Politics in the Urban Periphery: Citizen-Led Expansion and Informality at the Edges of India's Cities

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Abstract

Why are some privately developed neighborhoods on the outskirts of India's cities incorporated into municipal governance while others are not? And what are the consequences of uneven incorporation for public service provision? This paper explores these questions in the context of *peripheral private developments* in India. Peripheral private developments are planned neighborhoods at the urban-rural edge that frequently exhibit informalities stemming from weak or absent zoning approval. First, we explore how variation in authorization by the city shapes neighborhood access to basic public services. We next show how collective action among residents influences patterns of neighborhood-level authorization. Our study draws on qualitative interviews and neighborhood-level data collected from the urban development authority in Jaipur, a rapidly growing city of four million people. We interviewed neighborhood leaders across 25 of Jaipur's cooperative housing society colonies—a common type of peripheral private development. These interviews with local leaders, as well as interviews with officials and data collected from the urban development authority, provide novel insights into the political economy of these proliferating yet understudied spaces.

1. Introduction

In many ways, Brijpuri resembles any middle-class neighborhood in the north Indian city of Jaipur, Rajasthan. Two- and three-story homes line the streets, spaced apart at regular intervals and interspersed with trees. A *kirana dukhan* (general store) on Brijpuri's main street offers residents basic provisions and a place to gather and trade gossip. Most families own a car—a marker of middle-class life in urban India—kept secured behind gated parking spots. Far from the bustle of Jaipur's densely populated old city, Brijpuri's quiet suburban mood is only punctuated by visits from street vendors bellowing out their wares.

Other aspects of the neighborhood, however, point to a precarity in residential status that is absent in many other middle-class areas of Jaipur. Brijpuri's roads are unpaved, unleveled, and without drains. The city government has yet to extend piped water and sewers, leaving residents with no choice but to secure their own borewells and septic tanks. Conversations with residents reveal that the city development authority has not approved the neighborhood and does not recognize land purchases from a private developer.

Just a kilometer away from Brijpuri is Rohini Nagar. Like Brijpuri, Rohini Nagar is a *cooperative housing society colony[1]*—a common type of privately-developed neighborhood in India's cities. Cooperative housing society colonies typically form in the peri-urban fringe, where landowners (*khatedar*)—often farmers—sell their property to private developers who plan, subdivide, and sell plots, often for the construction of homes. Residents of these colonies are brought together under a larger "society," or group of residents interested in settling the land.

What differentiates Brijpuri from Rohini Nagar is that the latter has been authorized by the Jaipur Development Authority. Residents of Rohini Nagar have formal titles for their plots and have been absorbed into the city's formal public infrastructure and service networks. Roads have been paved, drains and sewers have been installed, and public water pipes have been extended to individual households. In Jaipur alone, just over 4,300 cooperative housing society colonies fan out across the

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[1] As we detail below, *cooperative housing societies* are larger associations in cities that purchase areas of land and develop individual *colonies* (another local term used for colony is *scheme*). There are 159 cooperative housing societies in Jaipur, which have collectively built over 4,300 *colonies* scattered across the outer rim of the city. Adding "colony" after cooperative housing society is deliberate and descriptively important, as it differentiates the larger association from the geographically distinct neighborhoods that are our primary unit of analysis.

city.[2] Officials in Jaipur estimate that these colonies house more than half of Jaipur's population.[3] Of Jaipur's cooperative housing society colonies, 1,200 are unauthorized like Brijpuri, leaving many residents in a state of precarity and marginalization from public services.[4]

Figure 1. Two Cooperative Housing Society Colonies in Jaipur

An Authorized Colony in Southern Jaipur

An Unauthorized Colony in Southern Jaipur

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[2] In this estimate, we exclude colonies that have been transferred to Jaipur Municipal Corporation (638), hold *ekal pattas* (728), or have been rejected (159). *Ekal pattas* are joint land deeds for an entire colony, which differ from most cooperative housing society colonies where land deeds are sought for individual plots within the colony.

[3] JDA Official, July 18, 2022; JDA Registrar, July 19, 2022; president of cooperative housing society, July 20, 2022. Vidyarthi 2014: 252 notes that cooperative housing society colonies represent almost one-third of Jaipur's housing stock.

[4] The disparities between the two types of colonies are illustrated in Figure 1, which depicts an authorized and unauthorized cooperative housing society colony in Jaipur.

These colonies are a subset of peripheral private developments in India's cities, which form at the urban-rural edge and frequently experience weak or absent regulatory approval. Scholars have documented peripheral private developments and other forms of "frontier urbanism" in other Indian cities as well (Bhide, 2014; Ranganathan, 2014; Heller et al., 2016; Coelho et al., 2020; Naik and Kunduri, 2020).[5] As the boundaries of India's cities have pushed into the countryside, legally tenuous private developments like cooperative housing society colonies have become common features of the periphery. Yet, despite their widespread and growing presence, scholars have paid scant attention to the local politics that emerge as residents of these spaces seek formal authorization and public services.

In this paper, we explore the defining features of peripheral private developments, the politics of seeking authorization status, and the consequences of authorization for access to public services. We first differentiate private developments like cooperative housing society colonies from more frequently studied types of informal spaces like squatter settlements, in which residents occupy and "autoconstruct" (self-build) the built space on land they do not own (Caldeira, 2017). Peripheral private developments, in contrast, are planned neighborhoods where residents participate in formal transactions to buy the land upon which they reside, but that land, in many cases, has not been approved by the city government.

A large literature focuses on the strategies of the poor and middle classes to gain access to public services in India's cities (Chatterjee, 2004; Harriss, 2006; Kamath and Vijayabaskar, 2014). These strategies, such as mobilizing through political intermediaries or civic associations, are often influenced by neighborhood type, specifically whether the area is a slum settlement or a propertied middle-class neighborhood. We discuss how features of peripheral private developments—particularly the combination of planned layouts, formal transactions for plots, and frequent lack of zoning approval—leave these existing explanations of citizenship practice incomplete.

We draw on qualitative interviews and neighborhood-level data collected from the Jaipur Development Authority (JDA). In the winter of 2021/2022 and summer of 2022, we interviewed neighborhood leaders across 25 cooperative housing society colonies in southern Jaipur—12 unauthorized and 13 authorized colonies. These interviews with local leaders, as well as interviews

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[5] On the concept of "frontier urbanism" in India, see Gururani and Dasgupta (2018).

with city officials and data collected from the JDA, provide novel insights into the political economy of these proliferating yet understudied spaces.

Authorization generally increases access to state-provided infrastructure and services, tenure security, and credit. Nevertheless, authorization status is not deterministic. Many of the authorized colonies in our study do not have access to amenities, while some unauthorized colonies do. The latter, however, are more likely to pursue access to infrastructure and services through multiple avenues, including non-state providers and by approaching political elites, who can use their discretionary budgets to provide services or jolt the bureaucracy into action when politically expedient. In this way, authorization shapes the extent to which different parts of the city gain access to state-provided, non-state-provided, and "hybrid" services (Post et al., 2017).[6]

Having discussed the consequences of authorization, we next investigate its causes. Residents must navigate complex legal and bureaucratic processes to attain formal incorporation into the city. Doing so requires not only knowledge but sustained collective action. We further find that the original residents of authorized colonies seem more likely to have personal ties and connections to each other than those from unauthorized colonies. As personal ties can facilitate collective action (Tsai, 2007; Paller, 2019), we hypothesize that the original residents of colonies shape the ability of citizens to navigate the authorization process.

The project makes several contributions to the study of urban politics and the development of cities more broadly. First, we draw on original qualitative data to describe peripheral private developments, a type of settlement common in cities in low- and middle-income countries yet remains sparsely studied. We outline the factors underpinning authorization processes across these spaces and highlight a particular source of informality – zoning informality – that shapes governance and public service delivery in the urban periphery. In doing so, we advance a budding literature on social change in India's peri-urban landscapes (Govinda, 2013a; Levien, 2018; Gururani and Kennedy, 2021; Sood, 2021; Rathi, 2021; Upadhya and Rathod, 2021). From a planning perspective, the neighborhoods' political economies represent an important mechanism through which cities expand outward. Our study

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[6] On the variety of ways that urban citizens access essential services under conditions of informality, see Roy (2002), Weinstein (2008), Anand (2017), and Auerbach (2020).

provides insights into the causes and consequences of citizen-led expansion at the urban periphery and generates multiple hypotheses to be tested in subsequent research, as outlined in the conclusion.

2. Informality in Urban India

Housing informality is a significant feature of contemporary urbanization in lower- and middle-income countries. Roy defined informality as a "state of deregulation, one where the ownership, use, and purpose of land cannot be fixed and mapped according to any prescribed set of regulations or the law" (Roy, 2009, p. 80). The archetypical manifestation of housing informality is a slum settlement, defined by weak or absent property rights; dense, unplanned, and substandard housing; and marginalized access to essential public goods and services.[7]

The literature on urban informality is predominantly animated by studies of slums (Weinstein, 2014; Bhan, 2016; Auerbach, 2020; Krishna et al., 2020). However, as several scholars demonstrate, informality extends far beyond slums: to high-rise apartments that dismiss building codes, middle-class and wealthy neighborhoods constructed in areas zoned for non-residential purposes, households that covertly tap into electricity and water lines without paying user fees, and other spaces of the city that evade public rules and regulations (Roy, 2009, p. 76). Informality, in short, is not limited to areas housing the urban poor.

Informality also lies on a continuum. For instance, Krishna, Rains, and Wibbels find that low-income residents of Bangalore's slums can have one of sixteen different documents—voter ID cards, ration cards, electricity and water bills, etc.—that give them some degree of rootedness on the land, even if their settlement otherwise lacks formal titles (Krishna et al., 2020). Likewise, Srivastava reveals a range of state-issued papers and cards that help anchor people on lands for which they have no legal title (Srivastava, 2012). In many cities across India, there is an official distinction between "notified" slums and "non-notified" slums, with the former acknowledged by city or state authorities and granted a modicum of protection from eviction (Banerjee, 2002; Nakamura, 2017). The peripheral private developments we examine in this paper similarly display varied forms of informality, not only in their authorization status but also in their formal access to public infrastructure and services.

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[7] In South Asia, one third of people living in cities reside in slums. The most recent census of India (conducted in 2011) estimated that 65 million people live in the country's slum settlements—one out of every five urban residents.

Studies of urban informality and governance in India have increasingly extended beyond megacities to less-studied terrains in peri-urban areas, small towns (Krishnamurthy and Kapur, 2016; Sircar, 2018), urban villages (Cowan, 2018; Pati, 2022), and special economic zones (Levien, 2018; Kennedy, 2020). Mukhopadhyay, Zerah, and Denis refer to many of these spaces as examples of "subaltern urbanization," which exist "outside the metropolitan shadow" (2020). Our paper centers on the politics of land and citizenship in India's fast-changing urban peripheries. As Gururani and Kennedy assert, the peri-urban encompasses not only the bands of land surrounding cities but also wider stretches of the countryside that are "enmeshed with agrarian and rural rhythms and dynamics that propel such peripheral urbanization" (2021, p. 1).

Recent studies have advanced our understanding of India's urban periphery. Arabindoo, Govinda, and Kundu examine the shifting peripheries of Chennai, Delhi, and Kolkata, respectively, and the role of pioneering residents in shaping these spaces through every day "place-making" and engagements with the state (Arabindoo, 2009; Govinda, 2013a; Kundu, 2016). Gururani (2020) provides a conceptual framework of "agrarian urbanism" that brings the social and economic linkages between rural and urban to the fore. Similarly, Balakrishnan and Rathi encourage scholars to "see" India's cities through the surrounding rural areas, underscoring patterns of socioeconomic change and continuity at the margins of metros and small towns (Balakrishnan, 2018; 2019; Rathi, 2021). Ranganathan (2014) examines how the demand for formal water access in Bangalore's outskirts is, in part, a way to claim land and urban citizenship. Upadhya and Rathod (2021) explore contestations around rural-urban land transitions in Bangalore's periphery, uncovering the caste politics in these rough-and-tumble land markets.[8] Pati (2022) investigates how caste, labor, and real estate collide to shape the political economy of rent in Delhi's urban villages.[9] Sood (2021) highlights land speculation and real estate development processes at the edges of Delhi and Hyderabad, which have pushed aside lower-income populations and reconfigured modalities of local governance. Finally, Bhide (2014) reveals the bureaucratic capriciousness underpinning the regularization of unauthorized peripheral colonies (*gunthewaris*) in several cities in Maharashtra.

We contribute to this rich and burgeoning literature by seeking to explain local variation in authorization status across peripheral private developments and tracing the impact of uneven

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[8] See also Anwar (2018) on informality and the politics of land in Karachi's periphery.
[9] See also Govinda (2013b) on social change in Delhi's urban villages.

authorization on resident citizenship practice and access to public services. Our focus on cooperative housing societies colonies further brings into focus an understudied yet important type of residential neighborhood at the margins of India's cities.[10]

3. Peripheral Private Developments

Terms such as "slum" and "informal settlement" can encompass a wide variety of neighborhood types—urban villages, unauthorized colonies, inner-city slums, squatter settlements, construction-site housing, post-eviction settlement camps—that significantly differ in their historical origins, regulatory governance, and social and spatial integration in India's cities (Naidu, 2009; Krishna et al., 2014; Auerbach, 2020). However, given the importance of neighborhood type in shaping how residents seek land titles and public services, it is important to define and delineate the type of urban settlement under study.[11]

Peripheral private developments emerge when private entities (such as developers, cooperative housing societies, or entrepreneurial individuals) purchase land on a city's outskirts and divide it into plots to be sold. As such, peripheral private developments have two defining features. The first is that the original residents undertake a formal transaction to buy the land they occupy. In most cases, the purchasing individuals will have documentation of the transaction and, unless there is a dispute, no other entity will have a legal claim to the land.

Second, peripheral urban land is often not initially zoned for residential plots or incorporation into the city. This arrangement arises from the developer's failure (often deliberate, as discussed below) to complete the approval process and land parceling in ways that conform to legal regulations. This failure may also be because the approval process is onerous and slow; Mitra (1988), for example, writes that plots in unauthorized colonies were particularly attractive in post-partition Delhi precisely because of the speed with which they could be brought to market. In Jaipur, these developments, widely

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[10] See Ganapati (2001; 2010) on the cooperative housing society model in India.
[11] See Auerbach (2020, pp. 29-31) for a more detailed discussion on the different types of informal neighborhoods that come under the term "slum," and the importance of specifying and defining the type of settlement under study.

initiated by cooperative housing societies, emerged in full force in the 1960s and 1970s.[12] They offered a source of housing in a context where the Housing Board was simply overwhelmed by demand.

These features of peripheral private developments shape their socioeconomic, political, and geographic characteristics. First, we highlight two aspects of peripheral private developments related to the formal purchase of land—their planned emergence in the city periphery and resident income levels. We next discuss zoning informality and its implications for authorization.

3.1 Planned Housing in the Periphery

Peripheral private developments tend to emerge on the outskirts of cities, in rural areas being engulfed by urban sprawl.[13] Given their location on lands that command lower prices than the city center, peripheral private developments are less dense than slums.[14] Figure 2 illustrates differences in density between a squatter settlement and a cooperative housing society colony.

Figure 2. A Squatter Settlement and a Cooperative Housing Society Colony

Squatter Settlement, Northern Jaipur

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[12]The earliest cooperative housing societies were formed in Jaipur in the 1950s to provide land to post-partition refugee populations from Punjab and Sindh (Interview with JDA Official, October 17, 2021). On the history of the cooperative housing movement in India, see Ganapati (2008).

[13] While many slum and squatter settlements are also situated in the periphery, they tend to be more spread throughout the city, as slum residents tend to live in closer proximity to labor markets in the informal economy (Sircar, 2021).

[14] Similarly, in the context of Brazil, Marques and Saraiva (2017) finds that in 2010, the population density in *favelas* in São Paulo ranged from 26,773 to 49,496 individuals per square kilometer. The population density in peripheral colonies, in contrast, ranged from 5,570 to 16,739 individuals per square kilometer.

Cooperative Housing Society Colony, Southern Jaipur

Their layouts are also "planned." Farmers, seeing rising land prices in the peri-urban fringe, sell their land to private developers who survey, excavate, and divide it into distinct plots.[15] As a result, they have an unmistakable planned and suburban feel, as described in the opening vignette. In contrast, slum settlements (and squatter settlements in particular) are defined by their haphazard, amorphous shape, as individual families capture small plots and construct *jhuggies* (shanties), creating narrow and twisting alleyways. While authorized colonies are privately-developed forms of urbanization at the city's edge, they lack the forms of "autoconstruction"—improvisational construction—that define slum and squatter settlements (Caldeira, 2017).

3.2 Middle-Class Residents

Because they purchase a plot of land through a formal transaction, residents of peripheral private developments are typically wealthier than those living in slum and squatter settlements. Marques, for example, finds that in 2000, about 73% of *favela*, or slum, households in São Paulo were classified as low-income, which they define as households earning three times the minimum wage or less (Marques and Saraiva, 2017, pp. 21-22). In contrast, about 58% of households living in *loteamentos irregulares*, or unauthorized colonies, are classified as low-income. In fact, Mitra (1988) finds that high demand allows developers to sell plots at a large return, and some developers advertise the developments as "prestigious" to attract an even wealthier clientele.

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[15] On the diversity of private land developers operating in peri-urban India, see Raman (2016).

Generally, peripheral private developments exhibit a broader range of incomes than slums (Bhan, 2016, p. 61). Residents of slums overwhelmingly work in precarious, low-income jobs in the informal sector. In contrast, residents of peripheral private developments are more likely to have incomes that place them in middle- or lower-middle-income status.[16] This relative wealth is frequently visible in the construction of homes. Residents of peripheral private developments are more likely to have houses with permanent roofs and walls than those living in slums.[17]

3.3 Zoning Informality

Despite their planned layouts, many peripheral private developments emerge in areas on the outskirts of cities that are zoned as rural agricultural lands, which legally prohibit the construction of residential neighborhoods. Other peripheral private developments are built on lands allocated for other non-residential purposes by the state government or within the city's master plan. While such zoning informality can mark a wide range of urban neighborhoods, including slums and high-income neighborhoods, it is especially salient in many peripheral private developments due to their frontier geography, where localities are transitioning from rural to urban in their demographics, built space, and local governance. As we discuss below, a common struggle for residents of peripheral private developments is to secure a change to the classification of their land—to urban residential space— and gain authorization from the city development authority. Success in these efforts can yield land titles and open the door to formal incorporation into urban public services and infrastructure networks.

3.4 Implications for Service Delivery

What are the implications of (un)authorization for access to infrastructure and services? We expect some similarities and differences between slums and unauthorized colonies. First, being outside of, or marginal within, a city's map of planned infrastructure suggests that unauthorized colonies should often lack access to public services delivered through networked infrastructure, such as water and sewers. Water and sewerage are particularly difficult for cities to provide as they require buried infrastructure and coordination with utilities. Second, because city authorities often do not acknowledge transactions for plot purchases in unauthorized colonies, households cannot use their

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[16] Ranganathan (2014) finds a similar class composition within the peripheral colonies of Bangalore.
[17] This construction is often paid for on credit. Even while the unauthorized purchase of the land can preclude its use as collateral for a loan, both formal and informal lenders have found creative avenues, such as recommendations from social networks or proof of income, to guarantee repayment (Naik and Kunduri, 2020).

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landholdings to access credit or must pay very high borrowing rates. This is an acute problem for those intending to use loans to construct housing. Third, although the lack of contestation over land rights means residents of unauthorized colonies usually enjoy stronger tenure security than those living in slums, unauthorized colonies may conflict with urban projects such as airports, railways, or industrial zones, generating uncertainty among residents.

3.5 The Road to Authorization: Existing Explanations

Over time, peripheral private developments can become authorized and incorporated into the city. Yet, as documented by Banerjee (2002), Bhan (2013), and Bhide (2014), and as we observed in Jaipur, these neighborhoods exhibit substantial variation in regularization status and access to services. What explains this variation?

We focus on citizens' behavior to understand when and how new groups of constituents on the edges of cities capture the state's attention. One possibility is that residents coordinate their votes for a single party or candidate to form attractive "banks" of support that a politician might draw upon (Bjorkman, 2014). Beyond voting, citizens may rely on local political brokers to communicate their needs, navigate bureaucracies, and pressure decision-makers (Jha et al., 2007; Berenschot, 2010; Auerbach, 2020; Auerbach and Thachil, 2023). Residents may even seek to insert themselves into municipal planning and budgeting (Baud and Nainan, 2008; Zerah, 2009; Ghertner, 2011).

Nevertheless, these strategies may not always be feasible in unauthorized colonies. First, institutions for civic participation in urban planning are often most accessible to those residing in propertied middle-class neighborhoods; the unauthorized nature of many of the colonies we study might undermine their ability to participate in the urban planning process (Chatterjee, 2004). Second, this type of organization may be precluded by the planned nature of these colonies, which lack the high population density that makes voter organization and courting politicians particularly effective in slum settlements. Third, the relative wealth of residents may make attempts to buy their votes less attractive.[18]

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[18] On middle-class voters being less receptive to clientelistic overtures by politicians, see Weitz-Shapiro (2014).

Furthermore, the motivations of those living in slums and those who own their land may differ. For example, Kumar (2022) finds that homeownership increases citizenship practice, motivated by increasing the sale value of one's assets. Residents of unauthorized colonies share these motivations, which may shape the political demands they prioritize and, in turn, the way they choose to engage in civic activity.

In sum, the unique nature of peripheral private developments suggests that known patterns of political engagement may not fully describe the behavior of residents. To better understand the causes of authorization, we turn to a study of cooperative housing society colonies in Jaipur.

4. Cooperative Housing Societies in Jaipur

The cooperative housing society colony is the chief manifestation of peripheral private developments in Jaipur. Public documents on cooperative housing society colonies stress their bottom-up, associational nature. One text, written by a former director of the National Cooperative Housing Federation of India, describes them as "a legally incorporated organized group of people who desire to develop their houses with collective efforts" (Khurana, 2002). The text further notes that a cooperative housing society is "democratically controlled by its members for the primary purpose of improving their living conditions" (Khurana, 2002, p. 3). The intended purpose is for a group of people of lesser material means to band together to purchase and manage a larger plot of land, making housing more affordable.

Ground realities deviate from the official discourse that stresses the grassroots and collectivist origins of these colonies. As we demonstrate below, rich associational activity exists in cooperative housing society colonies. Yet this emerges not necessarily because residents initially came together to establish the colony but because a range of problems that demand sustained collective action emerge *after* they are settled. Instead of a group of people establishing a colony through "collective efforts," plots are often purchased through disjointed processes of individual buyers transacting with developers and local land brokers.[19] Some residents may have members of their kinship, caste, and village networks within the colony, but colony formation through the collective organization of residents is uncommon, at least in Jaipur's periphery.

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[19] On local land brokers as crucial actors in the political economy of India in India, see Sud (2021).

The process of acquiring land from farmers, selling plots, and seeking government authorization is rife with opportunities for corruption. Journalists have long identified systematic abuses by cooperative housing societies: coercing farmers into selling land, falsifying dates and documents, evading taxes, and selling single plots to multiple buyers, leaving the disputing parties to years of legal struggles (Pachauri, 1988; Times of India, 2017).[20] Land in India's urban periphery is a thick rent-seeking sector (Times of India, 2019a; Agnihotri et al., 2022), and land transactions in these spaces are often greased by land (*bhoom*) mafias with ties to developers and political elites.[21] In the late 1980s, pointing to the corruption underpinning the proliferation of cooperative housing society colonies, the Chief Minister of Rajasthan, Shiv Charan Mathur, said during an assembly meeting, "Nothing has harmed the Rajasthan people as much as the cooperative housing societies" (Pachauri, 1988). [22] Echoing this, Vidyarthi writes that "the profiteers used the cooperatives as fronts to build settlements that occupied large sections of the urban periphery" (Vidyarthi, 2014, p. 246).

There are currently 159 registered cooperative housing societies (*Grah Nirman Sahakari Samiti*, or GNSS) in Jaipur, each of which has spatially distinct colonies in different areas of the city. In total, these number over 4,300 colonies. To illustrate the difference between an individual colony and its larger umbrella cooperative housing society, Figure 3 shows the layout and plot demarcations of the Braj Vihar cooperative housing society colony in southern Jaipur.[23] Underneath the colony's name, the document states, "Belongs To: Shanker Bhawan Nirman Sahakari Samiti Ltd." Braj Vihar is just one of many colonies spread throughout Jaipur that the Shanker Bhawan cooperative housing society has established.

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[20] On illicit activities in Jaipur's cooperative housing society colonies, see also Times of India (2019b); Times of India (2020a); Times of India (2020b). For a notable legal case against a cooperative housing society in Jaipur, see Singhal (1996), *Topkhana Desh GNSS vs The State of Rajasthan*, January 1996.

[21] Interview with former magistrate in Jaipur, September 5, 2021.

[22] In response to these abuses, Rajasthan's High Court sought to rein in cooperative housing societies, including "liquidating" 63 of the worst offenders (JDA Head Registrar, July 18, 2022).

[23] We collected colony layouts for every cooperative housing society colony in Jaipur from the JDA. These are public documents and are often drawn upon in legal disputes and resident efforts to have colonies authorized.

Figure 3. Example Colony Layout

The umbrella cooperative housing societies, or GNSS, not only prepare and sell plots but often register neighborhood associations in their colonies under Rajasthan's Cooperative Societies Act of 1956. Cooperative housing society colonies thus emerge within a planned organizational framework, with a local association in place with ties to a larger umbrella cooperative housing society. However, residents across different colonies under the same umbrella cooperative housing society do not typically organize with one another to advance their shared interests. Based on our interviews with neighborhood leaders and government officials, collective action and identifications with place are most often specific to the colony.[24]

4.1 Data Collection

In the winter of 2021/2022, we interviewed informal leaders across 25 cooperative housing society colonies in Jaipur. We selected colonies and identified informal leaders through a multi-stage process. First, we collected city-wide information on cooperative housing society colonies from the JDA. This information included the authorization status of each of Jaipur's roughly 4,300 cooperative housing society colonies, lists of original plot owners, neighborhood blueprints, and neighborhood-wise lists of private developers.

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[24] JDA Official, July 18, 2022; JDA Registrar, July 19, 2022; president of cooperative housing society, July 20, 2022.

We then selected one of the JDA's 14 administrative zones—Zone 9—to geographically focus our sampling. We selected Zone 9 for two reasons. First, Zone 9 has one of the highest concentrations of cooperative housing society colonies in Jaipur, as well as a significant mix (346 and 142) of authorized and unauthorized colonies. Second, due to pandemic travel restrictions, we worked with a local research assistant to find colonies, identify informal leaders, and carry out interviews, either over the phone or, in a few cases, outdoors with masks. The research assistant has extensive fieldwork experience in Jaipur and also resides in Zone 9. Selecting that zone, therefore, facilitated field visits and afforded a detailed understanding of the immediate area. These last two points were key considerations, as finding cooperative housing society colonies in Jaipur's periphery—urban sprawl without clearly demarcated colonies—requires on-the-fly navigation through conversations with residents and shopkeepers.

We randomly sampled 15 authorized and 15 unauthorized cooperative housing society colonies in Zone 9. After repeated attempts in the field, we could not locate 16 of the initially sampled colonies. This was due to either poor locational information or the plot of land being completely undeveloped, leaving us without any residents to interview. We replaced these colonies with new randomly sampled ones from the same authorization category. Given the high replacement rate and reasons why some initially sampled colonies could not be located, our sample is likely skewed toward more established colonies with enough households to be recognized as a named settlement by residents in nearby neighborhoods.

Our research assistant identified an informal leader in each colony through outdoor conversations with residents and shopkeepers. We first searched for the president (*adkyaksh*) of the neighborhood's development association (*vikas samiti*); if the president was unavailable, we settled for another association officeholder. In this way, our interviews centered on the most prominent informal leaders of the colonies. Next, we contacted the informal leaders over the phone to cross-check their status as informal leaders and schedule times for interviews. Ultimately, we were able to interview 25 of the 30 identified informal leaders. Interviews lasted approximately 25-30 minutes and were recorded and transcribed.

Given the pandemic conditions in India during the height of our data collection, a larger-scale, face-to-face survey of residents would have been inappropriate. Instead, we centered our data collection

efforts on local leaders to gain insights about each colony. Because of their social embeddedness and prominence, these actors are well-positioned to answer questions about their colonies' history, demographics, and politics. Moreover, our ability to rapidly identify local leaders and collect their contact information enabled remote phone interviews, ensuring safe communication.

4.2 Description of Sampled Neighborhoods

The qualitative interviews yielded rich insights into the state of Jaipur's cooperative housing society colonies. We start our discussion of the findings with general descriptions of the 25 sampled colonies. The average colony in the sample was established in the early 1990s[25] and had approximately 190 plots. The smallest colony has just 10 plots; the largest has 850.[26] The majority of sampled colonies (20 of 25) have all or most of their plots developed with a residential structure. In the remaining five colonies, half or fewer of the plots were developed with a residential structure. In most cases, those structures were single-unit homes. Less than half of the sampled colonies (12 of 25) included apartment buildings. The presence of apartment buildings was mostly concentrated in authorized colonies. Nine unauthorized colonies have obtained 90A or 90B status—legal land categories that are transitioning from agricultural to residential use.

The sampled colonies are socially diverse, though less so than slums in Jaipur, particularly in terms of religion and region-of-origin.[27] Most (17 of 25) of the colonies are exclusively Hindu. The rest are predominantly Hindu but have small numbers of Muslims, Christians, Jains, or Sikhs. Unlike slums, which are frequently home to migrants from outside the state, Jaipur's cooperative housing society colonies, at least within Zone 9, mostly house people from the city or its surrounding villages (15 of 25). Only a small handful (5) of the sampled colonies have residents who have migrated from other places in Rajasthan. This suggests a distinct pathway into these colonies compared to slums, with a greater need to be linked into the city-based land market and broker networks.[28]

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[25] Respondents sometimes gave time ranges in their responses to when the neighborhood was established (e.g., "1990 or 1991"). In these cases, we coded the earliest year. Two respondents stated "don't know"; these two were treated as missing data. Only five neighborhoods were established after the year 2000.

[26] One respondent did not provide an estimate for the number of plots.

[27] An author survey (see Auerbach, 2020) of 2,545 residents across 111 slum settlements in Bhopal and Jaipur found that in the average settlement, fractionalization scores for *jati* (caste), religion, and region of origin were 0.80, 0.17, and 0.28, respectively. While it is not possible to directly compare with our sampled cooperative housing society colonies without a resident survey, slums appear more diverse especially in terms of religion and region of origin.

[28] Illustrating this, one respondent told us: "The nearest station to the Delhi line is Jagatpura. It was easy to go to the village, my office was nearby, and the colony was also close. Secondly, the father of the person who developed this colony…asked us to buy three or four plots. So, through connections [I came here]" (Rohini Nagar).

Most sampled colonies are heterogeneous in terms of *jati*, or sub-caste. Only 6 of the 25 respondents described their colony as "mostly home to one *jati*." Just under half of the sampled colonies (9 of 25) are "mostly or entirely" home to residents belonging to the Scheduled Castes or Scheduled Tribes, while another seven have "many" members of these disadvantaged castes, even if their numbers do not constitute a local plurality.[29] Four of the six caste-homogenous colonies were home to members of the *Meena* tribe. This area of Jaipur was historically home to a large *Meena* population. In fact, several respondents noted that their land was purchased from *Meena* farmers, who still have local economic power in this area of Jaipur.[30]

The primary form of community organization across the sampled colonies is the *vikas samiti*, or development committee. All but one of the sampled neighborhoods have an established and active *vikas samiti*. The formation of these associations is part and parcel of the cooperative housing model, governed by India's Cooperative Societies Act, with its roots in colonial-era laws surrounding associational registration. Neighborhood associations like *vikas samitis* are vehicles for local problem-solving and petitioning the state for public goods and services (Ghertner, 2011; Coelho and Venkat, 2009). Several respondents described the importance of their *vikas samiti* as bridges to the state:

> Whenever the government does not come, we must meet them. Some people advised us to establish a committee. So, we have made a committee and given everyone a part in it.[31]

> We have made a committee…Through it, we are trying to get water…We will see when the line is installed; at present, there is no line.[32]

5. Causes and Consequences of Authorization: Emerging Hypotheses

In this section, we draw on our interviews to generate hypotheses about the causes and consequences of authorization across Jaipur's cooperative housing society colonies. Given the remote and

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[29] The Scheduled Castes are a large collection of *jati* (sub-castes) in India that were historically treated as "untouchable" and continue to face significant discrimination. The Scheduled Tribes are a collection of "indigenous" groups of that have historically resided in remote forested and mountainous areas.

[30] See Cowan (2018), Balakrishnan (2019), Upadhya and Rathod (2021), and Pati (2022) on the role of locally dominant caste groups in the political economy of land in India's urban periphery.

[31] Colony I (unauthorized).

[32] Colony P (authorized).

circumscribed nature of the qualitative work due to the pandemic, these findings are necessarily tentative. Still, we aim for them to guide future survey work on a larger scale across Jaipur. We first discuss the consequences of splintered formalization for residents and then turn to our hypotheses surrounding the roots of formalization.

5.1 The Consequences of Authorization

One of the main ways that authorization shapes residents' lives is through the quality of neighborhood infrastructure and services. Many of our respondents—in both authorized and unauthorized colonies—stressed that JDA approval is important for service access.

> The reason we try to do this [seek formalization] is because the JDA gives facilities like sewer lines, roads, and electricity.[33]

> Until JDA approval, access to all services is unavailable—sewers, water, or electricity. One or another is not provided. With JDA approval, water, sewers, and roads are all provided.[34]

> When land titles are issued by the government…roads are built, and electricity is installed. This is in the hands of the JDA.[35]

> They [residents of unauthorized colonies] do not get access to facilities...If their land is not authorized, they must struggle to get roads or water supply.

> Sewers and electricity poles have been installed here. They [in unauthorized colonies] must pay for such things themselves; here, the government makes that expenditure.[36]

We find that authorization status, however, does not rigidly determine access to infrastructure and services. Not all authorized colonies have access to JDA services. Several respondents in authorized colonies stressed their dissatisfaction with JDA responsiveness.

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[33] Colony B (unauthorized).
[34] Colony W (authorized).
[35] Colony M (unauthorized).
[36] Colony P (authorized).

> Considering the colony has been JDA approved since 2013, the JDA should have done development here but has not taken any interest. They have only done development in a small corner of the D-block. In some places, the roads have not been built.

> There has been no difference [after JDA approval]…roads should have been built, and the park should have been improved. There are also no facilities for police or cleaning.[37]

Conversely, unauthorized colonies frequently have access to services. All colonies have some source of daily water supply, though, as discussed below, the water sources differ. With few exceptions (in two unauthorized colonies and one authorized colony), the sampled colonies have municipal trash removal. Just over half of the unauthorized colonies have *all* their roads paved (7 of 13), while a moderately higher percentage of authorized colonies have all their roads paved (8 of 12). Four of the 13 unauthorized colonies had "most or all" their roads unpaved, while only two of 12 authorized colonies had "most or all" their roads unpaved. The non-deterministic nature of authorization for services in cooperative housing society colonies is consistent with findings from slums, which similarly secure services under informality (Auerbach, 2020).

Yet whether these services, particularly water, are publicly provided appears to vary based on authorization status. Residents of authorized colonies are more likely to be absorbed within formal service networks.[38] For example, all but two of the authorized colonies (10 of 12) have city water piped to individual households. Meanwhile, unauthorized colonies are less likely to have piped public water—just over half (7 of 13) of unauthorized colonies have city pipes extended to individual households.

Without public services flowing from formalization, the path to gaining access to these services varies across colonies. One way of gaining access to services is through politics. Residents of unauthorized colonies can and do turn to elected leaders—their ward councilor, member of the legislative assembly, and even member of parliament—to request political intervention and the discretionary resources

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[37] Colony T (authorized).
[38] Within our 25 sampled neighborhoods, authorization tended to precede service extension. That said, a path for future inquiry is whether some unauthorized colonies push for formal service access because having such access helps deepen their claim to the land, as Ranganathan (2014) finds in the context of Bangalore.

("area development funds") of elected representatives. They pivot to what Chatterjee (2004) describes as "political society," wherein subaltern groups demand state responsiveness through mass politics, political parties, and political brokers.

> If it is not approved, the government will not be able to pave roads. It is a different matter, though, if an MLA or an MP uses their quota to get something done. They have the power; we have gotten things through an MLA quota.[39]

> To get a road built, we sent a memo to the MLA and municipality, and we met the *parshad* regularly. The MLA has a budget for development, so he and the *parshad* built the road.[40]

A second pathway to accessing services is through internal private provision. Examples of private provision emerged in both authorized and unauthorized colonies but are especially critical in the latter.[41] For example, citizens may dig their own wells or sewer drains:

> Recently, our borewell ran out of water, so we gathered everyone for a meeting. In the meeting, we told everyone about the problem; it was also their problem. There was only one solution. The government doesn't listen; we talked to people high up in it…We talked to the MLA and *parshad*, who said they have no quota to give. We tried all this but then went to every household to collect money. We got the borewell installed and dug a well.[42]

> In the very beginning, when there was no sewer line, we built channels to take the water away. We got everyone in the neighborhood together in a meeting and asked people to use leftover material from the construction of their houses to build a channel in front of their houses. People agreed. We then joined all the channels together. Within ten days, the water that used to stand on the road cleared away, and we were able to have a clean environment.[43]

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[39] Colony O (authorized).
[40] Colony L (unauthorized).
[41] Bhide (2014) observes similar forms of internal self-provision in unauthorized colonies (*gunthewaris*) on the outskirts of several cities in Maharashtra.
[42] Colony B (authorized).
[43] Colony G (unauthorized).

Authorization status thus appears to sort neighborhoods into different realms of politics. Service provision for authorized colonies is more likely to be programmatic, while those living in unauthorized colonies may have to negotiate with political actors to gain access. Additionally, as Post et al. (2017) describe, services do not necessarily flow from the state, despite a focus on state-provided services in the literature on distributive politics. Unauthorized colonies are often more dependent on private provision for certain services—in this case, water and drains.

Next, we find that some respondents express that lacking authorization leaves the colony vulnerable to eviction, particularly if it gets in the way of larger public projects (a looming issue for cooperative housing society colonies in southern Jaipur, adjacent to the airport).

> If the government makes a major plan such as expanding the airport or some other such plan, the residents of the colony will not be given any guarantees.[44]

> Once it is approved, you can be tension-free. Compare a private job with a government job. In a private job, they can fire us whenever. A government job is different. There is a similar difference between a [cooperative society] lease and a government-approved JDA title. A plot's price and value increase with a JDA lease.[45]

Nevertheless, cooperative housing society colonies do not appear to experience an everyday looming threat of demolition or eviction that one might see in many informal settlements. Most respondents—9 of 13 informal leaders—in our sampled unauthorized colonies expressed that they are either "very confident" (5 respondents) or "somewhat confident" (4 respondents) that JDA approval is forthcoming. Only a single respondent (1 of 13) noted that they are actively worried that the JDA will demolish their colony. Three respondents were "not confident" that the JDA would ultimately authorize their colony, including the one respondent who expressed concern about the threat of eviction. These patterns align with the idea that unauthorized colonies are typically on land not legally claimed by other actors, thereby lowering the risk of eviction. The low threat of eviction may also arise from the fact that most of these colonies have survived since at least the early 1990s. Over time, government officials may have learned of their locations and incorporated them into *de facto* city maps.

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[44] Colony A (unauthorized).
[45] Colony D (unauthorized).

Finally, one of the major consequences of authorization is being able to access loans from the government. In recent years, private lenders have created methods for reaching those without formally owned capital (Naik and Kunduri, 2020). Nevertheless, these loans can be difficult to access and more expensive than their more conventional counterparts:

> All facilities are available, including sewerage lines, running water, electricity, and roads, so the public faces no major inconvenience except one. While buying and selling, government banks do not approve of loan applications, though private banks do.[46]

> The biggest problem is that it is difficult for anyone to get a home loan from a bank.[47]

> It will become easier for those who want loans to obtain them. Those who get loans at a rate of 10-12-15% now will be able to get them at 6.5%-7%.[48]

> There is tension if someone needs a loan. If there is a lease from the JDA, the Limited Bank and the SBI will give you loans. Otherwise, people must take private loans for which the interest rates are higher.[49]

> The people who are building their houses are unable to get loans approved because there is neither 90B nor JDA approval…They face difficulty in obtaining loans…This does make further development difficult for people if they want to do that.[50]

As illustrated by this final quote, and by Naik and Kunduri (2020), many residents in this type of neighborhood construct their own housing. This construction is often financed through loans, meaning any new construction and expansion is particularly expensive for residents.

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[46] Colony L (unauthorized).
[47] Colony A (unauthorized).
[48] Colony C (unauthorized).
[49] Colony K (unauthorized).
[50] Colony H (unauthorized).

6. The Local Roots of Authorization: Process, Collective Action, and Accountability

Given the political and developmental consequences of authorization, why do city authorities formalize some cooperative housing society colonies while others remain informal? In this section, we draw on our interviews to generate hypotheses about the causes of authorization in these spaces. First, we find that the authorization process requires deep knowledge of regulations and bureaucratic processes. We further show that sustained collective action can help colonies overcome many barriers in navigating the state and securing authorization. Finally, we hypothesize that the origins of a colony, particularly whether it was formed based on existing ties and kinship, can partially explain the emergence of this collective action through the ways it structures cooperation among residents.

6.1 Process

JDA authorization requires following rules, regulations, and processes that are often under-specified and are open to officials' discretion. Scholarship on the Indian state stresses bureaucratic discretion and capriciousness (Ahuja and Chhibber, 2012), "blurred boundaries" between state and society (Gupta, 2012), and "porous" bureaucracies that can bend to political intervention (Benjamin, 2008). While corruption and political bending of the rules appear common in the formation and authorization of cooperative housing society colonies (Times of India, 2019a, 2020a), adherence to laws and regulations is, in the words of our respondents, still of central importance in formalization.

> The most important consideration is government rules. Societies should act in accordance with those rules. We have also submitted our files at the JDA per the rules.[51]

Neighborhood leaders demonstrated detailed knowledge and identified those processes and regulations as reasons for their ability, or inability, to secure land titles from the JDA. Respondents narrated the steps involved in moving from the establishment of the colony to JDA authorization:

> We are surveying the colony to see where houses have been built. Then, a map of the colony will be made according to the JDA's plan. Another map will be made according

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[51] Colony A (unauthorized).

to the survey…After a list of plots has been made, the file will be deposited with JDA. Then, it will receive 90A approval, after which it will receive JDA approval.[52]

We have submitted the application, the map has been submitted, and they have surveyed according to the map with a 60:40 ratio…Now only JDA approval is left.[53]

A camp was set up, and the land was approved. Then, according to the way in which the society had distributed land to us, we paid the JDA the land rate. The JDA then approved it according to our names. They widened the road by ten feet and took space from our land for that purpose. We were not compensated. JDA approved this land according to its laws.

Here, residents track the guidelines for attaining 90A, 90B, and JDA approval. The JDA surveys their land and maps to see if regulations have been followed. Two considerations are especially important. The first is a specified ratio of built space to open space.

They check whether there is any dispute or court case. Then they check what percentage of the land is populated… The JDA will indeed check all these things, will it not?[54]

Our interviews with officials echo these same rules and regulations around formalization, particularly regarding the required ratio of built to open space, which must be 60:40. Leadership living in 7 out of the 12 authorized colonies in our study were able to state the ratio, while only 2 out of the 12 leaders of unauthorized colonies were able to do so. Officials also noted the importance of that area of the city being zoned for residential use in the master plan and not falling into "restricted" areas under the ownership of government institutions like the Forest or Railways Departments, or in areas unfit for housing like riverbeds and mountainsides.[55]

The presence of legal cases against the land—challenges from actors claiming ownership—can inhibit the authorization process. In one of our sampled unauthorized colonies, for example, residents were

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[52] Colony A (unauthorized).
[53] Colony C (unauthorized).
[54] Colony B (unauthorized).
[55] Interview with JDA Official, October 17, 2021.

initially given 90B land, but then farmers in the area lodged a challenge, leading the court to issue a "stay" until the case was resolved. The 90B status of colony residents was revoked. Legal cases inhibit the process of approval in many of the unauthorized colonies:

> There are about 81 colonies in this area that do not have approval. We are one of them. We are only somewhat confident that we will get approval because there has been a technical issue. The technical issue is that there has been a court order on this land. Now we do not know what the government will do.[56]

> Local farmers have initiated a case on it…It is a conflict between the local farmers and the JDA…and we do not have JDA *pattas*. The case must be resolved before the JDA grants 90B approval.[57]

> The first [way to get JDA approval] is for the people of a colony to make a committee and submit documents to the JDA on time, including the map for the colony and the purchase records from the farmers. After the survey, the JDA informs them of the date for a camp…Around us, colonies that are not in a state of inquiry [investigation into legal disputes] have already had camps. Ours is being delayed because of the inquiry.[58]

> There are some colonies that have not been approved because of dishonest actions. Farmers also sometimes commit fraud, holding up the approval process for their own benefit.[59]

Even once the requirements are met, officials are often dismissive and unresponsive. Gaining approval may require further engagement simply to get a response. As a result, citizens may have to pursue assistance through outside political channels:

> With everyone's agreement and signature, we wrote to the JDA on our development committee's letterhead. We sent [letters] many times. Finally, we have an appointment to meet [a JDA official]. We have also told the MP and the MLA, but nobody

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[56] Colony H (unauthorized).
[57] Colony L (unauthorized).
[58] Colony I (unauthorized).
[59] Colony Y (authorized).

listens...So this is the situation; we do have some hope that there might be further action.[60]

Residents' experiences suggest that even the first step of authorization, namely understanding the rules and regulations of the process, can be onerous. Once the process is understood, the colony must meet (and prove that it meets) several requirements for authorization. After this, citizens must ensure that officials acknowledge and process their paperwork.

6.2 Collective Action

Much of the work of meeting rules and requirements can be undertaken by colony leaders, but it often requires engagement by ordinary residents as well. While authorization is a colony-level status, it involves collective action among households, each of which secures a *patta* (a legal document confirming ownership) by submitting fees to the JDA, as well as contributing to regularization fees for public infrastructure like roads and sewers.[61] As such, authorization requires work on behalf of individual households in the colony and cannot simply be negotiated by the colony's leader. Residents need to be convinced to undertake this effort.

> Yes, our survey work is ongoing. Last Sunday, we called a meeting in which we told people to prepare the necessary documents and give them to any office holder of our colony's development council.[62]

> Look, the most important thing is that all the residents of the colony need to work together for the colony's development. If there is any work with the JDA or elsewhere, we all get together, including the residents as well as those who own empty plots.[63]

> Everyone was told to get their plots approved and get their *patta*…The government wants money if it is to build the road. We informed everyone by going to people's houses, door-to-door, and telling them that they should get approved as soon as possible, one way or another, and if someone did not have the money at the time, they

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[60] Colony B (unauthorized).
[61] Ganapati (2001) highlights these collective action problems in cooperative housing society colonies within the context of Delhi, Mumbai, and Chennai.
[62] Colony A (unauthorized).
[63] Colony D (unauthorized).

should get it from someone else. Only if you give money to the JDA will roads and electricity be provided.[64]

If it is approved, they will have gotten forty percent of the money from the people for their *pattas*. The money I give in exchange for my *patta* is money for development [like] electricity and roads. That is what I am giving the money for; why else would I give it?[65]

As with any instance of collective action, colonies must be able to ensure that residents do not defect from the broader collective goal of authorization for their own short-term benefit. Indeed, ordinary residents may be incentivized to defect if it is too expensive or if they are satisfied with existing amenities. We heard that several residents were not keen to pursue authorization because they could not afford the fees. Their resistance is likely strengthened by the fact that they may already have access to the services authorization would purportedly provide:

Look…some would want it to not be approved. Those who are poor people with money problems. Because if it is approved, they would have to deposit fees that the government has kept at such a rate that a poor man cannot afford it. So, five or ten percent think it is better that things go on as they are because the government's rates are such that an ordinary man cannot pay them. Members of the labor class are living here…For example, for a water connection, someone who owns a 200-yard plot must pay between twenty-seven and twenty-five thousand. Is that not burdensome for a person who does not make even two hundred rupees?[66]

The JDA demands Rs. 2000/yard for approval…We have all facilities, such as electricity. There is no need to get JDA approval.[67]

The original developers, or members of the cooperative housing society who purchased and subdivided the land, may also be involved in the collective action required to obtain authorization. On

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[64] Colony O (authorized).
[65] Colony O (authorized).
[66] Colony B (unauthorized).
[67] Colony G (unauthorized).

the one hand, they can initiate action on behalf of the community in ensuring JDA approval from the state.

> The person who 'cut' the colony, Pankaj Chaturvedi, then presented a list to the JDA and deposited some money. He then posted a notice of JDA approval in the newspaper. In just ten or twenty thousand rupees, it was JDA-approved. He posted a notice in a newspaper stating that the colony had been JDA approved and asked people to fill out the forms, compile documentation and submit the fees to get their *patta*.[68]

On the other hand, developers might defect from the authorization process. They are incentivized to subdivide land into more plots than the guidelines allow, as they can sell the extra plots. Residents have little legal recourse with developers after the fact. Indeed, respondents state:

> The most important consideration is that the GNSS gets the plots approved. But often, these cooperative housing society people just sell the plots and leave. They do not ask afterwards whether anything is happening or not happening.[69]

In fact, some residents believe that authorization may be undesirable for developers, as the process establishes plot boundaries, limiting future opportunities for sub-division and sale.

> It depends on the person who 'cuts' the colony. That person should be good. A lot of people commit fraudulent actions. They issue four *patta* for the same plot. They do not want it to be approved because when the colony is approved, their power over it ends. Then you buy the plot directly from the resident and give the money to the resident. Until it is approved, they keep 'cutting' the land. They keep selling plots...[70]

6.3 Accountability

We have shown that collective action, from individuals and developers, is required for authorization once colonies have met the basic requirements. Both residents and developers may act (or fail to act) in a way that serves their personal goals but defeats the overall goal of authorization. What accounts for the variation in the strength of collective action across colonies?

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[68] Colony W (authorized).
[69] Colony K (unauthorized).
[70] Colony W (authorized).

Informal ties and norms among individuals may help generate accountability that prevents defection. Say an individual wants to subdivide their plot for profit at the expense of the colony's authorization prospects. The fact that they will have to regularly interact with their neighbors may prevent them from doing something that may prompt anger and distrust. Such repeated interactions further occur outside of the context of authorization, meaning the actions residents take within the context of authorization will affect their broader relationships with each other. In short, informal ties generate the possibility of social sanctions to prevent defection from collective action (Acheson, 1988). Kinship ties, moreover, can keep local leaders accountable to citizens (Tsai, 2007; Paller, 2019).

How do these ties form in the neighborhoods we study? They can, of course, develop over time through shared experiences and repeated interactions. Yet authorization frequently requires collective action from a neighborhood's initial stages, especially for important considerations such as layout. Therefore, an important predictor of future authorization may be the ties of accountability between initial residents. Two authorized colonies in our study, for example, were formed through professional associations:

> There are 88 households here. The employees of Rajasthan's dairy were allotted the plots at a very minimum rate…The colony was JDA-approved 16 or 17 years ago when the plots were allotted.[71]

> We from the railways wanted to make a colony. We wanted to make a society and give quarters and plots of different sizes to people from the railways through a lottery. First, we made the society and became project managers for it. We collected money for it, little by little, and made a committee…that we registered. The society members informed those in the railway who wanted a plot that land would be available at such and such rates.[72]

In contrast, several unauthorized colonies formed through the anonymous sale of plots through a broker. Many we spoke to have no social ties to others when they moved in:

> In 1996, my father died, and all the burden fell upon my older brother. My father was in government service…The area we lived in before was not so good. In 2004 or 2005, my brother

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[71] Colony P (authorized).
[72] Colony N (authorized).

bought a 300-yard plot for Rs. 500,000. The house was built in 2007, and we moved in during 2008 or 2009…He bought it through some dealer.[73]

Look, we made a choice based on location and area. We made inquiries about the land here through a property dealer and then directly talked to the person who owned the land and bought a plot.[74]

More broadly, just about half of the interviewees in unauthorized colonies came to their colony based on a personal connection. Meanwhile, this is true for 4/5 of the interviewees in authorized developments. In addition to the quotes and anecdotes from above, these figures suggest that residents and leaders of authorized colonies are more likely to have personal ties to developers and other residents than those of unauthorized colonies. These personal ties, in turn, facilitate collective action among citizens and with developers.

7. Conclusion

In this paper, we have defined and described peripheral private developments – urban housing developments that have received much less scholarly attention than slums or more centrally located informal settlements. As the name suggests, these privately planned housing developments tend to emerge on the outskirts of growing cities. Residents purchase land through a formal transaction with the developer, but this land is often not zoned for inclusion in the city. This lack of incorporation leads to many of the problems typically associated with living in an informal settlement, including tenure insecurity, a lack of services, and financial exclusion. Yet these settlements look different from slum settlements in that their residents tend to be wealthier, their development often follows a planned layout, and they are less dense.

We illustrate these characteristics by studying peripheral private developments in Jaipur, India—cooperative housing society colonies. We conducted interviews with leaders of 25 colonies, roughly half of which have been formally authorized. While we found that authorization is associated with greater tenure security and access to local public services, unauthorized colonies can still gain access to services provided by private actors and political elites. Moreover, our conversations with these local

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[73] Colony J (unauthorized).
[74] Colony B (unauthorized).

elites further suggested that the presence of close personal connections at the time of neighborhood founding can facilitate the collective action required for authorization.

This research illustrates an important component of the process whereby cities expand outwards. As low- and middle-income countries continue to urbanize, agricultural land will be repurposed to provide housing, businesses, and other services. As this paper has shown, this conversion is not always state-led. But the eventual need for state-provided resources can lead to negotiations between the government and private actors after the fact. The misalignment in the timing of state- and private-led development has been explored in other disciplines, particularly urban studies.[75] We highlight that the negotiations resulting from this misalignment are fundamentally political and describe what it looks like from citizens' perspectives.

In the time between private expansion and government incorporation, private actors may provide essential services such as water, sanitation, or informal loans. Previous work has documented the growth of these private actors alongside public provision as part of the broader phenomenon of "hybrid" public service provision in cities (Post et al., 2017). This hybrid provision, in turn, contributes to what researchers refer to as the "fragmentation" of the urban environment (McFarlane, 2021). While both public and private providers deliver services to citizens, research on fragmentation highlights that service providers can vary in quality and accountability to citizen needs. Future research might, therefore, assess not only the presence of services in authorized and unauthorized colonies but also the variations in quality and equity of service delivery.

Finally, while this is a paper intended primarily to draw attention to, define, and describe peripheral private developments, it also highlights avenues for future research. This paper outlines at least four hypotheses related to the predictors of authorization and the implications for citizens. First, we predict that authorized colonies will have greater access to public services, particularly piped water, than unauthorized colonies. Second, we predict that unauthorized colonies will be more likely to have private or hybrid provision of services than authorized colonies. Third, we predict that residents of authorized colonies will be more likely to turn to formal, rather than mediated, claim-making channels than unauthorized colonies. Fourth, we predict that the founding residents of authorized colonies are

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[75] For examples, see Marques and Saraiva (2017); Mitra (1988); Banerjee (2002); Bhan (2013); Naik (2015).

more likely to have professional, associational, or social ties than those of unauthorized colonies. Empirically supporting these hypotheses will shed light on the major differences between authorized and unauthorized colonies and test mechanisms for why these differences persist.

We have illustrated the proliferation of peripheral private developments in just one city. Yet the processes, policies, and politics related to their incorporation are local in nature and, therefore, likely to vary across contexts. Peripheral private developments with varying degrees of formal urban incorporation have been documented in cities across India and a variety of countries, including Brazil (Marques and Saraiva, 2017), Indonesia (Zhu and Simarmata, 2015), Nigeria (Oyalowo, 2022), and Pakistan (Adeel, 2017). Future research should comparatively explore this phenomenon in other states in India and beyond.

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