

Emotions, Planning and Co-production: Distrust, Anger and Fear at Participatory Boundaries in Bengaluru

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Abstract

Emotions relationally and performatively constitute the very boundaries that distinguish the subject from the other(s). The urban human in India is affectively constituted by many intense emotional experiences of everyday life. Adopting a participation view of planning and drawing from Sarah Ahmed (2014, *The cultural politics of emotion*. Edinburgh University Press), we examine ‘what emotions do’ in the planning and participatory atmospheres (Buser, 2014, *Planning Theory*, vol. 13, pp. 227–243) in Bangalore. Tracing emotional content embedded in participations and non-participations, we demonstrate how distrust, anger and fear co-produced the process and outcomes of the 2031 Master Plan of Bangalore. We join the few emerging scholars that call attention to the emotional geographies of planning, particularly to be able to transform the continuing colonial urban management practice in the postcolonial world to that of planning. Planning, we argue, has to involve participation, in which emotions, we demonstrate, are the connective tissue (Newman, 2012, *Critical Policy Studies*, vol. 6, pp. 465–479).

Keywords

Urban planning in Bengaluru, planning participation and emotions, participatory planning in India, planning and trust, planning participation and state–society boundaries

Introduction: Emotions and Planning

The urban human in India is affectively constituted by myriad emotional experiences: of community, identity, diversity, social meanings and the associated social architecture of care; of hierarchy, inequality, exclusions, conflicts and the associated assemblage of contestations and violence; and of the

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not-so-random uncontrolled tribulations from accidents, disasters and so on. Whenever a lake or a river that one worshipped, swam in or lived from becomes a sewage-holding pond, it influences one's emotional landscape. Cities where women can walk alone at 2 AM or where rental housing is denied because of religion, marital status or caste also shape one's emotional self. The urban gets emotionally constituted when one bribes officials for planning and building permissions, public commons are encroached upon or one loses one's child in a flood or is evicted mercilessly from one's home and is bombarded with 'world-class city' images. Acculturated to the incessant world-class city discourse through government's slum surveys, Ghertner's (2011b) Delhi Shiv Camp residents perceived themselves as dischargeable and disposable 'dirty' slum residents who *should not* have a place in the anticipated world-class city that they helped build. The political mobilisation and violence embedded in friend-enemy discourse has deep emotional effects—this is only too obvious in the pictures drawn by child victims of the Gujarat violence in 2002 (Priya, 2012).

Such experiences generate thoughts, feelings, actions, politics and subjectivity. 'Beyond Carlton' (<http://www.beyondcarlton.org>), a fire safety and security campaign group in Bengaluru set up by the kin of the victims of the 2010 Carlton Tower Fire caused by violation of planning and building regulations, or the assassination of a planning enforcement officer because she attempted to enforce a Supreme Court order in Solan (Achom 2018), are instances of spatial planning induced emotional actions. These experiences are hardly understood as integrally connected to planning and governance processes, but it is loud and clear if one pays attention. When an elected representative says, 'give everyone a government job if you don't want violations', when a powerful planning activist declares, 'we are telling the government that we are watching your new master plan', when people routinely say, 'the development authority is a bunch of crooks', when we hear, 'the government doesn't care', when planners say, 'people are greedy', 'rich people are the most untrustworthy' and so on, what we hear are emotional expressions about the planning and governance atmosphere.¹ Movies like *Kaala* (Kuttaiah, 2018) or *Khosla ka Ghosla* (2006) become popular because they evoke critical connections between emotional experiences and planning/governance.²

A tradition founded on European Enlightenment reason and modernity, planning theory, practice and analysis has until recently eschewed the emotions that constitute urban life and planning processes. Emotions are seen as antithetical to or as an impediment to rational action and policy deliberations (Baum, 2015, Osborne & Smith, 2015). Evolutionary understandings that relegated emotions to the primitive human contribute to this invisibility (Ahmed, 2014). Many planning and policy analysts have recently ventured to challenge this division or omission and called for the study of the emotional landscapes that constitute urban processes, subjectivities, planning policies and participatory deliberations. They argue that 'rational' and 'emotional' are not opposing modalities but are mutually constitutive and that emotions are relational, embodied and socially, spatially and temporally constituted (Deitz et al., 2018; Hoch, 2006; Osborne & Smith, 2015). There is a recognition that emotions are performative (Ahmed, 2014), continually shape our worldviews (Buser, 2014; Hoch, 2006), are pregnant with transformative knowledge (Ahmed, 2014), enable insights into understanding social meanings (Fischer, 2010), constitute the boundary between the individual and the collective (Durnova, 2015), are the connective tissue of governance (Newman, 2012) and are an entry point to an empathetic approach, policy and practice of care (Barnes, 2008). Many scholars argue that planning and participatory atmospheres are fundamentally constituted of emotionality, which cannot and should not be wished away (Thompson & Hoggett, 2001). Understanding it is central to understanding needs, conflicts, contestations and power structures and for developing a planning epistemology of multiplicity (Osborne & Grant-Smith, 2015) and care.

The colonality of Planning got configured through notions of rational actors, public interest, expert knowledge, legitimate hierarchy, and planning power and associated protocols in opposition to the notion

of ‘people’ as anarchic, primitive, uneducated, greedy, and irrational natives incapable of knowledge and rational public action and needing to be modernised/civilised through professional planning policy epistemology and practice. An understanding of how planning and emotions are co-constituted is crucial for reforming this binary infrastructure of colonial urban space management in India and elsewhere into contextually relevant and people-centric planning (system, policy, practice and pedagogy). In this article, drawing from our research on the Master Planning (2031-MP) process in Bangalore, we will demonstrate how emotions shape planning and participation atmospheres. Our key conceptual and methodological interventions include developing a framework that considers planning in India as fundamentally *constituted by* diverse participations (both present and absent participations) organised around three interactive configurations of state and society.

We draw from Ahmed’s (2014) conceptualisation of the fundamental role of emotions in constituting the subjectivities of the self (individual and collective) and the other, that is, in inscribing the very boundary that shapes the experience of the body’s relationship to objects. Ahmed (2014, p. 10) encourages us to ask ‘what emotions do’ as social and cultural practices:

In my model of sociality of emotions, I suggest that emotions create the very effect of the surfaces and boundaries that allow us to distinguish an inside and an outside in the first place. So emotions are not simply something I or we have. Rather, it is through emotions, or how we respond to objects and others, that surfaces or boundaries are made; the, *I*, and the, *we* are shaped by, and even take the shape of, contact with others...emotions produce the very surfaces and boundaries that allow the individual and social to be delineated as if they are objects.

Ahmed’s ‘surface’ (of individual and/or collective body) is an effect of the impressions shaped by contact with others and objects (image, memories, materiality, entities, histories and so on). According to Ahmed (*ibid*), ‘all actions are reactions’ (p. 4). Contact impresses and leaves impressions; it influences the way we comprehend and produce the world by being produced as emotional subjects. In that sense, emotions are simultaneously relational and performative. Tracing the emotional content in planning participation can illuminate how bounded entities are (re-)configured to constitute the planning process.

The mandatory public participation process of 2031-MP provided many people with a platform to publicly express their feelings related to planning and governance. Drawing from these articulations, we demonstrate that distrust, anger and fear have characterised, and continue to characterise, planning participation atmospheres in Bengaluru. We recognise emotional content as the connective tissue (Newman, 2012) in the planning of and for multiplicity (Osborne & Grant-Smith, 2015) and care. We argue that enabling an empathetic emotional field is central to convening intermediary platforms and processes where conflicting, contesting, excluded and invisible positions can come together in contestation, representation, negotiation, bargains or resolution.

Mapping the Domains for Planning Participation Analysis in India

Any analysis of planning participation is influenced by the conceptualisation of what constitutes participation: what are its venues and avenues, and whose and what kind of interactions should be examined. The emerging body of scholarship on planning participation in India in the recent years is instructive and can be divided into three categories based on how the authors conceptualise planning and participation. The first category focuses on the ‘lack of participation’ based on an abstract idea of ‘state’ as the planner that is separate from the ‘social’ space that it seeks to plan. For example, Benjamin’s (2008, 2015) long-standing critique portrays Indian planning as ‘techno-bureaucratic and positivist’,

seeking to master plan over heterogeneous life worlds. Another instance is Sundaresan's (2019) critique of the Indian urban planning system as a continuation of coloniality and colonial management of urban space.³ From this framework, participation is planning's 'other' that is either kept at a distance or happens only when 'state' invites 'society' to participate on the state's terms.

This leads us to the second approach, which critiques contemporary planning participation initiatives and practices by portraying them as 'selective' and embedded in the 'neoliberal' state and governance. For the flexible allocation of resources and justice, the 'state' identifies favourable and unfavourable actors to include in and exclude respectively from planning decisions. Roy's (2009) critique of Indian planning as an informalised entity and neoliberal state (of exception) that establishes sovereign authority upon the population, Ghertner's (2011a) critique of the gentrification of state space in Delhi and the case studies from across sectors of planning in the two impressive edited volumes Coelho et al. (2013) and Kumar and Prakash (2016) belong to this category. The authors in the edited volumes propose that since liberalisation and the concomitant 74th constitutional amendment, urban planning in India has been characterised by modes of selective participation that only accommodate elite and middle-class interests. Such participation, they argue, co-opts and forges reformist partnerships to institutionalise second-generation reforms—market discipline, municipal financialisation and the implementation of the 'world-class cities' agenda. These sustain dominant power relations, produce new exclusionary power lobbies (like resident welfare associations [RWAs] and middle-class residents) and enable cities of bourgeois sensibility that exclude and marginalise the poor. The categories of 'citizens' who participate and the 'population' that is to be governed are firmly established through this process (Jayaraman, 2013). The 'state' of a particular ideological, cultural collective considers most people (and collectives) as a problem that it seeks to solve through planning and hence needs to be kept out of the process.

These two approaches conceptualise planning participation from a statist perspective, or what we call a 'planning perspective'. From the vantage point of a state *that plans*, society becomes that which *participates*. Drawing from Huxley (2013), Sundaresan (2016) has demonstrated how this epistemic framework is centred on Anglo-American planning history and poses serious limitations to the analysis of Indian planning. Further, such a perspective mobilises foundational structures (like the state) and its derivations, thus eluding any analysis of internal constituting processes.

We draw from a third approach, which we call a 'partaking (or participation) perspective'. This can be seen in the conceptualisations of Bawa (2013), Ranganathan (2013) and Sundaresan (2019). These authors consider an anti-foundational view of planning participation and argue that all planning should be understood as constituted by diverse participations, that is, planning *is* participation. For example, by challenging the formal–informal binary, Bawa (2013) conceptualises citizen participation as 'constitutive of and constituted by everyday interactions and practices... within and between state agencies, networks, social norms, and cultural and historical precedents' (p. 90). Examining Mumbai's water distribution improvement project, Bawa (2013) argues, 'participation takes place through arenas that are formally mandated as well as through platforms that come into being as a result of conventions, precedents and institutional dynamics' (p. 110) and that assigning normative values only to particular forms of interactions leads to classifying others as informal, illicit and stemming from patronage. Similarly, Ranganathan (2013) notes how water reforms in Bengaluru demonstrate a co-constitution 'between managed techniques of participation and more spontaneous politicised acts of collective action that seek to co-opt the former and to stake claims to the material bases of urban citizenship' (p. 66). Sundaresan (2019, 2016) pulls out the last plug that retains water in the statist analysis to argue that planning practice in Bengaluru reflects the seamless connection between master planning and violations, and he demonstrates that the master plan is an ever-changing, dynamic entity embedded within the practice of polycentric planning that is constituted by diverse actors participating continually through diverse avenues, enabled by the culture of political democracy. To these

authors, planning is a fundamentally social, cultural and even ritualistic process. The institutions, instruments and protocols that are mobilised in the process are constituted by its sociality. According to them, planning participation is not achieved by crossing boundaries between pre-given entities; the entities themselves are constituted in relation to other entities in the process. Planning processes and outcomes are constituted by participations occurring in incumbent, invited and claimed spaces (Kumar & Prakash, 2016). Any analysis should, therefore, examine who participates and through which channel, what interactions occur between these configurations and how and what outcomes are produced. Figures 1 and 2 illustrate this and outline 19 domains of analysis.

Planning participation in the 2031-MP process was constituted through interactions across all three avenues. A detailed analysis of the emotions that influence planning in all these domains is beyond the scope of this article, since each avenue is constituted by specific instruments, interactions, actors,

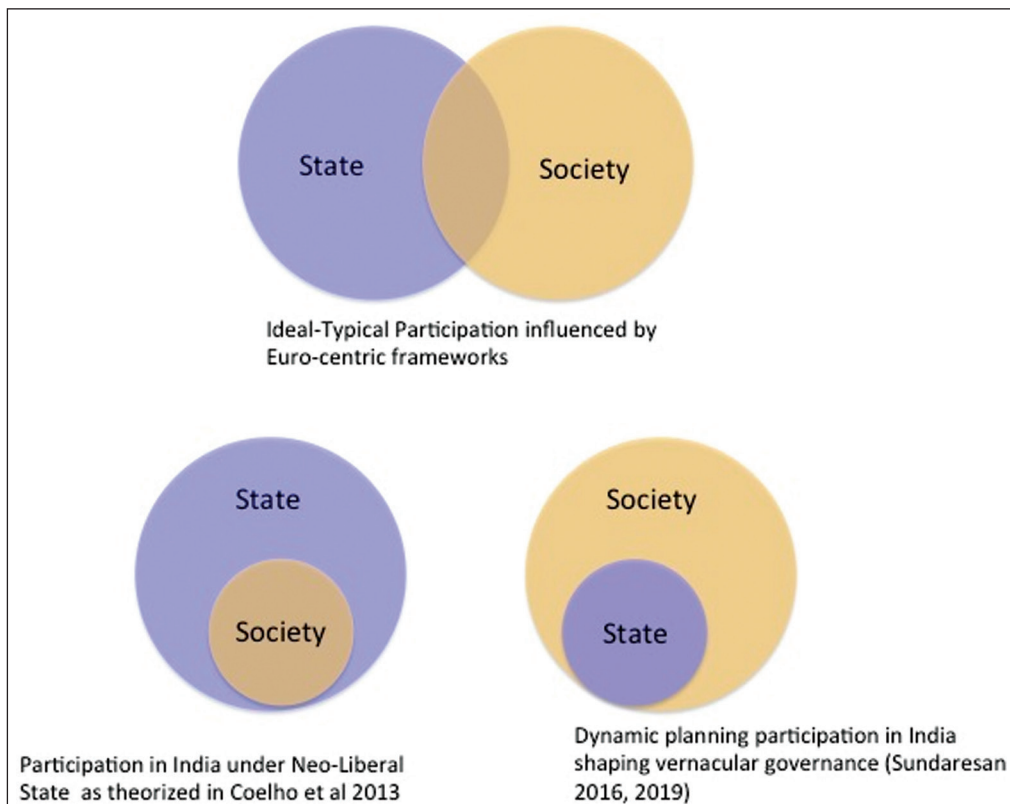


Figure 1. State Society Boundaries

Source: The authors.

(a) State and society are separate categories; participatory avenues bring these together for deliberation. (b + c) State and society get co-produced through practice. In (b), ‘planning state’ constitutes a ‘planning society’ (e.g., inviting policy elites); (c) ‘Planning society’ constitutes its own ‘planning state’ through the everyday.

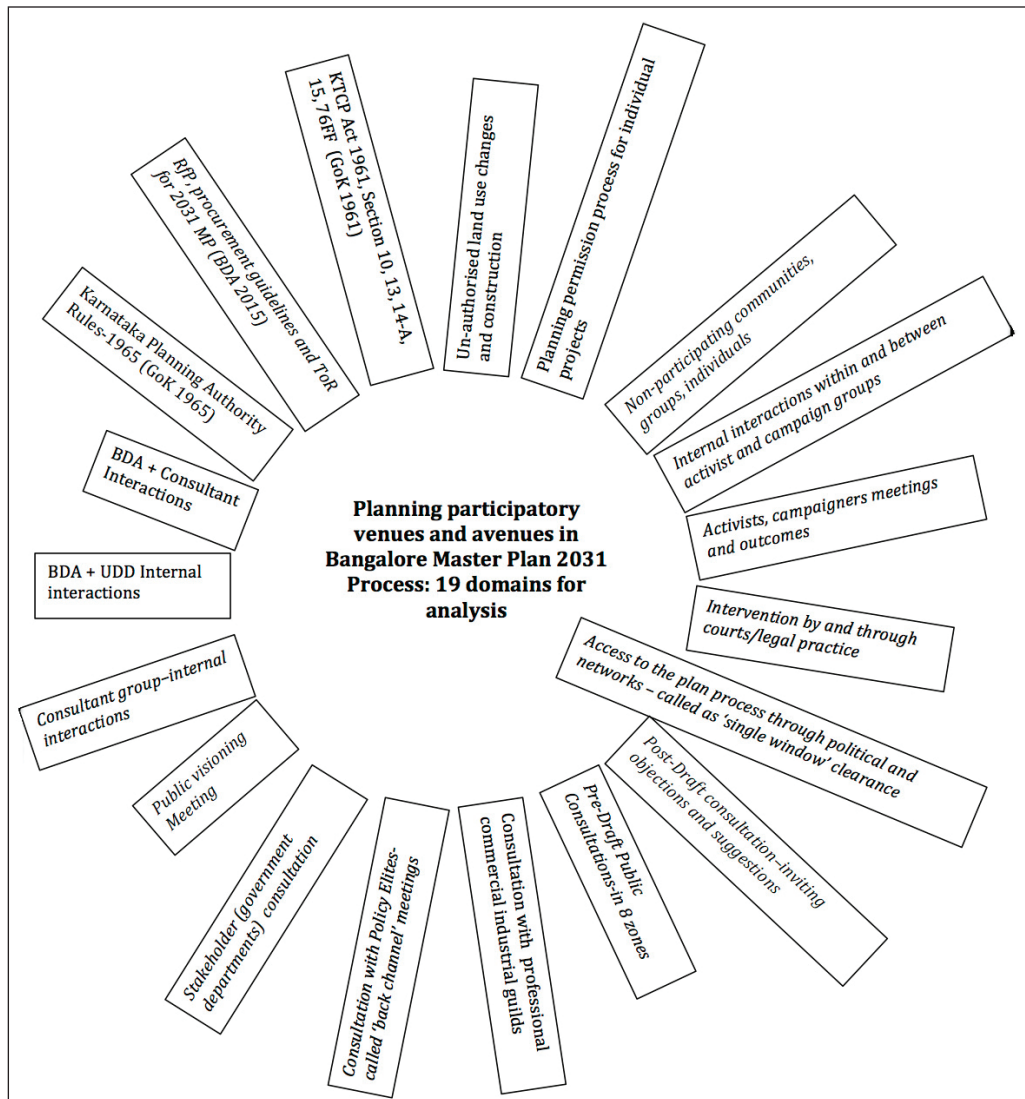


Figure 2. 19 Domains for planning participation analysis in Bengaluru

Source: The authors.

processes and outcomes in relational configuration to others. The point we want to make is that conventional participatory planning is a specific discourse in which actors, presumably embedded within confined institutional settings (state and society), cross predetermined boundaries and share knowledge, power, attitudes and resources to constitute the planning process. Understanding planning as participation enables us to conceive how actors constitute planning by constituting the bounded categories itself in relation to each other; different planning participations shape entirely different states, societies, communities and interactions, all of which exist and shape planning simultaneously. This is particularly

useful from the perspective of studying emotions in planning participation atmospheres, first, because it illuminates diverse relational categories that get constituted in the process, and second, because it enables the study of articulations that express the relation. For example, this approach will incorporate public engagement sessions connected to 2031-MP organised by communities or social institutions as well as non-participations—individuals/groups who were *invisible*—who did not participate, including the collectives that did not think they would be welcome to these avenues and may never turn up despite an open invitation to participate. It means that the emotional content in a specific configuration (e.g., distrust in the ideal-typical configuration) is responded with a different or opposite emotional content organised through a different configuration (e.g., trust in dynamic planning). The 2031-MP process revealed a complex and contesting process where people, institutions, laws, acts and rules, conventions, communities and associations participated or abstained from doing so.

A Note on Method

This article emerges from ongoing collaborative research on the Bengaluru 2031-MP process, which began in September 2018. It builds on the authors' experience and involvement in the process.⁴ The initial map of the planning and participatory process was drafted from our own understanding of the institutions, processes and instruments through in-depth self-reflexive auto-ethnographic notes, interviews and conversations with each other. We held in-depth interviews with government officials, consultants, civil society actors and campaign/activist collectives. Further, the data set includes newspaper reports, email group messages, blog posts, public documents and plan and policy documents.

Our initial focus was not on emotions; we began by documenting the process in its full richness. We found that our interviewees frequently mentioned how the master planning process affected them emotionally and shared examples of emotional outbursts in various interactions that they had partaken in or witnessed. Thus, we started paying closer attention to emotions in subsequent interviews, interview transcripts and notes. This article is developed from findings that emerged from the first two stages of data collection covering specific segments of a much larger study. We recognise that our findings may be biased towards the completed group segments and that further data will provide more insights.

Along with protecting the privacy of our interviewees, specific attention was paid to the ethical considerations involved due to insider knowledge—only data that were collected through interviews and triangulated or that which can be found in publicly available documents have been used as evidence. Many others that the authors themselves have been witness to have been omitted but have helped to inform the main arguments. Further, the evidence presented and main arguments proposed reflect collaboration between a full-time professional practitioner and a full-time academic, that is, their different approaches and comfort to discuss details in public. For example, the viability of master plan as a planning instrument, the details about parallel access to the master plan, the dynamics and interactions within and without the planning team, etc.

Distrust, Anger and Fear in Participations and Abstentions

In the domains that we examined, 2031-MP interactions revealed intense conflicts between and within participant groups on every aspect of the plan—legal frameworks, jurisdiction, instruments, epistemology, techniques, vision, process and proposals, among others. We identified that distrust, anger and fear

shaped many of these conflicts. Disagreements, rather than emerging from and through rational deliberations, were already embedded and pregnant within the context of the interactions, like the very nature of a charge that defines attraction (or repulsion) and how each entity is connected (or not) with other. Drawing from Ahmed (2014), the surfaces of entities (individuals, institutions, images and discourses) were already impressed with these feelings towards each other from previous contacts, which influenced the nature of these interactions and their outcomes. Even though we could discern entitlements, beliefs, ideologies, positions, protocols, interests, gains, losses, loyalty, recognition, respect and knowledge influencing the process, we shall be focussing on distrust, anger and fear. These emotions proactively assembled many present and absent proposals in the draft plan.

Distrust

Trust played a major role in how embounded actors—like state and society, consultant and client, advisor and government, planning authority and elected local government, academic, planner, bureaucrat, politician, minister, councillor, NGO, community group, activist, middleman, developer—interacted with each other in this planning exercise. We follow how a deep, pre-existing deep mutual distrust shaped the 2031-MP process.⁵ Based on previous interactions, the actors involved distrusted not only each other and their own group members but also the planning process. One of the advisors who helped the government procure a consultant for 2031-MP said:

One day I was told by a planning activist that, ‘By the way, thanks to you guys at [name removed] for the RfP—I have got access to it now through RTI [right to information] and we realised that it mandates a public visioning process before the plan processes start. So, we told the government that if you don’t do this, we will go to court’. That is when I realised that the participation clause suggested in the draft guidelines we submitted to government has gone through—I never expected it would. It is a miracle—either the officer who finally approved it overlooked or didn’t take it serious [*sic*]. (Interview with planning advisor, December 2019)

Even though this boundary crossing (collaboration between the government and elite think tank) produced an enabling document, past experience had impressed upon the advisor to distrust the government. They believed that the Bangalore Development Authority (BDA) and Urban Development Department were updating the master plan for statutory reasons and utilising the opportunity to help the developer–politician–planner nexus in the imminent elections.⁶ They did not trust the Karnataka Town and Country Planning (KTCP) Act to organise a democratic, inclusive or participatory planning process. They participated in this process because of hope, a feeling that encourages humans to act despite dwindling evidence of results.

This distrust was pronounced in the relationship between BDA and civic society groups, RWAs, planning activists, planning elites and planning evangelists, NGOs and community organisations. Despite coming together to cross boundaries for planning, neither BDA (plus some consultants) nor ‘people’⁷ trusted each other’s capability to make planning decisions. Most planning authority officials distrusted participation; participation meetings happened because of pressure from activists and interested members from the consultants team, who were also bound by their terms of reference (Interview with planning consultants between September 2018 – September 2019). Even though loyalty to the KTCP Act, the anxiety of losing control over the golden goose (master plan process), and the fear of facing planning activists in public (discussed below) could have also driven the BDA to avoid participation, it was clear that the planning officials’ fundamental distrust of ‘people’ played a significant role in their distrusting

participation in general. Many planners believed that ‘people’ only cared about private interest matters, such as water, transport or their own land. For example, one of our interviewees, a senior planning official, argued that people in Bengaluru were greedy about land and very casually violated planning norms. They said people even made ‘high rise buildings on 6 meter roads’ (Interview with senior planner in BDA, September 2019). They justified this by arguing that ‘there were 14,956 objections and suggestions, [for the final draft] of which 45% was about individual plot/land’ (Interview). Drawing evidence from their practice experience (culture of violations), corroborated by documentation, they argued that people could not be entrusted with public interest decisions. Our interviewee not only distrusted people but they distrusted the government as well, even though they declared loyalty to their employer (BDA) and demonstrated a passionate commitment to planning ideology. Therefore, their comments implied a sense of helplessness—they neither trusted the government nor the people—which emotionally isolates them inside their professional loneliness without any reliable outside. Like many planning officials in Bengaluru, they evinced a complex emotional response to the planning process. While at one level they believed in the progressive possibilities of planning, at another, they did not believe planning was possible in Bengaluru. Many socially committed planners and planning officials in the city, therefore, operate within their own boundaries, interacting selectively and instrumentally with three different configurations of state and society, as discussed above. ‘Planning doesn’t work,’ they believe, because ‘people can’t be changed’.

Reciprocally, many people also disliked and distrusted the government—they argued that according to the 74th Amendment, it is the Metropolitan Planning Committee (MPC) and not BDA that has been mandated to formulate 2031-MP. Despite being headed by the chief minister of Karnataka, unlike BDA (which is governed under the state government), the MPC has more local political representation. However, after formalisation in 2014, it has hardly ever met for business. Further, as its secretariat, BDA would still provide technical support to the planning process. Despite this, many campaigners (NGOs, community-based organisations [CBOs], RWAs, planning elites) were unwilling to accept BDA planning (see Chamaraj, 2017). This contention significantly dominated 2031-MP public meetings and led to a public interest litigation at the Karnataka High Court (Menon & Pabishetty, 2016; NBF & CAF, 2014; *The Hindu*, 2017). Many civic activist groups that opposed BDA’s role in planning had developed insights into its working through fighting planning litigations over the last 15 years. Some had also campaigned for the implementation of the 74th Amendment. Thus, even though in public campaigns and legal representation the arguments were rationally framed as ‘democratic deficit and non-implementation of constitutional amendment’, the reason for rejecting BDA’s role in planning was also influenced by the deeply held distrust about BDA itself. For instance, one of the campaigners said, ‘Bangalore is a cash cow ... The obsession to milk your own cash cow is just overwhelming. Across parties none wants to change [Bengaluru from] the idea of *the protectorate* [control of BDA – emphasis added]’ with civic activist, (January 2020). The Perception of Bengaluru as a cash cow that everyone ‘likes to milk but not interested in feeding’, and BDA being a ‘bunch of crooks’, were common among officials, professionals, civil society actors and unorganised residents. Sundaresan (2014) has noted how Bangalore Agenda Task Force Bangalore Agenda Task Force (BATF)⁸ reconfigured master planning in Bengaluru by awarding the 2005–2015 master plan to an inexperienced French consultancy because they believed that ‘entrusting the BDA with the master plan is like entrusting the real estate lobby’ (pp. 283). Therefore many of these groups but do not trust the BDA and wants to reconfigure the boundaries of the planning state either through localisation or internationalisation. Also, given the pervasiveness of planning violations, many activists/campaigners did not believe that BDA had any control over land use and argued that BDA planning was a dangerous exercise. For example, one prominent civil society campaigner stated that BDA’s role in planning had turned Bengaluru into a city of burning lakes and congestion, damaging its centuries-old wetland commons, sacred groves and planned neighbourhoods like Jayanagar.⁹

How distrust can reconfigure the boundaries of the planning state is further evident if we examine how different entities realigned themselves when confronting specific technical components of 2031-MP. For instance, not only civic society activists but also government departments and some planners and officials involved the planning team distrusted the population projection – the foundation of any master planning exercise (*Deccan Chronicle*, 2017). The planning team was accused of projecting high population figures for the planning period in order to help various entities gobble up land from Bengaluru's green belt, propose higher floor area densities and increase funding and contracting rates for infrastructure and the services such as roads, water, transport and waste. According to a senior member involved,

[BBMP accused us of] ¹⁰ helping solid-waste contractors with our population projection for increasing waste calculation. We were not; usually construction waste is not taken into account in waste calculation. Here, we also included that ... everyone [in Bengaluru] makes money out of everything, but that does not mean we cannot plan. (Interview with senior planner BDA, September 2019)

Another member in the planning team said:

[Civic society activists] accused that we were doctoring population projection so high that it could become tool for other institutions to project using this number to increase demands and become a domain [including providing legal authority in courts] for corruption. Also, they thought we were purposely helping bureaucrats and politicians owned land values by opening up land. (Interview with a planning team member, September 2018)

Such pervasive distrust has influenced many to dismiss the planning and participatory processes altogether. A farmers' collective member, whose representative attended most public consultation meetings, said: 'Master plan is of no use; [it] is just a tool devised by BDA to make money' (Interview with farmers collective member, August 2019). This perception emerged from struggles connected to their land that the BDA had notified for acquisition to construct the peripheral ring road.¹¹ Similarly, despite actively participating in meetings, civil society activists believed that 2031-MP was a futile and wasteful exercise because MPC, once legally or politically can be mobilised to assume its role, will have to prepare it again (Bharadwaj, 2014). Similar distrust marked the two hours of first public visioning meeting attended by about 500 people (Patel, 2015). One of the participants said:

[This person—deleted the name and organisation] said [publicly in the meeting], 'When you do these kind of stunts [like public consultation/visioning process], like that happened during, JnNURM [urban renewal mission launched in 2004], you make the videos and you show it to centre [central government] and get money but never address people's issues'. (multiple interviews with planning team member, September – December 2018)

Similarly, a prominent slum residents' collective/campaign activist, who refrained from attending participation meetings, said:

What is the point of going- no response will be there- we won't get any respect, they won't allow us to speak. The master plan is in English—everyone speaks English. They will call all but will only listen to certain people and will only listen to what they want to hear. This is just box ticking ... namesake consultation ... [to] make a report. That is all. (Interview with activist collective, September 2019)

Pronounced distrust marked how the activists conceived that the master planning discussion would be conducted in English, when in reality all participation meetings were conducted in Kannada. Participants even corrected English users during meetings. Following 'distrust' also reveal how bounded entities are

formed in the process, within pre-given categories like state and society. For example, one key member of the planning team (part of planning state) wrote how municipal councillors (part of the abstract state) ‘are convinced that the master plan is not a workable plan’ (Mohan, 2018). Similarly, many members in the planning team were more loyal to the ethos of citizen collectives than to that of BDA or the corporate organisation they worked for. Most government departments viewed the master plan as a ‘toothless’¹² coloured piece of paper that would be shelved soon after it was adopted. Therefore, each department created its own vision, population projections, sectoral plans and working protocols, without any connection to each other or to the master plan. Government organisations distrusted each other, particularly they distrusted the BDA that they refused to share details of their assets—especially the list of public lands owned by them—with the planning team. Many members involved in 2031-MP said that no one in the planning team knew, and perhaps even in Bengaluru know the actual list of government-owned lands: ‘It is a top secret; it was one of the toughest issues [to deal with]’ (interview with planning team member, January 2019).

While preconceived distrust generally characterised interactions between entities, it must also be noted that the planning participation process and concomitant interactions have influenced shifting from hope and trust into distrust, and vice versa. For instance, many planners considered working on the plan as an ‘emotional labour of love’ (Interview interview with planning team member, January 2019) for the city they loved; therefore, the participatory component excited them. This passion enabled them to endure the hard work, frustrations, overtime, tight deadlines and repeated disappointments. However, after witnessing the process in close quarters, many of them developed a deep distrust. One interviewee mentioned how they had broken down and could not talk for days after the first public-city-visioning meeting was cancelled. Similarly, another one of our interviewees said:

Master plan becomes a fictitious thing. You are trying to do a plan for a city that cannot be planned. We started asking, what are we doing really. Master planning is a farce, no? The city is predominantly mixed use if you look at it- the very rational of planning itself is against the nature of development of the city. (Interview with planning team member, September 2018)

Another said that by the end of the process, they realised, ‘We talk all these big things, but we don’t even have proper footpath to walk on in Bengaluru. The current master plan can’t make any difference to people’s lives. These scenarios [proposed in the draft] are useless’ (Interview with planning team member, January 2020). Similarly, a key member of the consultant’s team rejected that 2031-MP could address citizen’s concerns, because of ‘fundamental flaws’ in the planning process (Mohan, 2018). Many planners developed their disillusionment through first-hand experience. For example, one interviewee, a planner involved, remarked:

We kept green belt [land use zone in the master plan] because there is ‘Green Bengaluru’ activist bunch ... as if green belt [in the plan] will ensure we have fresh air ... there is in reality no green belt. Activists associate green in the map with [actual] green in real [on ground]. If we changed it, they would say [that it will cause] ‘sprawl’, ‘air pollution’ etc. The authorities love keeping green belt because if we changed the green belt regulation, then they can’t do the conversion of land use (legal procedure involving heavy bribes; Interview with with planning team member, September 2019).

The 2031-MP participation experience showed many instances when actors realigned from within specific bounded configurations to form new entities and configurations. For instance, some planners developed more trust in activists, campaign groups, voluntary associations and unorganised residents

during the process. Public interactions helped them appreciate the value people bring, for instance, that some NGO groups have more updated and reliable data and insights than government departments or that in Bengaluru there exists a ‘permanent establishment’ that cannot be wished away, as noted by Sundaresan (2014, p. 285)¹³ or that support from people is a valuable resource when managing complex entities in the government. Similarly, many members of the consulting team also started trusting specific officials who demonstrated genuine investment in the process compared to others before them, who they felt did not care.

Given the diversity of activists and campaigners in Bengaluru, mistrust also influenced interaction between civil society actors, campaigners and citizen’s associations. This was evident in the trust building and collective action process initiated by a few activists/campaigners which aimed to collectivise across boundaries (from permanent-establishment-policy elites to the urban poor and street-vendor collectives) and influence the 2031-MP process; however, this did not proceed beyond a few meetings.¹⁴ This was a missed opportunity to organise a collectivised planning society that could reconfigure the planning state to assemble a more appropriate planning process.

Anger and Fear

Pervasive distrust produced anger, fear and indifference that caused many forms of stress and humiliation among participants. Many people were angry at corruption and scams, violations, encroachments and their regularisation, non-implementation of projects and programmes, evictions, mismanagement of water, waste, transport, pollution, wetlands and flooding, commercialisation of their neighbourhoods and urbanisation in general, among others. There was no mechanism to manage these feelings in participation meetings through translation and trust building. Therefore, though participation platforms enabled an avenue to partake in the planning process, by interacting with anger towards each other, it also reinstated hard distrustful boundaries between entities. To begin with, we show below how public anger not only scared BDA but also influenced the outcomes of the public-city-visioning meeting (first participation meeting). Originally planned for November 2014, this meeting got cancelled at the last minute, because, according to our interviewees, BDA ‘got scared’ at the public anger that was expressed in email lists and letters. For example many people expressed their anger at the fact that the Terms of Reference of the plan preparation process included study tours for BDA officials to foreign countries at the taxpayer’s expense. A planner said:

The meeting was planned to a great extent, but the BDA got a cold feet...like...we can’t meet so many people. BDA was scared...[title removed] didn’t want to meet the public. Just that morning we were haggling with the coffee guys [to supply coffee at meeting]. (Interview with planning team member, January 2020)

However, on 29 April 2015, this angry public got their chance at the rescheduled public-city-visioning meeting in Ambedkar Bhavan public hall. One of the attendees described this as, ‘bang bang—everyone came with loaded guns and started firing’ (multiple interviews with planning team member, September – December 2019). The planning team member described the event as follows:

About 500 people turned up...BDA was apprehensive about what will happen. A Kannada [movie] actor was appointed as the compere. The crowd was already impatient...even as the event started, people were raising hands saying something. [Name removed] began the welcome [address] and s/he was supposed to present the slides. As soon as s/he began to speak s/he got interrupted. One person sitting in the middle stood up, pointed his hand at the stage and said ‘This is not your role to prepare the master plan—this is not your

jurisdiction'. Then, a few more stood up, had placards, and started shouting slogans and walked out. Then they kept on shouting slogans outside [the hall]. At the end, we couldn't make any presentation. All of us got quite scared. (ibid.)

An experienced urban campaigner remarked that in Bengaluru, 'Government don't listen to people' (Interview with a planning and policy campaigner, January 2020). By shouting, walking out, demonstrating, walking over to the dais and grabbing the microphone to talk, people were expressing their anger and concerns in a way that would make government officials listen. Despite the shouting, or perhaps because of the shouting, the public officials did not respond at all. 'They were sitting like stones' on the dais was how one interviewee described it (Interview with planning team member, September 2019). There was no dialogue, and nothing about city visioning came out of it; it was a monologue of shouting anger occupied and shaped the state–society boundary. This 2-hour meeting was reported in a newspaper as: 'war of words', people 'thundered as they walked out', 'free for all to get hold of the microphone', 'police had to intervene' and 'efforts to calm down...went in vain' (ToI, 2015). The angry mood was also reflected in how people spoke to each other, for example, when insisting English speakers to speak in Kannada. People challenged the officials on a range of issues, such as BDA's jurisdiction, corruption allegations, green-belt reservations and non-implementation of previous plans (like peripheral ring road), among others. Expecting the anger, the planning team not only decided in advance to present details on the envisaged planning process (which never happened due to the commotion) but also mapped the building's escape routes to run away in case of violence! (Multiple interviews with a planning team member September – December 2018)

This meeting, a planner argued, set the tone of 'how civil society engaged with the planning process' (ibid.), especially in the public meetings that occurred later across eight zones in the city, where, on many occasions, commotion prevented officials from completing their talk/presentation. Each zone had specific issues that attracted different collectives and expressions ranging from shouting to physical removal of displayed maps/plans. For instance, the farmers' collective were angry with BDA for disrupting their income security, property rights and livelihood by not completing the acquisition of their land many years after the notification for the peripheral ring road, which left them unable to sell, mortgage or cultivate. More affluent neighbourhoods in East and South Bengaluru were angry at commercialisation of their neighbourhoods due to the 'mixed-land-use' policy of the previous master plan, pervasive violations and regularisation policy that transformed neighbourhoods into hubs of traffic congestion, noise and air pollution and gentrification, forcing them to live next to pubs, bars, marriage halls and mega showrooms.¹⁵

Many everyday interactions between members of the planning team were also characterised by anger, fear, indifference, humiliation and depression.¹⁶ Some of these feelings were a consequence of what members in the planning team called 'interference' from politicians, government officials, lobby groups and the general public. A bounded watertight space for expert deliberation separated from the social sphere was not available; instead, using mutual trust networks, many planning societies comprising developers, politicians, brokers and public officials reconfigured boundaries to produce a planning state through which they could shape the master plan's existing and proposed land use categorisations, green belt policy, wetlands buffer zone boundary, heritage policy, infrastructure alignments, density policy and so on. One of our interviewees called this a 'single-window' approach when this access was more neatly organised, efficient and controlled.

The master planning process was embedded in complex emotional transactions that resembled Ahmed's (2014) 'action as reaction'; for instance, a major proposed land use decision was taken by the planners to 'teach them [a set of people] a lesson' (Interview with a planning team member, September

2019). Planners used the phrases such as ‘I was depressed’, ‘It was miserable’, ‘I was hospitalised’, ‘I lost my health’, ‘mental torture’, ‘I stopped meeting people’, ‘I was scared’, ‘I felt humiliated’ and ‘beaten down’ many times during our interviews to express what they felt during the 2031-MP process. Such distressing interactions reproduce distressing emotions that will affect future interactions, creating a cycle of events and occasions with similar experiences, but, more importantly, they further boundaries, which will prevent any people-centric planning.

Fear shaped not only participatory interactions but also non-participation. For example, some members from a prominent slum rights collective expressed their fear in participating: ‘Individuals who speak will be targeted by the local politician and their goons’ (Interview with community activists, January 2019). They said that they do not go to such meetings due to fear of retribution, since slum settlements are fundamentally sustained through local politics.

The planning team also utilised fear as an instrument during analysis and presentation to achieve what one interviewee termed ‘positive effects’, like encouraging public transport. For instance, they mentioned that the business-as-usual scenario presented in draft proposals

...was made to elicit fear from authorities and citizens. [It communicated] where we could end up if we continue the way we are, without infrastructure and enforcement. We used a transport model to show the kind of traffic problems that we are facing, we showed what is the kind of sprawl that is happening, [that] our natural system will be polluted and burning, roads will be clogged. By continuing this way, we implied, we might have to evacuate people from Bengaluru... the maps were made to alarm people. (Interview with planning team member, December 2019)

Conclusion

Planning and participation studies in India have thus far been attentive to the exclusionary role of state, ideology, class/caste divides or coalitions, corruption, etc., the appropriateness of the institutions, instruments and geographic scale, and partial or total lack of implementation. It has paid scant attention to how apart from rationality, interests, deceit and manipulation, emotions also play a central role in co-constituting urban planning processes and outcomes. In this article, we demonstrated how Bengaluru’s 2031-MP process and outcomes are influenced and co-produced by the emotional transactions between actors/collectives (participants) through (re-)configurations of entities and boundaries. Moving beyond the usual state–society binary framework of planning analysis to conceptualising planning as constituted by multiple participations in diversely (legally, socially, historically) constituted avenues and modes illuminated how collectives proactively shape the planning process. We demonstrated that tracing emotional content (distrust, anger and fear) embedded in participations and non-participations can provide deeper insights into the politics of planning participation atmospheres and, in particular, how emotions shape, transcend, reconfigure, reinstate or reproduce boundaries and entities. We also alluded to how some other emotional states, such as indifference, stress, humiliation, longing, love and passion, have also been influential.

Substantive states of these emotions were historically and performatively constituted, that is, these are shaped by experience from previous interactions, as well as from the participation process. Accessing through emotions, the 2031-MP process and outcome gets illuminated as diverse dynamic assemblages of conflicting sociality in (trans) formation, perpetuation or concealment. We demonstrated that the emotions of present and absent actors shape interfaces (including predispositions) between diverse entities (including law, planning act, institutions) that constitute and co-produce planning processes.

Given how planning processes are diversely constituted across the world, this methodology we propose could illuminate the uniqueness of every context.

So far, public participation in Bengaluru meant: enlightened, eloquent, economically successful elites discussing with officials in polite language inside closed rooms; statements made by urban activists, campaigners and academics in newspaper columns; NGOs and academic institutions handing over research reports to relevant authorities; or anyone concerned writing objections and suggestions to a published draft plan. Similarly, public resistance meant lawyers and specialists debating in courtrooms during public interest litigations or urban-poor communities protesting and demonstrating against various forms of violent evictions. For the first time, the 2031-MP process combined these two articulations—participation as resistance and resistance as participation, which was documented in newspaper reports, videos and public memory. More than ever this time the English planning was dissected or elaborated through Kannada in public forums. Through our research, we could further illuminate these spaces and interactions that are usually otherwise confined within black box notions of the state, government and community, to argue and demonstrate that planning should indeed be understood as diverse participations, both absent and present.

Only by working with and through such agonistic interactions in planning participation process, and not by escaping, relegating, deleting or masking it, can a democratic planning framework be developed. This cannot be done without also attending to how expressions of emotions in public tell us a lot about embedded power relations. In the public-visioning meetings, people sat on the floor and the government on the dais, not the other way around. We did not hear anything from our interviewees or from newspaper reports about street vendors, slum dwellers and sanitation workers shouting, protesting, walking out or articulating their views. The confidence of many activists as displayed in how they articulated their feelings shouting, pointing fingers, walking out, showing placards, criticising officials in newspapers, publicly accusing officials of corruption and so on emerged from their relatively privileged positions in society or through their membership in powerful collectives (farmers' collectives, RWAs, CBOs, NGOs), compared to others who were less confident, less expressive or did not participate at all because of distrust or fear. A fuller understanding of what is at stake in the planning participation atmospheres should focus on the visible, invisible and absent articulations.

The planning atmosphere in India is toxic and produces a vast array of urban toxicity. Even though the 74th Amendment occurred about 30 years ago and the model Nagaraj Bill Act (with its own ideological predispositions and shortcomings) was introduced 14 years ago, urban planning functions neither got decentralised nor were made participatory. During a conversation about half a decade ago, reflecting on local and regional governance questions, the main architect of the 74th Amendment, the late K. C. Sivaramakrishnan told one of the authors that he 'didn't understand the political geography of Indian cities adequately then [in 1992]' (Personal Conversation with the author in 2013). From our research, we would argue that any decentralisation and participatory planning reform should closely attend to the emotional geography of urban diversity to develop trust-building frameworks, without which we will just reproduce our exclusionary, unequal, violent, damaging and toxic colonial urban space management programme. Emotions are the very energy that constitute the social; thus, we agree with Newman (2012) that they form the connective tissue in governance.

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Notes

1. We draw the notion of 'atmosphere' from Buser (2014, p. 228), who defines 'affective atmosphere... as range of collective affects produced through dynamic, relational place encounters'.
2. *Kaala* is a fictionalised account of violent resistance to evictions induced by a planning project in Dharavi in Mumbai. See Kuttaiah (2018); *Khosla ka Ghosla* is a comically narrated politics of land encroachment in Delhi. See Team Mangalorean (2013).
3. The difference between these two authors' approaches is that while Benjamin seldom distinguishes between system and practice, Sundaresan does.
4. One of us helped Bangalore Development Authority (BDA) with Master Plan procurement support (request for proposal [RfP], evaluation, terms of reference [ToR], etc.). The other author was an integral member of the 2031-MP team. One of us attended many activist collective meetings in Bangalore during the 2031-MP process.
5. Implying also the networks of trust and loyalty that reconfigure or transcend pre-given entities and boundaries, constituting new entities and boundaries (planning society constituting planning state), which we mention in our analysis wherever relevant, but have not followed up in detail in this analysis.
6. The master planning process gets routinely implicated in election-related bargains.
7. 'People' (in quotes) here refers to an abstracted idea used by interviewees to refer to those that formed the 'society' outside the 'state, as outlined in the analytical framework.
8. BATF was an advisory group to the Chief Minister of Karnataka, formed of corporate elites between 1999 and 2004. Many of them later became the planning elites and lobby groups of Bangalore.
9. Jayanagar is an urban designed layout in South Bangalore developed as a satellite center by the City Improvement Trust Board in 1948 when land acquisition was not as complicated as it is now.
10. Bruhat Bangalore Mahanagara Palike is Bangalore's elected local authority.
11. Based on the 2005–2015 MP discussed later in detail.
12. Master plan is 'toothless' is a common parlance among officials and activists in Bengaluru.
13. Refers to a few people who always hold significant influence in Bangalore's planning and governance scene, irrespective of any changes in politics or bureaucracy.
14. Even though one of our interviewees involved in this initiative blamed it on the bandwidth (limitations on resource, time, energy, ability) of members, one of the authors who attended a few of these meetings clearly witnessed interactions and debates shaped by mistrust.
15. Some members of the planning team put in much research and thought to improve the living conditions in slums, including extensive documentation, but at the end, these efforts were abandoned from the draft plan, and no one even noticed or challenged it.
16. Many details are reserved from sharing here due to privacy concerns.

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