPL highly skilled workers and management allowed buyers to pay in 44 instalments, with each new payment due as a new floor was constructed. Many other 'informal' lending practices are present, which are more likely to be used at the lower end of the market. These money lenders were not exclusively working on housing, and were also the sort of people that auto drivers would sometimes turn to when deciding to purchase their own vehicle (see: Chapter Four).

As we have seen above, even though not all property is aimed at emerging middle-class professionals and elites, and even though not everyone will live in a gated-community, the imagery surrounding these groups and constructions circulates around the city. As elsewhere in India, Middle-class and elite understandings of affordability, quality and lifestyle set the tone of the housing market, with the needs of the poor often forgotten (Sengupta 2011). Moreover, with Mangaluru's Master Plan indicating that private developers will provide the “major portion of investment” (Mangalore Urban Development Authority 2006, 144) for residential development in the growing city, more and more housing is imagined with wealthy residents, emblematic of the new urban India, in mind. Landlords or developers, even those with more modest accommodation, often expect urbanites who embody the new India. Brokers are not, of course, neutral players in this, but key interpreters of imagination



into the market. Markets are not abstract, but peopled, contested, characterful changing arrangements; brokers conduct, from the bottom up, a specific imagination of this market, one that draws on India's expectant urbanism.

## **2.9. Late in the day/Lately in Life**

As the day starts to darken, Saleem's shop sees a little passing trade. People call in on their way home from work or the mosque to pick up a plug head, some electrical cable or a fuse. It is also the time of the day when Saleem is most likely to have a potential deal lined up. One of the deals that I accompanied him on was with a young couple he had met through his cousin's friend's wife, who worked as a lecturer at a nearby college. The middle class 'mid-caste' Hindu couple were from the same state, but not from the region. Earlier in the day Saleem had shown them the house along with a partner broker, who was in contact with the landlord. We were now going to *close* the deal and pay the deposit. After an initial conversation about the tenant's work and family, it turned out that the tenant's uncle had served in the army at the same time as the house owner. This pleased the landlord, and the deal was quickly closed. The owner agreed to give one month's rent, 6000 rupees to the broker, but Saleem had only agreed to receive half a month's rent in commission from the tenant, 3000 rupees. An argument in hushed tones then took place between Saleem, the tenant and the other broker about what was fair, whilst the landlord pretended not to be listening. Saleem wanted the 9000 commission split down the middle, 4500 each, but the other broker said that as Saleem had agreed to only ask for 3000 commission, it was his problem. This went on for fifteen minutes until the owner got bored and went inside, saying it was nothing to do with him. Eventually the tenant and the other agent left too, leaving us to return back to the shop with only 3000.

Shutting his shop at 8 pm Saleem stops at the petrol station at the bottom of the road, putting exactly 50 rupees into his bike, just enough for the trip back to his home. He struggles with the traffic over the Nethravathi river and is forced to wait at the railway gate before sweeping past Mangaladevi temple and down into Kudroli. Pulling up his scooter next to his brother's expensive motorbike, he enters his home and is greeted by his wife's and mother's bickering. He plays a while with his daughters, watches the cricket on television and eats before going

to sleep around 11 pm.

Mr. Pai takes his afternoon tea and snacks in a city centre hotel. Sometimes alone and sometimes with others, but always on the 'listen-out' for potential new customers. After finishing his tea, he spends his evenings showing properties to those who were unavailable during the day. If he is alone, he might ask the tenants/buyers to give him a lift to the property. He knows the city intimately and guides bikes or cars through back streets to avoid the traffic. On days when he is not so busy he may visit one of his charitable concerns. He donates sweets and money to an orphanage close to Mangaladevi temple, and supports one poor family. He enjoys giving generous donations, and also enjoys telling people about his generous donations. He would often remark that he was happy to do so as, "I have no children of my own. No one to give to."

Finishing work about 8 pm Mr. Pai drinks at least two pegs of whiskey at one of the city's more mid-ranged drinking establishments. He is usually joined by one, two – or if it is a weekend five – of his friends, all of whom are GSBs. After a few drinks he likes to talk about two recurrent topics: memories of the girl from Bombay he did not marry and his jati. As Mr. Pai tells it, the GSBs are Aryans who came to India thousands of years ago; for a long time they lived by the banks of the Saraswati River along with other Saraswat communities, but when the river dried up they left to Kashmir, Goa and other parts of India. Many of those who came to Goa were pushed to migrate again, this time by the Portuguese colonisers, who tried to forcibly convert them, and many GBS settled further down the coast in Tulu Nadu. As Konkani-speaking, fish-eating Brahmins they stand apart from the vegetarian, Kannada and Tulu speaking Brahmins in the district and also the non-Brahmin local jatis. Mr. Pai would often comment upon what he believed was the cultural superiority of the GSBs over the 'low-caste' spirit worshipping Tulus – "they had nothing before we came... they were a big zero!" Finishing his whiskey, he has a friend to drive him back to his rented accommodation. He falls into a drunken sleep alone in his room.

## **2.10. Link-work and Street Level Conductors**

It is widely acknowledged that there is an increasing commodification of land and housing in India. Whilst we have some understanding how commodification works when, for example, cities expand through the creation of new townships (Sami 2013b), or farmland is turned into industry through SEZs (Levien 2011), we know less about the day to day commodification process of land and housing within cities, especially smaller cities. All too often, in both academic and popular writing, discussions about markets abound with ideas of 'flow', but money does not flow into markets rather it is pushed and pulled by various actors (cf. Searle 2013). Real estate developers work hard in lobbying state offices to produce images of interconnected fluid cities into which domestic and foreign capital can stream (see: Rouanet and Halbert 2015) or in producing value from empty land by working to create discourses of ideal residents and their homes (Searle 2013). Similarly, whilst the commodification of land and housing in Mangaluru is enabled by past land reforms, the scarcity and increasing monetary value of land, the rise of the notion of 'real estate' and the influx of students and middle-class service workers – it is a process that is conducted by different groups of people, including brokers.

Brokers are the *street level conductors* of the housing and land market. In one way, they are conductors akin to those in an orchestra. Such conductors synchronise musicians playing at different sides of the stage who cannot hear one another; the conductor beats a rhythmic pattern which all can follow (however, see Chapter Three for a note on anticipation and the problem of 'following' the beat). Conductors also interpret a piece of music. Crucially, however, much of the interpretation takes place during the rehearsals, before the actual performances. Connected to this is the seemingly limited role of the conductor once a piece has started. Their presence is needed but, sometimes their actual conduction is not (there are cases of extravagant conductors abandoning their role mid-performance to greet members of the audience for example). However conductors can serve a role in reminding an orchestra during a piece of how they want it played. Brokers link people in a mediated fashion, and in this sense their conducting is also similar to electrical conductors. Such conductors are objects that allow the passage of electricity in both directions which, in complex systems such as cities, become part of the urban infrastructure or on a smaller scale architecture, as such as with wired connections into people's homes. As such, we can say that street level conductors are *links* that *synchronise*, *interpret* and constitute the

*rhythmic architecture of the city.*<sup>60</sup>

Mr. Pai, one the city's expert street level conductors, was fond of telling me, in English, that '*broker work is link work*': the forming, cultivating and breaking of links. These links exist between brokers and potential clients, as well as between brokers and brokers. The nature of these links, on the one hand, and the interpreting, synchronising and 'architectural' work done by brokers to manage them, on the other, are key to understanding how land and housing is being disembedded from longer term structures, and increasingly arranged around shorter term transactions (cf Hann 1998).

Verdery and Humphrey (2004) argue that the "peoples-things-relations" nexus that lies at the heart of western (and increasingly global) conceptions of property – i.e. that individual people have ownership and control over a thing – is problematic. They suggest that it is "possible that things may consist of assemblages of social relations rather than antedating those relations" (*ibid* p.8). The links-as-property which exist between brokers and sellers/buyers/landlords/tenants are a form of property in which there is no pre-given 'thing'; the 'thing' is made up of an 'assemblage of social relations'. However, links-as-property are built upon land and housing relations, and these are increasingly organised along individualised ownership models with a tangible 'thing' at its base.

Links-as-property are dividable – two or more brokers can collaborate to share the value of a link and split the profit. In this sense the link can be 'owned', but only if the client agrees to work exclusively with that broker. However, any sort of 'ownership' is fleeting – it is a temporary relation between two or more people. This link loses its value if one party chooses to break it, for example if a landlord chooses to work with a different broker or if one broker cuts the other out of the deal. However, once a deal is complete the link may retain some

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<sup>60</sup> We could also think of other conductors, such as bus conductors. Bus conductors in Mangaluru provide a paper record of your journey. Indeed, on private buses at busy times tickets are rarely passed into the commuters hand because of the rush, rather they are torn off and thrown in the passengers' general direction – at these moments it is clear that the conductor is providing a paper proof of the number of passengers for his employer left by the ticket stub in his book, rather than providing the passenger with an actual ticket. Bus conductors also regulate when a bus leaves a stop. They stand at the back of the bus, calling the stops and waving at passengers to hurry up and board, when ready they call to the driver to set off. Finally, bus conductors interpret rules on the bus pertaining to passengers, such as women-only seats on the front right of the bus which they usually enforce during the day, but are less likely to do late in the evening. Similarly brokers document, synchronise and interpret property relations.

residual value, for example if the landlord needs a broker again in a year or two and was happy with the broker's work<sup>61</sup>.

Accordingly, because links have a certain temporality that bring forth certain rhythmic relations, especially in the working lives of those mediating links, synchronising these links is a crucial part of the brokers' conducting. On the one hand the broker must move fast to close the deal for the tenant/buyer, yet on the other he or she must keep good relations with the landlord/seller and not bring unsuitable tenants/buyers. Moreover, many of the property-owner links come from broker's own jatis, communities or neighbourhood networks, heightening the need for maintaining good relations. The pressure to be fast, is also compounded by the sheer number of brokers, or potential brokers, operating in Mangaluru – if one broker does not succeed, another will. Indeed, links-as-property have been normalised to such an extent, that people's friends, family, colleagues, neighbours and so on have been known to ask for commission after linking them with a property owner or vice versa.

Part of the skill of brokerage is to identify what particular constellation of characteristics are desirable and undesirable (for particular groups of people) in certain parts of the city at any one moment. The broker then must be dynamically attentive, as old class and jati symbols are increasingly subsumed by more malleable markers (Frøystad 2006). As such the brokers regulate for whom the market can work and in what way. They have vested interests in the existence of market frictions, as it is their job to smooth them. As such they are, again at a street level, the regulators mobility – opening and closing possibilities in the city. Interestingly, in a similar way as to how an orchestra conductor does most of her interpreting work in advance, so do brokers. That is, especially in the rental market, they pre-select tenants based on known, or assumed, wants of the landlord. Some brokers would do very little once bringing the parties together, letting the relation deepen by itself; their quiet presence being enough, only reminding the clients of certain aspects if needed.

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61 The links between brokers and brokers are not a form of property in quite the same way as those links between brokers and clients, however. In one sense the links operate in a similar manner; if two brokers form a temporary alliance with a third broker, and only one of the first two brokers knew the third broker, then the value of link to this broker is shared. However, brokers' links to one another have no value without a further link to buyer/seller/landlord/tenant, which is again built upon land/housing property relations; thus it is twice removed from land/housing.

When successful, brokers' link-work is the conduit through which the capital flows of the housing and land markets are conducted – brokers' labour is the rhythmic architecture that helps the market move. Indeed, whenever we experience seemingly fluid or smooth environments, somebody or something is always working for it. This is well conceptualised through Sharma's (2014) notion of 'temporal architectures' – an arrangement of services, technologies, commodities, built environments or labour in a particular place, which are often arranged in such ways as to engender the motions of some groups, at the expense of others. For example, the flip side of the mobilities experienced by a business class traveller is the construction of exclusive air-conditioned lounges, priority lanes, boutiques selling special bras for scanners, the taxi driver who waits to pick her up and so on. I argue that such temporal architecture (read rhythmic architecture) is not only constructed in micro environments such as airports, but also on a citywide (or possibly wider) scale. Whilst on the surface brokers' street level conducting is about smoothly bringing together different parties, this is only the front stage of a highly contested, conflictual and laboured backstage process. At the front stage their job partially effaces the class, community, age, gender and jati frictions at the moment of the deal, but at the backstage it upholds and maintains these same relations.

Brokers' labour as part of the rhythmic architecture of the city – their role as conductors of this process – is predicted, in part, on their routine. Aside from the important differences in class and jati between Mr. Pai and Saleem, I argue that Mr. Pai's success is, to a degree, premised upon his strict adherence to a routine; as seen above, he had a regularity of which he was proud, whilst Saleem was always rushing and late. It is worth emphasising the importance of regularity as one of the basis for action, as there has been an unfortunate tendency within the social sciences to equate types of routinised repetitive actions with a sort of 'unfreedom', and novel, creative acts with 'freedom' (Wilk 2009). This is problematic, as everyday repetitions both seem to offer people comfort and, moreover, are always susceptible to change. Indeed, they allow people to cope with change. For example, people's routines, such as daily commutes, do not proceed in an unthinking robotic fashion. Rather they are made up of different constitutive parts of varying tempos, with internal structures that allow for adaptation to circumstance (O'Dell 2009). This is not to say that brokers have complete freedom in choosing their routine, which then brings them success.

To a large degree they are expected at certain places at certain times, and are thus bound by these expectations.

As such, street level conducting then is a truly difficult skill. As argued in the Introduction, skilfully inhabiting the rhythmic city requires the right combination of attention, intention and cultivation. Mr. Pai's regularised routine allows him to be attentive to differences as he makes his way in linear cycles through the city and his life. His daily trips to his favourite hotels for meals, allows him to intently jump on possible deals – alerted by waiters, or overheard conversations – and he further cultivates his reputation as a successful broker by keeping a routine, tipping these same waiters heavily and letting it be widely known he gives to charity. Of course, in his and other brokers' lives, life events – such as migration, births deaths and (non)marriages – complicate attempts at building routines and developing reputations.

As Saleem and Mr. Pai wake each morning and move forward in their lives, searching for propities, tenants and buyers, collaborating with a variety of different brokers (some of whom take the chance to be a broker for the first time), they assess clients' needs, interpret these needs into the housing market, before closing the deals and enhancing their reputations, and thus they help spread and deepen the commodification of land and housing in Mangaluru. The wider disembedding of long-term structures of property relations under capitalism is a peopled, laboured process. Brokers' conducting is a vital, if often unnoticed, part of this process.

However, I would often ask myself, and also though less often Saleem and Mr. Pai, why they kept working as brokers. Saleem I understood better. Although, to be frank, he was not very good at brokerage, he needed the money and, less immediately, he needed the prestige that came with it. His specific, jati and family mediated ideas of success and virtue pushed him to keep going, and pushed him to continued nervousness. Mr. Pai had little need for the money. He lived in modest accommodation and ate in mid-range but affordable eateries. He once told me once the size of his bank account – it would be easily enough for him to retire comfortably. Similar to Saleem, his reputation was important to him. He wanted to do something with his days. Part of this reputation was built through his charitable giving

and heavy tipping, but also, as mentioned above his routine – e.g. a widespread perception that doing things regularly implies that there is something worthwhile to be doing. As such, routine is widely seen as a virtue – the virtue of being regular, if you will. Because Mr. Pai's routine is anticipated by many – the temple poojaris, the school children on the bus, the waiters, his collaborators, his neighbours and so on – it gives him a place, even a purpose, as an elderly man in a novelty-celebrating expectant city. It is to questions of virtue, regularity and one's place in the city that we turn in the next chapter, but amongst street level conductors of a different kind – moving vendors.





*Figure 15: A building under construction. Source: Author.*

### 3. LEARNING THE CITY

#### *Anticipation & Virtue amongst Moving Vendors*

*Once every now and again* Natesh is forced to break his routine. One such occasion was the third time I met him. He had agreed to let me walk the streets with him as he sold flowers for the second time in a week. Carrying the flowers in a basket on his head, he has travelled a similar yet changing route for ten years. Taking four hours, and done mostly on foot, Natesh's route winds down from the bus station into the heart of the market district, round tight streets lined with old redbrick bungalows, expanses surrounded by new multi-storey apartments, and wide busy market streets nestled between retailers and wholesalers. The evening before the third time I met him he had drunkenly crashed a friend's motorbike and could no longer walk properly. Not wishing to pay for a room in a lodge if he could not work, he had decided to travel back to his home village, some seven hours bus ride away, whilst he recovered. However, he did not want to damage his carefully cultivated reputation for regularity amongst his customers. With this in mind, he had found a stand-in in Devaraj: a fresh off the bus villager who was to try his hand at selling flowers in Mangaluru for the first time.

“He knows it [the route]!” He told Devaraj pointing at me as he hobbled off towards the bus, “he'll show you.”

And thus Devaraj and I set off at 6 am to try and retrace the steps of Natesh. Needless to say I was a complete failure as a guide. Moreover, many of the houses and businesses I could remember refused Devaraj at first, telling him, “we only buy from one guy”. I apologised a lot, bought Devaraj a beer and hoped that the thirty percent or so of the route I was able to remember would be enough to make Devaraj's trip to Mangaluru worthwhile.

*Once every now and again* Sriram faces a problem. One such time was when the wheel of the cart he uses to push tender coconuts around Mangaluru broke. Sriram starts each day working as a head loader in the central market. Once done, he then fills up his cart with tender coconuts and works his way down through the streets of the city's old port selling fruit for drinking and eating until his cart is empty. On the unlucky day in question Sriram already had a bad fever. One of the rich Brahmin housewives to whom he sold three or four coconuts

most days noticed he was not looking himself, and whilst he was slicing the fruit nipped inside her home to bring him medicine. The next offered the same, and advice on how to look after himself, remarking to me on how it was hard for Sriram with his wife far away. Later that day, soon after he had taken the medicine, the ball bearings in the left wheel of his cart broke. He immediately entered the office of one of the port traders to whom he regularly sold coconuts. Without asking, he took the tools from under the owner's desk and started fixing his cart by the entrance. The trader, who along with his brother had moved down from Bengal to trade in the city, remarked to me in English laughing, "You see this cheeky man! He doesn't ask – just takes!"

### 3.1. Setting Out the Stall

Each and every day the streets of Mangaluru are filled with different types of moving sales people. There are fish sellers on foot, bicycles, motorbikes and in tempos<sup>62</sup> who rush to sell their ice-packed fish before the sun spoils their wares. Announcing their presence with horns, they haggle with buyers and complain about the wholesale cost before moving on to the next house on their route. There are astrologists who drift through different cities on foot, stopping in Mangaluru for a day or two to promise future happiness and warn of future troubles in exchange for a few rupees. Announcing their services in soft voices, they ignore derisory comments about their profession. There are magazine subscription sellers, who persuade readers to sign up for five years, enticing them with free gifts. They walk into offices as they knock, with their magazines in hand. There are tender coconut sellers who push wooden carts around the flatter of the city's streets, cutting open the fruit to allow thirsty Mangalureans to drink the water inside. They announce themselves by banging the flat of their knife on the cart, pause for a few minutes whilst their customers drink, split open the coconut to offer the flesh for eating and then move on with the discarded shell rattling on the front of their cart. There are flower sellers, who balance baskets of flowers strung together in garlands on their heads, stopping at buildings or the roadside and cutting a string of flowers with a razor. They announce themselves by calling, "Huu-ey [flowers]! Malige [jasmine]! HUUUU-ey!", stop long enough to cut an arm or so of flowers, before hoisting the basket up onto their heads and continuing with their walk.

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62 Small motorised goods vehicle.

The city reverberates with the rhythms of selling.

In this chapter I will analyse these moving vendors, how they sell and what the selling does to relations in the city. The existing research on street vendors in India mostly focuses on the vendors' categorisations and representations (through the state's regulations and representatives or by the middle classes) (e.g. Rajagopal 2001), their political struggles and everyday negotiations (e.g. Anjaria 2011), or their hardships and innovations (e.g. Bhowmik and Saha 2012). Surprisingly, there is very little written about the actual selling. Accordingly, on one level this chapter is about the selling of flowers and coconuts, about those who sell them, and about the city as a place of sale; or to phrase it another way, it is about the interconnected relations between the goods that are sold, the people who are selling them and the city within which the selling is done. But, building on the previous chapters, it is also about how people labour with and through the city's rhythmic modes – how they skilfully learn the city, drawing on its foreseen patterns and contingent happenings.



*Figure 16: Navigating a sharp turn. Source: Author.*

As I came to realise during the fieldwork, being a masterful moving vendor with a set route was not primarily about having the best goods, the best patter or even the best prices (though all were important), but rather about being in the right place at the right time (the same place at the same time each day). Doing the same thing in the same place at the same time does not imply mechanical repetition however, but rather a rhythmic engagement laced with intention, relying on attention and a work of cultivation within a changing yet patterned landscape. The opening anecdote with Natesh and Devaraj shows that being regular is extremely difficult and requires learning complex rhythmic modes within and beyond the city. Moreover, because the selling takes place in the street, this rhythmic entanglement with the city is one in which ethical considerations play an enhanced role, with political and market based contestations fused with ethical considerations, marginalising further the often already marginalised vendor. Indeed, there is an unresolved tension over vendors' place in the urban imaginary – on the one hand there is a desire for 'clean' 'modern' cities free from the 'dirty' 'informality' of street traders, but on the other they are held up as the quintessential neoliberal subject, demanding little from the state in terms of welfare, education and so on, thus lessening the fall out caused by a failing agricultural sector and migration to urban areas.

As argued throughout the dissertation, the city is a collection of heterogeneous rhythmic modes – synchronous, coherent, directional – within which moving beings navigate with intention, attention and cultivation. Irregularities that arise within the rhythmic city can be drawn upon as a cultural resource from inhabitants' successfully moulded regularities. The rhythmic flowing together of regularities and irregularities takes place through the concentrations, expansions and differentiations of the ongoing process of urbanisation. This structuring and de-structuring process times and spaces the rhythmic modes of the city by setting the contours through which they unfold. For instance, there is an ongoing differentiation amongst local inhabitants bred through high levels of education and outmigration, leaving many reluctant to engage in outdoor work such as vending. Migrants move into the expanding city with new selling routes opening up, whilst the concentration of residential and commercial activity in the city centre induces increased attention from state actors as they seek to 'order' public places.



Figure 17: Fast paced selling: Source: Author.

In Chapter One I explored the city's smallness, arguing not only that the city is positioned to have niche functions, but also that there is both a feeling of relative relational *lack* and a sense of *dense intimacy* which runs through Mangaluru's rhythmic modes. Mangaluru's position within place-based hierarchies is again evidenced in this chapter, with many vendors arriving from distant villages – Mangaloreans saving their manual labour for the large cities of the Middle East, or, occasionally, Mumbai. I often suspected that the ability of vendors to carve out their place in the city through anticipation was engendered by the *dense intimacy* of smaller city relations. In Chapter Two I introduced the idea of *street level conductors*, to explain how certain individuals' routinised labour constitutes the rhythmic architecture of the city. As will be seen below, this concept could well be used to explain selling in the city. However, in this chapter, we need to add a further conceptual tool to aid our understanding of the rhythmic city – that of *anticipation*.

I argue in the final section that anticipation is important, especially for rural migrants to the city like flower and coconut sellers, because anticipation suggests belonging. Once people anticipate they are already in a relationship with whom or what they anticipate. Moreover, anticipation born of regularity – such as the regular delivery of flowers or coconuts – speaks to ethical considerations as being 'on time' and 'reliable' are often considered a virtue. Regularity further produces temporal depth, creating fuzzy remembrances of beginnings, and suggestions of foreverness. The ability for certain vendors to cultivate a renown for regularity is the rhythmic foundation of sociability and normalcy, which ultimately creates the possibility for acceptance as part of the anticipated future of the city.

Although I researched amongst many different types of moving sales people – selling furniture, astrology, fish, coconuts, magazine subscriptions and flowers – for heuristic reasons I will mostly focus on two categories of seller in this chapter: flower sellers and coconut sellers. Firstly, both of these groups are rural-urban migrants and 'low caste', with some similar marginalities; by way of contrast, fish vendors are mostly locals and fish vending is increasingly undertaken by Muslim men. Secondly, as both groups speak Kannada I could conduct research amongst them; some of the sellers of household goods and candy floss in Mangaluru are from northern India, and do not learn Kannada. Thirdly, nearly all of the existing research on vendors in India is on stationary vendors. Here, in making the distinction between moving and stationary vendors I do not wish to suggest that those who sell in one place are 'static' (they have certain movements), but rather simply to distinguish them from those vendors who move from place to place to sell. Finally, and most importantly here however, were the regularities of these moving vendors. Coconut and flower vendors were two groups of salespeople who, unlike astrologists, furniture salesmen or magazine subscription sellers, kept an almost identical route. I became fascinated by how this rhythmic regularity was learnt, what the implications were for selling, and what it does to vendor-inhabitant relations.

In this chapter I write through the frames of – *Once every now and again, Once in a while, Around once a week, Once a day, Once or thrice a year and Once a year*. Such experimental temporal frames allow for a more dynamic and fluid account of rhythmic relations in the city. The ethnography will interweave with three more analytically focused sections: 1) the

marginality of street vending and political contestations of the street; 2) how walking vendors learn the city; and 3) how regularity can be conceived as a virtue that crosses from the market into the ethical sphere.

### 3.2. Once in a While

*Once in a while* Natesh heads back to his home village. The bus ride takes seven hours and stretches its way over the hills that hem Mangaluru up against the sea, before dropping down onto the Deccan Plateau. The roads become gradually straighter and faster as the bus approaches Mysuru. Natesh sees nothing of this as he is fast asleep in a comfortable bed on a luxury bus. He does not have a ticket for the bus, but rather an agreement with the conductor who makes money on the side by transporting flowers from Mysuru to Mangaluru, and from flower sellers back the other way. Natesh gets off at a small village around 45 minutes before the city and makes his way through the dark to his wife and daughter.

The village, which lies along the south side of the road, has a few thousand inhabitants. Though given its name by a water body, it no longer has much agricultural production beyond those who do subsistence farming. As Natesh likes to repeatedly remind me – “no rain, no work”. Natesh, like many in the village, is from the Nayaka jati. Nayaka can be loosely translated as 'leader', and there are many jatis named Nayak, or some derivative, in India. Natesh and others in the village trace their ancestry to the Nayakas of Chitradurga who ruled parts of eastern Karnataka from the late 1500s-1779 (see: Kamath 1980). At other times, they also might refer to themselves as 'scheduled caste', or rather with the English acronym S.C., and also occasionally, and confusingly, S.T. (Scheduled Tribe). They are considered untouchable by some caste Hindus. A local Dalit activist told me they are, or rather were, leather workers by jati trade. Nowadays, however, nearly all the male Nayakas from the village sell flowers.

The village's position lends itself to flower selling. It is not only close to the large flower market in Mysuru, but also on the side of a main road that leads from the city. Accordingly, flowers can be sent through a relative in the flower market, collected in the village, woven into garlands by the female family members and then, the following morning, sent on buses



to different towns and cities across Karnataka<sup>63</sup>. Nayaka flower sellers from this village can be found in many different urban centres across the State, and many shift locations until they settle on one town that best suits them. They work both as moving and stationary vendors and, although they usually move from place to place in groups, have individual businesses.

*Once in a while* Sriram heads back to his home village. His train home leaves in the late afternoon. After working in the morning he returns to his rented accommodation, bathes and puts on his smartest clothes, arriving one hour early for his eleven hour train ride into the neighbouring state of Tamil Nadu. Getting off the train in the early hours of the morning, he takes two buses until he reaches his home just in time for breakfast. He is not always alone on the bus, as there are a few others from his village who also work in Mangaluru, but he is not part of a large group as is the case with the flower sellers. For the most part he travels as he lives for most of the year in Mangaluru – alone.

His village and the surrounding ones are geographically remote, but it does not stop the locals from travelling across the world for work. Agriculture is unprofitable, and so men and women travel to Chennai, Mumbai and the Middle East to labour in various jobs. Sriram's wife worked in Mumbai before their marriage, his cousin worked in Singapore before his marriage and his brother-in-law in Saudi Arabia until an accident in the sea left him paraplegic. Like many in the village, Sriram and others are from the Konar caste (a subdivision of Yadav), who Sriram tells me were traditionally engaged in pastoral work. His brother-in-law, who lives in a village around thirty minutes motorbike ride away, explains the situation in the villages,

- P: 75 percent of people I grew up with went outside. For only one reason – money.  
 I: But why do people keep the land?  
 P: When we come home when we're 60 [years old] we need land. I need land because people won't give you respect if you don't have land. The land price is increasing but very slow... [my friends say] they'll come back, but after 60 plus. Some people say they'll come back and some say they won't.  
 I: And now who works the land?

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63 Often flowers are bought already strung for garlanding, though this makes them more expensive.

P: The old people. If I [as an example] go, my parents will work the land, if my parents go away then I'll come back and work the land. It's like a chain.

Both groups of vendors in the city – flower sellers and coconut sellers – are marked by their non-local jatis and mother tongues, and come from impoverished and distant villages which are unknown to Mangaloreans. As we will see in the following section, these markers entwine with the marginalities of street work in the production of their subjectivities.

### 3.3. Vendors, the Street and the City

Research on street vendors in ten Indian cities has shown that vendors are for the most part 'low caste' (Otherwise Backwards Castes have the highest representation followed by SCs), married, male, over twenty years of age, Hindu, stationary rather than moving, self-financed, work between 8-12 hours a day excluding any needed preparation time and live in cramped housing (Bhowmik and Saha 2012). Meanwhile customers come from a range of income brackets, choose to shop with vendors because of convenience, freshness and price, but complain about vendors causing congestion, charging richer looking customers more and sometimes the quality of goods (*ibid*).

Survey research in Mangalore in 2009 covering 940 'static' vendors, found that 94 percent were self-employed (only 6 percent worked for others). In terms of education, 25 percent were illiterate, 50 percent had primary education, 22 percent secondary education, 25 percent pre-university education (i.e. college usually attended from 16-18), 0.8 percent were graduates and 0.2 percent had technical training. Only 2 percent of those with stalls owned them, the rest renting, with more than half occupying footpaths with their trade. Finally, small petty shops were the most common (25 percent), followed by fish (15 percent), and including fruit (11 percent), vegetables (9 percent), coconut (7 percent) and flowers (5 percent) amongst others (NASVI 2009).

We can add to these two surveys by explicating the ways vendors are positioned through their place of work – the street. More precisely, those who work in the Indian street are subjectively positioned by: discourses that frame vendors as 'anti-modern'; a widespread

lack of respect or prestige given to those who work in the street; police/municipal harassment and corruption; a nationwide struggle for formal legal recognition; contestations emanating from class-derived claims on public places; and the rural backgrounds of many vendors. As argued in the Introduction, such positioning layers people's subjectivities over time and, depending on the situation, moment or setting, different aspects of a person may be brought forth (with other layers resonating to greater or lesser degrees).

Firstly then, vendors are often framed as anti-modern aberrations, holding back the development of Indian cities. In discourses on the 'modern city', streets are envisioned as places for movement, not loitering (Anjaria 2006). Accordingly, whereas city officials and planners in Europe often struggle to get people to use over-determined 'mixed-use' 'shared urban spaces', in India where streets are already 'mixed-use', city officials complain they are too 'dense', 'crowded' and 'messy' (Anjaria 2013). In this context, street vendors are often represented in popular media as anti-modern deviants who “function as quintessentially vagrant figures requiring discipline” (Rajagopal 2001, 91). Because many Indians perform auspicious acts to protect the home from the violence of the street, with the outside seen as where dirt, filth, rubbish and all that could harm the household is sent, where one is exposed and where strangers are encountered (Chakrabarty 1992), then it is unsurprising that “[g]iven the ability of the *pheriwalas* [vendors] to weave through the heterogeneous zones of the city without necessarily having the right to reside in them... in a time of unchecked urban growth, they become a symbol of metropolitan space gone out of control” (Rajagopal 2001, 94).

With street work often symbolically and discursively framed in such ways, respect can be hard to come by. This was well explained by Babu, an upper caste moving vendor from a rich family, who travelled throughout the district collecting subscriptions for a weekly magazine. I did not meet him for over three months, as he had returned to the city of his birth after his mother had died. The death had affected him deeply, partly because his mother had 'hated' his job. The first time we met since the death he told me,

- B: She hated that I worked in sales, she wanted me to stay in the bank [where he was when he was young]. By now I would have been a manager. But I can't stand being in one place for a long time, even for a few hours. I become frustrated. Even when I was very young I was only interested in sales. My brothers all have

respectable jobs. One is a doctor, one is a lawyer. They are earning lakhs [hundreds of thousands] of rupees per year. They tell me I am like a dog. Roaming the street from one place to another.

I: That's not very nice.

B: But it's true, isn't it? I am roaming from one place to another. Because my job is outside, [moving] from one place to another, it has no respect. People don't give respect to people whose work is in the field. Even policemen, they don't get respect. I was caught for smoking at a bus stop in Bangalore. They should have given me a 200 fine, I gave them fifty and got no receipt. That's how cheap a policeman is in India.

Babu rarely faces problems from the police, however. He keeps all of his wares in one bag and never stops in the street itself to sell.

Those vendors who work in the street however, have a much more complicated relationship with the police and other state agents; one of both aggression and accommodation. I understand the state here as a processual, peopled, multi-scalar, rescaling and unfinished constellation that is often contradictory in its aims and acts. We cannot simply label the state as one thing or another, as it does not follow a singular internal logic, but is rather a heterogeneous, ongoing process. Moreover, vendors would not refer to 'the state', but rather individual agents or bodies – e.g. 'police' or 'MCC' (Mangalore City Corporation). The peopled, inconsistent and unfinished nature of state can be seen in relation to vendors. In India, cities rarely issue licences for vending, if such provisions locally exist and, moreover, local police forces regularly enact fines and violence upon the vendors, demolishing their stalls and confiscating their goods for not having licences. Such acts are often coordinated at higher levels, and often occur as part of cleansing drives or in response to perceived growth in numbers of vendors in a particular area. They are not limited to large cities in which land is being re-conceived as real estate; I have sat with vendors in small towns and watched diggers decimate a street full of stalls. Faced with this aggression, there are horrible reports of desperate vendors who set themselves alight on the street after local municipalities removed their businesses (see: Bhowmik and Saha 2012). However, these semi-regular 'anti-encroachment' drives co-exist with the regular informal payments (*hafta*) given to the

police and other lower level state representatives. As Anjaria (2011) shows in his ethnography of street vendors in Mumbai, these regular payments, whilst extremely costly to many vendors, also open up “ordinary space[s] of negotiation” due to their regularity and everydayness. Relationships built up through hafta payments with low level officials can, for example, lead to advanced warning of coming demolitions ordered from higher up.

Conflicting messages resulting from informal payments to police and the violence of the urban municipalities, has led to an attempt by vendors to formalise their position in the city through legislation at a national scale. Vendors' past experiences “have taught them not to fear a regulatory state, but a predatory state, a state that constantly demands bribes and threatens demolitions – against which a licence or other formal recognition provide security” (Anjaria 2006, 2146). This desire for formal recognition instigates novel practices – for example the ongoing maintenance of an archive of material by vendors in Kolkata, that is then selectively produced to claim rights in the city (e.g. maps showing how vendors are obeying municipal rules, or past eviction notices to prove longevity) (Bandyopadhyay 2011). However, more broadly, these localised practices have fed into the work of the National Association of Street Vendors of India (NASVI), an umbrella body whose work has including pushing for central legislation to regulate vending. This long campaign was finally realised with the Street Vendors (Protection of Livelihood and Regulation of Street Vending) Act, 2014<sup>64</sup>. The act stipulates that Town Vending Committees should be constituted in each local authority, with at least 40 percent vendor representation, and that these bodies should keep updated records of vendors, conduct surveys of vending activities and issue certificates and identity cards. It is too early to properly assess the effects of the bill (my research was conducted before its enactment), but it has been argued that the increased regulation may stifle the 'vibrancy' of street vending, and that the bill does little to address wider issues of finding employment for the urban poor (Mathur 2014).

In Mangaluru there was a successful ten year long struggle to end hafta payments and gain formal recognition along with an allotted spot for the stationary female 'head load vendors', who came from the surrounding villages to sell their wares in the Central Market. Pushed out of the indoor market by male sellers, they began to sell on the street in front of the main

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64 This was developed alongside and is similar in scope to the National Policy for Street Vendors, 2009

building. This was considered a 'nuisance' by successive local governments, but the women organised under the Vegetable Growers and Head Load Vendors Cooperative Society with the help of the Roshni Nilaya School of Social Work faculty and students, who also linked up the women with NASVI, and together managed to secure a recognised spot in front of the market for which they pay a small rent. At the time of my research hafta was given to police only very rarely by stationary vendors, and the local government had stopped in its attempts to evict many of the vendors as they awaited the aforementioned centrally enacted legislation.

The positioning of street vendors not only comes from various state actors, discourses about respect or visions of a modern city, but also the customers themselves, who simultaneously enact classed relations of reliance and irritation vis-à-vis the vendors. As mentioned above, customers come from all income brackets, but those who most powerfully frame vendors and the street are those who are problematically termed middle-class: the group of highly aspirant, increasingly vocal and often extremely wealthy people who are growing in number and influence in the country and seem to have certain discernible common urban imaginaries – cities that smoothly flow, with friction-free consumption and accelerated progress. Middle class residents who dislike the presence of vendors engage in what Fernandes (2004) has termed a 'politics of forgetting', “a political-discursive process in which specific marginalised social groups are rendered invisible within the dominant national political culture” (p. 2415). These public discourses find institutional homes within the “gentrifying state”, in the new state spaces that give disproportionate influence to often anti-poor middle-class residents (Ghertner 2011). However, the twofold relation of reliance and irritation also necessitates negotiation. In one of the few pieces of research into middle-class resident and hawker interactions, Schindler (2014) shows how, instead of excluding sellers from parts of the city, there are discussions over terms of use, i.e. residents want hawkers in their neighbourhoods, but not too many of them and not all the time. Accordingly, resident associations seek to regulate and control vendors' access to 'their' neighbourhoods.



*Figure 18: Scooping the Fruit: Source: Author.*

Finally, in Mangaluru as elsewhere, much of the moving street vending work is done by rural-urban migrants, something which further subjectively positions the vendors. When I asked Kumar, a coconut vendor from south Tamil Nadu why so many Tamils were in his line of work he replied,

It looks like this job has no prestige. I think it has prestige, but not all people think so. They [locals] won't go with the cart. They get less money than me, though they put on pants and go to work in the shop [makes a mocking walking action of someone who is overly proud].

Mangalureans do undertake 'non-prestigious' work, but for the most part not in Mangaluru. Rather they do physical or outdoor work in the Middle East where the wages are considerably higher.

Vendors' subjectivities then are formed by layers of anti-modern positioning, a lack of respect for those who labour outdoors, police/municipal antagonisms, organised legislative struggles, classed claims on public places, and the outsider rural background of many

vendors. Unsurprisingly, such layering can make it hard for vendors in the city. However, as will be argued below, what is quite striking is not that there are contestations over the vendors' place in the city, but how vendors manage to make themselves an anticipated part of urban life through learnt regimes of regularity. This is not to say that there are no state/inhabitant/vendor struggles in Mangaluru however.

### **3.4. Around Once a Week**

*Around once a week* the flower sellers that sit selling near the bus station are scolded by the police. In the morning the sellers walk the streets of the city delivering their flowers door to door, leaving only two or three stationary flower vendors near the bus station. In the evening however, there is no walking work and most of the sellers sit in a row and sell. The busy junction near where they sit is the site of regular minor traffic accidents. After these accidents, the police arrive to try and de-congest the resulting build up of traffic. Even though they are not selling in an officially sanctioned spot, the police allow the flower vendors to sell as long as they stay within the waist-high depression behind the pavement, so they do not “block” the way. The flower sellers do not inhibit walkers, but like to be close to the road so that they can be seen and easily reached by passers by. On these days of semi-regular control, the shouting policemen force the sellers off the pavement and into the channel. However, as the minutes pass the flower sellers slowly creep further and further from the ditch onto the road, only to be scolded, forced to return and to start all over again.

*Around once a week* Sriram becomes irritated by the traffic on his route. He is honked at aggressively by drivers if he even momentarily inhibits their passage. He is careful to never stop anywhere that blocks motor vehicles, but nevertheless must cross a few busy roads in the course of his daily route. Despite working in the city for almost twenty years, Sriram has never had a fixed spot. He took over a route from an older man from his home village, who advised that he would make more money if he moved from place to place. However, he cannot go everywhere in the city. Most of Mangalore is impossible to traverse with a cart full of coconuts because of the many steep hills, but the central shopping area is also off limits, with police issuing fines for those coconut vendors who try their luck there. Krishna, a recent arrival to the city from northern Karnataka and coconut vendor is not highly skilled in avoiding



the police. As he explains, “The police give me fines. For blocking the traffic, they take 50 rupees or so. Every second day... three times a week the police take money. For what? For traffic jams!” Sriram meanwhile, who is careful to select mostly quieter roads, has never been fined during his long stay in the city.

Walking – being on the move – helps Sriram and Natesh avoid police fines and, moreover, can offer higher profits over stationary vending, but developing a route requires immense skill. The routes are developed and learnt; the learning is constitutive of development, but also takes place when one vendor passes on a route to another (as was the case with Sriram and an elderly man from his village). As I realised through my own fumbling attempts at spatially representing routes on paper or in my fieldnotes, this learning was intimately bound up with the various rhythmic modes of city.

### 3.5. Walking to Learn: Coordination, Submersion and Renown

Learning is a type of rhythmic urban navigation. Urban navigations, as I discuss in the Introduction, are skilled practices that involves combining attention, intention and cultivation. Whereas in Chapter Two the focus was *conducting* and in Chapter Four the focus will be *waiting*, here the focus is on the specificities of learning as a particular type of navigation. Vendors' lives also involve conducting and waiting, and of course brokers and auto drivers must also learn the city; I will take up this in the Conclusion.

In learning the city, walking vendors combine intention led *coordination* and attentive *submersion* as they cultivate their *renown* for reliability. For instance, they must *coordinate* the various rhythmic modes of their wares (lifespan, delivery schedules), the rhythmic modes of their customers (domestic, work), the rhythmic modes of transport (empty buses, traffic jams) and so on. At the same time they must also *submerge* themselves into the flows of the city, submit to where it pulls them, to walk repetitively up the same roads each day, but also be open to unexpected calls from potential customers that open up new routes. As such, they draw on the urban resource of irregularity through their regularities (see: Introduction). Throughout all of this, they must be aware of what customers come to think of

them, not least in the construction and maintenance of their *renown* as a timely deliverer of goods. Here I consider coordination and submersion, before returning to renown later in the chapter<sup>65</sup>.

*Coordination*, following McFarlane (2011a)<sup>66</sup>, refers to what Hutchins (1995) terms 'mediating structures' – those organising devices that mediate learning, such as rules, traffic signals or town layouts. They are 'functional systems' that aid learning as a way of overcoming complexity. For instance, coconut sellers have timetables coordinated through clock time that allows them to match their selling with work or school schedules. I would further suggest that mediated coordination, always requires a certain amount of 'translation' by those involved in the urban learning process. Translation refers to the ways in which people and places are involved in the production of knowledge even as they learn it; knowledge does not just pass through intermediaries but rather intermediaries are essential to it, as it is distributed, displaced, practised and compared (McFarlane 2011a; cf. Latour 2005). For instance, one flower seller may learn another's route, but they will, even in the practice of learning, translate this knowledge, developing new potentially profitable diversions.

The second more attentive element to skilled learning is submersion. Repetitive submersion is creative, not mechanical, unimaginative or limiting. For instance, learning in an Indian classical art setting is based around continual imitation of idealised forms in which the guru requires her students to go over the same steps or *raga* again and again (P. Chakravorty 2004; Weidman 2012). However, pedagogical tactics that adhere to the traditions of guru-disciple relations, following established 'observe-imitate-repeat' learning processes, do not restrict creativity, but rather contain elements that elicit creative responses, that can in turn feed back into teaching tactics (Dalidowicz 2015). Or, to turn away from India, jazz colleges in the USA have students copy note by note recordings of past masters' improvisations as

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65 Though research into observation and imitation as a form of social learning amongst hunter gathers (Hewlett et al. 2011), or into the formation of 'communities of practice' as learning environments (Wenger 1998) might yield some interesting insights, here I will only touch on learning in the arts because of its strong focus on repetition in learning.

66 'Learning the city', as theorised by McFarlane involves translation, coordination and dwelling. These three aspects are dependent on one another. McFarlane develops these three aspects into a learning-attuned theory of assemblage, providing him with the spatial grammar he needs for his analysis. I do not follow him there, but found his analysis useful in formulating not only the learning undergone by vendors, but ideas about urban navigations more generally.

a way of inhabiting these players' moments of creativity (Wilf 2012). Unlike mechanical 'metronomic' repetition, the repeated rhythmic movements of such dancers and musicians are constituted by difference, the difference that emerges from repetition. As such there is a "coconstitutive relationship between imitation and creativity" (Wilf 2012, 32), with repetitive practices able to become the source of creativity in themselves (Hallam and Ingold 2007). This repetitive creativity is, for the vendors, enlivened by the way they move – on foot.

Vendors' walking is both structured and (de/re)structuring; it is constrained by numerous rhythmic formations and yet is unforeseen, unpredictable and open. Or, to think again about the contested streets of Indian cities, we might say that, "walking is inevitably conditioned by multiple forms of regulation but possesses peculiar characteristics that always make these orderings of space and body contingent, facilitating immanent, often unexpected experiences" (Edensor 2010, 69). Therefore, walkers must learn not only the contours of the street, but also the strategies that attempt to circumscribe their weave through the city, whilst remaining attentive to tactical possibilities that allow them to transgress (cf Certeau 1988). They must not only be aware of the potholes, but also the police.

This is a learnt awareness in which the body is central. Lefebvre argues that such urban rhythmic repetitions constitutes a form of 'dressage' (2004); similar to the way animals are trained to behave humans as individuals or groups are 'broken in' – conditioned how to walk, move, sit and so on. However, such repeated gestures not only allow improvisational acts, but are essential for them. For example, repetitive, dressage-like training is vital for preparing pilots for emergencies, such as engine failure (DeLyser 2012). Accordingly, if learnt bodily habits occasionally give way to moments of improvisation that exploit a pause or space of difference (see: Bourdieu 1977), then these moments of improvisation depend upon – indeed are constructed in relation to – repeated gestures.

Finally, vendors embodied learning is inseparable from their surroundings; it is a 'feet first' engagement with a moving world (Ingold and Vergunst 2008). Indeed, "as people, in the course of their everyday lives, make their way by foot around a similar terrain, so its paths, textures and contours, variable through the seasons, are incorporated into their own embodied capacities of movement, awareness and response" (Ingold 2011, 47). Aware of

and responding to others, walkers differentiate themselves from one another. As flower sellers walk their route, they sway their hips to counter-balance the weight of the flowers atop their heads. Many mornings they pass middle class Mangaloreans out for their morning walk, clad in saris and trainers walking with hunched shoulders and purposeful, health-bringing strides. In such encounters we can observe how local social relations are embodied within the rhythms of walking (Vergunst 2010) or how a certain gait indicates one's position as a local or outsider (Österlund-Pöttsch 2010).

Learning whilst walking then is constituted through repetition; a repeated navigation through the rhythmic city. It involves coordinating practices but also submersion into the city and, as argued below, a relational cultivation of renown for being in the right place at the right time coupled with delicate remembrances. Skilfully moving between coordination and submersion requires a learnt understanding of the rhythmic modes of the city; an understanding of the ways in which the city can be both predicable and surprising as it flows. With this learning framework in mind, we can now explore the daily urban navigations of Natesh and Sriram as they make their way through the rhythmic city to sell their goods.

### **3.6. Once a Day**

*Once a day* Natesh, who at the time of writing is in his early thirties, wakes up at 5:30 am, harshly shakes his occasional roommate from his slumber, bathes and then leaves the lodge in which most of the flower sellers sleep. He crosses the road to the bus station and collects the bundles of flowers his contact in Mysuru has sent him. Along with his fellow sellers, he makes his way a little up the street to the partially covered depression in the road which the vendors have turned into a well-known flower selling point through their daily rhythmic practices over the last ten years. Some of the sellers will not move from the spot until late morning, but Natesh and a number of others (depending on the day of the week) set off around different parts of the city. Some stop at junctions but others, like Natesh, spend the next four or so hours walking the city.

Over the last ten years the individual routes belonging to different sellers have become informally settled. Each seller has developed his own route bit-by-bit over the years and are

coordinated so one flower seller cannot incur onto the route of another. There is no individual controlling force pushing certain flower sellers in particular directions, but informal hierarchies between the sellers do exist, in which longevity plays a role. There are frequent arguments between the vendors, but mostly not about routes – rather borrowing razors to cut the flowers, or other petty matters. In terms of route development, as a different vendor Kishore explains when I asked him how he “selected” his route, it is a learnt process of rhythmic inhabitation,

Select means that whilst going [around] I came to know. ...[when I] started there was no business. One week, twenty days no business. Customers were unknown to me. As days passed customers became known to me, then business was better.... Like that. In the beginning there'll be no business for anyone.

Yet, if a flower seller leaves the city, another seller might temporarily take over his route. Indeed, as we saw with Natesh and Devaraj above, this is encouraged as it keeps the regular customers supplied. In fact, Devaraj route-hopped for a while as he had no route of his own. As he was filling in for other vendors, he translated what he learnt, adding profitable detours to his route, which he was proud of pointing out to me. One's route is about negotiation with others as well as personal selection.

At around 6:15 pm Natesh drops flowers into a canteen, then jumps on a bus that takes him a few stops in the direction of the market, alighting at a junction where there is a few more canteens for him to supply. He is in a rush and so appears mildly irritated when he is stopped by a friendly customer who wants to chat. He usually delivers to his home, but by chance he met him while out on his morning health walk. Extracting himself from the pleasantries, Natesh sways down the road towards a petrol station, the basket balancing on his head. Making his way through tiny streets, he zig-zags in the direction of the market.

Natesh has developed his route over ten years. When I asked him how he chose the houses, he replied smiling with the English term, “market research”. This consisted of him going door-to-door with his flowers asking who wanted to buy them, and then remembering which houses and on which days. It was often not clear which came first, the desire to have flowers delivered to the door or the vendors offering of this service. In one morning Natesh sells around ten kilograms of flowers. As this is significantly more than many of his fellow sellers,

he does not need to work as a stationary vendor in the evening too. As he boasts,

Everyone is sitting, but I'm walking. I'll finish early, but those who sit and sell are very slow.

Mine is a fast-fast selling. At 10 o'clock or 10:30, I'll finish everything. But these people, they'll sell till the evening, till night, till 8 o'clock.

His remarks also highlight the importance of speed. Selling on the move is more profitable the faster a vendor walks, but profitability also increases with greater concentrations of customers. On another occasion, I was with a different vendor called Lokesh. He was called down a road from some distance by a customer who wanted to buy ten rupees worth of flowers. The customer asked Lokesh to come again the next day and Lokesh agreed, but then told me straight away he would not be doing so, as it was too far and would be a waste of time for him.

Leaving the tight residential streets behind, Natesh crosses Car Street and into the market area of the city around 7 am. He stops for a quick standing up breakfast of *ildi* and *samba* (rice cakes with thin lentil curry) at a roadside stall before continuing on his way. He stops again, this time to talk for five minutes with a family with whom he is especially friendly. The recently retired couple, who sit in their garden after breakfast reading English language newspapers, always welcome Natesh warmly. Natesh, who refers to them as his "friends", told me that he arranged the flowers for their daughter's wedding and that they always enjoyed talking with him about his life. Leaving them behind, his route is now a mix of businesses and houses. Many of the businesses are still closed at this hour, generally opening at 9 am. As per a prior arrangement, Natesh places the flowers inside plastic bags and hooks them into the metal shutters that adorn each of the business fronts. He will return later in the day to collect the money. This, he explains proudly, is his smart innovation to get around the problem of needing to be in many places at once. When I asked him if he thought this was risky, in case people do not pay, he told me that there was trust between himself and his customers.



Figure 19: Chatting with regulars. Source: Author.

The vendors must coordinate their selling with religious rhythmic modes, including time of day and day of the week. Hindus use garlands of flowers for *pooja* (worship) in various settings including the home, and different days of the week are associated with different gods. In domestic and business settings *pooja* is usually offered to a deity embodied in a physical form, often a picture<sup>67</sup>. The use of the garlands of flowers for daily *pooja* has two important rhythmic consequences for flower vendors: more flowers are sold on certain days of the week and flowers are needed at certain times of the day. The busiest days are Thursdays and Friday, as Friday is auspicious for the popular goddess Laxmi. Meanwhile, as the ideal state for garlanding is one of cleanliness, it follows that flowers need to arrive before (or just after) people bathe or clean their house/shop. Accordingly, Natesh needs to

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67 *Pooja* in such settings usually consist of the anointing of the deity with a fragrant paste such as sandalwood, the offering of fresh flowers, the waving of incense, the passing of flame in front of the deity and the offering of food. *Pooja* varies immensely by setting, region and time and is one of the core ritual practices of popular Hinduism (see: Fuller 1992, 57–82). Flower garlands are also popular in many other settings from honouring dignitaries to celebrating birthdays (Goody 1993, 321–346) though in Mangalore, for such occasions people usually source their flowers from the various flower markets in the city.

deliver the flowers before the morning pooja. For houses this is easier, as people are awake and cooking and cleaning before they bathe, but in shops – most of which open at 9 am, he has to deliver the flowers before or soon after their opening, which is why he developed his system of plastic bags. With some of these regular customers he has even developed weekly or monthly payment schedules to save him covering the same ground twice.

The sun is fully up at 9 am and already making Natesh sweat as he enters the market grounds proper. He is one of hundreds of people moving goods on their heads. He picks his way through the criss-crossing coconut, fruit and vegetable loaders and enters an indoor trading centre where merchants from both north and south India run electrical appliance retail and wholesale businesses. Here, nearly all of his customers are men and they have banter-heavy interactions, mainly based around Natesh's proudly announced high level of education and yet seemingly lowly job. The complex is a swirl of flashing LED lights, joking calls, brushes swatting away dust and shutters being screeched open as Natesh leaves the building, crosses the path of the afore mentioned female vegetable sellers and moves into the covered central fruit and vegetable market. Here he meets a row of middle-aged local ladies who sit threading together flowers, with their baskets of various completed wares in front of them. Upon seeing Natesh they inquire about buying some of his flowers to sell themselves. When he gives them a price, they berate him for being dishonest, sneaky and a drinker. When he argues back, they threaten to slap him. They then buy some of his flowers to sell on themselves, as they almost always do.

Natesh and the other migrant flower sellers took over the role as the city's moving sellers from local female sellers around ten years ago. Many of the local women were so successful going door-to-door with flowers, that they could afford to send their children to college, who in turn decided against such outdoor work. The local women had different relationships with their customers than Natesh and the others, however, as they were neither outsiders nor 'low caste'. Indeed, the new sellers' rural-migrant and Dalit marginalities are commented upon by some in the city. As one upper caste man put it, "people don't like buying from them – they are unclean – they are not keeping clean. We need them [flowers] clean for the gods."





*Figure 20: Checking the cricket scores whilst waiting for payment. Source: Author.*

By 10:30 am Natesh is already heading back towards the bus station where he meets up with the other sellers. The walkers all return around the same time. If they have some left-over flowers they might sit for a while and compete against the stationary vendors for some passing trade, before packing up around 11 am. The sun now is really beating down hard. Many of the vendors have a quick drink of beer or whisky in one of the 'wine shops' that sit in a row opposite the bus station, before eating and heading upstairs to the lodge to rest. They all gather in the room with a television and watch the comedy channel for a while, before drifting into sleep, three or four to a bed.

Waking in the afternoon, Natesh refreshes himself, has a snack in one of the canteens and slopes up the road to sit with those vendors who sell in the evening too. Each of the vendors has one to three baskets of different garlands of flowers, and sometimes a bucket of roses. The eight or so men and one woman, Chandrika, sit on stones, their baskets in front of them and call to passers by. Chandrika's husband is too old to work, but he often sits with her and

stays with her in the lodge at night.

The sellers stretch out the garlanded flowers for the potential customers to see, measuring them against their arms: ten rupees for a forearm, 30 rupees for a full arm span. “You want flowers? 10! 10! This 30!” Walkers and motorists stop, looking along the line of sellers, each in competition with one another, stretching their arms a little more, making eye-contact with the buyer. The customer settles on a vendor and tells him or her how much he wants, but as the vendor measures out the flowers the customer complains, “your arm is crooked! Stop bending your arm!” The sellers have razors for cutting the garlands and plastic bags for the customer's flowers<sup>68</sup>. Sometimes a couple of extra inches are added, sometimes not, and the string of flowers is cut and passed upwards.

As the lifespan of flowers is variable depending on type of flower and weather conditions, this tugs and the synchrony in the rhythmically enmeshed lives of vendors and flowers. The flowers, which have been threaded, travelled across the state and are stored in the lodge influence the vendors' selling tactics. The customer might get the choice of cheaper flowers (sold at a discount because they are on their last legs) the customer might believe the flowers are fresher than they are (fooled by splashes of water), or the customer might get little choice at all (with haggard flowers pushed onto them as they interact with the vendor).

Natesh spends some time with the sellers, some time engaged in 'timepass' in the bus station, and some time in the wine shop, until at around 9 pm when the flower selling eases off. Then the vendors join Natesh for drinks, either in the wine bars, or with bottles sneaked into the lodge to be drunk alongside biryani or some other meat dish. They drink, eat, watch television and then bicker, tease, joke, laugh, play fight and shout like any other group of men away from their families do before falling asleep around 11 pm.

*Once a day* Sriram, who at the time of writing is in his late 30's, wakes up at 3:40 am in the one-room outhouse he rents from a family in a small village outside Mangaluru. He brushes his teeth, bathes and goes to the bus stand for 4:20 am. He catches a shared auto into the

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<sup>68</sup> Apart from when there was a municipal ban on plastic bags of a certain thinness, which only lasted for around a month, and the vendors had to fashion carriers from old newspapers.

city centre, getting down at the Central Market where he has tea and breakfast from 4:50-4:55 am. He opens the premises of the coconut wholesalers for whom he works at 5 am. He then works for five hours as a head loader, part of a team of labourers who shift baskets of coconuts from lorries into the wholesaler's premises and then, later, from wholesalers into various vehicles to be distributed around the city. At 10 am, if there is no more work to be done, he quickly washes his face and arms, brushes his hair, changes out of the shorts and vest he wears for head-loading and dons a black shirt and long trousers. He proceeds to head out into the city with as many coconuts as he can purchase from the wholesaler for whom he works. Sriram is not a regular customer, as he spends most monsoons back in his home village with his family, and so can only purchase what is left over after the wholesaler serves his other more dependable customers. Accordingly, Sriram's best customers are those at the start of his route, as these are the ones he meets most often and always has enough coconuts for.

He pushes his cart down from the market and into the quiet streets lined with Kannada speaking Brahmin families who live around a cluster of temples. Shouting 'tender coconuts, tender coconuts' in both Kannada (*tengina kai*) and Tulu (*bonda*) and banging the flat end of his knife against the cart, he announces himself to the housewives that regularly buy four or five coconuts from him. He splits and drains the fruit, pouring them into pots and pans. He stops for a quick snack of *dosa* (savoury pancake) and coconut chutney at a two table eatery, and sells the owner a couple of coconuts too. He then pushes on down a row of goldsmiths and jewellers who take a five minute break from their work to quench their thirst. Some days, when Sriram is held up with his work as a head-loader and therefore late on his route, these goldsmiths decline his coconuts, telling him they have already had a "cold drink" (e.g. cola) instead.

Mangaloreans, indeed it might be argued that many people in many places, have quite strict set timings for eating and drinking. These are not all necessarily the same, but are broadly aligned. In the canteens where many workers take their food, it is impossible to get tea when it is not tea time, lunch when it is not lunch time or *tindi* (snacks) when it is not breakfast or tea drinking time. I asked almost everyone I interviewed to narrate 'what they did yesterday', and around half of the time they slipped out of the past tense and into describing their

everyday routine. Moreover, numerous people espoused the need to eat and drink at regular times. Unlike the flower sellers whose routes do not cross and are limited to one person on each, the coconut sellers – who are already confined to only a small section of the city because of the hills and the police – sell on each others' routes, but at different times of the day, so as to coordinate with the consumption rhythms of customers. Krishna, another Tamilian coconut vendor reiterates the importance of timing and coordination, “People buy from me daily. I’m at the same time at the same place. It’s my timing, my work. The school has its timings, the college has its timings, I have my timings. I have to maintain my timings.”

On the days when he is on time, Sriram pushes away from the market into the old port, Bunder, in which numerous traders, warehouses, and goods can be found. Men labouring in vests pause to drink and eat the flesh of the nuts. Sriram faces a rush on his cart, but it is at these moments you can observe the skill he has honed over two decades. He places the coconut on the rim on the edge of the cart and slices the top of the fruit, leaving just a thin layer above the water. Turning it in his hand he pops open the top layer by making three triangle-forming incisions. Working men drink the coconut as it is, but he gives women and richer looking men a straw with which to drink the water. After draining the fluid they pass him back the fruit. He first slices a spoon out of the hard exterior, before exchanging his cutting knife for a machete with which he splits the coconut in two. Taking the spoon he has just made, he scrapes the flesh from one side and places that flesh into the other side, handing it back to the customer to eat. The customer eats, and then passes him back the finished fruit. He is left with a pile of empty coconuts at the front of his cart.

The size, shape and weight of the coconuts give the fruit a particular life that coconut vendors must manage. Most have nowhere to store nuts. The areas where they sell are in the centre of the city, yet they live in the cheaper rural surroundings. Therefore all the coconuts must be sold, which means that if a vendor is late (as Sriram sometimes is because of his other work) then he has to extend his route to sell all of his nuts or, in the worst case, return them to the wholesaler. Half of the shells he dumps in a public rubbish collection point on his route, and the other half he gives away to an elderly Muslim lady, who dries them and uses them for fuel. I probably did the route twenty times and she never once bought a tender coconut from Sriram, but he did not mind at all.



Figure 21: Entering a goldsmiths. Source: Author.

As the route winds on, Sriram checks his watch and it is 11:45 am; the sun rises higher, the day gets hotter and Sriram avails himself of the drinking water used by the workers in the businesses he visits. He has his favourite places for this, which he claims have especially 'sweet' water kept in earthenware pots near their doors. He never drinks one of his own coconuts, however, as it would be a "waste" of profits. He stops for another snack, this time something fried, before heading into the busiest part of his route: the lorry filled road that runs down to the port proper. Though the road is straight and flat – a rarity for the city – he has to manoeuvre his cart around parked tempos and electricity pylons. Lifting the cart from below, he strains against weight as he twists left and right, wood and coconuts pushing back into his callused hands. As he passes a temple he pauses his cart outside. Two days a week there are stationary coconut vendors by the door, who capitalise on the temple crowd, but Sriram is not here to take their business, but rather do a quick round of the temple, hitting bells and offering one rupee to the *poojari* from who he receives sandalwood that he smears

on his head, the sweating anthropologist's head and then the front of his cart, "I should be good, and my cart should be good also!" he explains.

The city is written into the body of Sriram and the other coconut sellers through their carts and coconuts. When I asked Krishna, a vendor from northern Karnataka, if his job was hard he replied holding out his leathery hands, "Hard!? Hard!?! The cart is very heavy. 500-600 kg. Look at my hands, look how they are!" Furthermore, Sriram often remarks on the toll his work takes on his body. He will work one hundred days straight before leaving for home for a week or two. Once home he sleeps a lot throughout the day and night, almost as if his body has saved up its rest until he is away from the city

Usually by 1:30 pm Sriram has finished his route, and he pushes his empty cart back towards the market. He stops by the side of a temple which has a tap for worshippers to wash their feet. He gives his face, arms, and feet a thorough clean, but does not enter the temple itself. He locks up his cart on an unused bit of land opposite his friend's canteen. He used to leave it on a patch of grass on a quiet back street that belonged to the temple where he washed his feet, but the temple owners were not happy with the practice and erected a fence to keep him out. Returning his knives to the wholesalers, he then takes a bus back to the village where he sleeps. He washes himself, washes his clothes, cooks, and then calls his wife back in Tamil Nadu. "I know he doesn't drink or visit girls," she told me once laughing, "because he calls me every day to tell me, 'I've not been drinking or with girls'". At 7 pm he prays, at 7:30 pm he eats, then he rests. Sriram is asleep before the sun goes down.

We have seen in the daily schedules of Natesh and Sriram that their learning is one of immense skill, in which various rhythmic modes have to be coordinated and for which they must occasionally submit to the flows of the city. This can also be seen in the following three sections. As well as this urban navigation we can also observe ethical practice and performance by both the vendors and their customers.

### **3.7. Once or thrice a year**

*Once or thrice a year* Natesh and Sriram get invited as guests to a wedding by one of their

customers. If Sriram goes, he goes alone, but expects to meet someone else he knows from the route there. Meanwhile Natesh might go along with a couple of other flower sellers. Both like to take anthropologists. Weddings in Mangaluru usually last three days, with the middle day – in which the marriage ceremony takes place and everyone is fed – the day to which most people are invited. The preceding and following days, at which there is *mehndi* (henna) and dancing, are reserved for closer family and friends. Anything from a hundred to a few thousand people might be present on the middle day. In Mangaluru, Hindu marriage ceremonies usually start in the morning and last for many hours. During the ceremony the couple, priest and relevant family members are on a stage at the far end of the hall. Most other people however, turn up around lunch, which directly follows the end of the ceremony. As soon as the ceremony is over there is a rush to the front. Every single guest will now queue to congratulate the couple, give presents (usually money in an envelope, with the guest's name clearly signed) and pose for a photograph with the newlyweds. After the photograph, everyone apart from close family and friends eats and leaves. So it is perfectly possible to fit a wedding into a day's work selling coconuts or flowers.

### 3.8. Once a Year

*Once a year* Natesh and all the other flower sellers return back to their 'native place' near Mysuru for their village's annual *jatre* (religious festival with procession). They tell their customers in advance, and their absence seems to be generally accepted by everyone. Possibly brought forth by the intense time spent with their families, the break in the usual routine or my presence in their home, the sellers were particularly reflexive about their lives and aspirations in the moments of calm during *jatre*. This was especially the case for Natesh.

Natesh had disappeared from Mangalore about one month before the festival, his phone number had stopped working and people on his route were complaining. Because of this, I had not seen him in quite some time when I woke up on the morning of the festival at another flower seller's house and found him staring at me. We soon went off together and he showed me around his village, the school he went to, the dried up stone stepped water tank, the 'wine shop'. We had to go to the wine shop he said, because “my hands shake if I don't drink”. After the whiskey he told me that he had been drinking for ten years, and is upset at

himself for it, as he feels that he has failed himself along with his wife and daughter. After completing his bachelor degree in humanities at Mysore University, Natesh started to work for an NGO. Soon after he fell in love with a girl from a nearby village and they married. However, by his own understanding, he then began to develop a 'problem with drink'. This made the NGO job difficult, and he started to sell flowers like others from his village, as it allowed him to work in the morning and then drink in the afternoon and evening. After a short time in Madikeri, he moved to work in Mangaluru.

As we walk his village together on the day of the jatre, I ask him about his plans for the future, but he is elusive and becomes a little morose. His daughter is sick, he says, and the hospital bills are expensive, so he has to sell flowers. However, much to the annoyance of his fellow sellers, he believes he is a little above his job – not only is he literate, but highly educated.

When we walk his route together he often likes to point out the differences between different groups in the city and explain them to me, something which I really appreciated, as it was like having a street level social scientist. He would point out the sellers of cheap plastic goods from north India, explain that they are poorer than him and his friends or the local fish sellers and explain how he could tell they were richer by their dress and so on. He continues this practice during our time in the village so as to give me information for my 'article'. He explains the temple, the procession, the idol, the eating of chickens, the types of snacks and so on. At one point we pass a man with no legs who is begging for money,

“This is a poor man,” Natesh says. Two men passing behind us laugh and one of them says to Natesh,

“And you? You’re not poor?” to which Natesh just smiles.

*Once a year* Sriram and most of other Tamilians who work in Mangaluru make their way back to villages across the state to spend *Pongol* with their families. Pongol, which can be roughly described as a harvest festival, is celebrated across the state. The festival is a very home-centred familial celebration, during which special food is cooked, the street outside people's houses is decorated with colourful drawings [*kolam* in Tamil] and relatives are visited. I went along with Alexa to spend a week with Sriram at his and his in-law's homes.



We travelled through the afternoon and night, arriving in time for breakfast, Sriram laden with gifts for his relatives. I was surprised at his house. In comparison to the tiny, mouldy construction in which he lives in Mangaluru (alongside the occasional rat), his home, whilst not grand, was nevertheless spacious and clean; for instance unlike in some of the surrounding streets, his home had a toilet in the garden. He mother, wife Pavithra and two children lived together in the house, with a side room set aside for Pavithra's tailoring business. Because Pavithra had lived with him in Mangaluru for a few years when the children were young she spoke Kannada (and much better than me), but I could not communicate with their children, even though they attended a private English language school (this was not surprising, as I met the English teacher at the school and she did not speak much English either). As mentioned in the opening paragraph of the dissertation, Natesh and Pavithra had high hopes of sending their 13 year-old daughter Savitha to medical college to become a doctor in the future. If she was the 'clever one' then their son, aged nine, was the 'soft one'. Natesh constantly berates him for not doing things properly. Pavithra meanwhile says she does not mind that he is soft, as she enjoys playing with him and likes his sweetness.



*Figure 22: Picking berries with family. Source: Author.*

When selling coconuts with Natesh in Mangaluru, I was always amazed by the amount he ate. I used to meet him around 10 am, once he had finished working as a head loader, and whilst I understood that five hours of hard labour allowed him to build up a bigger appetite than a few hours of typing up interviews, the three stops we made during his route for food always left me bloated. When we returned to the village his appetite seemed to double, but so did his tiredness, and he spent the first four days either eating or sleeping, something he would laughingly point out to me. As he says during one of the moments between eating and sleeping, he worked 100 days without a break before this Pongol, and was exhausted, so was getting all of his rest whilst back with his family.

I ask Sriram about his future plans, and again he explains it in relation to his body. He says he had only three more years left in Mangaluru before he will quit the city for good, as his body can no longer take doing two physical jobs at once. He has a date – June 1<sup>st</sup> 2016 – after which he will have paid off his loan on his home, and have given his children enough

years of private education. He will then continue to work as a head loader, but for less money in a town near his village, as well as working on the small plot of land he owns. Living once again with his family will mean that he can also make sure that his son grows up 'properly'. Pavithra was also very happy about her husband coming home. Once during Pongol, when he was asleep, she started speaking to me in Kannada, a language which no one else in the room could understand,

“What do you think of my mother-in-law?” she asks me grinning

“Er, I think she's nice” I reply. Conscious of the fact her mother-in-law is about two metres away from me.

“She's not too angry and annoying?” she asks me laughing

Not knowing what to say I just laugh. Pavithra, I realise, is also eagerly anticipating Sriram coming back home for good.

### **3.9. Anticipation, Virtuous Regularity and Delicate Difference**

As seen above, repeated selling develops relations beyond that of consumer-seller and across jati, age, gender and class groups. In Indian cities, what can and should be done in public is not universal, but rather tied to an individual's suitability to perform certain practices within a certain societal order (e.g. see: Kaviraj 1997). The cultural criteria pertaining to vending in Mangaluru is positioned by the contours of class, community, jati, age and gender. We learnt above how most Mangaloreans will not do outdoor street work in their own city, but might abroad; how, if intergenerational social mobility was achieved, then vending work was consequently shunned in favour of indoor or office work; how there are very few female vendors in the city; and how middle-class derived discourses feed into ideas of what clean, ordered and modern cities should be, and what a vendor's place should be in them.

However, complicating this we saw how the regularities of vendors transformed these positionings. Natesh and Sriram's customers anticipate flowers for pooja and coconuts to quench thirst, and through the buying of these objects, customers enter into often long-standing relationships with vendors; the two groups become aware of each other's lives and

enfold into each other's rhythmic patterns – patterns of both sameness and difference. We observed how 'upper-caste' housewives provide medicine for ill vendors, how middle-class anglophones forge friendships and how parents offer invitations to their children's weddings<sup>69</sup>. Regularity also helps form loyalty. For example, Sriram's route crossed another Tamil coconut seller's and they would usually be at the same junction for around ten minutes each morning around 10:30 am. They sold the same goods at the same price. If one was a little earlier than the other, as was usual, customers would not switch their vendor, but wait for their regular seller. We also saw at the beginning of the chapter how Devaraj struggled on Natesh's route for a similar reason<sup>70</sup>. As selling repeats day-by-day, year-on-year, so it changes and deepens relations. Beyond selling however, in this concluding section I argue that regularity also changes the vendors' place in the city as they carve out normalcy, with their regularities flowing in and through the city, ethically asserting belonging in the cityscape through *anticipation*.

Vendors' daily repetitions are not framed by the vendors as ethical acts – they walk the city to sell their goods – yet they are awash with ethical considerations. Not least this is because in learning the city to sell they not only move between coordination and submersion, but also cultivate a certain renown amongst their customers and others. Renown for being regular, but also for remembering the small differences and particularities of their customers lives. The acts of vendors are of the 'market sphere', but they also speak – through performed virtuous acts of regularity – to the 'ethical sphere' (the two spheres, differences relating to commensurability notwithstanding (see: Lambek 2013), having considerable overlap). Or to put it another way, as anthropologists have long noted, systems of reciprocity and exchange have repercussions (or as it was once fashionable to argue functions) for sociality, with questions of virtue and morality flowing through such systems. The customer-seller relation, not just in Indian street vending, drips with ethical performance.

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69 Reverse gestures are also apparent. The flower seller Kishore invited everyone on his route to his wedding. There was little chance anyone would come as the town where the ceremony took place was seven hours and three buses away. I read it as not only useful for keeping up friendly business relations, but also an announcement to those on his route that he was a 'proper' person, doing what such a person should do at this age in his life.

70 This of course has a breaking point. On one fish route a vendor bought a tempo and put all but one of the cycling fish vendors out of business. The one who survived claims it was because his amazing ability with words endeared him to his customers.

In *Money and the Morality of Exchange*, Parry and Bloch (1989) identify two spheres of money/morality interaction – the short term and the long term. The short term sphere is the one of transient individual activity, acquisition and competition; the long term “a cycle of... exchanges concerned with the reproduction of the social and cosmic order” (p. 2). The relationship between the two spheres can often be fraught, with the transient individual working in the short term often kept at a distance from the long term order. However, they argue, the activities in short term sphere upholds the long term social order – the often morally dubious short term monetary acts sustain societal moral codes. They write:

The possibility of conversions between the two orders also has much to do with their moral evaluation. While the long-term cycle is always positively associated with the central precepts of morality, the short-term order tends to be morally undetermined since it concerns individual purposes which are largely irrelevant to the long-term order. If, however, that which is obtained in the short-term individualistic cycle is converted to serve the reproduction of the long-term cycle, then it becomes morally positive - like the [...] wealth given as *dana* [giving of alms to a spiritual person] in Hindu India. (p. 26)

Their insight is useful as it points to how inauspicious everyday repetitions speak to wider ethical judgements. However their analysis seems a little static, with the short term seemingly working as a closed circle within the context of a vast ethical system. In the rapidly changing context of Indian street selling, we need to explore the relation between the two spheres to account for how the synchronised, coherent directional acts of vendors allow them to ethically assert their place in the city. Rather than looking for how the vendors' actions fit unreflexively into culturally defined ethical norm following, their acts can be better understood through a virtue ethics frame, which has gained recent traction in anthropology in both Aristotelian humanist and post-structuralist Foucauldian forms (e.g. see: Laidlaw 2002; 2014; Lambek 2010a; 2010b; 2013; Mattingly 2012; 2014; Pandian 2009; Robbins 2007; 2010).

Following Lambek (2010b), vendors' regular selling can be seen as 'performative acts' in that they exemplify the ways in which a certain ethical sociality works. In Lambek's understanding ethics are intrinsic to even very ordinary acts, not just acts of great heroism or political performance. Performative acts, including language as a speech act, are not merely representative of something – e.g. the giving of the gift is not only emblematic of

certain social relations or conventions – but rather such acts are constitutive of society itself. Acts are culturally shaped or described, but it is also the very acts themselves that give culture or society its coherence. Indeed specific acts – the performance – and ongoing judgement – practice – are deeply entwined; the criteria on which judgement is based are produced by performative acts (including speech), “while [these] acts emerge from the stream of practice” (*ibid*, 39). As such, because performative acts instantiate the criteria for judgements, they both create and convey ethical value. In this way we can see how the ordinary act of being regular and remembering the difference within the regularity not only responds to customers' needs or fits in with any pre-existing notions of what might be virtuous behaviour, but also generates ethical criteria. In doing so, it can be seen how the vendors begin to release themselves from the dependency of their customers' rhythmic patterns. There are a number of further dimensions to this, however.

Firstly, the body is crucial for the performative act of regularity as a virtue as bodily acts can register on different levels, thus speaking to different criteria at once. Consider learning, one of the foci of this chapter, as learnt habitual rhythms can reveal “a whole cosmology, an ethic, a metaphysic, a political philosophy” (Bourdieu 1977, 94). For instance, when an Indian classical dancer practices the steps to a codified dance about Radha and Krishna and, in doing so, trains her body, cultural memory is evoked and subjective gender self-hoods are produced (P. Chakravorty 2004). Or when a live-in musician of Karnatic music repeats and repeats phrases for her guru, she not only learns aesthetic musical values, but also moral social values as her behaviour is inculcated in line with jati, class and gender hierarchies (Weidman 2012).

Importantly, such performative acts do not only have a value in regards to their ends (i.e. what they do or in terms of economic value produced), but also contain value within their very doing (Lambek 2013). To put it another way, their value lies not just in what is made said or produced, the object (a noun), but also in the activity that is undergone (the verb) (*ibid*). That is to say, that regularity – the skilled ability to be in the same time and the same place – has its own value that is not dependent upon the thing that is sold. Performed regularity then can be judged as virtuous in a way that is partly divorced from the object that drives the regularity. That is not to say that the object has no importance, but rather that the

relationship between the object and activity (the noun and the verb if you will) is not straightforward.



*Figure 23: Joking with customer. Source: Author.*

Of course the activity cannot be completely divorced from the outcome – in this case the selling from what is being sold. Indeed Sriram and Natesh rhythmically inhabit the same world as their goods, within whose lives they are entangled. The vendors become so closely associated with their wares that whilst sometimes they might be addressed as the coconut or flower seller – 'hoo tenginakayi maruvavaru' (Kannada) / 'hoo bunda marunakulu (Tulu)' [hey there coconut seller] – often people just shout of 'flower!' or 'coconut!' to get their attention. Indeed, in India, what is sold is often bound up with the categories of the seller: in Mangaluru Tamil speaking Dalits from northern Karnataka run nearly all the street cobblers in the city; working with leather would self-preclude many 'caste-Hindus' from the profession. Accordingly, although there is a partial divorce between the doing (verb) and the thing (noun) – between selling and that sold – we should think of the doing as a verb that is transitive (i.e.

with a direct object) rather than intransitive (without an object). Regularly doing a terrible thing would most probably not be thought of as virtuous. However if the outcome of the regular behaviour is not particularly troublesome (or not considered polluting), then there is room for repetition to suggest virtuousness.

Acting in the same way often enough, and in a way that supports your words (speech acts), can suggest a temporally deep sense of reliability. As Lambek writes, it is important “whether we stick with things long enough to make our statements and actions coherent and reasonably predictable, available for development, interpretation evaluation, and response. Ultimately we must acknowledge our identification with the person we have, through a series of marked and unmarked acts and utterances, become.” (Lambek 2010b, 47). If a vendor says he will come on a Tuesday and he comes on a Tuesday, then he might be considered as 'trustworthy'. If he does this every Tuesday, then even more so.

However, virtuous regularity is not machine-like repetition, but rather a self-cultivation through rhythmic modes in which difference is acknowledged. Remembering to ask about a customer's family, promising the best products or choosing the appropriate language in which to speak is to imbue sociality into normalcy – a detection of the 'human' within the routine (V. Das 2012). For instance, a fruit seller from northern Karnataka would speak bits of Beary to Bearys or Konkani to Catholics – he could not speak more than what was needed for the transaction, but it was a recognition that he considered an important part of his selling. The reverse could also be found, with one housewife enjoying speaking to Sriram in the broken Tamil she picked up from films.

People do not always refer explicitly to regularity as a marker of virtue, rather, when I spoke with customers about flower and coconut vendors they would variously talk about them as being good or correct (*sari*) people. Sometimes without knowing much about them. Those who did not buy from sellers, had different opinions, as we saw above. Of course people on the vendors' routes who I went to speak to alone knew I was close with the vendors, and thus were unlikely to tell me 'bad things'. However, I came across many other occasions outside of selling where people would frame another's morality in terms of their repeated performative acts. For example, Saleem, the Muslim part-time housing and land broker from



the previous chapter, told me the following story one lazy afternoon when I was lounging in his electrical goods shop:

I was sitting in my shop when a guy came in, a Muslim man, asking if the flat above the shop was available to rent for him and his wife. I told him it wasn't but the flat at the back was. I went to find the lady who lives there. She'd told me that she has an empty flat next to her own and that she needed to rent it for some extra money. I was meant to look for her. She's a simple lady. Simple means she lives in a modest way. Actually she's a former bank manager in Mangalore and she retired to live here. It was understood that I'd get some commission for helping to find her a tenant. The guy moves in and he pays a month's rent in advance. I don't hear anything from the lady about some money for me. I see her and ask about it and she tells me, 'He's paid only the month's rent to me. I'll ask him to give something extra to you for commission... [but] he doesn't. The guy brings his wife from Bangalore and he does what he wants for a month, then one day he steals the gold from her [his wife's] neck and disappears. Then the lady comes for me and asks for help because she has a poor woman crying her eyes out in her room. I told her,

"You didn't come to me when the guy was paying money and now you want my help?" She called the woman's family they came and took her away.

Later the police came to my shop and asked me who the guy was. I told them I didn't know, he just came into the shop. I sat them down and gave them [the police] some tea. I told them,

'I open at 8 in the morning and close at 8 in the evening. That's all.'

The police told me that next time I should get a copy of people's identity card if I'm going to do this sort of business. I told them again that I was a good guy who caused no trouble that,

'I open at 8 in the morning and close at 8 in the evening. I open at 8 in the morning and close at 8 in the evening.' [as he repeated this line he mimicked the movement of opening and closing his shop's shutters]

Saleem believed his virtuous character was evidenced in his publicly performed schedule, that in opening and shutting his shop at regular times, he could convince the police that he was a regular guy.

Regularity induced anticipation is key because it helps construct temporal depth in the future, with embodied publicly performed regularities rhythmically transforming relations, blurring beginnings and hinting at emplaced perpetuity. In this sense these acts are akin to ritual performances. Rituals, in claiming invariance from past performances as a means of legitimising their immediate role as 'traditional', collapse pasts into the present (Simpson

2004). Moreover, if the invention of traditions is grounded in repetition that implies past continuity (Hobsbawm 1983) then “tradition is in turn contingent upon performance; a tradition therefore only exists because it is constantly acted and re-enacted” (Simpson 2004, 313). Whilst the repetitions of moving vendors are not ritually producing traditions that speak to grand cosmologies – though the flower sellers do play a crucial backstage role in the pooja ritual – the past repetitions of vendors nevertheless deepen their place in the city. When I used to ask people how long they had been buying they usually admitted to not really knowing, as it felt like they had been there for a long time. Coconuts are pushed along a certain street each morning at 11 am, as they were yesterday, last week, last year and for as long as people can remember. This leads to both the cultivation of sociability and, on a city scale, part of the reason for the acceptance of moving vendors as urban normalcy.

Regularity not only produces temporal depth in the past however but also the future – through anticipation. Rhythmic modes, draw on past patterns and suggest future patterns, and in doing so they alter the experiences of those whose relations constitute them; as Abraham (1995) argues, rhythms synthesise pasts and futures. Each rhythmic moment is a *confirmation* of past beats and also an *anticipation* of future beats (*ibid*). The gesturing rhythmic body is key here as it is squashed between confirmation and anticipation, between the future and the past; bodies are incarnate continuation laced with change, and have the possibility for creative appropriation of rhythms (McDonald 2014).

For vendors, part of the space for creative appropriation is due to their regularities – regularities that allow vendors to move between presence and absence in the city. A similar idea has been explored by Garfinkel, who analyses playing or clapping in time to a beat (Garfinkel and Rawls 2002)<sup>71</sup>. As he explains, if we were to record ourselves clapping along to a metronome, then the metronome's sounds would soon be masked by our clapping. Thus it forces us to ask the question: when clapping in time, does the clapper follow the metronome or not? If the clapper was following the metronome, if they were responding each time to the sound, then the metronome would be heard and the clapper would be out of time. To be in time, the clapper must embody the beat in such a way as to make it disappear; they must construct their claps in *anticipation* of the coming beat (not in a way

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71 I thank Tatiana Safonova for alerting me to this connection.

that follows the metronome). Importantly, and here we return to questions of political contestation in the Indian street discussed above, moving vendors with regular routes, by masking themselves within the rhythmic modes of their customers and others in the city, slip between being noticed and ignored: they are both heard and silent, visible and invisible, absent and present. As they move in time to their customers' and the wider city's ('metronomic') schedules they mask themselves and, as such, avoid being labelled a nuisance within classed ideas of what a modern city should be and should be free from. Accordingly, they must announce themselves from behind their rhythmic invisibility by calling out the name of their goods, honking their horns or banging their carts.

Masking the rhythmic modes of others in the city does not entail dependency however, rather the potential striking out of new paths. Returning to the metronome example, Garfinkel (*ibid*) argues that clapping in time is not the mechanical *marking* of time (a retrospective acknowledgement) but rather the *making* of time (a prospective production of socially coherent time through movement). Clapping is not directed by the metronome. Rather the clapper is constructing their own behaviour moving forward in time, whilst in an accountable, attentive, relationship with the beat. The difference between marking and making is key as it points towards the ways in which gestures made in relation to rhythmic modes partially break free from those same relations, pulling away from the tug of dependency. Performative acts then, even as they follow contextually defined rules, continually (re)produce new and divergent rhythmic patterns. The regular rhythmic modes of the vendors are not only markers of someone else's rhythm, but also makers of time and space, and, as such, makers of the cityscape, not only in the past but also in the future.

Within a city whose elite social imaginary is one of smooth flow, friction free consumption and accelerated progress, these anticipation-induced, embodied, virtuous and sociability-engendering regular performative acts transform the vendors' place in the city. This is not an explicit verbally articulated claim of a right to the city, as is the case with the work of the vendors' organisation NASVI, rather it is a rhythmical entanglement through and with the cityscape. As the vendors undergo their daily selling, rhythmically inhabiting the city, their novel practices slide into 'always have been'. Anticipation is key here; everyday expectation re-orientates the vendors' position within the city – from a “symbol of metropolitan space

gone out of control” (Rajagopal 2001, 94) to a normal part of the morning routine. Vendors learn the complex rhythmic modes of the city and move, through repeated routines over many years, from the marginal to the anticipated. It is through their virtuous embodied regularities that vendors weave their way into the stream of the city. In the next chapter the virtue of regularity is further explored, but from the perspective of an auto driver who refuses what he considers to be impositions of regularity.



*Figure 24: Watching television in the lodge. Source: Author.*

## 4. AWAITING THE CITY

### *Chance, Entanglement and Rhythmic Dissonance Amongst Auto-Rickshaw Drivers*

The city – a heterogeneous collection of rhythmic modes, variously in motion, synchronised and coherent – is a site of irregular regularities. Its irregular regularities are positioned by city size (Chapter One), can be mediated by street level conductors (Chapter Two) and are anticipated (Chapter Three). As we will see in this chapter, the city's irregular regularities – positioned, conducted, anticipated – allow people to wait.

Children wait for their auto rickshaw to take them to school, wait for their exams, and wait to grow old enough to leave school or the city behind. Migrant moving vendors wait for their goods to arrive, wait for the monsoon to come, and wait for the chance to finally be able to pay off their mortgage and quit the city once and for all. Housing brokers wait every morning for phone calls from potential tenants and owners, wait for the high (dry) season to complete as much business as possible before the (wet) slump, and wait for the one or two pieces of truly big business that will give them the funds to open an office, send their children to medical college or allow them to retire. And auto-rickshaw drivers wait for customers, wait for MCC to build the promised auto stands and wait for the city to be pothole free.

The city is not only the site of irregular regularities but also regular irregularities – they are what makes the city so exciting, so hard to pin down, and so hard to predict. They throw up unexpected, wild, chance happenings.

For instance Raj, an auto rickshaw driver in his mid-thirties, goes to Morgan's Gate rickshaw stand each and every day. There are busy periods and lean periods; there are mostly familiar drivers, and the occasional new driver; there are the usual people who pass the stand each day, and occasionally the unusual. One day I was that unusual.

I had not been long in the city and I was waiting to be collected by my soon-to-be motorbike instructor, as I was in the process of getting a licence. He was recommended to me by a friend of a local college librarian, who had seen me waiting for a bus and wondered why I

did not drive. I was told to wait opposite Morgan's Gate auto stand at the edge of the city at 5 pm and the instructor would collect me. Whilst waiting Raj noticed me and called me over. He was one of around eight drivers waiting under the shade of a tree. I was nervous. The first few months in the field were difficult – the language, the heat, the dead ends – and my fumbling attempts to speak to auto drivers in my bad Kannada had so far led me nowhere.

The autos were in a line, but no one was sitting in their vehicles, instead they had gathered around the front of the queue; some were sitting on a stone bench with a tarpaulin cover above, some were sitting sideways out of their auto, and some were chewing gutkha (tobacco and crushed betel nut), occasionally turning behind them to spit into a hole in the paving stones. All were dressed in the khaki shirts mandatory for drivers, with an assortment of trousers. Raj stood out however, not only because he called me over, but because of his bare feet and black lungi (garment wrapped around the waist). After struggling to explain to them who I was and what I was doing in Mangaluru, I asked about why Raj was dressed the way he was.

“He's a swami! (holy man)” Another driver told me.

“Yes, Raj the Swami!” someone else joined in, and they all laughed.

Not getting the joke, I smiled and laughed along. My motorbike instructor arrived and Raj told me to come back another day. I was delighted as, by chance, I had a reason to legitimately spend some time at a stand again. I was going to turn this chance, I told myself, into an opportunity.

To say something happened 'by chance', that it was unexpected, is not to deny explanatory factors. As I have argued throughout the dissertation, the irregularities produced by the convergences of different rhythmic modes is one of the things that makes a city. Moreover, repeated actions like routines, as we saw with the housing and land brokers in Chapter Two, provide the foundations from which people can use the city's irregularities resourcefully. Of course too much chance makes us suspicious. As readers – of both fiction and non-fiction – if there are too many chance occurrences then we are suddenly removed from the world in which we were immersed, and left pondering the ugly scaffolding the author has erected to make her plot lines or argument come together. And yet one book – terribly written, racist and boring though it was – made me believe more strongly in the ubiquity of chance

occurrences.

The book is *Torteval* by ex-Indian Civil Service officer Hilton Brown<sup>72</sup>, an unremembered piece of late colonial literature set in a supposedly fictional provincial port town of Sikkal<sup>73</sup> in the Madras Presidency. Brown is at pains to note that the scenes and people depicted in the novel are fictitious, but it is hard to agree. The language spoken by 'the natives' (Tulu), the geography (a port city by the side of a wide river “north of Calicut but South of Goa” in the Madras Presidency p.7), the jati composition (Billavas, Catholics etc.) and, most importantly, the business undertaken by the novel's protagonist (tile making) all strongly point to the fictional city of Sikkal being Mangalore. Indeed, this is a view shared by a colonial-era British inhabitant, who makes passing reference to the book and its local popularity in his contemporaneous self-published non-fiction account of the city (see: Venn 1945). *Torteval* tells the story of Ross Cowal, an orphan from Scotland who jumps ship on the west coast of India and makes his name and fortune in the tile business in Mangalore. After leaving his ship in what is modern day Kerala, he chanced upon a journey north and chanced upon meeting a 'native', who then offered him employment in his factory. However it is a factory run by a Guernsey business man which comes to dominate the book – indeed the book is named after his house and land, *Torteval*, itself named after the smallest parish in Guernsey. Located at the edge of the river, this *Torteval* in the east is, according to Brown, just there as if by chance, and it is a chance Ross seizes as he makes his fortune by ingratiating himself with the owner and eventually taking the factory. It was not the use of chance in the book that most struck me however, but where the book was set.

To the best of my knowledge, *Torteval* is the only piece of colonial fiction written about Mangalore, but what really surprised me when I started to read the book was that it was set in and around Morgan's Gate, the very same small piece of land where I was researching

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72 It's author, Hilton Brown (1890-1961), was born and university educated in Scotland before working in the Indian Civil Service (ICS) from 1913 until 1934, for services to which “Hilton Brown Avenue” in Madras was named (Muthiah 2014). Most well known for his critical biographies of Kipling and Robert Burns, he also wrote a dozen novels, many pieces of light verse for popular magazines such as *Punch* and numerous poems, of which the Scotland-based ‘Glen, a Sheep-Dog’ is the most popular and often anthologised (Scottish Poetry Library 2015). He also wrote a non-fictional account of the British elite in colonial India *The Sahibs*, and a memoir, *The Civilian's South India*, under the nom de plume 'Civilian'. *Torteval* was published early on in his writing career, two years after he left the ICS.

73 Sikkal is a real place, a small temple town in Tamil Nadu, but the novel is certainly not set there.

amongst auto drivers. Indeed, it seemed the Cowals of the book were loosely based on the Morgans of Mangalore. They both had similar business interests in the region and outsider-British backgrounds. Ross Cowal, a Scottish orphan, goes on to marry the daughter of a Guernsey-born business man who ran a tile business in Sikkal. Meanwhile James Hungerford Morgan, a Jamaican-born British coffee trader, moved to Mangalore for coffee and diversified into tiles along with his son. That Torteval is set in Morgan's Gate and based on the Morgans is a view that is also shared by one of the descendants of James Hungerford – Roger Morgan. Roger's nephew had been in touch with the Basil Mission archives in Mangaluru, as he looked into his family history, and the archivist put us in touch with one another when we both approached him asking about the same family. It turned out that Roger spent some time in his youth at the real version of the fictitious Torteval house, which sits at the heart of the novel and believes the book is “poorly written, but gives one a feel of Mangalore in the early 1900's”.



*Figure 25: Waiting at Morgan's Gate. Source: Author.*

By chance I ended up researching auto drivers' lives at Morgan's Gate and, by chance, I had a novel set in and around the same locality. Moreover, I learnt in quick succession that



Raj's family land was adjacent to the old Morgan family bungalow and that my interest in the waiting practices of auto drivers was being undertaken alongside a research assistant whose name meant, 'one who waits' (see below). Now, my mum's maiden name is Morgan and, thanks to Roger, I had an extensive Morgan family tree; as I started to check it against my own family tree I wondered if I should quit believing in chance and start believing in fate, but as it turned out, sadly, there was no connection between colonial-era coffee traders and my mum's working class Liverpoolian family. Moreover, I started to feel uneasy about my own labelling of these events as 'chance'. Akin to Torteval's author, who uses chance occurrence not only as tired plot device, but because it allows the author to explain away the violent, exploitative and racist actions of the Europeans, I was using chance to mask what I really thought of it as – an opportunity. This distinction, between chance and opportunity, came home in the contrast between the auto rickshaw driver Raj, and Ross, Torteval's protagonist. The difference, as we will see below, was one of perspective, being able to partially disentangle oneself from the environment and view a place or a chance happening as an opportunity.

This chapter does not offer a comparison between Raj and Ross – between a hegemonic and subaltern man if you will – but rather uses the very blunt agentive fictional character as mirror through which to accentuate the nuanced real contradictory man who spends his days at Morgan's Gate. For this reason I will not offer a substantive summary or critique of the book or its often bizarre and disturbing storyline. It is enough to note that the book, which stretches from the 23 year-old Ross' arriving in 1880 until his death in the 1930s, centres on Ross' continued success as he moves from rough manual labourer to owning the tile factory, a coffee estate and being able to educate his children in the best private schools of the Empire<sup>74</sup>.

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74 The book is an account of a 'British' family's encounter with a changing India as they strive to rise in the world. The three parts of the book detail the 'ascendency' of three different Cowals: first Ross – a tough, rough spoken Scot who at first works for a native businessman before seducing a Guernsey-born tile factory owner through his skill in cricket, marrying his daughter, taking over the factory and making it immensely profitable; then his son Duffy – known as eloquent and witty and whom, after being sent 'home' to England for education, struggles to make much of the factory upon his return and shuts it down, finding fortune by marrying a rich widow and settling in the USA; and his granddaughter Rosy – a strong, feisty and charismatic in-betweenener, who struggles to rise within the now extensive family as she fights rumours of possible 'half-caste' origin, jealous cousins and a string of men who would marry her. These three parts are inter-cut with two interludes: the 'Agony of Lynna' - Ross' daughter and Rosy's mother, who runs off to live with an alcoholic alleged 'dago' (dark skinned southern European) planter after falling pregnant, but miscarries on the way; and the 'Ecstasy of Sylvius' - Ross' deeply religious 'bastard' son from his relationship with a Catholic native woman, who falls in love with an Italian lady from a rival tile factory run by missionaries and, even

Putting the two lives side by side is irresistible because the very same land that had, by chance, given Ross his opportunity in life, also offered one up to Raj. In recent year Morgan's Gate, though just a small piece of land at the edge of the city, has suddenly become very valuable. As will be seen below, Morgan's Gate was once home to typical colonial era activities (European traders and missionaries), before exhibiting what many now claim are the standard failings of the developmental state era (floundering Indianised companies building up debt). Recently the land is home to the epitome of neoliberal urban India – an outsourcing company (in the Morgan's old factory) and upcoming luxury flats (on land once owned by missionary tile makers). Moreover, it marks the southern entry point of a proposed mega-project – Mangalore Corniche – a six-lane ring road that aims to 'redevelop' the city's waterfront mentioned in the Introduction and Chapter One. Five years ago a development company offered to buy Raj's family land, as they moved into the area buying up the old Morgan property. Raj was against it, but was overruled by his brothers who have since invested the money in an extravagant family home and numerous business ventures. Raj however, is for the most part reluctant to follow this path, and remains a rickshaw driver at Morgan's Gate five years after the sale. This, along with his drinking, movie going and seemingly carefree attitude, is something that both annoyed his family and many of his fellow drivers.

Indeed Raj, and others like him, were framed as having no desire to 'seize opportunities' or 'progress' in life, and this disconcerted many people around them. Their lives were sometimes described as a 'waste' by certain people, in a similar way to how people would describe things in their own lives as a waste of time. The expectant city is one in which people are expected to progress. Ross, the fictional factory owner in Torteval was the opposite of a wastrel; whenever he gazed down on the land around Morgan's Gate he saw the opportunity to turn untapped potential into value.

In the previous chapters of the dissertation, whether it be with young students (Chapter One), housing and land brokers (Chapter Two) or moving vendors (Chapter Three), the

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after being legitimised when Ross eventually marries his mother, makes it his life goal to destroy the Cowal factory and ruin his half-siblings' lives!

discussion has mostly centred on those for whom skilful urban navigation involves educational achievement, financial success, intergenerational mobility and the other sort of goals and desires that we usually associate with modern subjects. What made me so interested in Raj was his refusal to join in, even though he was given the 'chance' to do so. Mangaluru's expectant urbanism is one that hides swaths of unsettling contradictions; one that folds the future folded into the present and in the process effaces conflict, disagreement and struggle. Raj interested me because I think he knew it and, through his practices, he destabilised the collective dream of the city's future.

In this chapter I describe Raj's practices as ones of *rhythmic dissonance* – actions that conflict with prevailing norms, rippling seemingly incoherent, asynchronous and directionless rhythmic patterns across the city. In pulling out of the demands of modernity, Raj's rhythmic dissonance makes him out of time: out of time with the prevailing rhythmic patterns of the city set by the linear time of capitalist modernity. Raj was classified as unruly by his fellow drivers and family not because he was “matter out of place” (cf. Douglas 1966 [1966] p. 36), but rather because he was a person 'out of time'. Whilst out of time, however, he was very much in place.

As I sat with Raj and the other drivers at Morgan's Gate the differences between, and more importantly the consequences of, their waiting, the waiting of investors who had bought up the land around us, and the waiting of Raj's family and others for him to take his 'chance' in life, became clearer. I argue in this chapter that their waiting practices are born of, and engender, varying degrees of *entanglement*.

Borrowing the phrase 'meshwork' (as opposed to network) from Lefebvre (1991, 117–118), Ingold argues that what we refer to as the 'environment' is an 'entanglement' (Ingold 2007 esp. 80). That is, moving beings are not discrete entities entangled in relations, but rather entanglements themselves; they do not have neat network-like relations with others, but rather are relations themselves, with the entangled messy lines of one and another's lives all caught up (Ingold 2011). Ingold's conception does not leave much room for inequalities, power and attempted separations, but these are well captured in Srinivas's *Entangled Urbanism* (2015). Here he shows how the entanglements between slums, gated

communities, shopping malls and temples, produce a city which is at once an entanglement, and yet also disparate, with thresholds and barriers obstructing different groups even as it entangles them. Mangaloreans then are all entangled entanglements, but their class, jati, age, gender and religious community position them differently within various settings (see: Introduction)

In regards to Morgan's Gate, the embeddedness of entanglements – their distance, closeness, and intensity – are made, constrained and ordered by the rhythmic modes of those in relations of waiting. Waiting at an auto stand – because it repeatedly pulls together different people for different lengths of time with varying degrees of intensity – entangles in a way that engenders cross-community sociability and mutual help. These gradually start to slip away as the waiting lengthens. The longer the waiting, the less frequent the repetitions and the higher the stakes, the less possibilities arise for sociality and solidarity. There is a distancing, an attempted disentanglement from the environment. For instance amongst the drivers at night, waiting periods are longer and returns less sure, leading to the breaking of queuing rules and angry arguments amongst drivers. Meanwhile for investors, who attempt disentanglement through abstractions – plans, maps, documents – waiting as an orientation is defined by calculative probability; an elevated waiting that strains relations, pulling itself away from what is waited on or for.

Waiting is about the synchronisation of different rhythmic modes in a way that produces coherence and gives direction to the city's movements. Within the repetitions of waiting are chance happenings, the possibility to transgress norms, creating rhythmic dissonance, and, depending upon the frequency, the deepening of entanglements.

With these broad starting points, this chapter explores the different ways waiting intersects with, at and through Morgan's Gate, especially in regards to Raj, one of its most infamous erstwhile residents and to a lesser degree Ross, its on time fictional owner. After arguing for waiting as an active relational multi-scalar practice in the following section, the chapter, in keeping with experimental temporal writing-structures employed throughout the dissertation, proceeds through a three, long 'first times': *the first time Raj admitted his wealth* (a short history of Morgan's Gate); *the first time I went drinking with Raj* (the entanglements and

disentanglements of waiting); and *the first time I went to Raj's house* (money, women and the need to progress). In the concluding section I bring the different threads together to advance the idea of rhythmic dissonance.

#### 4.1. Active Waiting on Multiple Scales

Morgan's Gate, at the edge of Mangaluru, is located in the erstwhile village of Jeppu – only brought into the city limits in 1980 when Mangalore needed to expand its population to attain City Corporation status. Below it the Netravathi River marks the southern border of the city, to its side a railway line gives traffic its frustrated stops and exhaustive starts, and to its back the city pulsates with its numerous and divergent patterns. At the stand, the road to the railway gate ahead, the hill and the river to the right, and the city to the left and behind, auto drivers wait.

Waiting is often thought of, in common sense understanding, as something passive, with those who wait in an unequal power relation with those who make them wait. Think for example of waiting passively in a short orderly queue. Of course there might be frustration or anxiety (or even pleasure at a pause in one's schedule), but there is not much agentive activity in the practice of waiting in such situations. Not all waiting exhibits such passivity however. Other types of waiting are extremely active; indeed they are characterised by their activeness and their need for attention. As Corcoran argues, "...waiting is doing something. It comprises a discipline, a 'use of time'... The word itself suggests strong and purposive action: to keep watch, to lie in wait, to stalk a prey, to take by surprise. Its connotations are preparedness, stealth, and seeking advantage..." (1989, 517).

Such a waiting well characterises those auto drivers who do not wait in stands, but rather roam the city looking to pick up passengers at busy junctions or outside offices where there are no stands.

Officially, the 5683 autos with a city permit<sup>75</sup> can wait in any of the 75-81<sup>76</sup> stands in

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75 This and other statistics pertaining to autos were all provided by the Regional Transport Office, Mangalore.

76 I was given numbers of between 72 and 81 by different union leaders and RTO officials, the confusion probably relating to the demolition of stands.

Mangalore. There are around 10,000 part and full time drivers; many drivers rent autos for part or all of the day from others. Some of these owners never drive their own auto as a job, but own it just to rent out to others. The number of stands is down from 112, after stands started to be demolished in 2008 as a result of a road widening and concreting programme. Union leaders identified up to 300 possible sites for new and existing stands in the city, out of which MCC officials agreed to 240. However, as of the time of research, no new stands had been formally designated, partly due to a disagreement over proposed new rules limiting the number of autos that could wait at a stand at any one time to five, the reasons for which no one seems to be sure. Waiting at places other than designated stands is a finable offence. Nevertheless, many auto drivers choose not to spend their time waiting at stands, but rather roaming, and occasionally waiting at busy spots with no stands. As Nikhil, a part-time driver of only a few months explains,

For me, there's no stand. If you go to a stand then there'll be no money, just talking to friends. But I go around everywhere. KSRTC [bus station], City Centre [shopping mall]. I don't want friendships [at work]. I'll only get 20 rupees fares if I'm there. I don't want it. I can't spend more time in the park [auto stand].

These drivers approach unofficial waiting points slowly, creeping up on the spot with an eye on any traffic policeman. Then they stop. Some keep their engines running, but others, who want to save on gas, sit silently waiting. At this point the waiting relationship between the driver and potential passengers is complicated by the city's traffic police, who are rotated from junction to junction every two hours or so and are tasked with keeping the traffic moving in line with the (loosely followed) rules. These policemen know that passengers often want the auto drivers to be close, and also know that drivers need to push the rules as a way of making a living. Thus, many traffic policemen pretend to ignore waiting drivers until eventually being forced into warning them and, sometimes issuing a fine. There is flexibility with the size of the fine however, as one traffic policeman explained – “auto drivers are poor, so I'll only fine them 100 rupees. I fine rich people 3-400 [for doing the same].” What is clear from this type of waiting is that noting the levels of activeness or passiveness when waiting does not reveal the full complexity of the practice.

There is also a difference between waiting *for* and waiting *on* someone or something. Minnegal (2009) elaborates on Schwartz's (1974, 858) distinction between the two arguing

that waiting *for* is being stuck in a queue when there is nothing to do; it is having little power vis-à-vis an institution; it is the type of waiting that, when there are scarce resources, results in waiting time coinciding with how power is distributed. Waiting *on* however is choosing when to wait and when to act; a momentary 'putting to one side'; a waiting that contains acts full of not only attention, but also intention.



*Figure 26: Waiting and Waiting. Source: Author.*

If we return to auto drivers in Mangaluru, we might say that waiting for a passenger is not defined by a time period measured by a clock, but by the closing of offices, the temperament of the traffic policemen or the swell of the city crowd as they move about the city to work, worship or shop. Passengers then are waited *on*, not because there is a pre-defined category of waiting time with set temporal or material, but rather because it is a practice that is given its meaning through the actions of the drivers who chose when to and when not to drive in relation to one another amongst shifting circumstances.

Accordingly, “[t]o wait is to be conscious of a relationship among oneself, others, and time. It is a temporal consideration of immediate, mid- range, and long-term interests” (Corcoran 1989, 517). A more mundane example is a waiter in a restaurant, who waits *on* her diners by establishing a relationship, choosing the right moment to approach to take orders or to check on the food (Minnegal 2009). Waiting can be then “to attend, to serve or wait upon, to await patiently and in silence, to take one's turn, to delay or postpone, to maintain inactive anticipation. These kinds of waiting are civil and social in meaning. They imply, perhaps, deference, unequal status, and differential power, but also some degree of mutually acknowledged obligation, attendance, care, and interest” (Corcoran 1989, 517). I must stress that in our case, 'for/on' is an *etic* classification based on participant observation; auto drivers did not differentiate, at least in Kannada to me, the difference between waiting for and on.

Nevertheless, once we recognise that waiting is a relational practice and that certain types of waiting require deeply embedded and complicated relations, it becomes clear that waiting can take place in a non-linear fashion. Whilst within a queue, waiting is, for the most part, linear (from the front to the back, with both formal and informal rules established), other types of waiting requires a more active awareness of others; it involves a back and forth as part of a closer entanglement with those one is waiting on (and with)<sup>77</sup>.

One of the peculiarities of the driver's waiting, is that they are often waiting for 'strangers' and indeed they are strangers to their passengers. This strangeness is encased within a very intimate setting – the three seat auto rickshaw – and often involves large amounts of trust on both sides: the passenger allows the driver to be alone with them and often take them to the edge of their home, whilst the driver must believe that he will be paid upon completing the journey. Stories about drivers' dishonesty are commonplace, but less often remarked upon are the times when drivers are cheated or when the strange relation becomes friendly. Gururaj, a driver of 22 years, has tales of both,

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77 Take for example Tan's (2009) research amongst Tibetan nomads. Their movements, and thus their waiting, is in part related to seasonal cycles, which are in turn mediated by star-interpreting leaders and elders, but the decision to stop waiting and start moving was always done in relation to other nomadic families; “...waiting, then, complemented moving: one was always attentive to the movements of the other, and waited, or not, based on the flow of movement at that time and place” (p. 71). Such a waiting is highly rhythmic. It involves cyclical repetitions as well as newness and change.



Bad things [in the job] mean after having gone on a long drive to Suratkal [a village outside the city] and after being made to wait for one, one and a half hours, not getting any money. The passengers said they'd go home and they'd get money. If they'd said 'I don't have money, [but] what I have I'll give' it would have been no problem for me, but they made me wait for one hour. Then they didn't come back, and so I came back [to Mangaluru], it was a very bad thing. I felt very bad...

I [also] got lots of good passengers. They talk well and they'll say, 'we'll have juice together, come with us.' 'We'll have lunch together'... 'At night if you get any problem you can stay in my home', these kind of passengers are also there.

Finally, there is an interdependence of waiting practices at different temporal and spatial scales. For example, we saw above how auto drivers are forced to risk fines when waiting at unofficial stops because they are waiting for the city corporation to rebuild the stands they demolished. Similarly, some university students in India, who find themselves with an abundance of time due to their relatively light schedules on the one hand and because they decide not to leave university as there are no jobs waiting for them on the other, spend their days with *timepass* (Jeffrey 2010) – an Indian English term that usually denotes the 'passing of time' in an innocuous manner (and a word that was often also applied to my participant observation by the auto drivers amongst whom I waited). What is key here is how waiting on an everyday scale – e.g. talking at tea shops – allows people to cope with prolonged waiting for something on a longer term. As seen in varying different contexts, people can use everyday activities such as preparing tea to produce temporal markers in their otherwise unstructured days, moulding meaningful moments and altering their relation to the future (Masquelier 2013), or as ways of cutting out the changing world and its troubles (Hazan 1987).

These waiting practices – active, relational, multi-scalar – are a skilful urban navigation requiring attention and intention (see: Introduction), under the auspices of the waiting relationship. A waiting relationship that is resplendent with the chances/opportunities of regular irregularities. As we will see in the penultimate section, waiting also speaks to the cultivation of the self, as waiting is about doing the 'right things' at the 'right time'. To understand timing, however, we must first understand the changes that have taken place at Morgan's Gate.

## 4.2. The First Time Raj Admitted his Wealth... A Short History of Morgan's Gate

The first time Raj admitted his wealth to me was when he, Jonji and I had driven up from Morgan's Gate to the track where motorbike instructors teach people, including me, how to ride. Jonji, our friend and fellow driver, had the use of a car for a few hours. As well as auto driving, he also works as a long distance driver, and the family who had hired his services had finished their trip early. He did not need to return the car to its owner until the evening. Jonji had recently heard *Hotel California* by the Eagles and quite liked it. I hate it, but told him I liked it, as I did not want to disappoint him and so we listened to a live acoustic version of the song on repeat as we roamed the city, before stopping to sit beside the car and watch the motorbikes crawl by.

Everyone, including Jonji, had told me how rich Raj was, but he had always refused to talk about it when I had asked. I had been looking into the history of the land, and so when setting up at the motorbike track I started to tell Jonji about what I had found out, including my meeting with the managing director of the company that I had suspected bought Raj's land. Raj, listening in, began to correct me on something or other and then started to tell me how his family, against his wishes, had sold their land to that same development company.

Raj was born in Morgan's Gate, the youngest of three brothers whose father died when they were young. He spent many of his childhood days skipping school to play in the “jungle” around his house. Raj finished school after the 7<sup>th</sup> standard (11 years old) and a few years later started to work in a close-by paint factory, but quit after two-and-a-half years because of the “heat”, and because he “didn't want to work under anyone”. He started driving 23 years ago; getting his licence three years later in 1993. His first auto was a Lambini, purchased for 22,000 rupees with a bank loan. As we roamed that day in Jonji's car, Raj occasionally would point out places to me where things had happened, including a section of the river where he says he almost drowned as a young man after his boat capsized, only to be luckily saved by a passer-by.

*Torteval's* Ross also boated in the river, though in his case it was to cross it and arrive to Mangaluru for the first time. The landscape around Morgan's Gate/Torteval often offered

itself to Ross when, at various times in the book, he looked down on the land, usually from the hill close to his home. Even his decision to stay in Mangalore/Sikkal was made from above when, after swimming in the river, he climbed up onto a rock and eyed the land that called out to him “come” and “explore” (p. 21). One of Ross' daughter's, Jane, had an obsession with landscape painting. She continually attempted to paint the river, but never quite got it right, a landscaping trope that is furthered in Ross' continued visual assessment of the landscape – an 'Orientalising gaze' that in a different context Mitchell (1988) describes as “cognitive manoeuvre of the modern subject, who separates himself from an object-world and observes it from a position that is invisible and set apart” (p. 28). Something that I will call here, attempted disentanglement.

This is in sharp contrast to Raj. Along with the vendors and brokers, I would often ask the auto drivers to draw me a mental map of the city – with all the places important to them marked on the map. Raj drew the river, the shape of the city and then stopped. He put two dots on the map and told me to write Morgan's Gate and Hampankatta (the centre of the city). After that he was unable to draw or mark anything more. Like the other drivers he was exasperated with my request, pointing out that whilst he knew the city well, he could not draw it. He further told me that if I wanted a city map, I should go to MCC and ask them for one. He knew the city, he told me, as it was his *uru* (native place) and could take me anywhere in it.

The landscape that Ross separates himself from with his top down disentangling gaze is one resplendent with opportunity; opportunity that the young, rough Ross of the first chapter of the book is eager to seize. He sees things, he decides he wants them and, like heroes in these sorts of novels do, he claims them. He wants to move on from working for the native factory owner, and sets his sights on running the European one. After winning the affections of the factory owner's daughter he marries her and takes the factory to new heights under his command, reaping profits, making tiles from the muddy banks of the river. His roughness slowly turns into steeliness as he is driven by the desire for more and more profit as the book progresses.

Raj, as mentioned above, was much more ambivalent about the supposed opportunity that

came his way. As he eventually told me, his family was approached about five years prior to our conversation by a representative of Taglin Development, the investment wing of the popular pan-Indian chain of coffee shops *Café Coffee Day*, who had started to buy up property in the area. The company is owned by the former Chief Minister of Karnataka's son-in-law who, whilst not from the region, went to college in Mangaluru. Before making a move for Raj's family land, Taglin had first acquired the factory and two bungalows that had once upon a time belonged to the Morgans.

The first Morgan in Mangalore was James Hungerford Morgan (1824-1881), a British coffee trader born in Jamaica who arrived in the mid-1800s, probably during the coffee rush of 1855 (Venn 1945, 145–146). His family came to own a number of coffee plantations in nearby Mysore and Coorg<sup>78</sup>. Upon the death of James Morgan his son sold the coffee estates, but not before they had already diversified into tile making, probably impressed by the profits of Mangalore's first tile factory built by the Basel Mission. 'Mangalore Tiles' not only bedeck many of the older houses in the region, but went on to gain national and international fame<sup>79</sup>.

In Mangalore, at that period, the tile-making missionaries were German Protestants, but in the novel *Torteval* they are Italian Catholics, who were in fierce competition with Ross's family. Sylvius, Ross' 'bastard' son with his 'native women', was given an expensive education by Ross, but any ideas he might be considered an equal are disabused by Ross' white children when he meets them. Angered by this, Sylvius, bent on revenge, works for the missionary tile makers and eventually forces the Cowals out of business. In historical

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78 By 1895 coffee production in Mangalore provided livelihood to 1603 persons, with Morgan and Sons' factory competing with those of Arbuthot & Company and Saldana and Sons, producing between them an estimated 2000 tons of coffee to be exported to Europe (Stuart 1895, 140). The coffee berries were pulped, washed and dried on the Morgan's estate, before being brought to the factory managed by James, and later his son Charles, where the berries were cured before being shipped (Playne 1914, 324).

79 V-shaped *nada hanchu* tiles were produced in the region for centuries from the mud on the banks of the Netravathi and Gurupura rivers, but it was the Basel Mission that first industrialised the process when they opened the first tile factory in the vicinity of Morgan's Gate in 1865. The missionary printer Charles George Andrew Plebst had studied the technique in Germany before setting up a factory, powered by first hands then bullock, before the master tile maker Huttlinger was invited to India in 1871 to modernise the factory. The factory had paid off its initial investment by 1873 and soon after moved to steam power, with the mission opening a second kiln in Kudroli (1882) then Malpe (1886) (Raghaviah 1990; Prabhu 1999). Other industrialists, like Morgan, soon moved into the business with factories cropping up along the river, especially the north bank of the Netravathi. 'Mangalore Tiles' went on to gain a worldwide reputation, winning numerous awards in exhibitions. In spite of the recent decline in popularity, much of Mangalore is still bedecked in these mud-coloured tiles and tiles are still produced on the site of the Basel Mission's first tile factory in Morgan's Gate, albeit by different owners.

Mangalore this could not have happened, as during the First World War the German missionaries were interned and by 1920 had all their properties taken<sup>80</sup>. Soon after the last of Morgans also left. Charles Morgan died in 1928, and according to the elderly Roger Morgan now living in New Zealand, this, along with other family deaths and a downturn in the economy, led to the remaining Morgans leaving of the region by the end of the 1920s.



*Figure 27: One of the Moran Bungalow's. Photo credit Richard Lasrado.*

The factory and at least two of the Morgan's bungalows were sold around that time to Pierce Leslie, a British company who had concerns throughout south India during the colonial period. The factory that still stands in Morgan's Gate today was used, up until recently, for

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<sup>80</sup> The thirteen factories belonging to Mission were allowed to keep running however, albeit with Swiss managers, until 1916 when, after a brief time in the hands of a British based company and then a trust, all holdings were finally transferred to the specially set up Commonwealth Trust Limited in 1920 (Raghaviah 1990, 49).

coffee and cashew nut processing. Pierce Leslie transferred most of its holdings to an Indian subsidiary in the decades following independence, and the newly Indianised company has been on a downward trajectory ever since<sup>81</sup>.



*Figure 28: Charles Morgan's gravestone. Source: Author.*

Taglin Development, the company of Café Coffee Day renown who also bought Raj's land, were in regular contact with Pierce Leslie due to their shared interest in coffee trading. According to the managing director of Taglin, they were looking to sell their assets in Morgan's Gate for many years until they finally managed around 1997-99. The manager told me that Taglin managed to secure the land because although Pierce Leslie wanted to sell all the land to clear a debt, they could find no out-and-out buyer and so parcelled it up and made arrangements with a number of buyers in the 1980s, many of whom even paid deposits on the land. However, for reasons which I could not uncover, the sales did not go

81 See the assessment by financial journalist Luke Verghese <http://www.equitymaster.com/outsideview/detail.asp?date=04/11/2012&story=1&title=Peirce-Leslie-Introspection-needed-Luke-Verghese> accessed 03/052014

through and Taglin stepped in and bought all the land at the end of the 90's. In the meantime Pierce Leslie sold off land elsewhere in the city<sup>82</sup>.

Taglin now have Raj's old family land, but at the time of research had yet to do anything with it. Meanwhile the erstwhile Morgan's bungalows are lived in and looked after by two families on behalf of Taglin developers. The old factory itself has been converted into the *Tech Bay*, best described in the company's own words,

With a touch of a Master craftsman, this heritage building of 150 years (formerly held by the British) was transformed into a state-of-the-art IT campus for Mphasis Technologies at Mangalore. Tech Bay was held originally by the Pierce Leslie Company, to carry out specialty [sic] cashew and coffee processing businesses. The campus with its old world industrial sheds and architectural antiquity have been treated with dignity, ensuring to preserve its heritage, and fusing it with modern age functionalities.

Spanning across 20 acres of lush green land, Tech Bay has a total built up area of 300,000 square feet with potential to add another one million square foot. Tanglin has developed a 300 room fully furnished residential facilities with top of the line amenities in its efforts to promote the concept of 'Walk to Work'. Tech Bay also enjoys uninterrupted infrastructure such as electricity, bandwidth and water.

Just three kilometers from the prime Central Business District areas of Hampankatta and MG Road in Mangalore, the campus enjoys vantage boarding points for bus, railhead and the ring road connectivity to the Bajpai Airport. Situated amidst ample social infrastructure, the campus definitely does provide a holistic lifestyle for its employees. Mangalore today is a strategically connected busy port, with easy access to Mumbai and other South Indian cities through the Konkan Railways. With its many education institutions, the availability of skilled manpower is a boon to the progressive growth of IT and retail sectors<sup>83</sup>.

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82 Pierce Leslie's factory manager's son, a Swiss-British Indian resident, remembers the area well and says little has changed since he was a child, apart from the decline in the ready availability of the mud needed for tiles. He no longer lives in the area, but has maintained an interest in it as he – as a successful real estate developer and owner of an exclusive club at which Mangalore's elite drink and dine – saw an opportunity for profit in part of the land once owned by the Basel Mission. The tile factory, now known as Commonwealth Tiles still runs (it closed for a period from 2006 to 2013), but has suffered like all tile factories in the region from high labour costs, dwindling supplies of clay and cheap competition elsewhere. The Commonwealth Trust, long since Indianised, mortgaged and hypothecated all of its land to pay off its debts, but in the process discovered it did not have full rights over all twelve acres at Morgan's Gate. Two acres were held only through the mulageni system (see: Chapter Two). This is where the local Swiss-British developer stepped in, tracking down the papers (located in Chennai, as Mangalore was once part of the Madras Presidency). He found the family of the original landlord (*mulagar*) and purchased the land outright (they apparently had no idea they owned the land), demolished a German heritage bungalow before the Archaeological Survey of India could step in, and started building the luxury highrise complex.

83 See: [http://tanglin.in/index.php?option=com\\_content&view=article&id=21&Itemid=8](http://tanglin.in/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=21&Itemid=8) accessed 02/06/2014

Many employees of Mphasis, who are drawn from across India and occasionally drift down the road after work to get an auto into the city, have a slightly different take, complaining that the “old world industrial sheds” leak during the monsoon and that Mangaluru is 'provincial' compared to Bengaluru. Some told me that rather than being stuck at the edge of the city during their free time, they would rather be in bars and malls. Raj, even though he has wealth enough to join them in bars and malls, would not confer with their assessment of Morgan's Gate.



Figure 29: Basil Mission Tile Works c. 1900. Source: Basil Mission Archives

Figure 30: TechBay. Source: Taglin wesbite

### 4.3. The First Time I Went Drinking with Raj... Entangled Waiting

#### 4.3.1. Entangling

The first time I went drinking with 'Raj the Swami', was about a week after our first meeting. I now knew that he was dressed the way he was because he was preparing himself for a pilgrimage to Sabarimala, an all-male pilgrimage to the very male deity Ayyappan. Preparing for and attending the pilgrimage plays with two important typical regional male figures – the *householder* and the *renouncer* – and in doing so collapsed the oppositeness of immanence/transcendence, inserting a particularly male transcendence into everyday life (Osella and Osella 2003, 729). This everydayness of the pilgrimage was key, with men not only showing their devotion to Ayyappan, but also signifying their role as a man vis-à-vis



their family, be it as a husband or son. Crucially, for 41 days Raj and other pilgrims could not drink, be angry, have sex, wear shoes, sleep in a bed and a number of other requirements that in Mangaluru at least, changed from person to person. Moreover, “[d]uring this period pilgrims become transformed: they are all swamis (holy men), incarnations of Ayyappan himself, and are to act, and be treated, as such” (*ibid*, 733).

Which was why when meeting Raj, slightly nervous as the awkward ethnographer and with my head full of ideas of abstinence, I was shocked when he said, “Let's go for a drink.” A few drivers and locals squeezed into two autos, following Raj's instructions, and we drove the short way to Santosh Wines – the favourite place of the few drinkers amongst the Morgan's Gate stand. Mangaluru is dotted with such 'wine shops', which function as both places for buying alcohol and as (often unlicensed) places for drinking, with tables in the back. Women are almost never present, the exception is the occasional female labour-migrant at wine shops near transport hubs and the clientèle is very much working class. This strongly differentiates these places from 'pubs' or 'bars', which are frequented by the middle-classes of both genders. I was ushered inside Santosh Wines and into a corner, ducking so as not to bang my head on the fan as I was offered a plastic seat. The floor was littered with used whiskey cartons and bits of left over curried chicken and I could not help but think about Raj's bare feet. As it turned out he did not drink that day, nor at all until he had returned from Sabarimala, but he did not wish to miss out on the chance of showing off the strange white (or rather red) man to his friends.

The importance of auto stands like Morgan's Gate as sites of male sociability, which bring both regular comforts and the occasional unexpected event, can be seen not only in the displays of sociality and humour described above, but also in the steady presence of non-drivers amongst those waiting at the stand. Leslie and Sunil, two contractors who have many friends amongst the drivers, spend at least an hour at the stand most evenings. Sunil, during the first nine months I knew him, drank increasingly heavily until he crashed his bike one day when drunk. Soon after he stopped drinking, and thus missed out on the sociability of the wine shops he had previously enjoyed. From then on he spent many more hours at Morgan's Gate instead. Another regular was Vishy, a local man in his sixties who constantly moved in and out of the stand throughout the day, pausing for minutes or hours to chat or

sit under the shade of the tree. Because the drivers were coming and going with passengers, it was often these locals and I who were the mainstays at the stand during busy periods. Jainta, who worked as a lorry driver until he died around six months after I left the city, waited for calls from contractors intermittently between his home and the auto stand. He liked coming to Morgan's Gate because,

They are all a good human beings there. There is no robbing or telling lies. If I am in trouble and I need money, I'll ask and they'll give. Also I'll give to others. Today, when you came, Dinesh took you to the tile factory. It wasn't necessary, but he'll do it. If you come, then they'll all 'salaam' you and tell you to sit.

Waiting at auto stands temporally allows certain jati and community relations to alter (cf. Jeffrey 2010). Because Mangaluru was known as a place with active Hindu nationalist groups (see: Chapter One), and because many people alleged that auto drivers often acted as the eyes and ears for violent vigilante groups from the Hindutva movement, I often asked the drivers about these issues. Whilst, especially close to elections I would hear more 'communal' sentiments, more often than not the drivers expressed cross-religious community solidarity. Raj for example, got tired at my questioning one day in Santosh Wines and went on a long speech about jati not being important, about how we are all one, and how there are only two jatis: men and women. Jonji, a Protestant auto rickshaw driver, followed this up by telling me a joke. We have to work together he told me because, "the Muslim god is deaf, that's why they have to make the call, the Hindu gods' legs don't work, that's why they have to carry them, and the Christian god is blind, that's why we have to take a candle!" Amongst the Morgan's Gate regulars I was given examples of how they would help each other, regardless of religion. Jainta, for example, told me how he drove Rasheed, a Beary Muslim auto driver, across the State border to Kerala in the middle of the night in his lorry to visit a dying family member.

Most auto drivers, especially if auto driving is their main job, will have a stand they consider as their own, although there are no formal restrictions about which stand an auto driver can wait. Baldev, a union leader and driver from a different stand explains,

Every driver has his own park, the one he comes to first thing. It's his own place. I go to Temple Square. Then I will stop there. If there's many people [auto drivers] there then I won't stop. Where the autos are less I'll stop there. Otherwise I come back to Temple Square. That is psychology, we think 'It's my park. I must go there. I'm only going there'.

This is the stand, which they will go to first thing when they start working, where they will have the most friends or as some put it 'known people'<sup>84</sup>.

Moreover, as can be seen in Jainta's account above, the sociability of auto stands slides into notions of mutual help that appear in variously formal and informal ways. Most drivers are members or a stand-specific formally or informally constituted 'organisation'<sup>85</sup>. Some local organisations will have regular fees and set meeting dates, whilst others meet as and when the need arises. They can be important sources of solidarity, information exchange, money lending through loans and social security, as Charlie (a driver for 13 years and regular of a different stand) explains,

The life membership is 300. From that money they've established a fund [for lending money]. And if there's an accident then they'll collect money [for the driver or their family in case of death]. And there are meetings, like about increasing the meter rates. We'll be informed. If anything happens to any auto driver then we'll come to know. If there's a major accident then they'll collect. If there's sickness they'll collect money and pay. Like that.

The work of these local organisations naturally cross-cuts those of the city-wide unions. Where they differ is in levels of formality and, quite obviously, scale. Unions promote insurance schemes, organise protests/strikes, donate books to school children and have links to wider political or ideological movements/groups/parties, whereas local organisations would become more intimately involved in individual troubles and everyday local issues. Morgan's Gate is a local organisation on the informal side. There are no set fees, meetings are irregular and 'leadership' is uncontested. As Prasant, a well liked and quick to laugh

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84 As well as having one stand, which is their main stand, many drivers have a number of other stands, usually within the local vicinity, at which they are well known. This is in part a practical outcome of autos filling in 'gaps' in the local bus service, i.e. plying the same routes where there are infrequent or no buses and being well known at stands at both ends. As many drivers have their main stand close to their home often they know other local drivers who might not have the same main stand. Active union members and lifelong elderly drivers often know people throughout the city. There are also drivers at stands who, having dropped their passengers off nearby, come to a stand where they know nobody. Thus waiting at any one stand at any one time there are a mix of people who range from a group of 'unknown' people (though this would be rare, as drivers often know each other from other contexts e.g. through church) at one end, and a tight group of regulars at the other. Stands located in the busy city centre can exhibit more 'anonymity' at peak hours, whereas stands like Morgan's Gate at the edge of the city have more regulars and semi-regulars. Some auto drivers believe that until 1989 that autos could only wait on one particular stand, but others are in disagreement about the date and if the practice existed at all. The officials from the RTO are often transferred between cities, as is the norm for people working in 'government jobs', and thus were also unsure if this practice existed and when.

85 The term used locally is *samthi*. This can also refer to unions. I use 'local organisation' to refer to stand-specific *samthis* and 'union' to the city/district wide bodies.

driver explains, “There is a leader – the longest serving guy, he’s the chief. After him, it’s me. So once he’s dead [laughing] it’s me!”

Male sociability and (in)formal relations of mutual help take place within a tightly regulated social system of waiting: the queue. Queues at auto stands, as queues elsewhere, generally have both formal and informal rules and sanctions are formulated to regulate behaviour, such as 'pushing in', and appeal to values, such as egalitarianism and orderliness, that may not necessarily link to wider cultural norms outside the queue itself (Mann 1969). The rules for auto drivers are usually displayed on a sign at each stand. The stand in Morgan's Gate reads:

Morning from 7 till evening 7. Those who stand first in line should take the fare. If you don't take a fare, you should put the auto at the back of the line. If you leave the auto in the park and go somewhere, then you should go back 3 places (see figure 31).

There are many occasions however, when someone might not want to follow the rules. For example, if it is the end of a driver's shift and the passenger wishes to go to the other side of the city, it becomes too costly because of the fuel wasted on the trip back. The driver then would ask down the line to see if someone is willing to take the passenger. Amongst close drivers, this is usually resolved easily enough. For example, everybody knows that Prasant is not so driven by the need for profit as he has no family to provide for and owns his own auto outright, whereas Shekhar has two young children, and thus is much more likely to be willing to work a little longer (see below for more on the importance of ownership).

The low-stake queuing during the day changes at night. Most night work is done outside hospitals, the train station, bus station, and at points in the city where long distance buses drop of passengers. Officially drivers can charge one and half fare, but unofficially this only holds till midnight, after which double fare is charged or prices are individually negotiated with passengers before the journey. Unlike during the day when drivers almost universally keep to the queuing system or find another driver with whom they are happy to exchange their place, at night some drivers attempt to break the established rules and this leads to disputes. This is not to say that there are not possibilities for mutual help or sociability, but rather that they are much diminished.



*Figure 31: Rules at Morgan's Gate. Source: Author.*

There are at least three reasons for the change between night and day. Firstly, at night drivers have to wait a long time for fares (usually when the night bus drops off passengers), but it is profitable because the passengers will usually want to go much further than in the day (there is no night-time public transport system in this smaller city), the fare is doubled, and the gas costs are much lower as there is no traffic. This high-profit long-waiting can result in economic loss if, for example, after waiting three hours the passenger only wants a short trip. Secondly, many who work at night are not full time drivers. They are less likely to be in local organisations or unions and may only do the work for a short period. As one union member puts it, “they are not drivers”, rather they are people who “drive an auto at night”. Thirdly, other rules in general are not followed at night; most noticeably khaki shirts are not worn, even by those drivers who also work during the day. It is in this change from night to day, that we can begin to understand the differences when waiting becomes partially disentangled.

### 4.3.2. Disentangling

As discussed above, different types of waiting can take place simultaneously on various scales. Maybe the most awaited for happening amongst auto drivers is an improvement in the state of the roads. In their waiting they are in good company, as Mangaloreans and incomers have long been waiting, and complaining. In 1800, Thomas Munro, the first Collector of South Kanara wrote

Ten miles a-day is as much as a cutcherry can go on an average in this country; and as nobody travels at night, by the badness of the roads and interruptions at ferries, it is usually late before we get to our ground; and with prayers and ablutions, and waiting for baggage, nothing is ever done on these days. (quoted in Gleig 1831, 289)

Yet road improvement was not taken up seriously by the British, with responsibility for maintenance passing through a number of bodies that never had the funds required, and new roads for the most part were limited to connecting important commercial areas and linking military stations with 'trouble spots' (M. Rai 2003) – the colonial administrative head, in distant Chennai, was not overly concerned with a provincial backwater like Mangalore.

As we saw in Chapter One, independence brought about considerable infrastructural development in the city – an airport, an all weather port, a road bridge across the Netravathi River – but the condition of roads remained, and remains, a problem. Indeed, in the 1980's, the Consumers' Education Trust was running an annual 'spot the pothole' contest in an attempt to shame the local administration into repairing bad roads (Javeed 1988). The shaming and continued complaints did not work however, and roads remain heavily potholed.

In 2012 *Jaago [Wake Up] Mangalore Association* urged a district wide horn-honking protest against bad roads, blaming lack of coordination between government departments, bad planning, non-payment of contractors and poor quality work claiming, “good roads are the citizen's birth right”, and describing the rhythmic modes of roads thus,

If a road near your house gets spoilt, the administration takes one year for tender, and one more year for repair. Then the road lasts only a year. So in this cycle of 5 years, citizens get

to enjoy a good road only for one year.<sup>86</sup>

The promise of new, better roads is often heard in Mangaluru. Once, in the run up to an election when I was sitting at Morgan's Gate, a local politician stopped to give a speech at the junction. After the speech he approached the drivers, canvassing for their support with a promise of better roads, and a road bridge over the railway line close by. Moreover, in 2008/2009 many roads in the city were covered in concrete, the hope being that they would better withstand the heavy monsoon than currently existing asphalt roads. At this time certain roads were widened, but many locals complained about the work, which not only demolished auto stands (see above), but also pavements. In one part of the city, Valencia, road widening would have led to the destruction of 45 trees along one stretch of road, but locals and activists campaigned against the widening and managed to get a staying order after only six trees were cut. Using the Right to Information Act 2005 (RTI) locals discovered that although the land beside the road belonged to MCC, the trees belonged to the Forestry Department and they had not given their permission for the trees' removal. Echoing what many had told me, one local tree campaigner – in between pointing out the lack of storm drains and the awkwardly sized roundabouts that caused accidents – claimed that the architect who planned the road widening scheme was also the main player behind the proposed six-lane ring road project, Mangalore Corniche. The road, which cut through Valencia and cut down trees, would provide a key link from the city onto the proposed circular.

Mangalore Corniche, which will sweep along the waterfront of the city mimicking Marine Drive in Mumbai, will eventually, if started, encircle the city (see picture 32). Land will be acquired as part of the project on each side of the road for 'comprehensive redevelopment': the building of housing, commercial buildings and recreational centres. Much of the land that may one day be subsumed by the Corniche is owned by the port, with renting tenants easily moved, but other land earmarked for the Corniche is privately owned, and real estate developers are buying this up with the future increase in land prices in mind. Indeed there is already one building project under construction named *The Corniche* in expectation.

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86 'Honking' for a Cause' 'Advertiser's Feature' in The Hindu Mangalore Edition, Thursday March 22<sup>nd</sup> 2012



Figure 32: Proposed Route of the Corniche. Morgan's Gate is close to "Ullal Bridge". Source: Pre Feasibility Report.

Mangalore Corniche is not quite a state, not quite a private project. For a while it was once under the auspices of the Coastal Development Authority (CDA); they soon handed it on to Mangalore Urban Development Authority (MUDA) citing a lack of capacity. In MUDA if you ask about the project, people will tell you it is the pet project of the most influential real estate developer in the city and planner behind the above discussed road-widening project. The two are close, with MUDA often advised by his consultancy firm for free.

The current plan is to take all of the land with agreement from the owners, redevelop the area in its entirety and give back a percentage of the redeveloped land to the original owners, rather than go for land acquisition as has traditionally been the case for large scale infrastructure projects in India and Mangaluru (see: Cook, Bhatta, and Dinker 2013). The hope is the owners will agree to the scheme because of assurances over increased land prices. Such a model was employed previously in agricultural land in Gujarat, which is an inspiration for the project, but according to the CDA has never before been done in an urban



area. Motivation for avoiding acquisition might be the new Land Acquisition and Rehabilitation and Resettlement Act 2013, which has provisions against 'land grabbing' – builders buying up land in advance of government acquisition schemes. This act, brought in under the last national government, is currently facing dilution by the current administration, though at the time of writing it is unclear if they will be successful in bringing changes.

Most builders believe there is the political will to make the project happen, and are bullish about their prospects. As the managing director of a real estate developers says,

D: Mangalore Corniche, this will do wonders for Mangalore... It's good because you will have a 100 feet road and the river. You need to look at development from that aspect – there will be systematic development.

I: It's good for builders then?

D: It's a planned development that will give the city a boost. First [of all] it will benefit the city. I feel it is going to happen. There's a lot of energy, so we're very hopeful. There's lots of energy in the local CREDAI [Confederation of Real Estate Developers' Associations of India] group. There's a young generation – we have a lot of fight.

The Corniche will encircle the city, but the first phase – the water front development – is the most important in terms of redeveloping Mangaluru and offering potential profits for builders. Morgan's Gate will serve as its southern gateway at the edge of the city. It is within such context that we can better understand the development potential of Raj's erstwhile family land and the two Morgan's bungalows that currently sit empty. Luxury apartments are already being built in Morgan's Gate – on erstwhile Basel Mission land – with the developer of that project leaving space for the Corniche.

There was excitement amongst many that I spoke to about the possibility of the project. Here, as elsewhere, large-scale road construction enchants populations, promising progress and development through economic connectivity and increased speed, even as past road constructions continue to disrupt and disappoint (P. Harvey and Knox 2012). And as we have seen above, disappointment is never far away from roads in Mangaluru. Indeed, in India, experience suggests that with large-scale transport infrastructure projects, completion is only one of three possibilities – such projects might also be removed or *suspended* for varying amounts of time (Gupta 2015). Understanding when and where

projects will be built, stopped or suspended can have immense financial repercussions. I was told of a former mayor barging into the office of the developer/planner/architect behind the Corniche project and demanding to know its exact route and why he had seen 'surveyors' in a different spot. As such, infrastructural projects like Mangalore Corniche not only reveal much about the aspirations and hopes a society invests into imagined futures, but also about power to 'disentangle'.

Waiting for the Corniche is a different type of waiting than that of auto drivers waiting for their customers. The relative power of individuals within a closed social system influences waiting in relation to the distribution of time (Schwartz 1974) – i.e. powerful people often have to wait less – but in complex social systems like cities, relative power allows people to wait in ways that others cannot. Whilst Raj's family and others who have sold land around Morgan's Gate or the proposed route of the Corniche may have made what they considered to be considerable sums of money, their ability to wait for better returns in the future was constrained by immediate financial concerns and the lack of knowledge about the likelihood of increased value. Real estate developers not only have the resources to wait, but also, due to their closeness to politicians and other state apparatuses, the knowledge of the details of future projects – knowledge that allows them to wait for longer periods, from greater spatial and temporal distance. Accordingly, their waiting – active, relational and multi-scalar – is also calculative; it is a waiting characterised by abstract probability, partially *disentangled* from the world around it.

#### **4.4. The First Time I Went to Raj's House... Women, Money & Timing**

##### 4.4.1. Women

The first time I went to Raj's house was for his wedding to Radhika, a high school teacher from Kerala, with whom his family had arranged a match. I had been told by a few of the Morgan's Gate regulars that Raj had a “really, really big house”. As quite a few of the auto drivers, Raj included, enjoyed winding me up during my attempts to learn about their life (i.e. persuading me to cancel an interview so they could take me to a “temple for a very important festival”, which turned out to be the wine shop) I did not know quite what to believe. Thus I

was a little shocked when I arrived at the white, shiny three storey house with decorative columns decked out in sparking electric lights to celebrate the wedding; the house was 'really, really big', with a floor for each of the three brothers and a small retinue of live-in workers. The wedding had taken place in the afternoon amongst thousands of guests at the nearby Muslim owned Unity Hall, but now it was a strictly close friends and family affair – as it had been at the *mehendi* party the night before, and the bachelor party a few weeks earlier.

Many of Raj's friends claimed that he was put under a lot of pressure by both his siblings and his mother to get married. As the youngest of three brothers, it was now 'his turn'. However Raj was not very keen. As he told me a few months after his marriage when sitting at Morgan's Gate "I don't like girls". I pointed out a group of girls who were walking up towards MPhasis at the old Morgan factory, a few of which were dressed in a 'modern' way, and a few of which I thought were good looking.

"And them?" I asked.

"I've seen many girls who are wearing jeans and *kurti* [upper garment], but inside there'll be nothing!" he replied.

Ross however, the Scottish factory owner from the novel *Torteval*, views women in a similar way to how he views the local landscape. Early in the book as a way of learning Tulu he takes a local Catholic girl, Coaces – bought from her alcoholic father for the price of a bottle. When he first meets her he surveys her body,

...tall for an Indian and fair ; erect and shapely ; she looked kind, sensible, decent. She wore a white blouse and a short dark-blue skirt; her legs were bare and her small feet were encased in little black slippers with the turned up toes, Mohammedan-fashion. The blouse made a ring at the base of her really beautiful throat; under her short sleeves were soft round capable arms. Her black hair was tied with ribbon at the back – where a Hindu girl would have worn a bunch of flowers ; her face was an oval. Her features regular. Out of it immense eyes fastened on Ross anxiously rather than greedily – huge eyes dark as they were deep, intelligent eyes, living. (p. 46)

Akin to other colonial writings, "the eye treats the body as a landscape: it proceeds systematically from part to part, quantifying and spatialising, noting colour and texture, and finally passing an aesthetic judgement which stressed the body's role as object to be viewed" (Spurr 1993, 23). This coalescence of the representation of both body and landscape goes beyond contemplation however, as Ross reaps the rewards of his 'chance' encounter with

India. He likes what he sees and takes Coaces, the native girl, along with the factory owners' daughter, Glory, too.

After his marriage, Raj's family put increasing pressure on him to change his usual daily (working) practices, which they considered to be unfitting for a newly wedded man of his means. Unlike most people amongst whom I researched, he did not keep to a regular schedule and often left work in the middle of the day for long periods of time. This is how he once described to me his yesterday, many months after he had returned from his pilgrimage and drinking break,

At 7:30 I got up – checked the auto was repaired. At 9:10 I came here [Morgan's Gate]. After 9:30 I went to the 'office' [wine shop]. At 10 I saw a film in Central Talkies. Then I went to Attavar with customers. Then again to the office. I went there, to an office there, not Santosh [Wines]. Then in Nagrolli with a customer. Then I went for lunch, near Pumpwell. I like the lunch there, it's like a family lunch. Then I went to Aardya Falls [a waterfall about 45 minutes outside Mangalore that was a popular trip from the wine shop]. Then to the Santhosh office. At 7:30 I went home. After washing: eating, watching TV and then sleep.

He was not alone in his drinking habits; there are always plenty of drivers in Santosh Wines and the city's other wine shops. However drinking amongst drivers is not the norm.

Heavy regular drinkers are looked down upon, both by the middle classes – many of whom have a bad opinion of auto drivers in general – and by other drivers who save money for what they consider legitimate expenses (their children's education, paying off loans, food for the family etc.). Joseph, a middle-aged man who took up auto driving three years ago after he and his family returned from Mumbai, rarely drinks. He describes the drinking drivers disdainfully,

Some are busy in a bar all day, then work for 4-5 days, then go drinking, then go working again. The guys who rent [their autos from others] can always find something [a new owner to rent from] within two or three days if they want.

Views on levels of drinking, the type of drink (for instance some would not drink 'hot' drinks i.e. spirits) and where one drinks in India are entwined with jati, class, occupation and gender, and help produce and maintain stereotypes about certain sections of society (Doron 2010). In Mangaluru, some middle-class BPO workers would proudly boast of turning up to work drunk or stoned, or make jokes about the amount of money they blew in a pub on their day off. In contrast many auto drivers would park their autos away from wine bars to avoid

getting a reputation in their locality as a drinker.

Meanwhile Ross, after his marriage, set about making a name for himself and making a family. At first he praised his wife, Glory, for owning a body that was good for bearing children. However over time she proved to be frail. He needed boys to take over his factory, but she kept producing girls, something he tried to overcome by raping her in the hope that aggressive sex was more likely to yield boys. Eventually, her body ravished by numerous and near continuous pregnancies, she dies.

As the book progresses and Ross' weak children fail to live up to his expectations, Ross' continued bodily strength propels him upwards. Always looking younger than he is, and always stronger than those around him, he develops an intimate relationship with the landscape that speaks to him as he speaks to it. His father-in-law failed because he built his tile factory on the wrong side of the river; but Ross fixes this to much success. However, the same river takes away the only son that he truly liked, sweeping him to his death after Ross extended the factory premises too close to the river despite warnings from locals. Another of his sons, Duffy, who was sent 'home' for the best of English private schooling and higher education, is a good point of comparison to Ross. He is witty, makes excellent speeches, is highly regarded by others with a similar background and eventually persuades his father to hand over the reins of the family to him. However, he is overweight and too scared to take the girl he wants; he fails at manufacturing soap and lets the tile business go into decline.

This is in part due to the Italian missionary tile works who enter into fierce competition with the Cowals, but also because the landscape offers reduced returns. Slowly Ross and later his son eat up the mud around the factory and the land that had offered profits, reduces its potential; this coalesces with a wider shift in the book from the 1870s to the 1930s, with the Indian landscape no longer represented as fertile ground for entrepreneurs: the independence movement grows and the British state, whose officials had once inspired the names for Ross' children, are derided as lethargic and baggy. A sense of loss and decline pervades the closing chapters of the book.

The vitality shown by both Ross, and later his granddaughter Rossy, sit in stark contrast to

the failings of the two children he sent to be educated England. The disdain for the supposed superiority of the upper-class educated English accompany swipes at the Indian Civil Service and this, along with the conflicting interests of British entrepreneurs and Italian/German missionaries, reveal the tensions at play amongst the colonisers. Ross, a working class Scot, feels more affinity with the poor natives than the struggling sahibs who never seem to quite get it; the plurality and contradictions of colonial rule are ever present (cf. Comaroff 1989). Rossy, his granddaughter, is forced to fight against her snobbish auntie who is embarrassed by the family's disreputable past. The younger, darker woman proves to be more virtuous by trying to save the face of her kleptomaniac cousin, who stole a rich Jew's precious stones from the local golf club in Ooty, by trying to return the stolen objects in a dramatic scene during which she races a car through the streets of the hill station.

#### 4.4.2. Money

The class awkwardness faced by Ross, and the appeal to virtues beyond material wealth were also present when I visited Raj's house for *Ayudha pooja*. This, the ninth and final day of Navaratri, is when vehicles, objects and implements are worshipped. Much of his family's material wealth was on display, ready for the ritual for which they had brought in a poojari (see figure 33). He made his way along the four auto-rickshaws, sound system equipment (which Raj sometimes rented out as a side business), motorbikes belonging to each of the three brothers, one motorbike belonging to me, a new car, a food delivery tempo and a large lorry. After the pooja we travelled to neighbouring Kerala, where the brothers together owned a red-brick quarry, and repeated the ritual with a different poojari.

Part of Raj's awkwardness about his family's new-found wealth were the expectations that came with it, expectations that entwined with age and jati. Indeed, expectations of consumption practices and displays of material wealth in south India, as elsewhere, are closely linked to an individual's stage in life and pressure from the jati community.

Raj is a member of the most populous jati in Tulu Nadu, the Billavas. Billavas were once treated as untouchables by some Brahmins in the region because of their association with distillation, as part of their traditional jati-occupation as toddy-tappers. However, over the

last century the Billavas have undergone significant upward mobility, becoming both economically and politically powerful. Indeed, members of the Billava community have made a conscious effort at jati mobility. Inspired by the Keralite social reformer Narayana Guru, they built their own temple, consecrated in 1912, which operates with non-Brahmin poojaris.

Osello and Osello (2000b), who remark on the similar position of Billavas to the Izhavas (the toddy-tapping 'low-caste' group they research amongst in neighbouring Kerala), detail the struggles of members of such jatis in relation to modernity, most noticeably how they are driven by the strong need to 'progress'. They argue that, whether it be in their work, marriage, religion or consumption practices, there is always a broad commitment to progress and development. As such, they can be understood as “*subjects of development*: subject, that is, to the force of a demand to develop themselves, to the weight of a burden to overcome the felt inadequacies of their own nature” (Pandian 2009, 9). This is development both by outside bodies, and the development that people work on themselves, including cultivating habits, feelings and desires (ibid). Such cultivation is evidenced in jati mobilisations and internal reforms, produced through discussions over both locally derived notions of equality and justice, and Europe-originating ideas of modernity (Osella and Osella 2000b).

In relation to material wealth and consumption, practices for progress and development are partly contingent upon age. That is, over time a “youthful orientation towards transience and ephemerality should eventually be replaced by a mature demeanour directed towards duration and permanency” (Osella and Osella 1999, 990). Raj, married and rich, against his wishes, is forced to face this demand for permanence – one that comes both from family and jati expectations and to a certain extent he complies, with the four autos and a sound system.



Figure 33: Ayudha pooja at Raj's house. Source: Author.

Indeed, for auto rickshaw drivers one of the most important purchases that gestures towards permanence and stability is possessing their own auto and, more importantly, a permit. As mentioned above, only around half of the city's drivers are their own boss, with the rest paying a rental fee to the owner. The permit and auto are purchased separately. The permit officially costs just a few hundred rupees and is linked to the owner of the auto, but the permit can be transferred to another auto if, for example, a vehicle becomes too old. Permits can also be transferred between drivers for a small administrative fee at the Regional Transport Office (RTO). The 5683 'city' auto permits, set by the DC office, have not increased in number since 1997.

The long-standing fixed number, along with the increasing demand for the work has led to steady increase in the unofficial cost of the permit (the cash that changes hands from one permit owner to another when the change is made official at the RTO). A new auto will cost around 130,000 rupees and a city permit costs about the same. But whereas an auto



decreases in value before eventually being sold for scrap after around 15 years, a permit will only increase in value until the DC office revises the amount, something which they tell me they have no plans for at the moment. Official loans from banks are available for the purchase of autos, but loans for the unofficial permit cost can only come from unofficial means, often money lenders.

In general, most unions support the rise in the informal permit costs, as it provides older drivers with a lump sum on retirement (though it also inhibits new drivers), but they take issue with non-drivers owning permits/autos. Anyone can own a permit and many people decide to invest in an auto/permit and yet never drive – bank workers seemed to get mentioned the most often by disgruntled union reps. Owners receive around 200 rupees a day (the driver has to pay his own fuel and other small costs). Drivers I spoke with who rented autos complained about time and money lost if the auto broke down and needed repairs during their rental period.

The advantage of having one's own auto/permit are clear; however, a loan requires a steady income and often, when faced with unpredicted family emergencies, drivers are forced into selling their permit and loan. The desire to own or not is also related to the working life of drivers, which is strongly tied to age and health. There are 70 year old drivers in the city, but most I knew planned to retire from driving at around 50, especially if they suffered from poor eyesight. They would then survive on their children's income, newly introduced pension schemes and from lower paid 'easier' work, such as being a watchman<sup>87</sup>.

Shekhar, a driver of 18 years and also a Billava like Raj, lives in a village outside the city and has moved between being an owner and renter a number of times over the last years. His ideas of ownership and progress are fairly representative of the dominant view,

S: In a year, 365 days I'm working. I won't take any leave.

I: No holiday?

S: There is no holiday. If I want to go to a wedding I'll go, and then again start work. Without money I can't do anything. Now is the time to work. If I earn money now, it will be useful for my children. Running [driving] is jolly. This is the age. After 22

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87 The irony of retiring due to poor eyesight to become a watchman was seemingly lost on everyone but me, no matter how often I mentioned it.

I started work and now I'm 40. 10 more years I'll work, but after 50 I won't work much. 50 is a lot. After 50 I would work, but the food [in canteens] is not good. It's useless. So after 50 it's hard work. The items are all chemical items. At home the food is good, but I don't like to take 'outside food'. You know, before the food was small – the fruit – but now it's big. It's from chemicals.

- I: After 50 will your children support you?
- S: Now one is six and one is four.
- I: So what will you do for money?
- S: For that now I'm saving and... I'll adjust. And after 55 I'll get the pension.
- I: What's the pension?
- S: Now it's a new scheme for auto drivers and others. You pay 100 rupees a month. 1200 a year. Plus then the state government adds money to make 3600 and then we'll get the pension.
- I: How much?
- S: Now I can't say.
- I: Do most people have the pension?
- S: I do because I have faith, but some don't.
- I: So what will those who don't do?
- S: They can't do anything. But I have faith. Now they said they passed it, they only have to adjust, or their family adjusts. It's a recent scheme. Only 1 year passed. It's a central scheme.

Later, when I asked Shekhar about what has changed in Mangaluru he remarked,

- S: There's been improvements. Big buildings. When I was small I could get nothing, now what I want I can get. Before there was no supermarket, Big Bazaar and all of those. Now if you have money you can buy.
- I: And do you?
- S: I purchase simple things.
- I: The goods advertised on TV?
- S: Till now I didn't go to City Centre or Big Bazaar [the two biggest shopping malls at the time]. Just from here [Morgan's Gate] I get everything, in a small super bazaar.
- I: So why did you say it was an improvement?
- S: Because I see it when running [driving]. My job is a running job. I go to every corner of the city. Those who work in other work might not know, but we come to know everything...  
...Everything has changed. But those who are poor have stayed poor, whilst

those who are rich have stayed rich. The rich have become more rich, but the poor have stayed poor. Now I've been working for 13 years, I owned a rickshaw, but there are people, they only rent, they won't purchase. They have no interest in purchasing a rickshaw.

I: Why?

S: I can't say, there are many types. I have a goal in my life, so I purchased. I have seen improvement [in my situation]. We were three children, my parents did nothing, but we built a home and I own a rickshaw.

I: How big is your family again?

S: My sister is a housewife, I have three children. My brother works as a builder.

I: Do you think of yourself as poor, middle or rich?

S: Middle.

I: Who are the poor?

S: There are poor people only. They won't achieve in life [they have] no goal.  
[later]

I: And what about Raj? [He had on numerous occasions made sardonic comments about him]

S: [Laughs] Before he had a jolly life, and now he has a jolly life. Before I was working, and now I'm working.

Shekhar, in this sense, represents those who work hard and try to progress and develop in life. He is materially constrained, but sees inter-generational social mobility as a real prospect, based on his own experience. Even though he sees possibilities for excessive consumption around him, he rarely takes them, remaining wedded to his goals in life. There were many more who shared Shekhar's orientation in life – that hard daily work would bring gradual improvement.

As mentioned before, Raj was not overly keen to talk about his own life or feelings. He joked and he laughed, but he usually kept his thoughts about non-immediate things to himself. As with some of the other auto rickshaw drivers with whom I had spent a lot of time, I wondered if part of the reason I could not illicit much from him was because we had spent too much time together. As mentioned above, often my attempts to learn about their lives resulted in me being told jokes. Accordingly, I started to ask for sit-down interviews along with my research assistant Prathiksha – a 20 year-old female whose class background meant that she could very well be one of their own daughters or other relatives. This made everyone a bit more serious, and once Raj finally agreed to the interview, his thoughts on material

wealth, consumption practices and age came spilling out,

School kids they don't know hard work. They just go to school and then tuition. They have a pleasure filled life. Then they use their parents' money that they've kept for them, for their daughters and sons. But the children will sell their parents' property and buy a flat. They want luxury. They want a luxurious life. They look at rickshaw drivers and they think 'they're poor', but they didn't work actually. Society is changing like this.

...

Boys will wear shoes, belts and clothes belonging to their older brother, but they'll only have 10 rupees in their pocket. They'll act like a big star. They'll pull out their mobile phones and pretend to talk on them, but they'll have no credit.

...

I saw many people like this. I've had girls in my rickshaw who I thought were rich, by their clothes and because they were speaking English [pauses when I look at him] I can understand what people say in English! When we got close to their house, they suddenly switched to speaking in Tulu and saying that they hope their mum doesn't see them come home late. And I can see inside their house and there is nothing there. I thought they were rich, but they are poor. The youth now are changing. With their style, language, dress and respect!

In light of Ross, Raj and Shekhar's thoughts on progress, money and women we can add a final element to the practice of waiting – timing. Family, jati, fellow drivers, friends and society at large all expect that certain things will be done at certain times. For instance waiting, remaining unmarried and single, disrupts societal expectations of youthful transience and wedded maturity (Lahad 2012) or waiting too long to invest in land, housing or other permanent goods suggests a failure to achieve (Osella and Osella 1999). As such this is the aspect of waiting relating to cultivation, in which people choose to follow jati, gender and age constrained sensibilities in the cultivation of a particular self.

#### **4.5. Rhythmic Dissonance**

At first I thought that Prathiksha, my research guide, was maybe given the wrong name by her parents. As mentioned above, 'by chance' her name means 'one who waits', but as I soon learnt, she hated waiting. She hated waiting for me when I was late to collect her (stuck in traffic or with an over-running interview) and she hated waiting for informants. When we first started to work together, if someone was late for an interview, then she would scold

them, until I asked her to stop. However, as I got to know her better, I realised her name was a good fit after all. Like Shekhar, the auto driver with a goal in life, she had what she referred to as her “plan”: finish college, get a loan from her church to do a year of teacher training, get a job as a teacher in a primary school and only then get married (with a man from her community, who would help with housework and allow her to work as a teacher). 'One who waits' now made sense to me with all its implied virtuousness; she would wait until the right moment to do the right things. About Raj, she shared similar sentiments to Shekhar, and once told me “his life is a waste. Simply a waste. He just wastes time. Just a *bindas* [cool, carefree] life”. She also felt very sorry for his wife for “having to live with him”.

I was not able to speak with Raj's wife, as he would not let me, but spoke with the families of many other drivers. Rita, the wife of an auto driver who spent two decades in Mumbai and now works as a housemaid in Mangaluru, explained her daily life thus,

R: Bombay life is busy busy, and here it's not busy – time moves fast there, here it doesn't. Now I'm going to work [before she did not] so time goes fast. If I'm a housewife then I'm only at home. A little work here and there and then I have to sit.

I: Does the day go fast and slow at different times?

R: If I have work then the time goes fast, when there's work it will be interesting – otherwise it's simply wasting time.

I: Wasting time?

R: Sitting like a lazy girl, it's a time waste. Sometimes there'll be work but I'll feel lazy.

As with Prathiksha's assessment of Raj's life – and as with the broker Mr. Pai from Chapter Two, who cast aside wasteful clients – here the productive use of one's time is seen as paramount, with other activities seen as a 'waste'.

The idea of waste has been well theorised in the Indian context by Gidwani and Reddy (2011), who argue that waste “is the political other of capitalist 'value', repeated with difference as part of capital's spatial histories of surplus accumulation.” (p. 1625). Through the colonial, developmental and neoliberal periods they show how people, places and things are placed outside what is considered to have value. During the colonial period, the natives' lives and the untapped landscape suggested waste to the colonisers, with the rational pitted against the traditional from water management to property relations, as they sort to rectify

the wastage. India's developmental moment in the decades following independence similarly had waste and wastefulness at the forefront of government policy from Nehru onwards, not only in plans, budgets and pricing mechanisms but also radio, film and TV propaganda. More recently, in the neoliberal period parastatals such as the Karnataka Industrial Area Development Board (KIADB) acquire 'wastelands' at the edge of cities such as Bengaluru for emergent IT/ITES companies (see: also Chapter One for Mangaluru). Waste, always posited against what is valuable, shifts and changes even as it repeats.

Here we might contrast Ross and Raj. Ross the colonial working class white young man, climbs above Mangaluru, and sees the waste in the landscape as an opportunity, ready for strong, agentive men like himself to turn mud into tiles and land into value. Raj meanwhile, the working class Indian man refuses to see the landscape as an opportunity, despairs at distanced representations of the city, and is drawn daily to entanglements and chance occurrences in the repetitions of waiting at Morgan's Gate.

Raj, and countless others like him, are considered as leading wasteful lives because their everyday patterns produce *rhythmic dissonance*. That is, their disorderly rhythmic modes challenge behavioural norms based on progress, life-course, consumption practices, development and opportunity, as well as those based on proper use of time, including working hours, drinking during the day, time spent at home with family and so on. Thus Raj's rhythmic dissonance makes him 'out of time': he is out of step with the prevalent rhythmic ordering of everyday life, practices that pull him, partially, out from the dominant beat of empty linear homogeneous time. This dissonance – at once reverberating at the everyday and life-course scale – is bound up with ideas of modernity.

Indeed, the dissonance comes to the surface in the struggle over representations of time and time use in relation to what is considered modern. The notion that every society will 'progress' to become 'modern' and enjoy all the fruits of modernity is a myth; however, it is a very powerful one that manifests itself in the practices of everyday life (Ferguson 1999). Moreover, this waiting for modernity is premised on the production of difference – a temporalised but also spatialised difference, with the non-modern, non-western, (post)colonial, being both historically and geographically distant from the modern (Mitchell

2000). Modernity then is a qualitative category (Osborne 1992), the name which we give to the double difference of the non-west space/time, but also the performance of this difference (Mitchell 2000). It is not then only the linear modernist histories emanating from the West, that place colonial societies into the 'waiting room of history' (Chakrabarty 2000), but also the everyday performance of the difference upon which modernity is premised. Cultivating the modern self through 'performative acts' (Lambek 2010b; Lambek 2013) can be immensely difficult, requiring negotiation of multiple rhythmic modes, as we saw with the moving vendors in Chapter Three.

It is tempting to view Raj's acts as arising from different epistemological or even ontological categories, however simply evoking multiple temporalities as a means of explanation is both insufficient and potentially contradictory. As Helgesson (2014) has insightfully argued, there seems to be a contradiction between attempts within post-colonial approaches to, on the one hand, criticise the way in which non-Westerners are placed 'out of time' and, on the other, claim multiple temporalities for people outside the West. The first argument is most widely associated with Fabian (1983) who has forcefully argued that anthropologists have often denied coevalness to their informants, by writing in such a way as to situate them not just in a different place, but also in a different time. The second argument can be found in Chakrabarty's work, especially *Provincializing Europe* (2000).

Developing his argument through a close reading of Marx, Chakrabarty posits that there are two histories: 'History 1', the history of modern capital; and 'History 2', the antecedents of capital which do not belong to capital's life process and thus do not contribute its reproduction. These histories are not left-overs from a soon-to-be overtaken past, but have their own logics and interdependencies. Chakrabarty argues that to only see the possibility of a History 1, a history of empty homogeneous time where societies are either part of capitalist modernity, or not yet part of capitalist modernity, is a way of consigning such societies to, as mentioned above, 'the waiting room of history'. However, such an approach runs the risk of both (tacitly) seeing time as culture or culture as time, thus falling into a dead end of cultural relativism, and of representing the times of Western modernity in a monolithic fashion – i.e. as a singular time of linear progression (Helgesson 2014). Moreover, as Bloch (1998) argues in a different context, just because people represent the past in multiple ways,

it does not automatically follow that these refer to different epistemological views on the passage of time.

Part of the irritation or discomfort that Raj creates then is related to temporal representations, or to be more precise to his different performance of concepts relating to modernity. Concepts are often asynchronous, because concepts have differing and often conflictual temporalities (Jordheim 2014). Social and political concepts, which derive from historical experience, are used as tools in societal struggles, conflicts or debates (Koselleck, 2000 quoted in Jordheim, 2014). Each concept – e.g. development, progress, waste, value – has its own temporal structure. That is, it signifies something about the past, future and present. Accordingly, because we are always living with various relational, temporally-endogenous and forever changing conceptual apparatus, synchronicity is forever elusive. Historical periods do not have coherent homogeneous frames (though Western modernity was maybe the most temporally coherent period in history), but are made up of ongoing non-synchronicities. However, this does not stop the apparatus of powerful (yet contradictory) bodies, like the state, from attempting synchronisation (Jordheim 2014). For instance, as touched on in the Introduction, British colonial rule through its factories, schools and prisons instituted an abstractable temporal regularity that could be placed into wider schemes of progress and development (Kalpagam 1999).

With this in mind, we can return to Raj and the *rhythmic dissonance* he causes through his refusal to take the 'opportunity' offered to him by his family land. Raj is 'out of time' not because he exists in another temporal dimension, but rather because he falls out of step with the dominant forward march engendered by a culture of urban expectancy. He had the chance for accelerated progress, for basking in the joys of friction free consumption and joining the ranks of those for whom the city was a site of flow. But he does not. In sitting at Morgan's Gate (even though most of the time he has no material need to do so), his waiting practices entangle him deeper and deeper to the place. Rhythmic entanglements that engender possibilities for cross-community sociability and mutual-help, as well as the chance happenings of everyday life. But such waiting sends uncomfortable ripples across his pool of friends, family, and some fellow drivers. His rhythmic modes are 'out of time' with the prevailing norms of how both a good hard working auto driver and a man who has been



given an opportunity in the flows of expectant urbanism should behave. Such characters in the city destabilise not only synchrony, but also coherence and direction. They unravel coherent understandings of places and people, upset notions that the direction of the collective city's motions are forwards, upwards, that they are developing, progressing. And Raj does not mind one bit,

I don't care if anyone advises me what to do. I hate these people. If people tell me don't do that work, then I'll do that work. My mother is always telling me [what to do]. I don't speak with any relatives if they come to visit. I just smile and go to my room. In the evening, after drinks [in the wine bar], I just smile at my family and go to bed.

If, in a non-western setting the double difference of non-west space/time makes performing modernity so elusive (Mitchell 2000), then in a smaller city characterised as lacking urbanity (see: Chapter One), successfully performing modernity becomes doubly difficult again. Raj's refusal to overcome this doubly difficult double difference peels back the lid on the unspoken anxieties surrounding the contractions of expectant urbanism. In a city whose size engenders densely intimate social relations, it is a rhythmic dissonance with wide reverberations.



*Figure 34: Happy in Santhosh Wines. Photo credit: Rajendra*

#### **4.6. The Last time I met Raj...**

The last time I met Raj was a few days before he left for Saudi Arabia for work. Our friend and part time auto-driver Jonji was driving to the airport to pick up his wife's brother, who was returning for a visit home after a year working in Dubai. Jonji had borrowed the car he used when he worked as a driver for wealthy families. We squeezed into the car along with Jonji's wife Veena, and their three year old son Vishy before making the 45 minute trip to the airport, stopping on the way for a beer as Veena and Vishy waited in the car. Once we reached the airport, Raj wandered off to stare at the planes and refused to speak or make eye-contact with any of us. He just stood alone staring at the sky. I asked Jonji about this, and he said it was because he is scared about his own trip, as it is his first time away from Mangaluru and his first time on a flight. I was a bit surprised by his sudden seriousness. A few days earlier Raj had asked me to read his English language work contract, which he had signed and entered into without being able to read himself. I had taken this for an

extension of his carefree attitude. Later that day, when we had dropped off Jonji's brother-in-law, Raj again wanted to go for a beer. It is then that he told me and Jonji that his wife was four months pregnant.

This came as a shock to us both at first. Jonji did not really believe it because, as he explained to me when Raj was in the toilet, it is a "big shame for Hindus not to have a baby soon after marriage. The wife can't even attend all family functions before she's pregnant for the first time." He was convinced Raj would have told him about it already, as they were close friends.

Ever since his wedding, the one-time 'swami Raj' had gained a new nickname at Morgan's Gate – hard-on Raj. In the beginning he did not mind this reference to the amount of sex he was supposedly having; however it soon started to irritate him as he 'failed' to impregnate his wife. Moreover, she was apparently unhappy at him coming home drunk in the evenings, and found a way to take control of his savings with his family's help, forcing him to either work more or drink less. It seemed that once his wife was pregnant, he was now to leave for Saudi Arabia to work installing air conditioning units.

He did not want to go, but was put under immense pressure from his family. It was widely interpreted by his friends, especially Jonji, that he was being sent to Saudi Arabia to sober up and learn how to behave 'properly' – how to rhythmically order his working day as befitting a man of his age and wealth. Once his drinking was under control he would return, maybe in about a year. He refused all attempts by his friends to organise a leaving party and kept his phone switched off in the days before he left, with only Jonji managing to find out his leaving time from one of his brothers, and making the trip to the airport to see him off. Those waiting for Raj to conform would need to wait no more...

... however, it was not the last time I met Raj.

The really very last time I met Raj was when he came to drop my wife and I off at the airport when I left Mangaluru at the end of the fieldwork, sixteen months after I had first met him. He had returned from Saudi three weeks earlier with health problems (he had kidney

stones), having managed just one month away. He had gone straight back to his jolly drinking life again. I was slightly embarrassed when he, Jonji and two regulars from Santosh Wines came to pick us up. They all stunk of booze, and I worried what the lady in whose house we had been living might say something. Desperate last bits of fieldwork anxiety hanged in the air as I hugged her goodbye. We drove up to the airport and, on my last day in the city, as I bade goodbye to Jonji and the others at the airport, Raj stood again staring off into the sky, not even noticing I was leaving until after the waiting was over, and it was time to leave.

## CONCLUSION: THE CITY AS A RIVER

No person ever steps into the same city twice. The city, forever changing, forever the same, forever delayed, is a rush of sounds, smells and sites, of touches, of places, of histories. It is a cacophony. But just at first. As people attune themselves to the city, as they steady themselves, as they are submerged, a rhythmic pattern emerges. The dissonant becomes the decipherable. But only just. They tenuously slip through the movements of the city as they push out into its flow.

People move. Round their kitchens preparing the day's food, round their houses sweeping the floor, round their Tulsi tree watering its roots. To and from work, to and from the market, to and from school. Groups move. Housing brokers move round the city, conducting clients. Vendors move round the city, learning new routes as they hawk their wares. Auto rickshaw drivers move, picking up and dropping off passengers, punctuating their elongating waiting at stands. Imaginaries move. Into the future where goods, money and people flow unimpeded. Into a tomorrow where consumption is friction-free. And into a dream where the city and the country are on an accelerated pathway of progress.

Moving with pregnant purpose along this course is Mangaluru. This smaller, rapidly urbanising coastal city is known as many things: as a transport node, with bus, rail, road, air and sea links across the world; as an education hub with domestic and international students flocking to the region; as an up and coming investment destination, with booming real estate and budding technology industries; as a Hindutva lab, with vigilante moral policemen enforcing ethical norms; and as a city waiting to make it big, brimming with development potential. The urbanising city moves to the beat of its ports, its schools, its cashew, coffee and call centre labourers. The diverse city pulsates to multifarious celebrations of the city's diverse communities, Tuluvas, Bearys, Gowda Saraswat Brahmins, Catholics, Protestants. The smaller city strains at its niche position, at its supposed lack and through its densely intimate relations. As the city moves its rhythmic modes slide in and out of synchrony, have more or less coherence and differing degrees of omni- and uni- directionality; they culminate and agglomerate, coalescing into a recognisable rhythmic shape – a shape that suggests expansion, concentration and differentiation.

In Karnatic music, when introducing an idea into a piece, musicians can use one of six different rhythmic shapes (*yatis*), which generate different feelings through the repetition of a changing idea. A phrase is repeated whilst getting increasingly shorter, increasingly longer, or through a combination of the two. For example there is the cow's-tail shape (*gopucca yati*), which has a gradual reduction in length, or the hour glass (*damaru yati*), which starts long, then gets shorter, then longer again. The shape that best fits Mangaluru however, is the rhythmic statement that gets progressively wider or longer, that speaks to its ongoing urbanisation and that captures the feeling of expectancy – the flowing river (*srotovaha yati*).

Mangaluru then is not only experienced as a Heraclitian river (its changes giving it its continuity), not only named by its rivers (called Kudla, a name deriving from junction in Tulu as it lies at the confluence of two rivers and the sea), but also has the rhythmic shape of a river – growing, widening, lengthening – the shape of expectancy. It moves in ebbs and flows, in eddies and whorls. Part of wider cycles, it is structured from afar and structures up close. A river that expands, concentrates and differentiates under the laya-like process of urbanisation.

For example in the lives of housing and land brokers, housing is expanding upwards as the city expands outwards and upwards, building work is concentrated in the most lucrative central areas, differentiating established jati and community clusters. Meanwhile for tender coconut and flower vendors the ongoing differentiation of Mangalureans through education leads locals to eschew street work and this, along with the city's expansion has opened new markets, even as the concentration of commercial and residential activity has made street selling more difficult. Finally for auto rickshaw drivers, concentration in the city is leading to congested roads, the expansion of the city to longer passenger rides and the creative destruction of differentiation in the city with the demolishing of stands to make way for wider roads.

The de-structuring and restructuring river-like process is given an urgency by an urban social imaginary that pulls the city of the future into the city of today. An urban imaginary in which

the Indian city is characterised by smooth flow, friction free consumption and accelerated process. An imaginary born of India's urban moment in which novelty, newness and change are celebrated.

## **Urban Regulators**

As we saw in Chapter One, India's urban moment is not the same for all cities. Mangaluru, a smaller city, is one placed into niche functional positions often by actors at higher state spatial scales, experiences expectancy through densely intimate relations and is framed as lacking certain urban attributes. In Chapters Two, Three and Four I explored various urban navigations that draw on the skills of conducting, learning and waiting. As hinted throughout, although I analysed different groups through particular skills, there was a certain degree of overlap. Briefly thinking through these chapters by differently combining groups and navigations not only serves the purpose of summarising some of the most salient aspects learnt from research into brokers, vendors and drivers, but also suggests some possible ways in which urban navigations and a rhythmic conception of the city might be applicable in other settings.

For brokers like Saleem and Mr. Pai waiting is very much part of the job and part of their lives. For Mr. Pai it is never a passive waiting however, as he pays to have his services advertised in two newspapers every day. Saleem, even though he does not advertise himself formally, nevertheless waits actively, or rather impatiently, as he hopes for potential customers. Waiting, as seen in both their lives, was also about timing. Mr. Pai decided not to wait in Mumbai with the girl he loved, but to return to his mother and missed his chance, whilst Saleem cannot wait much longer to make his fortune if he is going to save his pride in the eye's of his family. They also both wait for the city, in Saleem's case he waits for the city to finally deliver him the fortune he needs, whilst Mr. Pai waits for his addiction to the city to end.

Meanwhile, moving vendors are street level conductors of the rhythmic modes of thirst and ritual. Vendors like Sriram and Natesh synchronise the arrival of tender coconuts and flowers from across the Western Ghats with the needs of Mangalureans for drinking coconut water

or performing pooja for their household or work place deities. They become the rhythmic architecture of the the city, whose hard daily labour, unsociable working hours and long periods spent away from their family, allow for the convenience of goods delivered to the door. The backstage that allows the front stage to more easily function. The routine these vendors uphold allow them to develop their reputations.

Finally, auto rickshaw drivers like Raj and Shekhar must learn the city. Here the stands act as coordinating places, where knowledge and information is exchanged, and prices and best routes debated. Sometimes passengers come to the stands, but drivers must also learn the busy parts of the city where there are no stands. Risking a fine they must learn the practices of the traffic police, knowing when to pause and when to submerge into the city's flows. Their reputation is built amongst their fellow drivers by being regular members of particular stands, a regularity that affords stability and security in times of need.

Whatever the skill and whatever the group, regularity is the foundation of navigation. Moving with a combination of attention, intention and cultivation, regularity allows for the possibility of difference; for the differences to be possibilities. Brokers, vendors and drivers – like countless other groups who are seen as the disorderly, backwards or informal – are in fact the order makers in the city. They forge regularity – a sequential repetition that engenders synchronised coherence, a commonality of gestures and direction; such regularities sit in stark contrast to a state of disorder from above.

### **The Future of the City and the Future of its Study**

In this dissertation, taking Lefebvre as a point of reference (but not of reverence), I pursued an ethnography-rooted 'rhythmanalysis' (2004) of everyday city life. This relational rhythmic perspective produced an understanding of the urban in which people are not defined by the places in which they work or reside, but rather known by their patterned movements. It has allowed me to develop a concept of movement through the city – urban navigation – as well as three rhythmic conceptual tools that could be fruitfully applied in other settings – street level conducting (a way of linking, interpreting and synchronising different people or groups), anticipation (a way of giving the future a presence in the present), and rhythmic dissonance



(a way of disturbing the city's dominant beat).

It also allowed me to argue that India's expectant urbanism – felt especially strongly in a smaller city with big dreams like Mangaluru – is dialectically produced by urbanisation (concentrating-expanding-differentiating), future-heavy urban imaginaries (of friction-free consumption, smooth-flow and accelerated progress) and the agglomeration of a city's rhythmic modes (synchronised-coherent-directional). Understanding such an urban culture of expectancy requires deep, sustained and delicate ethnographic engagement of the kind I have undertaken in this dissertation.

There is a lot of excitement about the global 'urban age' in general and India's 'urban awakening' in particular. However, the debates emanating from these celebrations are not only dominated by policy makers and think tanks, but also by a type of urban studies that, even in its critical and radical forms, for the most part is free from people, never mind culture. India's 'urban moment' is not only constituted by the process of capitalistic urbanisation, its future-celebrating imaginaries, nor the patterned movements of the city. Produced by and mediating the three is an urban culture of expectancy, a culture that, in its triadic dialectal production is an abolition and a preservation, a negation and an overcoming, a resolution and a contradiction; an impossible possibility formed by the expanding-concentrating-differentiating process of urbanisation, a flowing-consuming-progressing social imaginary, and the synchronised-coherent-directional rhythmic modes of the city. Anthropologists can contribute to our understanding of this moment – as I have done in this dissertation – by showing not only how urban cultures are formed by such epochal moments, but how they also help produce them. Sustained ethnographic research in cities and with groups that are usually ignored can, as I have shown throughout the preceding chapters, reveal the ways in which people respond to such impossible possibilities. Primarily, when faced with rapid, far-reaching and accelerating change the response of brokers, vendors and drivers has been to find sameness.

I have argued above that regular repetitive routine behaviour is the bedrock of navigating the future in the everyday lives of brokers, vendors and drivers, but there are of course different ways in which people seek to manage the future, from astrology to town planning.

I am not arguing that these other ways of representing or thinking about the future are not important, far from it, rather that the daily regularities of urban inhabitants in a city in which the future is so pervasive, allow them the stability needed to more confidently access the changes wrought by urbanisation. Their navigation of the future is an everyday one. Not an everyday of only bland mundanity however, but also differences; differences that jump out of repetition.

The rhythmic city is an enlivened and enlivening aggregation of difference-producing patterns. It is a place through which people live their futures; futures are not (only) fantastical and unbound – the imagination also unfurls in the cadence of the quotidian. Urban anthropology has meaningful contributions to make to our understanding of India's urban moment that go beyond the suffering of slum dwellers or the shining lives of elite consumption. In amongst the rush of urban expectancy are people attempting to create order from disorder, to make repetitions within differences, creating futures with their routines. A rhythmic approach to the city allows us to see not only the 'spaces' and 'times' of the urban, but also those who exceed such abstract categories in their everyday patterned movements. Movements at once of the past, present, and future. Indian cities will continue to be places through which people imagine their futures, but these futures can best become futures filled with possibility, if the rhythms of today are filled with regularity.

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