RE-ENVISIONING THE INDIAN CITY -
Informality and Temporality

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Submitted to the Department of Architecture
in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the Degree of
Master of Science in Architecture Studies
at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology
June 2009

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ABSTRACT

Although informality constitutes an omnipresent and growing phenomenon in the cities of developing countries, planners pay limited attention to this sector. Moreover, current development schemes project Western-planning concepts onto Indian cities despite the fact that these models do not relate to the specific cultural and socioeconomic context of Indian societies. This approach does not provide what is needed: an “inclusive” city, responsive to the diversity of needs and priorities of Indian people. Given this, and the dynamics of rapid urbanization, I question whether the traditional comprehensive planning approach is truly comprehensive and appropriate for coping with the challenges encountered in urban India.

Extensive research has been conducted on the social and economic aspects of informal activities in India; however, as yet, there has been very little research exploring spatial conditions that may engender an inclusive city. In three sections, this thesis focuses on the spatial implications of one sector of the informal economy: street vending. The first section introduces the Indian urban realm through a journalistic narrative based on impressions during my first visit to India. The second section is inspired by the challenges of urban growth in the City of Ahmedabad: firstly, it examines current formal planning approaches in Gujarat State; secondly, it portrays the informal city and how it responds to formal planning solutions; finally, it examines the existing and potential relationship between temporal and permanent, or informal and formal systems. The third section explores the way informal processes may inform policy makers and planners in order to develop a framework for defining inclusive urban projects and to propose tools for citywide and local implementation. Subsequently, I apply these strategies to a segment of Ahmedabad’s Riverfront Project, which is currently under construction. This exploration, an inclusive alternative to the current plan, highlights the need for, and the potential of, such strategies.

In this regard, I conclude that where the formal and the informal “world” coexist, spatial solutions must support effective cooperation between these antagonistic, yet symbiotic domains by providing appropriate space for both formal and informal activities.
I want to thank all those who continuously motivated, inspired and encouraged me throughout the past two years: my wonderful family and
friends, my advisors and teachers.

In particular I say thank you to Matt Nohn, Christine Outram, Nida Rehman, Andrea Schuckmann, Susanne Selders, Hannah Krautwig,
Helene Sou and Olivier Milliot for having always been there when needed.

I thank my advisor Rahul Mehrotra for his constant support. I greatly appreciate the time he invested in giving me feedback both on content
and process, also in the scope of the Bombay Studio.

I thank Martha Alter Chen for her insightful advice on the topic of informal economies and the specific context on Ahmedabad. I also thank
her and WIEGO for their generous support in India, above all during the Delhi workshop on Inclusive Urban Planning.

I thank Reinhard Goethert for his constructive criticisms. Not only during the course of this research but also throughout my studies at MIT
he has been both, a caring and insightful mentor.

I thank Alan Berger for his commitment during the Bombay Studio; I highly appreciated his way of thinking and his inspiring nature.

In India, I would like to thank the many people whose support made this research possible: Bimal Patel, Rushank Mehta, Yatin Pandya, and
Matt Nohn for sharing their insights into the current planning situation in India. Both, Bimal Patel and Niki Shah for sharing project material,
especially on the Sabarmati Riverfront and Kankaria Lake with me, Rushank Mehta for sharing his significant research on street vendors.
SEWA, in particular Manaliben from SEWA Union and Bijalben from Gujarat Mahila Housing SEWA Trust, for making me better understand
the street vendor’s situation in India. And Ahmedabad Municipal Corporation leadership for the interviews I was able to conduct.

I thank Marilyn Levine for being a great writing teacher and Claudia Paraschiv for her editing support. I am extremely thankful for their steady
commitment.

Finally, I would like to take this opportunity to thank the Elisabeth-Meurer-Foundation for supporting me not only financially; our regular
meetings have highly motivated me to continue my work and pursue my goals.
# TABLE OF CONTENTS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Section</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Introduction</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I PERCEPTIONS</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 My Experiences of the Indian City</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>II COEXISTING CITY LANDSCAPES</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 The Inelastic City – Formal Emerging Landscapes</td>
<td>37</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 Temporality – The Unintended Informal City</td>
<td>53</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>III TOWARDS AN INCLUSIVE CITY</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4 Reading Ahmedabad</td>
<td>77</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5 Ideas for Ahmedabad</td>
<td>83</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conclusion</td>
<td>99</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bibliography</td>
<td>103</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Appendix</td>
<td>105</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Although informality constitutes an omnipresent and growing phenomenon in the cities of developing countries, planners pay limited attention to this sector. Moreover, current planners project Western-planning examples on Indian cities despite the fact that these models do not relate to the specific cultural and socioeconomic context of Indian societies. This approach does not result in what is needed: an “inclusive” city, responsive to the diversity of needs and priorities of Indian people.

This thesis explores how informal processes may inform the urban planner and administrator of Indian cities and seeks to develop a method for inclusive planning strategies that may be translated into citywide and local plans and, eventually, be implemented through individual manageable neighborhood-scale projects.

The key question is whether spatial solutions can help reconcile the two antagonistic, yet symbiotic domains: the formal and the informal.
STREET VENDORS. In Indian cities, informal activities constitute an omnipresent phenomenon. Street vendors, small-scale businesses and other informal economies often characterize the public space through creativity, efficiency, and temporality. Though often producing goods and services consumed by all sections of society, – such as food, garments, and household items – people working in the informal sector lack formal recognition and protection. A lack of legally provided space forces people to encroach on the public space. Even though, today, the informal sector is increasing in most developing cities, planners care only little about it and continue to develop cities that follow western examples rather than developing the distinct concept of a city, based on the specific needs and priorities of all Indians.

COMPREHENSIVE PLANNING APPROACH. Whereas recent studies on the informal sector have focused mostly on economic, social and political challenges, spatial implications have been neglected. Hence, given the specific dynamics in rapidly urbanizing developing countries, this thesis questions if the traditional so called comprehensive planning approach is truly comprehensive and whether its tools are appropriate for coping with present and future challenges.

Yet, the study argues that where the formal and the informal “world” coexist simultaneously, spatial planning solutions for the temporal are needed to support the effective cooperation between these symbiotic antagonists by providing appropriate space for both: the formal and informal activities.

Therefore, the thesis examines how the public planners’ provision of space for informal processes in the case of street vending may contribute to organizing the informal and, in this way, can support the poor and allow for the making of a healthy environment, building on cultural and human resources. The thesis is biased in favor of an inclusive rather than exclusive approach and highlights the needs for and potential of such strategies.
KEY QUESTIONS. The key questions are, whether spatial solutions can help reconcile the two antagonistic, yet symbiotic domains: the formal and the informal? In other words, can urban design play a role in the process of reconciliation, to create more synergized, more correlated and complementary relationships?

LIMITATIONS. The thesis concentrates on spatial analysis and solutions of how to include street vending into formal planning processes effectively; however, given the complexity of street vending and diversity of individual circumstances, the thesis does not provide a generic solution that solves the problem for all street vendors and respective stakeholders. Rather, the thesis explores a method for identifying projects and developing local solutions based on the research on street vending in section II. Given my focus on the spatial implications of street vending, I do not write about any of the following in detail: political implications such as how to advocate the suggested changes; management of these activities such as how to license inclusive street vending; economic or financial viability of the proposals.

Fig.1: Teen Darwaja, Ahmedabad
BACKGROUND. Indian cities are fascinating on account of their liveliness and density. No one can escape the ubiquitous proximity to their people and their way of life, the stray or sacred animals in the streets, the incredible variety of street food and the never resting traffic. The Indian public realm is transformed continuously throughout the day: during the day sidewalks become shops, manufacturing locations or restaurants, but at night they may turn into the home for the poor. Informal economies and activities often characterize the public space through creativity, efficiency, and temporality. There are multiple examples, demonstrating how India’s urban landscape becomes the workplace for India’s urban population: people encroach on medians and sell commodities at traffic intersections, they put mirrors up on a wall to start a hairdresser’s business, or change part of a road at night into a mobile outdoor restaurant. These manifestations of small-scale and mobile businesses are not a random phenomenon: in Ahmedabad, informal economies account for 77 percent of the city’s total employment. (AMC, AUDA and CEPT, City development plan Ahmedabad 2006-2012)

This economy, characterized by a wide array of small-scale businesses and different professions in diverse states of consolidation, provides employment to and secures the livelihood of millions of people. These people’s attitude is characterized by great flexibility: their highly mobile services often only require a little room. Although this image of temporal transitions is significant to the Indian public realm, urban planners care little about it: where streets change temporarily into natural food markets and serve the informal and formal system, no vending space is officially assigned; neither is access to clean water provided nor public toilets allocated, both of which would increase the food’s safety.

THE VENDORS’ AND BUYERS’ PERSPECTIVE. Street vending has a long tradition in Indian cities. The majority of Indian citizens, regardless of their income-class, buy from street vendors. The goods and services provided differ in quality and price and, therefore, allow the vendors to cater to all classes of society. Not only the poor, but virtually all consumers highly value vendors because they provide quality goods and services at economical prices in a decentralized and therefore most convenient manner. Because of this flexibility and the low prices, street vendors’ service is often accredited as a means to poverty alleviation.
LACK OF RECOGNITION. However, the majority of the population does not formally recognize the vendors’ contribution to society and therefore does not concede to them the right for their profession. Instead, while the number of vendors is growing in most Indian cities, citizens and authorities consider street vendors the cause of severe problems such as congested traffic, littered places and inappropriate competition to formal (tax-paying) businesses. Consequently, city authorities conduct evictions regularly, often confiscating the vendor’s goods and charging tremendous fees. These banishments, however, only prove temporarily successful since the vendors, deeply relying on their spot-bound business, usually soon return to their vending locations. Alternatively, the informal vendors may suffer from paying bribes to avoid eviction. Regardless of either of these two vicious cycles, the lack of economic opportunities continues to push poor people into the cities where they might start as street vendors in the hope of accomplishing a better future. In sum, on the one hand street vendors contribute enormously to cities’ economies, on the other hand they are perceived to deprive the city of its quality by (arguably) deteriorating traffic flow and urban hygiene.

I argue that urban development should acknowledge both, the positive and negative effects that street vending might generate. Moreover, I reason that assistance to the vendors to improve their businesses and to integrate these with urban infrastructure (such as public and private transport as well as water and sewage systems) is crucial in order to allow society harvesting the positive externalities of street vending and, at large, to avoid negative spillovers. Consequently, the integration might lead to a change in how street vendors are perceived and, finally, guarantee them the dignity and citizenship to which they are entitled.

CITY VISIONS AND INAPPROPRIATE PLANNING. The lack of such an integrated vision contributes fundamentally to the difficulty of incorporating street vendors into the vision of a contemporary, often Western-like city with a high quality of life. In fact, current planning practices – that have a central planning and, thus, necessarily simplistic approach making ideological and potentially wrong assumptions about the future – are not able to reflect on the individually different and complex needs of street vending and its interdependence with the formal city. Therefore, planning tools such as the development plan create an inflexible notion of a city that is envisioned by a planner.
(or policy maker) but that does not allow for transitional stages such as incremental development of settlements and public infrastructure. However, this would allow adaptation over time and make rapid urbanization more manageable. As a consequence, in some Indian cities already 40 to 65 percent of the cities’ population live in substandard housing, often built by the residents themselves illegally on government owned plots (Tiwari) or informally sold, private agricultural plots. However, the future development of the informal sector is hard to predict: according to Dr. Martha Alter Chen (2004), Coordinator of the global research policy network, Women in Informal Employment: Globalizing and Organizing (WIEGO), “the informal economy is growing and is not a short term but a permanent phenomenon” (p. 5). The fact that formal and informal worlds increasingly develop simultaneously, reinforces the notion that current planning processes need to be revised and informed by the actual situation.

OTHER STUDIES. The effort to find meaningful solutions for integrating the formal and informal worlds has led to several studies, especially in the field of urban planning. In regard to street vending, most of these studies aim to better understand the socioeconomic complexity associated with street vending activities in order to develop integrative strategies. However, spatial solutions for informal activities still need to be further investigated.
In contrast to recent research which focuses mostly on the alleviation of problems street vendors cause (such as potential aggravation of traffic congestion or increased pollution), this thesis questions whether street vending as a growing but still temporal phenomenon can instigate a method for envisioning more inclusive cities. Inspired by the challenges of urban growth in the City of Ahmedabad, I examine in the last chapter of my thesis the existing as well as the potential relationship between the temporal and permanent, or the informal and the formal systems. I have chosen to look at Ahmedabad because the city, as the intellectual capital of Gujarat, has great intellectual manpower including institutions such as the Centre for Environmental Planning and Technology (CEPT) University and the Indian Institute of Management (IIM). Moreover, the city hosts a sophisticated community of NGOs, such as SEWA UNION, which has over one million members, among which many work in the informal sector. In addition, Ahmedabad has a progressive government, which has taken proactive vision for the city and invests a lot into urban design. In this intellectually and politically charged environment, what struck me as an outsider, was the lack of synergy between these groups and led me to ask: can spatial imaginations and interventions play a role in the softening of the threshold and divisions between these groups.
AHMEDABAD. Ahmedabad, formerly known as Ashawal, Ashapalli or Karnavati, was founded by Sultan Ahmedshah in 1411 AC, on the Banks of the Sabarmati River in the state of Gujarat. Initially planned on the principles of Islamic town planning, the city’s dense fabric was determined by the city walls. However, at the turn of the 20th century, during the colonial period the times of emerging textile industries, industrialization and other commercial activities opened up the expansion of the city beyond its walls, by the construction of Ellisbridge in 1875 and the railway connection to Bombay. Soon, more bridges were built in order to facilitate growth on both sides of the river. However, an overall vision for the city’s expansion was missing; whereas the industries settled foremost on the eastern side, the western part of Ahmedabad became the center of the State’s first-class educational institutions, which fostered the adjacent growth of low-rise residential buildings. In the contemporary period, the residential growth on the western side took the form of high-rises due to high pressures on land. However, the contemporary Architect and Urban Designer Balkrishna Doshi (2002) highlights in The Ahmedabad Chronicle that the city of Ahmedabad can never be understood by the chronology of its history only, but has to take into account a look at symbioses in the activities of economies, education, art and craft, culture, architecture and administration. According to Doshi, the aspect of Ahmedabadis’ initiative and involvement in civic affairs is crucial to the development of a city, which “has been for, by and of its people”.

Fig.3 | urban growth Ahmedabad

1411 AD | 1900-1930

AHMEDABAD, Gujarat, India

Ahmedabad, Gujarat, India
CONTEMPORARY AHMEDABAD. Today, the municipal area constitutes a population of 4.5 million, the greater region of 5.5 million. Moreover, the city, perceived as the commercial capital of Gujarat, accounts for 25% of the States population, 20% of the State’s GDP and hosts one of the largest informal sectors. Currently the city seeks to “ensure high standards of quality of life” for its present and future citizens by preparing for the expected urban and population growth (AMC, Comprehensive Mobility Plan and Bus Rapid Transit System Plan Phase – II). The investment in major infrastructural projects aims at the stimulation of investment and economic growth.
SECTION I. The first chapter gives an impression of the existing situation in Indian cities through a journalistic narrative with emphasis on my experiences and observations during my visits in India. This description focuses on five major omnipresent concepts in the Indian city: density, creativity, climate, flexibility, and informality. This narrative is not intended to point out or qualify the problem of street vending; rather, it aims to introduce Indian Urban Landscapes to the reader by raising curiosity.

SECTION II. The second chapter overviews the current development tools and describes the emerging inelastic landscapes of the planned city. This part demonstrates why the existing planning tools are no longer appropriate, planning only for a minority of the Indian society: the wealthy.

The third chapter portrays the unintended and spontaneous city, explaining how the majority of the people use the existing structures and systems to provide for their livelihoods, why they are forced to do so and what these spontaneous solutions imply spatially.

SECTION III. The fourth chapter exemplifies a method to (i) identify projects, looking at the citywide scale in Ahmedabad and (ii) develop strategies for re-envisioning these locations. In other words, it shows (i) how to effectively interlink urban systems (macro elements) such as the BRTS, the riverfront and the still existing green belt of Ahmedabad and (ii) how to work out neighborhood scale solutions by applying microelements, in particular street markets, to strategically connect the urban systems locally.

The fifth chapter concludes with a portrait of potential transformations of one of these nodes in the public realm of Ahmedabad. It investigates in more detail the intersection Ellisbridge / River Front where two of these major projects connect: the Bus Rapid Transit System (BRTS) and the Sabarmati Riverfront Development Plan. A typology of urban elements based on the needs but also potential of street vendors, becomes the basis to re-envision this node in an inclusive manner.
METHODOLOGY

In the first section I introduce the subject of the coexistence between the formal and the informal through a journalistic narrative. The second section is based on my personal impressions and interviews that I conducted during my visits to India in the summer 2008 and January 2009 as well as on literature reviewed. Section III is a design proposal based on a spatial analysis of Ahmedabad seeking to integrate the findings of Section II. Case studies (throughout all sections) are based on site visits, interviews, planning material and studies collected in Ahmedabad.
I PERCEPTIONS
1 I My Experiences of the Indian City
Fig. 5 I Perceptions
Chapter 1: My Experiences of the Indian City

This chapter gives a subjective image of the dynamics and flows in the Indian urban city. It is descriptive and based on my personal impressions and visits in India and on the way one experiences the city using different modes of transportation, and therefore different speeds. It focuses on the Indian landscape, concentrating on temporal changes within its urbanity. Its purpose is to generate an image of the city and to introduce ‘density’, ‘creativity’, ‘climate’, ‘flexibility’, and ‘informality’ that I experienced to be defining characteristics of Indian cities. This narrative is not supposed to be complete in nature; and it is subjective.

Perceptions. I remember my first visit to India in every detail. After my arrival in Bombay, I collected new experiences related to this vibrant city. These experiences often felt like a puzzle to me, composed of a variety of colorful images and impressions, yet unanswered questions and not understood observations, little stories and big ideas. My glances at and immediate thoughts about this place were constantly filtered through an established layer of my past experiences in a foremost Western world. This layer works like a sieve, but colorful and flexible. On the one hand, it compares the new experiences and impressions to those formerly collected, trying to classify them in order to better understand; on the other hand, this sieve is in a process of constant change due to new impressions and thoughts that alter it. Like everyone else, too, I saw this place through my eyes.

The following excerpt from my travel journal describes these first experiences in Bombay and Ahmedabad, where my thesis on Re-envisioning the Indian City started.
Bombay, January 1st, 2009, 5 a.m. People say that January is the nicest time to go to Bombay because it is wintertime in India; but today, in these early morning hours, I can already feel the rising weight of heated air. I sense that this day will become hot. The first shafts of sunlight will soon discover the dense and misty concentration of dust and air pollution, heavily low-lying over the city. Subsequently, the heat will reach the earth quite fast, and stay, captured between the densely populated, endless city and the yellowish dust belt above. The city wakes up under a dust belt.

I am walking to Bandra Station to get onto the train to Ahmedabad, Gujarat. Although it is still early, the streets around me are already crowded and busy. I am crossing roads, full of people, stray animals and an incredible diversity of small-scale businesses. The variety of activities seems indescribable: a man is folding a foil, which he used to cover himself over night, sleeping on the sidewalk. In the meantime, a hairdresser starts his business right next to him, with a mirror simply attached to a fence and a shaky chair in front of it. A wide-crowned tree, a banyan, will provide him and his clients with relieving shade throughout the day. Beside, a woman is sweeping the street, compiling multiple little piles, foremost composed of colorful little envelopes. This packaging material, used for the chewing tobacco paan, points to a still missing person: the hawker, selling an endless number of small-scale packaged items such as snacks, hair shampoo, or shoe laces. I turn, and see the cleaning woman starting to burn the garbage piles, one after another. After a little while, a stray dog comes and makes another still fuming mounds his preferred location to lie down. From time to time the dog lifts his head while people stop by, talk, laugh, and leave again. Shouting voices become more and more, taking over the place; hawkers announce all kinds of goods, which they offer to people on their rush to the train. These vendors, static or mobile, are everywhere: they sit on sidewalks with their goods displayed in front of them on a piece of cardboard, they push little carts, so-called lorries, walk their bikes with merchandise attached to it, or carry it in a bucket on their heads through the crowds. Some prepare fresh food on the spot, and a tempting smell meanders constantly through the crowd.

While I am walking closer to the tracks, passing a great deal of tiny, stacked shelters, this smell changes abruptly, becoming unpleasant; some shy glances in the direction of the tracks make me understand that the people, living in this extreme density, lack the provision of
sanitation: thus, they use the railway structures for defecation. I am shocked and remain motionless for an instant, but the crowd around me gets me back to reality pretty soon by pushing me towards the platforms onto a pedestrian bridge. On the top, the view opens up, revealing more insights into a complex urban structure. All around me, people are living in small shacks, between two to six stories high. It is hard to recognize a single unit, the houses appear to me as if they are glued to compact blocks. It is hard to tell where they start, where they end. Little openings in this dense mass make me assume that, in its interior, there must be a system of covered, narrow alleys, allowing access to the individual homes. I discover a flimsy antenna reaching out of this sea of provisional roofs. Two green megaphones tied to its top make the structure bend in the wind. Where the antenna sticks out, the mosque has found its place in this neighborhood. All over the place, in the adjacency, tatters of steel-blue foil merge with corrugated iron sheets to become provisional roof structures, weighted down by some stones to fortify the structures against flying away during monsoon. Into this somewhat cheerless patchwork of materials join multiple billboards, advertising in bright colors new cell phones, the latest Bollywood movie or a futuristic new development scheme. The latter promising descriptions of a clean and modern city for everyone looks to me like a caricature reigning over the tiny and fragile homes that are yet more permanent than one would guess.

In this informal world, permanence does not mean stable and everlasting materials, sealed walkways or well-thought-out planning. Rather, well-established social and economic networks give a hint to a permanence in the usage of space: little public places emerge around steps, where people gather and sit down to have tea, surrounded by snack bars and myriad shops, catering for more than only daily needs. At first glance, the provisional homes and street vendors appear temporary but often they turn into permanent occurrences, only threatened by government or police evictions.

The street is busy. Pedestrians walk here, next to scooters, rickshaws, bicycles, camels, elephants, cows and cars. Drivers horn steadily, brake and circumscribe skillfully the pedestrians. The traffic seems to have its own rules: light systems or signs are missing as far as I can see. However, everything is simply in a constant flow. When I ask myself why people walk in the street, I realize the number of reasons that impede the continuous use of the sidewalk; the narrow sidewalk’s surface is broken, a tree is planted in its middle and has long, new branches sprouting at eye height, and the curb is very high,
probably raised deliberately to protect the pedestrians from heavy floods during monsoon. Further down the road, the sidewalk ends abruptly and turns into a narrow dust-strip, which, over here, separates shops in the first floor from the road. No wonder, that people prefer walking in the street. A tree with an enormous crown seems lost in this scenery. The leaves’ dark greenery shimmers slightly through a thick layer of dust. On the bottom of its trunk, a minuscule temple is carved into the wood. The little shrine with its minute statue of the elephant god Ganesh is embellished with fresh flowers, shining brightly in orange and red. The voices of children playing make their way through the many noises of car engines, horns, and talks. The city deeply lacks open spaces for its citizens. As a consequence, these children play between the traffic and the settlement, in the vicinity of their parents who probably work close by, maybe on a construction site, in the street, or in one of the shops. The constant presence of people in the street mitigates my initial worries about these children. I turn my head slightly and spot a woman in the middle of the street with her three children on a median. While the woman, carrying a little boy on her arm, leaves the median and stops at every waiting car in order to beg, another child is running towards her from the other side of the road, her arms loaded with plenty of cardboard packaging material, which she presumably collected at adjacent shops to be used as burning material for cooking.

I pause for a moment and slow down. This place is incredibly vibrant. Its functioning seems to be incredibly complex. Its dynamics are based on its own rules, which appear so different from my previous experiences and understanding.

Energetic places such as Bandra Station are a major component of the Indian city. The city, that is primarily its millions of people and their myriad activities. Indian cities are said to be amongst the densest in the world. And they are still growing. But what does density mean? At first glance, it looks as if there is just not enough space or perhaps the space is unequally distributed. Yet, density implies that there are not only spatial restrictions. People, who have to share little space, often also lack the provision of other vital resources such as water, electricity and food. As a consequence, informal activities grow naturally where the state and the formal economy fail to provide its people with secured employment, housing and infrastructure. Because people’s basic needs remain unsatisfied by the formal administration and planners, they are forced to invent creative responses to their necessities. For instance, people lacking any or sufficient formal
employment to make a living, often become self-employed, setting up a little business in the street, efficiently using existing infrastructures to operate in multiple ways such as serving goods of daily needs. Consequently, a parallel world of informal services, provided mostly by the poor, is the response to the imbalance between crucial demands and insufficient supply.

I reached the platform just in time. Some people around me are sitting on their luggage or on the floor, nibbling snacks, having tea. Once the train has arrived, men and women equally push into it. The train fills rapidly, people claiming their seats, storing their luggage, talking, arguing, and waiting for the train to leave. A guy selling tea, a chai walla, pushes three or four times through the aisle, knocking on the teapot in the rhythm of his singsong. Occasionally, when he stops to serve the sweet chai masala in tiny plastic cups, the can plumps onto the floor. Then, he collects the money, and continues his way through the packed train, which journeys on to Ahmedabad. During the following ten hours the train crawls slowly onward and a great number of different vendors move through the aisles, loudly advertising their goods ranging from snacks and spices to flowers, newspapers, and maps. It is hard to take a little rest; the vendors push constantly through the walkway, shoving whoever is in their way. All items, which they sell, come in very small sizes. This, on the one hand, makes them affordable to the people and, on the other hand, allows the vendors to be even more mobile. Trains are primarily a means of transportation, however, for the vendors they constitute their workplace. To me, the vendors make my long journey easier, adding comfort and offering social interaction.

It is dark. The train crawls slowly into Ahmedabad Station. Ten hours of fans, continuously blowing air into my face. I feel tired without having done anything except sitting, watching and waiting.

How will Ahmedabad’s streets look? Will the city be fundamentally different from Bandra, or will it be similar? I prepare to get off pulling my luggage from under the seats, tapping on it to make the dust move away. The train was fully packed and once everyone left it, people push onto a pedestrian bridge to cross the tracks and leave the station. I finally find my way through the crush, passing people sitting and sleeping on the stony floor of the station. In front of the main entrance, hundreds of auto rickshaws are waiting in line. The little yellow three-wheelers with green plastic roofs completely dominate the scenery. I espy my friend, with whom I am going to
stay, in front of one of those. We get onto the rickshaw and my friend
gives the driver directions. Only few drivers know the streets by their
names; instead, the citizens use landmarks to memorize the city map.
We ask the driver to bring us to *Panchwati charasta*, a well-known
major crossing. From there we will give him further directions to get
home.

It is 8pm by now and we are driving through a dark but vibrant
city. Small temporary shops are lined up on the streets’ side as if
held by a string. They are illuminated and clogged with people. The
already narrow streets in the historic center of Ahmedabad become
even narrower with all the activities happening in here.

Glancing around me, I ask myself how this place would work
if all the little rickshaws would be exchanged for cars? We slowly
crawl through the clogged streets, one time moving faster, and then
unexpectedly stopping again in order to circumscribe either people
walking in front of us, parking scooters, or stray dogs who merge
with this turmoil. One of the food stands has an expanded sitting area,
which reaches into the street. While navigating through an island of
seats and tables, nicely decorated with tablecloths, I spot a pinkish
layer of powder on the dusty soil. I glimpse questioningly at my
friend. He explains to me that, during the day, this place changes into
a rope-making and rope-dying business in preparation for the kite
festival. This international festival is very important in the State of
Gujarat, drawing every year on January 14th a great deal of kite flyers
to Ahmedabad. The ropes, which are dyed colorfully and prepared
with razor-sharp, broken pieces of glass, play an essential role when
the kite-flyers start fighting each other. The participants show up in
teams: whereas one is flying the kite, trying to cut the rivals’ ropes
with the glass-shards tied to the string, the other, the kite runner, is
hunting already cut-off kites. By listening thoroughly to my friend’s
stories, I become impatient to experience this day. He describes
Ahmedabad’s streets and rooftops being full of children excited for
weeks in expectation of the festival. During the Kite Festival but
especially on the final day that falls together with *Uttarayan*, also
called *Makar Sankranti*, the celebration of winter’s end, people put
their work aside and meet with their families. At this time, the city’s
image changes enormously when the kite flyers start taking advantage
of January’s breeze, strong enough to lift the colorful kites into the
wide sky over the city. Later, after the festival, a great deal of cut-off
kites, entangled in trees, electricity and phone lines above the city, will continue to dangle there for a long time, reminding its citizens and visitors of a unique day. Beside Makar Sankranti in Ahmedabad, there are myriad other indigenous festivals transforming the Indian streets for days, sometimes for weeks into such a place of intense, social interaction.

Panchwati charasta. We are nearly home. Another left turn, another right turn. I get off the rickshaw. I want to sleep directly. Not sure what made me so tired. Is it the journey itself or, in fact, all the new impressions and images in combination with alien smells and sounds? I fall into my bed. My head is amply filled with new experiences perceived while traveling in India. I think of my home country, Germany. My thoughts go back and forth between images from home and those I just collected. Most impressive were the Indian streetscapes used in the most diverse ways. I fall asleep, one question in mind: what is the street for?
II COEXISTING CITY LANDSCAPES

2 I The Inelastic City – Formal Emerging Landscapes
3 I Temporality – The Unintended Informal City
Fig.6 I planners' vision: Gujarat International Finance Tech City (GIFT) - a second Shanghai?
2.1 ARE CURRENT PLANNING TOOLS APPROPRIATE?

GUJARAT’S URBAN PLANNING REGIME\(^1\). The prevailing system of urban planning in Gujarat is the Gujarat Urban Development and Town Planning Act 1976 (GTPUD Act, or hereafter simply the Act). When, due to accelerated manufacturing growth in Gujarat’s cities, urban areas evolved rapidly, the need for a more effective approach to urban planning became obvious. Therefore, in 1976, the Act was enacted to improve urban land use management and infrastructure and service provision. The Act gives the State Government the power to determine Urban (or Area) Development Authorities and to indicate their boundaries according to the extent to which these areas are likely to grow and infrastructure provision would be required (Chapter II and III of the Act).

In this regard, the planning regime is proactive, for example, based on data analysis and its extrapolation into the future. In general, urban planners seek to develop a picture of how the future might be like and to plan accordingly. Furthermore, the planning regime takes a cluster approach to development such as changing land use and density for an entire zone in a single action as opposed to a parcel-wise approach such as spot-zoning the land use and density for all individual plots within a ‘zone’ separately.

The Act gives the planners two major tools to achieve their objectives: Development Plans (DP; Chapter IV), and Town Planning Schemes (TPS; Chapter V). Chapters VI and VII are on Finance and Development Charges. A final Chapter VIII on Miscellaneous completes the Act.

THE DEVELOPMENT PLAN (DP). The DP applies Urban (or Area) Development authority-wide. In this sense, it is a macro tool, planning the entire land of major agglomerations; for example, the current DP for (Greater) Ahmedabad encompasses also the area of the small town of Sanand, where the new Tata factory for the Tata Nano is

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\(^1\) I am thankful to the planning professionals, above all from Gujarat, and members from academic institutions including CEPT in Ahmedabad and MIT that helped me to structure the content of this chapter. It is based on personal and phone interviews as well as email exchanges about the topic.
being constructed, although it is located about 20 miles away from the city centre. The DP is based on a city assessment and a city vision that provide data and goals for the planning, respectively. Though the DP ought to achieve many objectives other than zoning, I will concentrate describing the zoning prescriptions in detail because this is the means through which the DP most significantly affects street vendors by not making adequate provisions for them.

At present, Ahmedabad’s DP prescribes the land use for the entire urban area; it makes moreover zone-based prescriptions such as separating residential and manufacturing in different used-based zones; however, it does also occasionally spot-zone certain land uses, above all in the cases of institutional uses such as a hospital or a school plot. Furthermore, Section 12.1 (B) in the complementary General Development Control Regulation for Ahmedabad varies the land use by street width: plots on streets of at least 18 meters width may be fully commercial; plots on streets of at least 12 but less than 18 meters width may have commercial in the ground and first floor, plots on streets of at least 9 but less than 12 meters may have commercial in the ground floor, and all plots on smaller streets may have no commercial.

To me, the DP zoning mechanisms appear to be prone to failure for several reasons; the following three items are the most important ones with respect to street vending:

First, Ahmedabad, a six-million-inhabitant agglomeration is zoned in a single plan and, thus, in a scale where meaningful planning of local content is impossible. For the same reason, meaningful (local) participation as required by the Indian Constitution’s 73 and 74th amendment is impossible and, thus, though not completely absent in legal terms, a farce in practice.

Secondly, land-use is only moderately mixed. The use-based zoning system extracted all manufacturing activities from residential neighborhoods, besides commerce being rather limited. This artificial separation does not balance the costs and benefits. While it reduces the cost of living in the city (through containing nuisances such as bad smell or noise pollution) it also significantly reduces benefits by impeding efficient and sustainable local neighborhoods: it impedes

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2 The latter spot zoning might also happen through tenure restrictions applied by the Revenue Regime in the form of New Tenure or Restricted Tenure.

3 This is especially true, if a self-regulation of mixed-use development could be possible. For example, in Berkeley a facility in a mixed-use neighborhood must be stalled if 24.5 percent of the population opposes the facility’s further operation. Similar rules for Ahmedabad could leave it to the local neighborhood to determine which facilities are moreover beneficial or destructive for a sound neighborhood live.
the latter by increasing commutes between various zones and, thus, traffic demand that aggravates the competition for space between socioeconomic and mere traffic needs. Increased travel also wastes time and energy needed for the commutes and augments the necessary investment into transportation infrastructure. All of the latter deprive Gujaratis of significant benefits from mixed-use development, though it provides homogeneous nuisance levels due to homogeneous use. Furthermore, the formal exclusion of even small-scale manufacturing not only reduces local employment it also imposes high cost on the employment-intensive manufacturing sector and, thus, shrinks the sector itself. In a recent presentation at MIT that was made by Rakesh Mohan, Deputy Chair Main of Reserve Bank of India, Mr. Rakesh argued that the exclusion of manufacturing has contributed to India jumping from an agrarian to a service economy, leaping the manufacturing. While this is a great achievement in many respects, it has left many behind that are now forced to seek employment in the informal economy, arguably including many street vendors.

Finally, the used-based zoning system applies to (private and public) plots but not to the public realm where street vending is taking place: these are, foremost, public streets and public squares. Thus, (neither) the zoning system (nor other aspects of the Comprehensive City Development Plan) does not regulate the spaces where many if not most of the socioeconomic activities take place. In fact, streets, as the space where different functions merge, are not planned in an integrated and inclusive manner. Different departments are involved in the planning of different aspects of the street, such as the landscape, planning, real estate and water and sewage department. However, an overall organizing and managing institution is missing. This becomes clear looking at streets where trees are planted in the middle of sidewalks, becoming an impediment to the flow of pedestrians rather than a shade providing element.

In sum, participation and local content is necessarily limited in an agglomeration-wide Comprehensive City Development Plan so that the needs of street vendors are not effectively heard, despite the fact that they constitute a significant economic and citizen group. Additionally, the tendency to monogenic use zones not only increases traffic but also depresses the development of the manufacturing sector, pushing many underemployed into informal street vending.

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4 This is because higher costs shift the supply curve upwards (or inwards). Assuming no change in the demand curve, this increases the market-clearing price and reduces the quantity of manufacturing supplied.
Both, increased traffic and increased street vending aggravate the competition for public space. Finally, there is a lack of inclusive regulation and planning for the space of public streets and squares.

THE TOWN PLANNING SCHEME. In the second part of this chapter, I will briefly describe the basic TPS principles and their shortcomings. In general, TPS are a land pooling technique that facilitate the provision of public infrastructure and services in not yet or under-urbanized areas, usually at the urban periphery. A scheme encompasses various stages with the final goal to layout roads and public infrastructure without disadvantaging any single landowner. The cost of infrastructure development is pooled amongst all landowners while the scheme is revenue neutral to the public sector and, thus, the taxpayer.

The advantages of TPS are rather obvious: they are democratic in the sense that they (i) let landowners participate and (ii) respect property rights (avoiding the use of preemptive force). They are also equitable and fair in the sense that some land is appropriate for low-income housing (as part of the public amenities plots). Given the long history and numerous court cases TPS have withstood they are also a reliable techno-legal tool. Finally, TPS produce win-win situations and are, therefore, highly estimated by all parties: the private landowners and the public administration departments involved.

Some limitations of TPS might be obvious, too. In the above-cited article, Ballaney argues that the lengthy and centralized procedures reduce the supply of formal land and increase corruption (which in turn increases the price of land and, thus, fuels the surge of new slums). Additionally, the land bank assembled in the scope of TPS for the purpose of public amenities is not managed properly so that there is a lack of transparency and public control over these assets. Finally, while TPS are a self-contained and sustainable tool for infrastructure financing, the process is (until now) completely de-linked from formal municipal budgeting – whether this impedes more inclusive development or just makes TPS simpler to manage

5 (i) Survey of the area; (ii) establishing ownership; (iii) reconciling records; (iv) defining boundaries; (v) marking original plots; (vi) tabulating ownership and plot details; (vii) laying out roads; (viii) carving out plots for public amenities; (ix) calculating deductions and final plot size; (x) delineating final plots; (xi) tabulating infrastructure and betterment charges; (xii) multi-stage landowner consultations and modifications; (xiii) finalization.

and, thus, whether this is a disadvantage or and advantage remains unclear.

However, in regard to street vending, there is one important limitation that Ballaney does not mention. In my eyes, TPS are not as democratic as Ballaney argues. Though one might make the argument that all stakeholders are involved – i.e. the landowners and the public (represented through the public administration – street vendors (likely as many other potentially informal occupants of urban space) are not represented in the process. This is because the poor’s needs are usually not taken into consideration sufficiently, despite the fact that a scheme provides pro-poor housing. To make inclusive cities work, much more considerations need to be taken such as an inclusive street layout allowing for efficient pedestrian connections or a decentralized provision of public space, instead of large often dull open spaces that lack other activities and are closed throughout most parts of the day. Such spaces might be located around shadow-spending stretched-out trees or locally limited widening of the public street, potentially close to bus stops, public amenities, formal markets or street intersections.

I argue that if street vendors would have a voice in the layout of inclusive TPS (e.g. through Self-Employed Women’s Association (SEWA) or a self-run street vending cooperative), TPS might look rather similar to current schemes but be modified by small though important changes such as a decentralized pedestrian and open-space network.

In sum, despite of many advantages, in other aspects Town Planning Schemes are too lengthy, and neither transparent nor inclusive. In regard to inclusive cities in general and street vending in particular, TPS lack true participation by the poor and the informal sector. The poor and informal are not sufficiently represented by public planners who miss the knowledge and ambition to plan for them in a proper and truly inclusive way.
SUMMARY

The prevailing system of urban planning in Gujarat is the Gujarat Urban Development and Town Planning Act 1976. It gives the planners two major tools to achieve their objectives.

THE DEVELOPMENT PLAN

1. Zones the entire city in a single plan - given the scale, neither true participation (as required by the Indian Constitution’s 73 and 74th amendment) nor meaningful planning of local content is possible
2. Use-based zoning applies to (private and public) plots but not to the public realm where street vending is taking place.
3. A holistic organizing and managing Street Activity Department is missing, dealing with issues from private and public transportation over parking over green space to street vending.

THE TOWNPLANNING SCHEME

1. Local content, effectively pools and reorganizes land for urban growth
2. But too lengthy and infrastructure-provision-oriented
3. Not inclusive because deals only with land owners but not users of the land
4. Has power to make additional e.g. design and land use specifications; however, it is not made use of these options. Could be a vehicle for participation and public realm zoning, if amended appropriately.
Wednesday, January 21, 2009

In the morning, we arrive at Kankaria Lake. The high gates that fence off the park imitate those from the presidential palace in New Delhi. A crowd of people is standing in front of these gates, pushing their noses through the tiny spaces between the fence’s vertical bars. Why do they not get in? I figure out that we have to pay a 10-rupees entrance fee. Is it that the others cannot afford it?

We stroll along the lakes promenade and enjoy the fresh breeze under the shading trees. Where places are planned for vendors, no one has settled yet. Except for a school class, which causes some sensation, the park is quiet and empty; a miniature train crawls slowly its rounds. Compared to last year’s visit in August, the place is much cleaner. However, it is virtually empty. Where are all the people? For whom was this place redeveloped and whom does it serve now? Poor households earn between 20 to 100 rupees per day. Can they spend 10 rupees to enter a ‘public’ space?

SITUATION. Kankaria Lake, built in 1451 AD by Sultan Qutab-ud-Din is an artificial circular lake situated in southeastern Ahmedabad. In December 2008, it was inaugurated after a 32 crore restoration process that aimed at

(i) the recreation of the lake’s character as a world-class amenity for the public;

(ii) the redevelopment of the adjacent areas such as the zoo and the water park;

(iii) the cleaning of the waterbody.

7 One Indian Crore equals 10,000,000
FLEXIBILITY BUT ONLY TOP DOWN. A steady exchange between planners and the AMC resulted in often changing concepts of place, which challenged the planning process. Eventually, planners proved flexible to make such alterations. For instance, initially, emphasis was placed on the lake’s 2.3 km surrounding promenade provided that its adjacent circular street would stay in place. However, when the planners’ attention shifted to the promenade itself as the centerpiece of the restoration process, soon, the idea to change all of the lakefront into a pedestrian recreational zone was born. As a consequence, the traffic planning of the surrounding neighborhood needed to be revised in order to make this idea feasible. The impact on the vicinity was tremendous: two informal settlements needed to be evicted and removed in order to make place for the new road, substituting the old circular road.

MANAGEMENT PROBLEM. Moreover, in December 2008, even before all of the redevelopment was finished, the city decided to fence off the area and to restrict access by charging an entrance fee of 10 rupees. This equals 20 US cents, which, in fact, constitutes approximately one fifth of a poor person’s daily income. During the interviews I conducted, AMC officials argued that the entrance fee is crucial to guarantee the maintenance of the lake area along with all of its public amenities. However, when I visited the lake in January 2009, I could not find proof of proper management or caretaking. Instead, the restrooms were unclean and some of the water-carrying pipes were already broken. In fact, all other attractions in place such as the music fountain, the boat cruise, and the train ride are charged separately. A family, spending an afternoon at the lake can easily end up paying Rs 250 in total. In this regard, I question the argument that demanding an entrance fee is necessary in order to provide for the maintenance of the park itself. Rather, a more differentiated and inclusive maintenance model is needed; this could be, for example, based on charges for special attractions such as the train rides. The park was and should continue to be a public place, meaning public to all of the city’s people.

NO PARTICIPATION. The redevelopment scheme includes the provision of vending spaces for street vendors. These locations, now regulated and organized, include access to potable water and electricity, provide a terrace for the clients, and are located in vicinity of public toilets. However, these limited facilities do not, by far, accommodate the same number and variety of street vendors
that used to come here every day. Moreover, the vendors who are being issued a license are moreover formal franchises that can break even by selling (arguably) higher standard food at higher prices. Therefore, especially poor visitors who cannot afford to pay higher prices for food will miss those hawkers selling cheaper snacks and, potentially, cannot afford to buy any food items within the compound. This problem compounds the social exclusion given the entrance fee.

To me it is crucial to understand the different stakeholder’s opinions and takes on the Kankaria Lake project. While the planners and municipal officials saw it as a successful plan, their focus was mostly based on the comparison to the vision they had: the vision of a clean and regulated place with well-maintained lawn grounds, a dazzling train carrying the park’s visitors on a ride. However, the Self-Employed Women’s Association (SEWA)\(^8\) heavily judged the project on its meaning to the poor: SEWA argues that it is excluding the poor in two ways: first, a great deal of street vendors lost their source of income because the number of street vendors allowed in the park area is now not only limited but the license is also expensive, and second, due to the entrance fee which restricts access to those who can afford it. SEWA went even further claiming that none of the attractions such as train rides or the boat cruises should be charged for. The planners’ reaction to these arguments was the implementation of a free-hour policy. In the morning, between

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\(^8\) The Self-Employed Women’s Association (SEWA) is one of the most active stakeholders advocating for the social inclusion of street vendors. SEWA is based in Ahmedabad, Gujarat and has more than one million members.
**KANKARIA LAKE**

*before*

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**Fig. 10** | pedestrian promenade
---|---
**Fig. 11** | informal snack bar
---|---
**Fig. 12** | decayed structures/littered edge
---|---
**Fig. 13** | woman, using the lake for washing
---|---
**Fig. 14** | pin-wheel seller
---|---
**Fig. 15** | street vendors
---|---
**Fig. 16** | people socializing
---|---
KANKARIA LAKE
after (January 2009)

Fig. 19 I cleaned water’s edge
Fig. 20 I promenade
Fig. 21 I new furniture
Fig. 22 I gates restricting access
8 and 10 a.m., access to the park is without charge. This is supposed to refer to the many people in the vicinity who want to go for morning walks, and also to the poor. The proponents of this policy claim that in this way, the poor can access the park in the morning and stay throughout the day. However, SEWA responds, based on their understanding of what it means to be poor, that most of the poor must work during the morning hours that would allow free entrance to the Lake. Therefore, despite the free access in the morning, the poor are usually not permitted to enjoy the park at all.

Although Kankaria Lake, as a place where one can recover from floods of city noise and smog is a success in itself, the restriction of the recreational area to those you can afford it, is not a good decision. This is true because, firstly, to entertain and attract people, there is nothing better than watching the ballet of other people (Jacobs); keeping poor visitors out only hampers the appeal of an earlier vibrant but now, at least throughout most of the day, vacant place. Secondly, the same is true for keeping poorer street vendors out. In addition, the new policy with regard to street vending at the Lake has undermined the socioeconomic wellbeing of the vendors who had been there before the redevelopment.

AN INCLUSIVE PROJECT? This project, although intended to serve the public, clearly excludes the poorer section of the population. The exclusion starts with the removal of informal settlements during redevelopment and continues to perpetuate the right to access of public spaces through the entrance fee and exclusion of traditional street vending. In sum, to the poor the lake no longer constitutes a source of income, nor a recreational zone. The loss of traditional street vending at Kankaria Lake and the de-facto exclusion of poor visitors is a reality that strongly negatively affects the project’s success. In this regard, the vibrant life at Law Garden / Ahmedabad – including the public and for-free garden and both, a formal market for artisan clothing and an informal one for food – could serve as an example for improving the current policies for Kankaria Lake.
SUMMARY

AN INCLUSIVE PROJECT?

- The top down approach did not include true participation of stakeholders other than the State Government and the AMC. For example, not even the architect knew that they would fence off the area. And, informal settlements have been relocated against their will.

- The maintenance model clearly led to the exclusion of the poor that cannot pay the Rs 10 entrance fee. A more differentiated and inclusive model is needed, one that is for example based on charges for additional activities, street vending licenses or a property tax increment for adjacent neighborhoods – but not on the entrance to the park itself.

In sum, this project, although intended to serve the public, clearly excludes the poorer section of the population. To them, the lake no longer constitutes a source of income, nor a recreational zone. In addition, the removal of the informal settlements questions the inclusiveness of the plan.
This chapter is on the informal city. It describes street vending activities in urban India, in regard to (i) temporal appropriation of space, (ii) multiple uses of space, and (iii) the livelihoods that depend on its existence. While the chapter discusses the problems that are often associated with street vending, it also reveals its potential role for future developments, based on the thesis that informal activities are not likely to decrease but, instead, to increase even more. In sum, this chapter looks at the phenomenon of street vending, as an informal response to formal planning that does not provide for such activities.

The case study Manek Chowk on street vending in Ahmedabad will be presented as an example. The Self-Employed Women’s Association (SEWA), one of the most active stakeholders advocating for the social inclusion of street vendors, based in Ahmedabad, Gujarat, conducted this study which is on the Gujarat High Court case on the eviction of street vendors in Ahmedabad’s Old city, Manek Chowk.
THE INFORMAL ECONOMY IN AHMEDABAD

AHMEDABAD

100%

5.5 m inhabitants

77%

the share of the informal sector of total employment

47%

the share of the informal sector of the city's total income

STREET VENDING

10%

100,000 street vendors are contributing to the household income of approximately 10% of the population

ca 142 natural markets were surveyed in a study prepared for SEWA in 2003

Fig. 23 I Map based on: Mapping Natural Markets in Ahmedabad, survey by SEWA 2003
3.1 STREET VENDING

Economists trace the emerging and growing informal economy, that is “all economic activities by workers and economic units that are – in law or in practice – not covered or insufficiently covered by formal arrangements” (Flodmann Becker), back to a lack of formally provided economic opportunities such as secure employment or a working welfare system. Recent studies that aim at understanding the political and economic meaning of a growing informal sector reveal surprising numbers. For example, the City Development Plan Ahmedabad (2006-2012) cites a study, conducted by Uma Rani and Jeemol Unni, in which the significant contributions by the informal sector to the city’s economy as a whole are highlighted: Rani and Unni state that in 1997/98 “the share of the informal sector of employment was 77 percent” and that this “generated 47 percent of the city’s total income” (p. 71). In other words, half of the city’s income is generated by the poor.

Looking in particular at street vending, in 2005, the estimated number of street vendors in Indian cities constituted around 2.5 percent of the urban population (Bhowmik, Street Vendors in Asia: a review). Today, in the specific case of Ahmedabad, the estimated number of vendors is more than 100,000 (SEWA). Assuming an average household size about five members amongst street vendors, street vending alone contributes to the household income of approximately 500,000 citizens, equivalent to ten percent of the city’s population. Moreover, the study Mapping Natural Markets in Ahmedabad conducted in 2003 by Shreya Dalwadi for SEWA gives these numbers an additional dimension: Dalwadi maps approximately 142 natural markets in Ahmedabad and illustrates that street vending is not related to one specific location in the city. In fact, the natural markets studied are distributed all over the city. This is because street vendors cater a variety of demands at many diverse locations such as residential neighborhoods, squares, parks and other nodes.

People take to street vending for a variety of reasons: in Ahmedabad, once the center of textile industries, thirty percent of today’s vendors were once employed in the formal sector and became street vendors when the large industries had to shut down in the course of the past two decades. The remaining seventy percent of street vendors are foremost rural migrants who came to the city in the search of a better life (Bhowmik, Street Vendors in Asia: a review). For them, street vending constitutes the first step on the socioeconomic ladder since only few skills are needed to enter the field; however, they and...
their families often do not have the possibility of improving their skills due to a lack of educational and professional opportunities. In a survey on twelve vending locations in Ahmedabad, conducted in 1999, Sonal Parikh classifies another type of vendor, the traditional vendor. According to her survey, only thirty percent of the vendors had got passed on the trading profession from their family. Therefore, planners and authorities need to be aware of the interdependence between rapid economic change (de- and increase of global economy) and the rise in informal economies.

But, street vending mechanisms are complex. In his article *The Politics of Urban Space*, R.N. Sharma illustrates the multiple facets of street vending. His research on Bombay hawkers, for example, talks about a category of “concealed” hawkers. These people, often new to the market, are patronized by official authorities in exchange for a weekly fee, a *hafta*. Without receiving receipts for the fees paid, these vendors stay unregistered and become an easy object for criminal actions. Moreover, at some places hierarchical structures exist, where senior hawkers would employ those new to the market. Such a structure is often used to exploit those who just entered the field. Those on the top make good money, whereas those on the bottom, which constitute the most prevailing form of street vendors, only earn between Rs 50 to Rs 80 a day, women even less.

**EVictions.** In addition to very low incomes, regular evictions carried out by local authorities or the police, threaten the livelihood of the vendors. As a consequence the vendors pay informal rents – or bribes – to the authorities as a means to secure their source of income. These often constitute between 10 to 20 percent of their earnings (Bhowmik, National Alliance of Street Vendors). Therefore, proponents of street vending argue that legalizing street vending and establishing trade unions represent two important means to reduce abusive rent seeking mechanisms.

**AmBivalent AmAttitudes.** Citizens often show an ambivalent attitude towards street vendors. A survey conducted in 1999 by SEWA and the National Alliance of Street Vendors (NASVI) gives insight into the motivation of different income groups to buy from street vendors and, therefore, also explains which locations the vendors prefer. Although most citizens are aware of the problems street vending causes, people from all income groups highly appreciate the service the vendors offer. The higher income groups in particular value the vendors’ food for their great taste, the middle income...
**STREET VENDING - SUMMARY**

*In Ahmedabad, 100,000 street vendors are contributing to the household income of approximately 10% of the population.*

**Problems:** vendors lack recognition, they often have to face evictions and harassment by citizens, the administration and the police. They are accused to cause congestion, litter the streets and not pay taxes.

*Who are the vendors?*
Formerly employed in the industry, migrants, or traditional vendors.

*Where do vendors go?*
They always choose the location where they can meet the highest demand. Places such as commercial hubs, recreational zones, bus stops and temples attract public activities and therefore also vendors. They preferably set up their business at nodes, squares, streets and in neighborhoods.

*Who buys from vendors?*
People from all income groups highly appreciate the service the vendors offer.

*How much do they earn?*
The majority earns between 40-80 rupees, US $ 0.80-1.60

*vendors pay bribes* between 10 to 20% of their income.

*SEWA UNION* organizes street vendors.

*2004: National Policy on Urban Street Vendors recognizes that planning needs to include street vendors, spatial solutions are needed.*
classes buy preferably clothes, vegetables, and fruits, and the poor benefit by purchasing all kinds of goods at an economical prize from the vendors.

While people seldom talk about the benefits of street vendors, they are more often mentioned along with the problems they cause. Street vendors for example are associated with the congestion in the streets and littered sidewalks they leave behind them. Tatak Prapti Ujiyati, a researcher at the Institute for Economic and Social Research in Jakarta, brings the problem to the point. She states, “street vendors also have weaknesses.” Due to the problems they cause, they are often “accused of being a hindrance to modernity […] it is no wonder that many government officials harass them.”(Ujiyati)

STREET VENDING CATEGORIES. The matrix in figure 24 categorizes street vendors by degree of mobility from very mobile to spot bound. This categorization allows for the development of a better understanding of the vendors needs and priorities and the implications of street vending for the public space.
## STREET VENDING CATEGORIES

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>degree of mobility</th>
<th>goods sold</th>
<th>vending location</th>
<th>space needed</th>
<th>other needs</th>
<th>urban elements used</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Hawkers: very mobile</td>
<td>fingerfood, tea, small scale, utensils</td>
<td>street, bus station, park, train</td>
<td>access, storage, fresh water, public toilets</td>
<td>street furnitures, walls</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hawkers with vehicle: mobile</td>
<td>food, fruit, vegetables, utensils</td>
<td>neighborhoods, markets, streets</td>
<td>fresh water, garbage disposal, close storage, public toilet</td>
<td>streets, sidewalks, trees</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Appropriation of space: phase 1</td>
<td>food, fruit, vegetables, utensils, textiles</td>
<td>nodes, tourist locations, markets, squares</td>
<td>shade, public toilets, space for display, close storage, license</td>
<td>streets, sidewalks, trees</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Appropriation of space: phase 2</td>
<td>food, fruit, vegetables, utensils, textiles</td>
<td>nodes, tourist locations, markets, busy streets, key locations</td>
<td>shade, public toilets, close storage, fresh water, electricity, license</td>
<td>streets, sidewalks, trees, street furniture</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Appropriation of space: spot bound</td>
<td>street restaurant, utensils, clothes</td>
<td>nodes, streets, neighborhoods</td>
<td>shade, public toilets, client seating area, license</td>
<td>walls, trees, sidewalks</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Fig. 24: Street vending categories, sorted by mobility.
### Degree of Mobility

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Hawkers: Very Mobile</th>
<th>Goods Sold</th>
<th>Vending Location</th>
<th>Space Needed</th>
<th>Other Needs</th>
<th>Urban Elements Used</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Finger-food</td>
<td>Street</td>
<td>Feet</td>
<td>Access</td>
<td>Storage</td>
<td>Street Furniture</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tea</td>
<td>Bus Station</td>
<td>Public Toilets</td>
<td>Fresh Water</td>
<td>Walls</td>
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<tr>
<td>Small-scale Utensils</td>
<td>Park</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Train</td>
<td></td>
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Fig. 25 I Street vending category 1: very mobile
### 3 degree of mobility

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>street vendors: appropriation of space</th>
<th>goods sold</th>
<th>vending location</th>
<th>space needed</th>
<th>other needs</th>
<th>urban elements used</th>
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<td>nodes</td>
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<td>tourist locations,</td>
<td>public toilets,</td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td>textiles</td>
<td>markets, squares</td>
<td>space for display,</td>
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<td>close storage,</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>license</td>
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Fig. 26 | street vending category 3: appropriating space
3.2 INFORMAL RESPONSES TO THE CURRENT PLANNING APPROACH

IMPORTANCE OF OPEN SPACE. Since immemorial times the open space plays a major role to Indian societies. Indians enjoy using and, therefore, transforming the public realm in multiple ways, such as for social gatherings, informal markets, festivals, or even animal feeding. The Indian festival calendar gives proof of these activities, naming an event nearly every week. These festivals may last several days and usually take also place in the public realm. On the Ganesh festival, for instance, people form huge processions and carry idols of the god Ganesh to a river, lake or ocean, to immerse it. Whenever such activities become part of the daily life, street vendors show up simultaneously to cater the demand with diversity of items such as snacks, tea, or lucky charms.

DENSITY/PRIVACY. In fast growing cities such as Ahmedabad or Bombay, high land prices result in small apartment sizes, high densities and a lack of open space. As a result of high leases, many people have to rent out one room of their only two-room apartment to another family. To those, who are forced to live very close together, the crowded public realm becomes the only place be anonymous and to experience privacy.

VENDORS’ ROLE. In this regard, the street vendors play an important role where the public space is used in diverse ways over the course of a day. They cater for the different needs of different uses at different times and add to security in the streets through the people they attract. Moreover, the convenient service they offer to the citizens reduces travel demand and pollution. Vendors will always choose their preferred location based on the fact where they can meet the highest demand and, therefore, can make the highest earnings. However, current planning tools do not include the provision of space and amenities, needed to envision a symbiosis of this informal/formal relationship. Whereas urban plans allot space for public uses such as institutional facilities, parks, gardens and markets, no space is allocated for street vendors.

In this regard, the Indian National Policy on Urban Street Vendors, introduced in 2004 by the Department of Urban Employment and Poverty Alleviation, criticizes current planning procedures and highlights the need for participatory mechanisms with the ultimate aim to serve all stakeholders, as the basis for overall successful solutions. However, this symbiotic, yet antagonistic relationship between the formal and the informal reveals that spatial responses to the needs and priorities of all stakeholders, i.e. the authorities, the
consumers, and the sellers, need to be taken into account.

**POTENTIAL OF STREET VENDING.** Existing successful spatial designs such as the example of Ahmedabad’s Night Market at Law Garden prove that the provision and management of space can not only mediate the negative effects associated with street vending but also create a unique location that can turn into an important amenity for the city and its people. India’s fashion society has yet realized the potential of these unique locations to attract people from even beyond the city borders: Shiladitya Bora, a young filmmaker based in Ahmedabad, recently highlighted some of such examples for their success and unique character in an article published in the March 2009 version of the *Spice Route, a flight magazine* by the Indian airline *Spicejet*. His compilation of six “must-go, must-see” locations in Ahmedabad includes three informal markets: the Manek Chowk market as it is known for the best food, the three kilometer long stretch of IIM Road to hangout for the best *kitlis*, and the night market at Law Garden as the best place for “people-watching”. This article clearly shows that informal markets are appreciated, also by high-income groups, especially for their meaning to the character of a city.

**IMPORTANCE OF FORMAL/INFORMAL LINKAGES.** Geetam Tiwari, Chair and Associate Professor at the Indian Institute of Technology in Delhi writes in 2006 in an article about the needed linkages between the formal and the informal city: as a transportation planner Tiwari refers to ‘formal planning techniques (that) are not adequate to respond to the dynamism that cities display’: planning does not allow for street vending though it often provides for a significant share of jobs within Indian cities. She argues that where formal plans do not include the needed informal services people have to take over the streets, to encroach the streets in order to make a living. Tiwari claims that society has to accept the informal activities, in order to allow for mutual interactions. Furthermore, arguing that street vending adds to street safety, she claims that planning spaces for vendors is necessary but should also take into account the comprehension for other dynamics of other street users and how these need to be arranged together. Finally, she states “the growth of future cities depends upon how well we are able to plan for the unplanned” (Tiwari).

**CONCLUSION.** The investigation of the different stakeholder’s perspectives on street vending led me to the finding that the problems that are associated with street vending equal the vendors’ needs and
priorities. Therefore, I claim that pro-vending approaches have the potential to mitigate such issues as littered and congested streets, unsafe food or unequal competition to the formal economy. However, throughout recent literature it is common reasoning that the first step to improving the situation of the street vendors and, at the same time of the city as a whole, would be the legalization and recognition of their profession. With establishing a formal, legal framework for street vendors, responsibilities (such as cleaning after them) and taxes can be demanded in exchange for their rights. Moreover, any legalization of street vending needs to be followed by the provision of appropriate space, along with the management and maintenance of such. For example, if street vending would be recognized as a formal profession, then formal cooperatives of street vendors could manage and maintain their vending spaces, and they could be hold accountable for their performance when doing so. I conclude that the inclusion of street vending in planning procedures has many potential. Among others, it can perform as a means to reconcile the formal and the informal and therefore foster the growth of heterogeneous rather than homogenized cities.
Fig. 27 I street vending in Manek Chowk
3.3 CASE STUDY: MANEK CHOWK / AHMEDABAD

The rickshaw driver stops in the middle of a turmoil. I am at Manek Chowk. The complexity of impressions is overwhelming. I smell spices, freshly prepared food, dried fruits and herbs. I see vendors sitting in the street on blankets next to their colorful displays of fresh vegetables. Next to them I glance at a diversity of shops, selling jewelry and handcrafted textiles, adding their shimmer to the already rich image.

Women in colorful saris carry flowers to a little temple; on their way they circumnavigate a cow, lying in the street, some auto rickshaws, multiple scooters and vendors. I see them passing a big waste dump, which feeds animals when the women slowly disappear into the urban chaos.

Manek Chowk, the most traditional market in Ahmedabad, is situated in the center of the old city, east of the Jami Mosque. The natural market locates on a 4690sqm area and provides for the livelihood of more than 1000 people. The formal market is renowned for its diversity of goods, among which the most visible are jewelry and traditional crafts. In addition to these items that are provided in formal stores, informal vendors supply over the course of the day vegetables, snacks, tea, and household items in front of the shops and in the streets. All activities happen between 4 a.m. and 2 a.m. on the next day, leaving the streets only ‘empty’ for two hours a night. During the day, the traffic along with the vending activities adds substantially to the already existing congestion in the streets, resulting in consistent evictions by the police or the authorities.

In 2008, SEWA, which organizes more than 55,000 street vendors in Ahmedabad, gained a stage win in the lawsuit against the Ahmedabad Municipal Cooperation (AMC) over the disputed eviction of street vendors in Manek Chowk. SEWA advocated the positive role of street vendors in providing basic commodities to the society in a convenient and affordable manner. Additionally, Rushank Mehta, an architect working as a consultant for SEWA, illustrated in a case study on Manek Chowk the complex socioeconomic networks and a highly sophisticated system of temporary interlinked usage of the locality, all of which would make any eviction a hardship for the evicted. Moreover, the case

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study advocated the street vendors’ right to work and therefore the need to legitimate street vending as a profession. As a consequence, the Gujarat High Court ordered Ahmedabad Municipal Corporation to develop a comprehensive and spatial solution that is to be inclusive and must allow for the vendors to stay.

The case study on Manek Chowk, which was prepared in this context, is in particular valuable because of its detailed and on the ground research. In the study, Mehta gives insight into (i) the variety of activities at Manek Chowk, (ii) the dependencies of the vendors and their interrelationship to the formal shops in place, and (iii) the specifics on the vendors living and working conditions. His research is based on interviews with the formal and informal entrepreneurs, their clients, his own assessment of the market activities, and his experience as a citizen of Ahmedabad.

INCOME NUMBERS. Mehta’s study shows that during the day the number of vendors is 95, the number of jobs provided 106. The vendors in Manek Chowk make an average income of Rs. 6977 per vendor per month, which equals approximately Rs. 230 per day, assuming 30 working days per month. Some pay informal fees, some bribes and some “legal” taxes, which take the form of association fees or court fines for operating their businesses”. The night food stalls generate a total income of Rs. 619500 per month, which equals ca Rs. 18221 per food stall, per month. Although the stall owners have a license, they have to appease the police by offering food in return for the certainty that the police will not interrupt their activities. The cost of the food is shared between the stall owners equally.

RELATIONSHIPS. Through mapping the different uses over the day, Mehta reveals the diverse spatial and social relationships between the formal and the informal vendors, which evolved over time and became consolidated. In the morning, the rag pickers are the first to show up, followed by the gold dust collectors, of which there are ten in total, but who negotiate work hours and place among them. After two hours of work, they separate the gold and silver from the dust in a close-by temple. All of this happens before 8:30 a.m. when the municipal sweepers come to clean the area. This provides an example of symbiosis, where the formal world gains through this informal recycling service, which in turn constitutes the basis for the livelihood of the waste pickers.

TEMPORALITY/MULTIFUNCTIONALITY. The Manek Chowk market is busy 22 hours a day. The activities that occur over the course of a day are incredibly diverse, responding to the demands of the people living or visiting in the vicinity. Whereas some vendors, including the good omen sellers or the chai wallah, pursue their business all day long, others are tied to specific hours. For example, those vendors who sell towels or imitation jewelry start in the morning and leave their spot at 7 p.m. At this time, food vendors appear and take their
turn, converting the place into a big outdoor restaurant. In sum, Mehta describes this unique setup, underlines the place’s and the people’s flexibility referring also to the number of festivals and the different seasons that likewise change the market’s appearance.

Fig. 28 I tea vendor in Manek Chowk

Fig. 29 I food market at night

Fig. 30 I early morning without activities

Fig. 31 I busy during the day

Fig. 32 daily activities at Manek Chowk, Uma, Rani and Rushank Mehta. From Removal to Regulation - Planning for Street Vendors. Pro-poor Urban policy Group. Ahmedabad: unpublished, 2008.(p 4)
PROBLEMS, NEEDS AND PRIORITIES. The market area lacks basic services such as secure provision of water, toilets, electricity supply, and rainwater management. People cope to organize water in different ways: some use the public water fountain close-by in the market hall, which only provides limited supply in the morning hours; Others, who make up approximately thirty percent of the vendors, carry their water from home. In addition, some informal vendors have an agreement with the formal shop in front of which they pursue their business: if the shop has a water tap, the vendors may use it in exchange for (potentially exorbitant) payments and the provision of different services such as the protection of the shop.

The one existing public toilet in Manek Chowk is not maintained and not sufficient. People complain about unhygienic conditions.

The waste collection points are insufficient in size, location and number. They do not respond to variety of activities and waste that occurs in Manek Chowk. Waste only gets collected on every morning by the waste pickers and the AMC clean-up, leaving all night activities to deal with the waste of the day. Moreover, since the water runoff system is not sufficient, this further deteriorates, especially during monsoon, the already unhygienic conditions. The mix of waste, sewage, and runoff often clogs the streets and their drainage system, threatening not only vending activities but also people’s health.

Formal shopkeepers supply the vendors with electricity, based on informal contracts. Mehta mentions that a better supply of streetlights, which would support the vending activities, is needed.

COMPETITIVE SPACE. Mehta also analyses the moving and static patterns in the area. Although a single vendor often only takes little space, the vendors’ preference to locate visibly makes them move close to where the traffic flows. This spatial composition, along with a lack of parking lots and a lack of pedestrian space, adds significantly to the congestion issue.

Mehta concludes that, potentially, the urban arrangement would offer enough space to allow for fluently moving traffic but that the arrangement of parked cars, vendors, and pedestrians need to be reorganized. He also emphasizes the fact that proper allocation of pedestrian spaces is needed; today, the few narrow footpaths are taken over by the informal markets. Consequently, people walk in the streets and this not only slows down traffic but also adds fundamentally to congestion.

In sum, Mehta argues that, in contrast to common thinking, it is not a lack of space that causes the issues between vendors, formal shop owners, traffic users and the authorities. Rather, he states that “unorganized space and insufficiently and inappropriately defined space” results in highly competitive space (p. 18). Consequently, Mehta develops a schematic plan in which he suggests a rezoning of the place based on his findings. Mehta concludes that in addition to
the new zoning, the provision and maintenance of all basic services needs to be guaranteed in order to plan for a successful solution for the Manek Chowk vendors.

CONCLUSION. Mehta’s study illustrates in detail the relationships between the different people involved in all activities over the day. He highlights the importance and uniqueness of the social and spatial networks that evolved at Manek Chowk over time. He takes the first step towards a spatial solution that responds to the needs and priorities of all stakeholders: the regulation and re-zoning of the space along with the provision of basic amenities. However, Mehta has not done the next step, towards spatial, three-dimensional answers to street vending, yet. Although his study reveals the opportunities of the spatial solutions, an imagination of the space is lacking. Moreover, the study does not touch on the challenges of maintaining and managing such projects and locations.
This matrix summarizes examples in which street vendors creatively appropriated urban space according to their needs and priorities. An example of such is a wall or a tree used as a structure to connect a canopy, as a protection from rain and sun, or the way in which street vendors use the medians to display their goods sold in the street.
CHAPTER 3 | CONCLUSION

PROBLEMS CAUSED BY STREET VENDORS
- litter the streets
- add to traffic congestion
- do not pay taxes (but bribes), formal shop owners complain about unequal competition
- may produce unsafe food
- constitute an ‘eyesore’ to the rich.

VENDORS’ NEEDS
- access to basic services (water, sewage, public toilets, electricity, waste disposal)
- space, depending on type of vendor
- legalization of individual vendors / recognition of the profession
- introduction of systems that will maintain and organize such facilities

addressing the vendors’ needs and priorities will simultaneously mitigate the problems they cause

OPPORTUNITIES I POTENTIAL
- OPEN SPACE plays an important role in densely populated cities, (examples: festivals, ghats, animal feeding) - street vendors activate such spaces and contribute to their success (example IIM)
- PRO POOR: “subsidy” for the poor because informal goods are usually more economical
- NOT ONLY FOR THE POOR: example night market Law Garden Ahmedabad: more than just a market - a unique location
- RECONCILIATION OF FORMAL AND INFORMAL: street vending fosters the growth of heterogeneous cities rather than homogenized cities
- SECURITY: in particular through multiple uses of space, “eyes in the streets”
- EMPLOYMENT: securing the livelihood of the poor
- STREET DEPARTMENT: a coordinating agency. Potential of reconciliation through the design of the streets.
III  TOWARDS AN INCLUSIVE CITY
4 I Reading Ahmedabad
5 I Ideas for Ahmedabad
Inspired by the challenges of urban growth in the City of Ahmedabad, this section explores the existing as well as the potential relationship between the temporal and permanent, or the informal and the formal systems (for detailed information on Ahmedabad and the city’s historical growth please refer to the introduction). I have chosen to look at Ahmedabad because the city, considered the intellectual capital of Gujarat, has great intellectual manpower including institutions such as the Centre for Environmental Planning and Technology University (CEPT) and the Indian Institute of Management (IIM). At the same time, the city hosts a sophisticated community of NGOs, including the Self-Employed Women’s Association (SEWA), which has over one million members that virtually all work in the informal sector. In addition, Ahmedabad is considered to have a rather effective government: given its proactive vision of the city it invests significantly into urban development. Finally, the State of Gujarat is considered very entrepreneurial and Ahmedabad itself is considered as the state’s entrepreneurial centre.

In this not only intellectually and politically rich but also strong civil and private sector rich environment, what struck me as an outsider, was the lack of synergy between these different groups and led me to ask: can spatial imaginations and interventions play a role in the softening of the threshold and divisions between these groups.
CURRENT INVESTMENT. The city of Ahmedabad currently invests significantly in the city’s infrastructure. The development projects are supported by the Jawaharlal Nehru National Urban Renewal Mission (JNNURM), which offers funding to Indian model cities for investing in urban infrastructure. Through this funding, projects the size of the development of Ahmedabad’s Sabarmati Riverfront and the implementation of a Bus Rapid Transit System (BRTS) are made possible. The costs for these two projects alone are estimated to reach approximately Rs. 19,800 million, which equals approximately US$ 400 million (or US$PPP 2.5 billion).
NODES ATTRACT VENDORS. Planners often lack awareness of the fact that new public infrastructure projects such as the BRTS system or the Sabarmati Riverfront Project will attract both the formal and the informal economies. Especially projects that create multiple nodes such as the new BRTS corridor, with its high number of bus stops along major road arteries and several bus terminals at local centers, will attract a great deal of all sorts of activities. Besides formal businesses, the response to improved public transportation systems and, therefore, increased pedestrian flow will be an increase in the number of street vendors at the new nodes. In addition, new development schemes that plan for deeply needed recreational areas, such as the Kankaria Lake Redevelopment Project (see case study in Chapter Three) or the Sabarmati Riverfront Project not only attract visitors but also street vendors who will cater to the visitors’ demand.

I argue that the intersections of these two systems, of which the BRTS will allow people to travel easier, faster and more, and the Sabarmati Riverfront will create new targets people will travel to, are most likely to develop into new and important city nodes. However, current plans do not reflect the need for integrating street vending at these nodes. Rather, those plans that provide places for vendors, such as the Sabarmati Riverfront Development, do not locate the street vendors at places where they will be demanded; instead they often push them to the periphery (see fig.: 44).
The map in figure 38 gives an overview of the following citywide systems: the Sabarmati Riverfront Development Project, the BRTS system and the Green Belt. The existence of the Green Belt is threatened by new residential development; however, I see its potential to become an important amenity to the city with minor investments, and therefore include it in my considerations. Moreover, as a system of green spaces, it is most likely to equally attract formal activities and street vendors.
These three systems intersect frequently, creating many new nodes. The map locates twenty of those nodes in the city, all of which are diverse with regard to the urban context.

The diagram in figure 39 shows a closer look at ten of these new nodes, describing the urban context and highlighting the following node: BRTS Stop Ellisbridge / Riverfront, which will be the site for further investigation in Chapter Five.
In this last chapter, I will demonstrate by means of a reflection on the Sabarmati Riverfront Development Project how inelastic conditions and lack of communication between street vendors, NGOs, formal sector and planners undermined the project’s potential. I will show that, through small spatial interventions, we, as a community of designers, can contribute positively to the process of planning for inclusive cities.
For a better understanding of the site-specific conditions, I will now briefly introduce the Sabarmati Riverfront Development Project.

THE SABARMATI RIVERFRONT DEVELOPMENT. The Sabarmati River divides Ahmedabad into two parts: eastern and western Ahmedabad. Whereas the eastern part encompasses the Old City and most of the industrial zones and the airport, the western part, which only developed in the 20th century, contains many residential areas, major institutions such as CEPT University and IIM, and at the periphery (e.g. Drive In Road and Satellite-Ghandinagar Expressway Charrasta) Ahmedabad’s most modern and high-end commercial establishments.

The Sabarmati’s fluctuant water levels during monsoon were threatening especially those who lived close to the banks. However, most of the city itself lies well above the normal flood level and the riverbanks and the riverbed were used by many and diverse informal activities: for example, people went there for dyeing clothes, doing laundry, or growing melons in the sandy riverbed. Informal squatting also occurred frequently. One of the major intentions of the Sabarmati
Riverfront Development Project is to prevent flooding by canalizing the river. Furthermore, a lake-like situation is generated through a dike in the city’s south, which holds the water, and an irrigation canal in the north, which feeds the river even in dry periods and therefore guarantees a more or less constant water level.

However, this project not only builds on the idea of flood mitigation, in fact, it constitutes a big real estate project: as stated in the brochure *Project Experience – the Sabarmati Riverfront Development* the project aims at reclaiming 162 hectares of land, of which 81 percent are dedicated to the development for public purposes. Out of this, 9.8 hectares are reserved for promenades along the banks of the river (HCP, 2004). This reclamation is made possible by the construction of a total of 20 kilometers of retention walls on both sides of the river. The walls’ height is planned between five and seven meters, which orients at the one-in-a-hundred-year flood level.

The plan provides newly reclaimed land for public and private activities, most of which will inadvertently attract street vendors. However, the plan only relocates one of the riverbank’s prior informal activities, the Sunday market. In addition, it creates additional space for the flower market and locates space for an informal market. I believe the plan does not prepare for the natural emergence of markets that will be induced through the allocation of commerce, offices and retail. The provided space for informal activities is insufficient. Furthermore, the current planning does not illustrate how vending could potentially be accommodated on the promenade, in the parks, or in the vicinity of commercial developments. Instead, current planning is concerned with accommodating larger arterial roads alongside the riverbed, which, I fear, will rather stimulate the loss of a riverfront by cutting it off from the city, than it will allow for the integration of the riverfront into the city.
Fig: 43 I Concept Plan by HCP Design & Project Management Pvt. Ltd., Ahmedabad
Fig: 44 I analysis based on concept plan: space provided for informal activities and planned uses most likely to attract street vending
The analysis of informal landscapes in chapter three resulted in a matrix, which shows different ways in which people appropriate urban space. I use this matrix now to rethink the existing urban elements. In this way, the matrix generates new visions of urban elements that can act in multifunctional ways. Elements such as walls, bus stops and streetlights can also become items that allow for the provision of shade, the connection to a water faucet or an electricity outlet.
CATEGORIZING: LINEAR AND FOCAL ELEMENTS

urban elements

linear elements

focal elements

needs and priorities of vendors

water collect-
ing & storing

wall shaped to promote display

canopy wall / green wall

part of canopy structure

display structure and seating area

wide-crowned trees

structure to display and protect

water cooled structures

rainwater collection canopy

structure for shading

canopy for rain water collection, cistern

pemeable paving

a network of (temporal) fountains

integrated kiosk

covered with solar panel

solar panel generating electricity

water cooled structures

storage of water in cistern

covered seating

 provision of water for toilets

combined with public toilets

owner / public works department

management/ maintenance/ responsibilities

public works department

landscape department

sweepers waste department

water dep. fire dep.

transportation department

transportation department

Fig: 46 I colorcoded matrix: linear and focal elements
OPPORTUNITIES INSPIRED BY INFORMAL CREATIVITY AND ORIENTED TOWARDS PROCESSES. This matrix allows the development of a typology of multifunctional elements. These elements may be *linear* or *focal* in nature. For instance, bus stops, providing shade and protecting from the sun, can also collect and harvest rainwater. After filtration, the collected rainwater can be stored in an underground cistern. Vendors are allowed to set up their businesses on the bus stop’s side that does not face the street; through a partially open screen, a *jali*, they sell also to the people waiting at the bus stop. The vendors can use the harvested water for their businesses. Furthermore, the water can be used for an integrated public toilet whose maintenance will be guaranteed through one of the vendors in charge of it, and being rewarded through collecting revenues for utilization of the toilet. Another example is a wall that has the ability to store rainwater. Provided that the rainwater is relatively uncontaminated and subsequently filtered, it can be reused for dishwashing or other activities that do not include the consumption of the water itself; however, new filtration technologies will make even this possible.
Fig: 47 | typology of linear elements
The shown elements only exemplify the full potential of such interventions. According to diverse context-specific conditions, other multifunctional elements can be further imagined and developed.

In a next step I suggest to apply the findings to the identified focal and linear elements in the official Riverfront Concept Plan. In this way, the development of the riverfront can be re-envisioned.
TYPOLOGY OF MULTIFUNCTIONAL FOCAL ELEMENTS

- **kiosk/bus stop**
- **WC**
- **tree bench**
- **passenger waiting**
- **vending**
- **plug in street light**
- **temporary market fountain**
- **fountain**
- **jali**
- **wc**
- **wear bin**
- **hydrant**
- **bus stop**
- **parking meter**

**Fig: 49** Typology of focal elements
AHMEDABAD RIVERFRONT: RE-ENVISIONED

My intention in these small interventions, using existing infrastructure, often achieved through large investments, is to host small spatial rearticulations that can make the city more elastic.
DRAFT:

- Additional seating and vending platform
- Rainwater collecting wall
- Multipurpose grid structure attached to wall
- Rentable shutter/locker providing shade + access to electricity
- Shrine/water pavilion
- Seating in tree’s shade provision of electricity from street light
- Access to river and river bed also during dry periods
- Balcony providing shade

Re-envisioning the Indian City - Informality and Temporality I Chapter 5

Fig: 50 I riverfront re-invisioned
Throughout my thesis, I have been very conscious and mindful of two things: first, though I see many benefits of informal activities such as street vending I do not want to romanticize it; there are definitely many negative aspects to be dealt with. However I believe it is possible to overcome these adverse sides and to strengthen the positive aspects. Such an approach would help both the formal and informal world to thrive and to develop. Secondly, despite the fact that my literature review highlights the fact that the informal economy is not a temporary but, more likely, a permanent phenomenon, I do not think that the informal world is a “fixed reality” that would continue in the same fashion permanently. Instead, I believe that informal activities will continue to be important service and goods providers in cities. However, I also believe that the form – e.g. the degree of professionalism and the level of technology – will change over time. Alternatively, many activities that are today considered informal may become formal – e.g. by licensing them – however, that does not mean that the activities themselves disappear. Therefore, in my design, I have always imagined the same place with and without informal activities.
Fig: 51 | riverfront re-invisioned
CONCLUSION

I argue that street vendors and natural markets emerge where there exists demand for such offers. At these places, spatial solutions for including street vending need to be found. Otherwise, street vending negatively affects the formal city. However, with integrative spatial solutions, positive aspects of street vending have the power to significantly improve the quality, not only of street vending locations but also of city life as a whole. These findings are backed up by the literature review, interviews and on-site research.

In particular, the literature review reveals (i) the informal sector as a permanent and increasing phenomenon, (ii) the dependence of the poor on the sector, (iii) an appreciation of the service among all income groups, (iv) problems that vendors are accused of causing, and (iv) the need for spatial solutions that integrate street vendors into formal planning approaches. A comparison of the vendors’ needs and priorities with the problems they arguably cause reveals that addressing the vendors’ needs and priorities will simultaneously mitigate the problems they cause. For example, if the vendors could access fresh water and public toilets, the foods quality will improve.

Moreover, while “comprehensive planning” does not yet reflect the dynamic interrelationship between both the formal and the informal as a characteristic of Indian cities, this analysis reveals the opportunities of inclusive strategies to reconcile the formal and the informal worlds. On the one hand, for the benefit of the formal, the informal is capable of enabling vibrant street life that the “modernization” of Indian cities too often endangers as a result of intolerant modern planning approaches in favor of the separation of functions. On the other hand, for the benefit of the informal, the formal world can improve the vendors’ working environment, for example through the provision of fresh water and electricity.

The case study on Ahmedabad portraits the city administrators’ amazingly proactive vision; however, it also questions the lack of inclusive approaches. In detail, I argue that although through the new BRT system and the Sabarmati Riverfront Development new nodes are created, too little attention has been paid to the fact that they will attract large amounts of street vendors. Therefore, I claim that through small-scale interventions such as the rethinking of urban elements a win-win situation for all stakeholders, including vendors, clients, citizens and administrative officials can be created. I illustrate this by means of a design exercise, looking at how such small-scale interventions can allow for the integration of street vendors at the new BRTS node Ellisbridge/Riverfront.
In particular, I suggest utilizing two scales: the city and the local scale. The city scale is defined by large urban systems such as the Sabarmati River, the green belt and arterial (public) transportation systems; the local scale is defined by nodes, in which the city-scale systems meet. In order to make the city-scale systems work, and thus the city itself a livable space, the local nodes need to be developed in an inclusive manner. Only then, the city-scale elements effectively connect and produce vibrant spaces in which different social groups are able to interact meaningfully. Such spaces will thrive around the clock, making them a safe place to be.

City-scale interventions create a framework for the city’s development goals based on broad notions such as the development toward a more sustainable city. Such interventions are planned in the long-term, given the size of the investment. On the other hand, local-scale projects provide the framework for the integration of short-term approaches relating to the site-specific context.

With regard to this two-pronged approach, the example of the Sabarmati Riverfront (Section III) demonstrates that (i) for a long-term vision it is necessary to create a plan with the most important city-scale elements. This plan shall promote the major ideas on which urban development should be directed to over a decade, such as the environmentally friendly BRT system or the Sabarmati Riverfront. Complementary, (ii) flexible short-term visions are necessary to define gradual development steps, especially for the local scale. Such steps should not be definitive in nature but, instead, they should be altered if the needs and priorities change over time. Finally, the example shows that such a two-pronged approach, based on (i) the city versus the local scale and (ii) the long versus the short term, is feasible in a meaningful way.

While I am aware of the fact that this study focuses on a specific site – the riverfront – I believe that the same approach may be taken in any other location. To prove this, the method should be explored in a different urban context such as at highly frequented street intersections. Additionally, steps could be taken towards a pilot project, requiring only uncostly investment for such small-scale interventions. Such an experiment would allow for testing of the approach’s viability, providing a successful example, that may be adapted in future.


Shweta, Sharma. Hawkers and Hawking space: A study of Commercial Centers in the NDMC area of Delhi. Ahmedabad: CEPT University, Faculty of Planning and Public Policy, 2007-08. (Thesis)


FIGURE LEGEND

Fig. 1: Teen Darwaja, Ahmedabad courtesy from Alexander Kalsey

Fig. 2: street vendors and hawkers a,b,c,d,e,f,g,i courtesy from Andrea Schuckmann h by author

Fig. 3: urban growth Ahmedabad by author

Fig. 4: aerial Ahmedabad / urban fabric google earth

Fig. 5 I perceptions by author

Fig. 6 I planners’ vision: Gujarat International Finance Tech City (GIFT) source: Gujarat Urban Development Corporation, fall 2008

Fig. 7 I Revised Draft Development Plan of AUDA - 2011AD Part I, Vol 2 http://www.egovamc.com/

Fig. 8 I aerial Kankaria Lake / Ahmedabad google earth

Fig. 9 I Kankaria Lake redevelopment agenda based on the presentation Kankaria Lakefront Redevelopment Project Ahmedabad Municipal Corporation/HCP Design & Project Management Pvt. Ltd., Ahmedabad, 12-21-2005, courtesy from HCP Design & Project Management
Fig.10, 11, 12, 16 from the presentation
Kankaria Lakefront Redevelopment Project

Fig.14, 15, 17, 18, 19, 20, 21, 22 by author

Fig.23 I Map based on : Mapping Natural Markets in Ahmedabad, survey by SEWA 2003

Fig.24, 25, 26, 27 I street vending categories images and matrix by author

Fig.28, 29 from: Uma, Rani and Rushank Mehta. From Removal to Regulation - Planning for Street Vendors. Pro-poor Urban policy Group. Ahmedabad: unpublished, 2008. page 6

Fig.30, 31 ibid, page 13

Fig.32 ibid, page 4

Fig.33, 34, 35 Uma, Rani and Rushank Mehta. From Removal to Regulation - Planning for Street Vendors. Pro-poor Urban policy Group. Ahmedabad: unpublished, 2008.page 31, 32, 35

Fig.36 I matrix by author

Fig.37 I urban investments by author based on interviews and email exchange with HCP Design & Project Management

Fig.36 by author based on AMC. Comprehensive Mobility Plan and Bus Rapid Transit System Plan Phase – II. Ahmedabad: AMC, 2008.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Fig. 39, 40, 41</th>
<th>by author</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Fig. 42</td>
<td>by author based on a brochure by HCP. Project Experience - the Sabarmati Riverfront Development. Mumbai: unpublished, 2004.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Fig. 43</td>
<td>Concept Plan by HCP Design &amp; Project Management Pvt. Ltd., Ahmedabad</td>
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<tr>
<td>Fig. 44</td>
<td>by author based on Concept Plan by HCP Design &amp; Project Management Pvt. Ltd., Ahmedabad</td>
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<td>Fig. 45, 46, 47, 49, 50, 51</td>
<td>by author</td>
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<td>Fig. 48</td>
<td>by author based on Concept Plan by HCP Design &amp; Project Management Pvt. Ltd., Ahmedabad</td>
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