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Competing for victimhood: Stories of Bosnian war survivors

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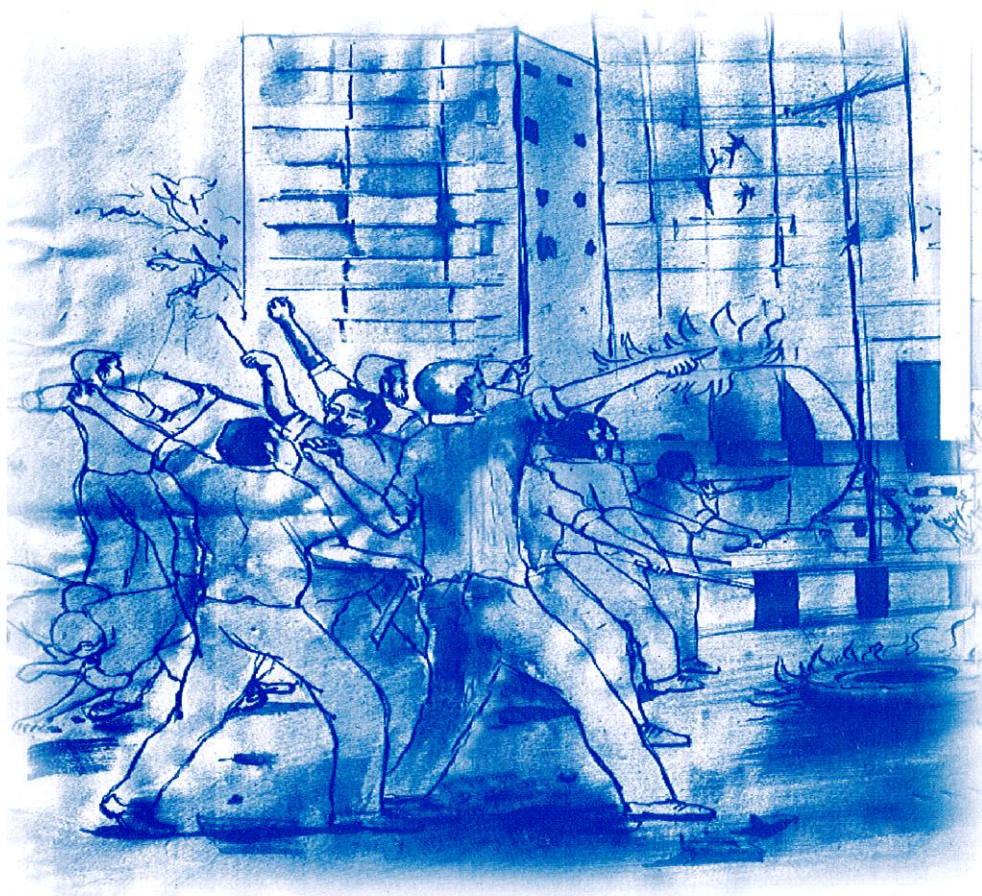
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International Conference on Democracy, Citizenship and Urban Violence



Organized by:



Urban Research and
Development Society

12-13 March 2014

Muzaffar Ahmed Chowdhury Auditorium, Social Science Building, University of Dhaka

Foreword

During the period of neoliberal democracy we face huge challenges of inequality and social polarization which leads to the new forms of urban violence. In Bangladesh democratic governments are under threat in recent decades due to the overwhelming dominance of market and corporations under the new web of privatization. The disjunctions between democracy and modernity have produced the fragmented urban spaces. Today's Dhaka is a city of shopping malls, restaurants, cafes, beauty parlours and glamorous gymnasiums. The city in short space of time has transformed, the landscape is now dominated by new developments. An array of real-estate advertisements offering lucrative land and housing deals dots the city. Alongside these new developments a new wave of service privatization, of universities, hospitals and schools is sweeping across the city, pricing out the vast majority from access to basic services. Millions of poor people moved to the city's peripheries with the hope of prosperity where they were in fact, trapped into the new urban poverty. In the urban peripheries new manufacturing and garments factories are fast developing, which become centers for poverty, violence and exploitation. Urban poverty, widespread violence, and massive population movements to Dhaka have contributed to the concentration of poverty and violence in peripheral areas of the city during the period of market democracy. These new forms of urban violence produced citizen insecurity.

It is in this context, the conference has drawn together from academics and researchers to address urban violence under neoliberal democracy and insurgent citizenship. The implications of neo-liberalism in terms of producing inequality and violence have been presented in the contexts of different countries. Session-1 addresses democracy, the city and victimhood where the cases of Bangladesh and Bosnia have been presented. Session-2 addresses neoliberalism and increasing polarization focusing on Bangladesh, India and Central and Eastern Europe. Session-3 offers a plenary discussion on the classical paradigm and other thoughts underlying the conference. Session-4 addresses privatization of urban services and challenges of urban citizenships highlighting Bangladesh and China. Session-5 addresses urban poverty and slums in the context of neoliberal transformation in Bangladesh and Tondo-Manila. Session-6 addresses urban crime and violence highlighting the situations of Bangladesh, India and South Africa. Session-7 addresses governmentality, policy and protest in the contexts of Bangladesh and India.

In fact, it was really difficult to organize the conference in Dhaka due to ongoing political violence. A number of presenters had withdrawn their submissions as their universities did not encourage them to travel to Dhaka. Moreover, financial constraints are a common problem for organizing an academic conference here. Despite these difficulties we are happy that we have finally made the conference possible.

We would like to thank everyone who extended their support.

Shahadat Hossain & Samina Luthfa

Democratic Transition, Collective Action and Urban Space: Hartal in Bangladesh, 1947-2013

Prof. S. Aminul Islam, University of Dhaka, Bangladesh

Democratic transition in the post-colonial states has invariably moved through protracted violence and often without much success. Although Bangladesh began its journey towards democracy within the nation state of Pakistan in 1947, she is still struggling to achieve democratic transition. After independence from Pakistan, the country began anew its move towards democracy which came to a halt very soon. A new beginning for a democratic system was made in 1991 which is yet to be completed. In Bangladesh like any post-colonial state the fight against authoritarianism has been shaped through collective action in the urban space. The objective of this paper is to explore the nature and dynamics of a particular form of collective action which has come to be known as hartal in the country and which is a culturally shaped and unique form of collective action of South Asia with roots in the anti-British colonial struggles. The paper will present the historical pattern of hartal in the country with particular focus upon the period from 1991-2013. This will show that Hartal carries the legacy of mobilization politics of anti-colonial struggles of the urban elites. It is also a form of collective action that has particular cultural packaging which may be described as enemy discourse through which legitimacy is claimed for it or it is denounced. Thus hartals in Bangladesh provide a unique insight into the dynamics of collective action that the emerging urban space produces in unique conflation of a divide between the urban elites, and the parliament and streets that tends to reflect it through the working of the state apparatus or remorseless violence in the streets.

Neoliberalism, Neopatrimonialism and Urban Violence in Bangladesh

Prof. A.I. Mahbub Uddin Ahmed, University of Dhaka, Bangladesh

The main objective of this paper is to examine the relationship between neo-liberalism and urban violence as intervened by neo-patrimonialism in Bangladesh. The main assumptions of this paper are: (a) urban violence in Bangladesh is the direct result of the rise of a penal state in favor of capital and against labor, and (b) The class-based penile state in Bangladesh is the direct heir of neo-patrimonialism under neo-liberalism. A perspective derived from Harvey and Wacquant is used to analyze data gathered by historical-documentary method. The main findings of the paper are: (a) neoliberalism's economic practices have created a "lumpen" mode of accumulation as well as "accumulation through dispossession" which has reproduced a lumpen-comprador class structure in Bangladesh. (b) To facilitate such class accumulation, the traditional patrimonial state has transformed itself into neo-patrimonial state: mastanocracy has systematically destroyed democratic processes gained through anti-colonial movements. (c) As a result, contradictory democratic locations have emerged: market democracy has not corresponded to social and political democracies. (d) Thus, a new form of social enclosure through the collapse of social democracy, the savaging of social safety nets, has evolved. (e) Together with the collapse of liberal political democracy, conflict between labor and capital has become a norm in Readymade Garment sector. Therefore, urban violence, under neo-liberalism and neo-patrimonialism, has become a new mode of accumulation and means to political power.

City versus Cities: Profiling Dhaka

Prof. Monirul Islam Khan, University of Dhaka, Bangladesh

After the independence in 1971 Dhaka city's growth became fast paced infusing complexity in the process. At present the city is divided into more than 90 municipal wards with heterogeneous socioeconomic composition. While traditionally old and new parts of the city reflected congested and open spatial arrangement, in the recent time the so-called new Dhaka grew in such a manner that there are several 'cities' in one. Parts of the new city are so diverse physically in terms of space arrangement, degree of congestion, respective population density and the utilities that it is not possible to profile it homogenously. While wide and smooth roads, bright colored buildings, and play-grounds will mark some parts like Dhanmondi, Gulshan, Uttara or Baridhara, narrow and broken roads, dilapidated buildings, tin sheds mark the neighborhoods of Bashabo, Badda, Kuril or other places. The contrast in spatial and physical outlook is closely related to social stratification and economic inequality. The residents of the marginal 'cities' of Dhaka are subject to economic hardships of such an order that 'physical living' prevails over their 'psychological living'. The paper argues that 'physical living' is mere survival struggle with absolute poverty while 'psychological living' addresses relative poverty. For example, the nature of entertainment contrasts starkly across 'cities' in Dhaka. Ground sports versus street play or street corner gossiping versus gathering at fast food shops are a few relevant examples. The differential presence of green space is also contrasting in the 'cities' in Dhaka, as is the occupational pattern of different 'cities'. Poor 'cities' of Dhaka are often excluded from the consideration of the city planning owing to a number of physical constraints.

Narratives after the Bosnian War: Competition for Victimhood

Dr. Goran Basic, Lund University, Sweden

This article analyzes verbally portrayed experiences of 27 survivors of the 1990's war in northwestern Bosnia. Focus lies on describing how the interviewees portray the social phenomenon of "victimhood", and to analyze discursive patterns which contribute to constructing the category "victim". When, after the war, different actors claim this "victim" status it sparks a competition for victimhood. Categories appear and they are: "the remainders" those who lived in northwestern Bosnia before, during and after the war; "the fugitives" those who driven into northwestern Bosnia during the war; "the returnees" those who returned after the war and "the diaspora" those who were driven out from northwestern Bosnia and remained in their new country. The competition between these categories seems to take place on a symbolic level. All interviewees want to portray themselves as "ideal victims" but they are all about to loose that status. The returnees and the diaspora are losing status by receiving recognition from the surrounding community and because they have a higher economic status, the remainders are losing status since they are constantly being haunted by war events and the refugees are losing status by being presented as strangers and thus fitting the role of ideal perpetrators. It seems that by reproducing this competition for the victim role, all demarcations, which were played out so skillfully during the war, are kept alive.

Renegotiating Social Policy through Informality: A View from Central and Eastern Europe

Prof. Abel Polese, Tallinn University, Estonia

This paper demonstrates that informal practices may allow for the participation of a wide variety of citizens in the policy making processes. In particular, it focuses on the renegotiation (at the formal and informal level) of social and welfare policies in Central and Eastern Europe. Previous research has already highlighted the potential conflicts between universalistic values and their application locally such as anti-corruption campaigns in Central Asia (Werner 2002), the difficulty to apply locally concepts that conflict with the indigenous ethos (Gill 2000). This paper builds on contemporary literature on the conflict between structural and individual goals in developing countries and explores the role of informal practices in creating the fundamentals of a parallel and divergent pattern. Gathering evidence from case studies (Estonia, Lithuania, Russia, Romania, Ukraine), a mix of ethnographic methods and national surveys designed by the author of this paper suggest that: 1) citizens unable to use traditional channels (voting) or consolidated tools (contentious politics) may be able to informally renegotiate a policy that they are unable or unwilling to comply with. In this it builds from a long anthropological tradition of unorganised resistance (Scott 1984) to show the role informal practices may have in the renegotiation, or even rejection, of formal policies; 2) the incapacity of a state to act as welfare distributor does not imply automatically lack of welfare tools in that society. By organising themselves, citizens may be able to create parallel structures securing welfare without necessarily passing through the state. In this the paper will start from Polanyi's (1968) distinction between pre-modern and modern economies to critically analyse literature on the lack of structures and social capital in Central and Eastern Europe.

Karl Polanyi in India: Neo-liberal Capital and Politics of the Poor

Dr. Sarbeswar Sahoo, Indian Institute of Technology (IIT), Delhi, India

The post-Cold War project of globalisation has had far-reaching implications for the dynamics of liberal democracy and governance in India. With the opening of the Indian economy in the 1990s, global market forces and private sector organisations have played an increasingly significant role in the political life of the nation. Given this background, several questions are addressed. How has globalisation affected the way that state and civil society relations in India are constituted? In particular, what are its political implications for the poor who had previously relied on the services provided by the post-colonial state that carried out significant welfare-orientated functions? The paper argues that although neo-liberal restructuring of the Indian economy has helped India overcome the so-called "Hindu rate of growth", it has adversely affected the economic interests of the poor and marginalized. India's job market has shrunk, public expenditure in social development has consistently declined, urban-centric economic growth has bypassed the agricultural sector, farmer's suicide has increased, and the redistributive politics have become irrelevant. Such contradictions of globalisation have, however, transformed the dependent identity of the poor and marginalised toward a greater propensity for collective mobilisation (or what Karl Polanyi has referred to as "the double movement"). The paper concludes that while the longer-term outcomes of such mobilisation remains unclear, the hegemonic position of entrenched elites is more clearly being challenged by the emergence of new agendas of inclusion, welfare rights and social justice appearing under conditions of neo-liberal globalisation.

The Recent Share Market Bubble as the Crash in Bangladesh: Who Are to Blame?

Dr. Helal Uddin, University of Dhaka, Bangladesh

This paper explains the factors behind the recent share market bubble and the crash in Bangladesh. It will further explain the street violence made by small investors after the crash. Contrary to the widely perceived notion that manipulations in the stock exchanges have created the bubble, this study shows that the inappropriate monetary and fiscal measures have created the bubble and the consequent crash. To counter the adverse effect of recent global meltdown, expansionary monetary measures were undertaken during the phase of bubble creation. The excess supply of money, created by policy mistakes as appeared, would not transmit disproportionately to stock market had there been no substantial distortions in place at the micro level. The Ministry of Finance created distortions in incentives that directed the excessive supply of money to the share market. Policy measures such as lowering interest rate on National Savings Certificate (NSC), imposing taxes on NSC incomes, directing black money to share market, leaving share market incomes non-taxed, and huge monetary expansion created those distortions. Instead of demand management, demand was highly induced through those distortions. Attempted supply driven policies failed to offset the exponential growth in demand. As a consequence, the bubble was created and it crashed when Bangladesh Bank enforced its regulatory measures on banks in December, 2010. The paper further reveals that the crash made the small investors desperate as many of them lost their savings. They protested in the streets after the crash which ended in violence due to repressive role of the state.

Migration and Exclusionary Urbanisation in Delhi and its Periphery

Dr. Nandia Gupta, University of Delhi, India

Delhi, the capital-city of India, has witnessed large scale in-migration for several years. Recently, however, it seems that migration into Delhi has somewhat stagnated. Academicians differ on the reasons for such stagnation; some suggest that cities such as Delhi have become exclusionary while others attribute this reduction to popular social protection programs (such as NREGS) in rural areas, while others attribute it to the gravitational effect of peripheral urban agglomerations (in case of Delhi). It can be surmised that all three have an effect on changing incidence and possibly even patterns of migration – however to what degree each of them effect in-migration in Delhi is at this point not quantifiable. This paper looks at the changing face of migration by the poor in Delhi (National Capital Territory) and its surrounding areas (National Capital Region). Using two large scale empirical surveys conducted in the NCT and NCR this paper shows that the profile of poor migrants in Delhi NCR and NCT is changing with respect to caste, religion, levels of education, work profiles etc. This provides evidence to show the exclusionary processes operating in Delhi and its fringes. There is a difference in migrant poor's profiles in the centre of Delhi and those living in its peripheries. This also points to possible exclusions in the centre of Delhi and also urban planning itself. Lives of new migrants, older migrants and non-migrants with respect to living conditions, types of settlements, work atmosphere, employee-worker relationships, exploitation and other aspects show different result. Similarly, also puts forth differences in perceptions related to safety and security – in Delhi, localities, neighborhoods and public transport; people's assessment of their quality of life and several of its component indicators.

Neoliberal Urbanism and Its Discontents: The Case of Dhaka City, Bangladesh

Prof. Shahadat Hossain, University of Dhaka, Bangladesh

The paper aims to explain the discontents of neoliberal urbanism highlighting the rise of new urban marginality and increasing urban violence. The paper is based on the frameworks of apocalyptic urbanism, urban marginality and insurgent citizenship. Combining both urban history and ethnography the paper addresses the issues of suburbanization and peripherilization, the rise of new urban marginality and incidence of urban violence in Dhaka. The paper reveals that rural displacement and massive migration of rural population to the urban peripheries cause rapid urbanization in recent times. Economic restructuring and relocation of the poor communities in the urban peripheries causes suburbanization of Dhaka. The urban renewal and redevelopment justified for beautification of the city favours a very small portion of urban population ignoring the rights of urban margins and near-margins. Dhaka's landscape is now dominated by new developments and an array of real-estate advertisements offering lucrative land and housing deals across the city. The paper also reveals that most of the urban poor are involved in low paid peripheral economic activities. It is in this context the urban peripheries have become centers for new poverty and exploitation. Yet despite these volatile living conditions, many poor people choose to live in the peripheries as employment is unavailable in the city. The paper further reveals that Dhaka has emerged as a city of chaos where unprecedented violence is occurring due to exclusion of majorities of the urban dwellers from access to formal employment, land and housing and urban utilities. However, the paper argues that incidence of urban violence is closely linked to the new form of economic restructuring and increasing insecurities and uncertainties produced by neoliberal transformations in recent decades.

Urban Ecosystem Services under Risk in Dhaka Mega City, Bangladesh

Dr. Shafi Noor Islam, Brandenburg University of Technology, Germany

Urban ecosystem is dynamic ecosystem that has similar interactions and behaviours as natural ecosystems. Moreover it is a hybrid of natural and manmade elements whose interactions are affected not only by the natural environment, but also by culture, heritage, architecture, human behaviour, politics, economics and social organizations. Urban areas cannot exist in isolation. The ecological footprint analysis of Dhaka mega city has shown that city requires productive land. However, several times the size and shape of the city has changed and so has the supporting services for citizens. Dhaka city has emerged as a fast growing mega city in recent times. The rapid urban growth in Dhaka city also exercises influences on all aspects of social life including the nature of economic development as well as demographic and many other social and ecological processes. The urban ecosystem contains four spheres in Dhaka mega city such as i) the natural and fluvial environment, ii) the built environment, iii) the culture and heritage environment and iv) the socio-economic environment. Furthermore it also offers urban ecosystem goods and services such as i) supporting services, ii) provisioning services, iii) regulating services and iv) cultural services. In addition the urban ecosystem of Dhaka mega city has values in different categories for example ecological values, economic values, social values and cultural values. The urban ecosystem services are degraded due to rapid growth of population and city size expansion, infrastructure development, shrinking of fluvial process, drinking water scarcity, lessening of vegetation and green spaces, vehicle and air pollution, increased industrial pollution, slums development and waste mismanagement. The mega city ecosystem services development planning is essential for the betterment of Asian largest mega city social life. This paper is based on secondary data sources. The objective of this paper is to understand the urban ecosystems services and its rapid degradation scenarios on Dhaka mega city.

Is It the Best Time or the Worst Time Ever in China: Privatization and Inequality in Chinese Urban Areas

Yang Chen, Program Officer, Mercy Corps China Program

Since the economic reform and opening of China in 1978, Chinese people have seen a variety of changes in their lives. Along with China becoming the fastest growing country in the world, nowadays Chinese people have also gained reputation as the strongest consumers of luxury products, meanwhile property market in China has been rapidly grown for years. Some analysis stated that the implementation of privatization and enforcement of marketization contributed to those developments. However, it is an un-denying fact that the inequality issue in China has become significantly severe. This brings the question of whether privatization policies have benefited the majority of Chinese or not, considering developed welfare policies are still missing in China. This paper, based on secondary data and first-hand interviews, examines the pros and cons of privatization in the Chinese urban context, and analyze the correlation between privatization and existing inequalities. Specifically, the paper briefly illustrates the history of economic reforms in China, and looks at the positive impacts brought by privatization. This is followed by an investigation on privatization and inequalities in the following areas: migrant workers, education, and ownership and earning. The author will also explore practical approaches to solving existing inequality issues in Chinese urban areas. Based on all the findings, the author suggests that the privatization is a necessary evil in the process of improving Chinese people's overall living quality. Nevertheless, it is crucial for the government to integrate public participation, transparency and accountability into relevant policies and enforcement.

Service Delivery Insecurity in South Asia: Community Based Experiences in Obtaining Municipal Services

Faisal Haq Shaheen, Toronto City Council, Canada

Viewed as the 'new city centre', peri urbanization has taken control of many cities in South Asia. Karachi's boundless suburban sprawl is testament to this unrelenting growth. Continued migration to urban centers and the services oriented skill set of transient workers will feed peri urban growth and class polarization in the years to come. Violence against civil society organizations and individuals striving to extend services to the urban poor has peaked with the murder for Perween Rahman this past spring. The policy aims and intergovernmental efforts to address such conflict need to be escalated and harmonized in light of cost recovery and equitable growth. This paper compares the contexts of state and non state efforts to extend municipal services to peri urban communities in South Asia, with a focus on case studies from Karachi and Dhaka. Process tracing of relationship development between state and non state actors reveals an urgent need to formalize service delivery facilitation. The absence of efforts to build security around such approaches will allow the power of Individuals and interests to outpace the processes of institutions in addressing the needs and development positioning of peri urban communities. The complex context of obtaining services through a labyrinth of municipal and provincial actors with opposing interests, leads to the need for more rigorous and agreed upon boundaries between intergovernmental jurisdictions and more specifically, service providers.

Climate Migrants and Citizenship in the New Urban Space in Dhaka

Saad Quasem, Independent Researcher, Bangladesh

Bangladesh is at the forefront of climatic changes in the atmosphere. Predictions show that livelihood sources of the poorest will be diminished, therefore in order to cope with the shocks, many will be migrating to urban centers and Dhaka being the center of economic activity and the capital is a very popular choice. Estimates hold that by 2050, Dhaka will be housing 6 million climate migrants. Some studies conducted in urban areas show that, when members of the poorest strata move to Dhaka, they are unaccounted for by the government and loose access to safety nets. The policies of the government of Bangladesh in addressing climate change and migration do not reflect on self determination of the migrants. Holding Lefebvre's theory that space is created through manipulation, negotiation and appropriation, this paper argues that climate migrants in Dhaka is creating their own space in this global city as they are pushed in and forced to survive. This paper also examines the state of citizenship for the urban migrants, as climatic migration in the age of globalization switches between the 'national citizen' and the changing notion of increased diversities.

'Squatters SilangMuli' - Discovering a Cycle of Displacement of the Urban Poor in Tondo-Manila and Beyond

Sascha Facius, Alice Salomon University of Applied Sciences, Berlin

Countless urban poor communities and informal settlements in Metro Manila are at the threat of or already forcibly evicted and relocated. Next to others, those developments are initiated by processes of urbanization and national housing policies. The procedures of eviction and relocation cause a major impact in the social, psycho-social, economic and environmental settings for the affected families and individuals. A triangulated, participatory grounded approach within the networks of urban poor communities in the Tondo area, the factors and the impacts of the eviction and relocation process is described in the framework of Human Rights standards. The present inquiry further identifies a cycle of displacement within that process, ignited by forced evictions and accelerated in pace by current resettlement policies. It also describes the process its core variables, and its impacts.

Slums in Bangladesh: Its Socio-Cultural Structures and Practices

Prashant Kumar, Jawaharlal Nehru University, India

Slums are a worldwide reality among the rapidly growing developing countries particularly in the urban society of South Asia. No country can deny this reality as all metropolitan cities in the world are affected by this problem. The characteristics of slums include poor and congested housing, disorganized families, low literacy rate, deviant behavior, high population density, etc. The rate of population growth and density in the cities of Bangladesh is very high. After the independence Dhaka has been getting more and more populated every year. The rural poor in Bangladesh have been migrating to metropolitan cities from the hinterlands and take refuge in slums. The principal objective of my paper is to analyse the social structure and cultural autonomy of slums found in Bangladesh in general and Dhaka city particular. The paper will also try to trace the roots of the emergence of slums in urban area of Bangladesh, patterns of their growth as well as process of migration and adjustment of the migrants. The most important motive of this paper is to examine the current status and emerging dimensions of social structure of slums in cities of Bangladesh. The important components which are interrelated, and interacting with each other are: family, kinship and marriage, occupational pursuit, religion, education and political life, population structure etc. The paper examined whether the social structure of cities in general and Dhaka in particular has encouraged the slum dwellers to follow an ever-changing culture of their structural location with specific stress on materialistic or non-materialistic aspects of life and whether in that case they are alienated from the mainstream culture of the cities. The present study is somewhat different from other studies as our focus is on the interrelationships between cultural and structural aspects of slums; how one influences the other; and what its relationship is with the mainstream culture in the cities.

Urban Poverty and Vulnerability: Capital Utilization and Livelihood Situation of the Rickshaw Pullers in Dhaka city



Meheri Tamanna and Kamrul Hasan, BRAC University, Bangladesh

This paper focuses on livelihood vulnerabilities, capital utilization, strategies for dealing with these vulnerabilities and challenges encountered by rickshaw pullers in informal urban economy. A qualitative study was conducted in Dhaka, the capital of Bangladesh and one of the fastest growing megacities. The study applied focus group and in-depth interview methods to collect data from rickshaw pullers of Dhaka city. This paper demonstrates that the rickshaw pullers attempt to use their human capital, social capital, physical/productive capital and financial capital to mitigate their livelihood vulnerabilities and challenges. This study suggests that this poor urban occupational group carefully manage these capital assets to secure a better livelihood compared to their livelihood options in the rural areas. Social policies may be directed to better address their vulnerabilities by supporting the rickshaw pullers' attempt to accumulate and maximize assets.

Neoliberal Transformation and Rise of the New Urban Poor in Bangladesh

 K. M. Lipon, University of Dhaka, Bangladesh

Bangladesh is a post-colonial nation of the global South, now passing through uninterrupted neoliberal transformation. In Bangladesh, this transformation appeared in the late 1980s while its economic structure was being reshaped by the neoliberal policies and recently reached its pinnacle. It is a calling of privatization, stabilization, liberalization and deregulation of everything, from market to civil society to personal relationships. Based on this theoretical premise the paper argues that the rise of the new urban poor in Bangladesh is the unswerving consequences of neoliberalism. For perceiving the connection between neoliberal transformation and new poverty the paper makes argument by collecting empirical data from Kamrangir Char Thana through 53 in-depth interviews using life cycle model and addressing three research questions such as: (1) how neoliberal policies are creating low pay jobs through privatizing and exploiting market relations (2) how inflation is transforming a family into a "labor family"—where going to work has become mandatory for every family member (3) how the tools of neoliberal policies—unskilled labor force, contractual jobs, shutdown of state-owned industries, withdrawal of state subsidy from public expenditure, centralization of the state power, structural violence, eviction, NGOs, remittance flow, and climate change—are producing new poverty in cities. The study found that 94 percent of the respondents' actual wage is TK.10.26 per hour. The study also found that every respondent needs at least two jobs for their survival, which is seen as "double-exploitation". Because of eviction, political war and violence, 77 percent of the respondents reported that they have lost all forms of savings and are now in debt. Amongst all, 96 percent respondents said that they are landless whereas 23 percent people considered them as climate refugee. Another striking finding is that 41 percent respondents have no connection to the villages since last 20 years which is seen as the collapse of social capital. Moreover, NGOs are found here as poverty-generating machine through micro-credit program which is giving birth the "weekend poor".

Interpreting Urban Crime in Indian Society – A Study from Gender Perspective

Bratati Dey, Dhruba Chand Halder College, West Bengal, India

Urbanisation transforms social relations, such as class and caste systems and gender dynamics, in ways which may provide benefits (e.g. greater freedom for women to enter the labour market) but also costs (e.g. poor labour or citizenship rights for migrant workers). Urban areas are also the seat of higher numbers of crimes. According to Indian National Crime Report mega cities' percentage of incidents of crime is on the rise from 2007 (16.3%) to 2011 (64%). But the rate of incident varies from 12.7% to 6.5% within 2007 to 2011. Several scholars focused on the socio-economic causes behind this increase and variance. My study focused on the gender perspective of it. According to the same report incidence of crime against women from 2007 to 2011 increased from 28.9% to 59%. But the rate varies from 16.5% to 34.9%. Here the question is about context of justice. This study finds out the social lacuna behind this inequality in urban areas. As we have seen, urban areas are in a constant state of flux: new people, new trade opportunities, new forms of power and opportunity. Within this new social environment why crime against women's rate is higher than other? Understanding these transitions greatly enhances – often linked to control over space and the changing nature of vulnerability. This research examines the spatial phenomena and find out new social questions for formulating the policy.

Criminal Violence in Urban Peripheries of Dhaka

Kamrul Hasan Sohag & Shamima Momen, RAJUK (Capital City Planning Authority), Bangladesh

Dhaka emerges as one of the fast growing mega cities in the world confronting challenges of accommodation, infrastructural and utility deficiency, improper growth management and urbanization policies. The geographical and functional peripheries of the megacity consists of a jurisdiction of 1528 square kilometers covering areas under three city corporations, three pourashavas and several union parishads. The rapid pace of urbanization coupled with the growth in city size and density is associated with increased crime and violence. The fabric and layout of cities impact on the movement of offenders and victims and on opportunities for crime. The city lacks a structural master plan from its initial stage of urbanization. Post planning readjustment tools are used for development control mechanism by the city planners. The incidences of crime and violence are likely to be varied in accordance with the geographical clusters and city morphology. The rate of incidences are higher in the new urban peripheral areas where the in migrants and settlers make their habitation and unplanned growth of fringe shanties are accelerated. The study was conducted based on newspaper data collection of incidences of crime from the daily newspapers and studying its geographical distribution under morphology of the megacity functional area. Households located in the urban peripheral areas as Narayanganj, Siddhirganj, DND areas, Tongi, Savar are more likely to become victims of violence than those in communities with staple population as Uttara, Dhanmondi, Gulshan, Baridhara areas. The nature and pattern of incidences varied from one area to another area as per the city formation and civic and social landscape of the area. The study will represent the nature and pattern of violence in the new urban peripheries of the Dhaka megacity area and provide policy recommendations for planned infrastructural and social development specially for the new urban peripheries.

Family Violence and Modern Women: A Study of Gulbarga City, India

Khazi Abdul Khader, Government Pre-University College, Narayanpur, Yadgir, Karnataka, India & Surendra K, Govt. Degree College, Kamalapur, Gulbarga, Karnataka, India

This intensive study of the social process by cross-cultural observation investigates the origins of aggression (domestic violence) and other behavioral aspects of the respondents' violent behavior. It has been carried out in Gulbarga city of Karnataka State. It conducts interviews with open ended questions. Sample size is about 700, drawn from different sections and cultural background. The acquired information/data is analysed quantitatively. It reveals that about 81 percent of the respondents had stated that whenever the difference of opinion arises, it had lead to argument and eventually that had turned into the violence. About the awareness of law against domestic violence among women folk, the result reveals that about 17 percent of women has knowledge of law against domestic violence, and about 64% percent has only awareness and still around 20% of respondent did not know that there are laws related to family violence. As data suggest that 65.3% of the study respondents living in a moderately abusive relationship, and remaining 34.7 percent of women respondents staying in a non abusive relationship. Based on the findings it can be concluded that the domestic violence concept is more ancient and widely accepted by the people in comparison to the any other form of violence. But when we see the awareness and knowledge about family (domestic) violence act 2005. Both are low. Rather their knowledge is limited to thinking that it is only their fate to be born as a woman in this 'Janma'. Hence, family violence becomes 'the part and parcel of their life'. It will be worthwhile for future studies to explore the existing mechanism of family violence and further examine the factors associated with it.

Criminalization of Poverty in Urban Bangladesh

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Sumona Sharmin, Mawlana Bhashani Science and Technology University, Bangladesh

Poverty is a culturally constructed notion where individual fail to earn livelihood properly and bear a stigmatized identity. Criminalization, on the other hand, is the process by which behaviors and individuals are transformed into crime and criminals. Criminalization of poverty is, therefore, traced as an important social phenomenon widely discussed but rarely researched in Bangladesh. In this article, an analysis of criminalization of poverty through discourse on impoverishment as a relational process involving fluid power dynamics at the intersections of classes, and gender has been done. This article discusses the issue using a historical perspective of criminalization of poverty in the urban context of Bangladesh referring to some contemporary notions and evidences. It shows that there are many ways of limiting the access to rights through the use of criminal legislation addressed to disadvantaged groups like access to land. The paper starts by describing situations in which disadvantaged groups, e.g. poor and immigrants are prosecuted, punished and cornered by the social and legal system in urban areas. There are two broad views in urban areas where (i) 'poor are criminals' or (ii) 'poor are made criminals'. Furthermore, 'it is a crime to be poor' is the perceived view of the poor and it is the privilege of the rich to exploit that perception with the support of the state machinery and laws and rules framed against them in the country. At the end, the article contains a careful policy analysis of these criminalizing practices and offers recommendations.

Should Citizen Insecurity be Blamed for Increased Public Violence During Protest Action in South Africa?

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South Africa (SA) is a multicultural and diverse society composed of varying ethnicities, languages, cultures and racial groups. Although the country has developed significantly in numerous sectors since the advent of democracy in 1994, it still faces immense societal challenges. With these challenges comes increased dissatisfaction and frustration from the public on the lack of much desired improvements in their daily lives. It comes as no surprise to witness regular protests, commonly referred to in South Africa as "strike action" by disgruntled members of the public. Labour unions also command great influence and power in the country in terms of negotiating and leading protest marches, with many protesters aligned to particular unions. Protests are usually carried out for improved service delivery in a number of poor and inefficient SA communities that lack necessary development. They strike for improved wages for workers in the varying lower sector jobs such as petrol attendants, miners, truck drivers, factory workers, retail workers and automobile assembly workers amongst others. Although the country allows citizens the right to protest, many of the protests which take place often go out of hand and often turn violent with casualties reported in certain instances. Violence, the use of threat, vandalism, looting of shops and intimidation are common with protest action in the country. A link could thus be established between citizen disapproval, dissatisfaction and insecurity towards the government due to a lack of rapid improvement and response towards societal needs such as low wages, communal service delivery and many others across the country.

Taxonomy of Political Violence in Bangladesh

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Political violence is an act involving force or threats and destruction of properties perpetrated by political actors (individual politicians, a group of political activists and institutions). Such an act is aimed at eliminating political rivals, thereby capturing the centre-stage of domination of the public sphere for political gains. Political violence takes on a variety of forms and takes place at different levels. In recent times, it has reached to an alarming proportion in Bangladesh. Political violence in Bangladesh takes place at three levels: micro, meso and macro. Micro level violence is associated with perpetrator's motivation for taking part in violence. Meso level encompasses political institutions, for example, inter and intra-party violence belongs to meso level. Ethnic and religious violence turns into political when it pertains to the state power. Violence during pre-election, election-day and post-election days is simply political violence. When state perpetrates violence, it is macro-level violence. Coups, counter-coups, killing of eminent political leaders, killing of activists, and enforced disappearance by the state law enforcing agency are but some common forms of violence that have inflicted the political milieu of Bangladesh. However, despite various forms of violence, its determinants remain in quandary. On occasions, the determinants of violence have become blurred. Sometimes perpetrator's interests have overtaken the real triggering factors behind political violence. Political violence over the competition for winning tender is a case in point. Sometimes students in the university halls are evicted from their rooms due to personal rivalry or being physically assaulted just to create panic. Be that as it may, identifying determinants helps to classify political violence. Against this backdrop, this paper deals with the question: What are the determinants of political violence by which we can classify it? The answer to this question is worth-studying for three clear-cut reasons. These are: making a classification of political violence based on the determinants would reveal the soft and hard dimensions of violence; it would contribute to the policy makers in government to take appropriate measures against violence; finally, such a classification would help identify the political actors who indulge in political violence.

Violence and Citizen Insecurity in Patna, India

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This paper attempts to look at whether perceptions of insecurity in an urbanizing city differ by the socio-economic and legal status of its residents. In doing so, it will identify different types of insecurities that affect citizens in a transforming city like Patna. The city is characterized by inequality and exclusion in the context of a market driven approach to development and lack of urban planning. The paper establishes whether perceptions of economic, physical, social and political insecurity differ by the socio-economic status of different groups. The paper will argue that reasons for differences in perceptions can be traced to the differential experience of and access to state institutions that exist in a city marred by increasing inequality. The main research question is: Are there differences in citizen insecurity based on their locality (slums v/s middle class localities), where locality is a proxy for inequality? Are there differences within localities in people's perception of insecurity? If so, how do these differences play out, whether these take violent forms and in what conditions? The paper uses the National Crime Bureau Records along with disaggregated local police station information to estimate the level of public violence in Patna and to see differences across locality. It will then use data from perception surveys carried out in selected slums and adjoining middle class areas to gauge peoples' perceptions of both the nature of public violence, their own experience of insecurity as well as their coping mechanisms. The analyses will be further supplemented by data from Focus Group Discussions (FGDs) held in the slums to assess, in detail, how the most vulnerable groups in an urbanizing city are affected by different forms of violence.

Pre-Urban Areas as a Land of Misery and Conflict: A Case of Harare, Zimbabwe

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Urban sprawl is a global phenomenon, unstoppable but can be smoothened. Harare as the capital city of Zimbabwe is now recognized as a metropolitan city, urban management is a call for concern as growth continuously invades agricultural prime lands, squatter camps and rural areas. The housing backlog for Harare now stands at 500 thousand waiting for allocation. Increasingly land is not available but has to be acquired from the rural district councils. This has created a source of conflict between Rural District Councils and the Urban Councils, with their power being derived from two different acts, Rural District Councils Act and the Urban Councils Act respectively. The latter yields a more power than the former. This imbalance has been inherited into the formation of Harare combination master plan in trying to incorporate the surrounding rural areas encompassing Mazowe, Norton and Marondera areas. The great Harare master plan exhibits parasitic notion of rural-urban nexus. Peri-urban areas have left much to be desired by the new settlers, squatters and former farmers (who are immediately rendered landless, if not homeless and stripped off their livelihood). The provision of basic services and amenities is not of priority of local authority as it was before with the advent of parallel development. All these lead to urban conflict. The research paper therefore seeks to understand the nature of conflicts, urban sprawl, problems and opportunities sparked by the continuous growth of Harare and how these can be solved without distortions to local economic development. Empirical study of urban growth has shown greater need of collaborative and decentralization in urban governance as a remedy to the illness of urban sprawl.

Police and Governmentality in Bangladesh

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In August 2013, a strange and controversial consultancy report—Public Satisfaction with Current Policing Practice: A Study on DMP—was circulated amongst the intellectuals and academics of Bangladesh. Consultancy reports are rarely published for public consumption, but this was an exception. Funded by the Dhaka Metropolitan Police (DMP), the report was prepared by the University of Dhaka's Criminology and Criminal Justice Program of the Department of Sociology. Reaction to the report was swift and predictable. Human rights organizations called it a disgrace and claimed it sugarcoats police misdoings; in their eyes, it will prevent the police from enacting necessary and long-overdue reforms. Marxist columnist Badaruddin Umar, on the other hand, viewed the report as a general symptom of the declining standards of education in Bangladesh, calling it a "terrifying research work" and a "hoax." This paper uses Foucault's construct of governmentality to argue that both the report and its critics miss a crucial aspect of the technology of power relations—that is, governmentalization of the state, which refers to the "contact between the technologies of domination of others and those of the self" (1988, 19). This term also describes the connection between power as the regulation of others and the relationship with oneself. In other words, governmentality serves as the connection between ethics and politics, where power and the technology of power play a crucial role. In colonial South Asia, the police force was introduced as a social institution in 1861, only a few years after the first large-scale war of independence of 1857. As a part of colonial governmentality, the police were created to provide a political rationality that organized colonial power to produce an effect. The postcolonial police in Bangladesh is a historically constituted complex of power/knowledge that gives shape to political projects of the Bangladeshi postcolonial state. In this way, the report in question provides knowledge and service to the state in its quest to rule and to hegemony.

Explaining Labour Unrest in Bangladesh: The Limits of Conspiracy Theory

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This paper employs the method of structured and focused comparison in analyzing the minimum wage debates in the ready-made garment sector of Bangladesh. It argues that the 2006 and 2013 wage dialogues reflect some interesting similarities. In both cases, RMG workers have resorted to violent and non-violent protests to press their demands for wage-hike and affordable living; whereas the local investors and factory owners have voiced their concerns over losing market competitiveness due to substantial wage-hike. Despite such superficial similarities, the two wage debates differ quite sharply on the circumstances, which led to their openings. The 2006 debate followed the outbreak of series of violent labor unrest in factory premises in Dhaka and its vicinity. By contrast, the 2013 wage debate was sparked by the Rana Plaza disaster – the worst accident in the history of Bangladesh's RMG industry, in which nearly 1200 people were killed, and 2500 injured – mostly apparel workers. This latest wage debate was also conditioned by mounting pressures for improving workplace safety and compliance mechanism. To what extent does the theory of 'race to the bottom' offer a useful paradigm in understanding these wage debates? The central goal of the paper is to investigate this question by systematically analyzing the role of various actors – government, workers, factory owners, international organizations, and foreign buyers – involved in the RMG sector of Bangladesh.

Making the Personal Political: Digital Activism against Urban Violence in India

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The new media in India must be understood within the context of wider social processes such as globalization, changes in the sphere of cultural politics and the emergence of the transnational elites as these agents of new forms of articulations of the politics of identity operate in a networked, neo-liberal, urban space. In this paper, referring to a number of recent incidents of violent attacks on urban women, including the Mangalore pub attack, Assam molestation incident, and Delhi rape case, I particularly focus on the intersection of the emergence of new media communication in India and the mobilization of urban women's agency. Through the social media, blog and other networked community worker act against such increasing urban violence in India. The series of such cases perpetrated within the city and specifically on educated, urban women points towards a broader military and theoretical interest in what is seen as a martial, disciplinary urbanism on the one hand and an untamed, lawless urbanity on the other. The discourses that emerge represent both an urbanist lens on exceptional violence per se, and a logic of the city understood as a medium of that violence. In this paper, I explore the interrelationship between the use of social media, and the intervention of the paternalistic nation-state, to question the emancipatory sphere of social networking in relation to movement against such violent attacks in the urban space. Extending these arguments, I try to question, in what way the "agency" of the urban, educated, often well-employed women is located in new media communication and through what trajectories that agency may reconfigures itself. I explore, whether movements like these disseminate urban women's collective experiences and invest in the realignment of the political domain for gendered social change. By focusing on blogs and social media sites, this paper broadly seeks to explore how a specific community can come together and take collective action using social media urbanity exerts authority in the realm of digital activism against urban violence.

Women in Shahbag: Representation and Rhetoric of Transitional Justice Movement

Dr. Samina Luthfa, University of Dhaka, Bangladesh

Shahbag movement will be one of the most significant events that rattled Bangladesh in 2013. This movement of sit-in protestors demanded capital punishment for convicted war criminals and mobilised this into a massive uprising called the Shahbag movement. The presence of women in this movement was quite strongly evident. Popular accounts of the movement stresses how this movement encouraged a space of freedom for urban educated middleclass females who participated in this protest breaking some traditional values. This representation of Shahbag is definitely misleading since a deeper examination of the movement showed that although women had significant presence in the front stage of the movement, the back stage or decision-making within the movement was done predominantly by males. Overall, the society's perception about 'women' also did not alter. However, as Shahbag initiated a discursive process within the national politics of Bangladesh, female participants through a discursive 'talk and back-talk' against the opponents was constructed into 'women' by the popular media and the participants too. Basing on archival data and participant observation this paper will unravel the process how 'females' became 'women' and occupied a central position in the conflict between two opposing sections of the ruling class. I also explicate how one of these opposing sections pitch liberal values against religious ones that gives them a women-friendly-image as opposed to the religious political parties. However, mitigating the structural inequality against women is no one's priority. Therefore, through examining two short stories about these 'women' that sparked anger among the protestors I show how 'women' in Shahbagis constructed as a homogenous group. These women are depicted using secular signifiers. By constructing this 'women' in Shahbag, 2013's Bangladesh did not free its women rather reinforced the mainstream gender rhetoric and pitched one type of women against another.

Aims of URDS

Knowledge production through research: to conduct research for producing theoretically and empirically sound knowledge on city and urban communities.

Building awareness: to continue dialogue, communication and networking for equity based urban development.

Influencing urban policies: to influence urban development authorities through dialogue and communication for undertaking and implementing appropriate policies for sustainable urban development.