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Counter-space: A Study of the Spatial Politics of the Urban Poor in the Megacity of Dhaka

Lutfun Nahar Lata

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Abstract

Access to public space for livelihoods is essential for the growing number of urban poor in the Global South. However, the urban poor have little to no control over access to public space because it is effectively controlled by formal and informal power brokers. Access to space is denied through legal rules and regulations, direct costs and social exclusion. In Dhaka, Bangladesh, nearly 300,000 people's livelihoods depend on accessing public space. To engage in small-scale informal business activities, street vendors operate in a climate of constant uncertainty, dealing with violence, extortion, expulsion and stigma. Their precarious status is compounded by constraints of religion, culture and informal community.

Against this background, this thesis uses a case study of Sattola, a slum in Dhaka, Bangladesh to address three research questions:

- 1) To what extent does the form and nature of urban governance enable and constrain poor people's access to and use of public space to pursue livelihoods?
- 2) How do street vendors in Dhaka pursue livelihoods in constant negotiation with other more powerful actors in society?
- 3) What are the gendered aspects to the appropriation of urban space for livelihoods in Dhaka?

Methodologically, I have adopted a 'subtle realist' approach based on the critical realism paradigm that emphasises the importance of the socially constructed or mediated nature of social reality. I used a case study method conducting in-depth interviews with 99 informal workers, and 37 key informants. Participants were recruited from Sattola slum in Dhaka as well as 16 government officials and an academic expert on urban poverty.

The thesis is built on a theoretical foundation of the social production of space, the right to the city and gendered space as they apply in the Global South to theorise the production of a 'counter-space' (Lefebvre, 1991) in public space by street vendors.

In the broader socio-economic and political context of Bangladesh, this thesis makes five key findings. First, vendors' access to public space for livelihoods is constrained and de-legitimised by

the government and its agencies without alternative employment opportunities or resettlement programs. The government and its agencies have produced a conceived space (Lefebvre, 1991) that denies poor people's right to the city, particularly their right to appropriate space. This has led to the expansion of informality and the creation of 'gray spaces' (Yiftachel, 2009a) where vendors struggle to make a living negotiating with different powerful state and non-state actors. Second, vendors use a range of negotiation strategies utilising different sources of power such as political affiliation, kinship networks, length of tenure, social status and economic power, to access public space. Third, due to the nature of the authoritarian state, the violence of law and order and the prevalence of patron-client political culture, the vendors of Sattola are suspicious of any kind of organisation and do not easily form collectives that can resist state and non-state actors' coercion. Vendors instead adopt covert resistance strategies such as the quiet encroachment of public space and high mobility to earn a living, rather than confronting power directly. Fourth, utilising these covert resistance strategies and their uneasy relationships with those in power, the vendors of Sattola have constructed counter-spaces in opposition to the planned order of the city to earn livelihoods. Finally, a comparison between male and female vendors' everyday tactics in constructing counter-spaces suggests that female vendors' access to public space are further constrained due to the multifaceted gendering of public space. They bear the triple burden of social stigma, religious barriers and patriarchy in accessing public space, thus mostly use parochial realm to earn an income.

The significance of these findings is that they reveal vendors are able to construct counter-spaces drawing on a range of everyday tactics and appropriating public space by quietly breaking the planned order of the city. This is done with the tacit support of a range of state and non-state powerful actors who are compromised by the benefits and profits they extract from vendors. This everyday pact also serves to diminish the idea of a collective movement against the state, its agencies and rent-seekers and serves to reproduce spatial inequality and 'permanent temporariness' (Yiftachel, 2009a) while allowing for tenuous livelihoods.

The thesis makes a significant contribution to the emerging scholarship of space and poverty in cities of the Global South. The thesis provides a means for understanding the everyday politics of survival for street vendors; the way that the poor must negotiate with different levels of formal and informal modes of power and governance; and the dynamics of gender. The way that these factors combine demonstrates how the creation of a tenuous counter-space can occur and will provide a valuable framework for work in other urban contexts, beyond Dhaka, in the Global South.

Declaration by author

This thesis is composed of my original work, and contains no material previously published or written by another person except where due reference has been made in the text. I have clearly stated the contribution by others to jointly-authored works that I have included in my thesis.

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List of Abbreviations

ADB	Asian Development Bank
ASK	<i>Ain O Salish Kendro</i> [Law and Mediation Center]
AL	Awami League
BDT	Bangladeshi Taka [Currency of Bangladesh]
BBS	Bangladesh Bureau of Statistics
BBOSC	Bangladesh Bosti Basheer Odhikar Surakha Committee [Bangladesh Slum Dwellers Rights Protection Committee]
BLAST	Bangladesh Legal Aid and Services Trust [NGO]
BMRC	Bangladesh Medical Research Council
BNP	Bangladesh National Party
BWHC	Bangladesh Women's Health Coalition
CBO	Community Based Organisation
CUP	Coalition for Urban Poor
CUS	Center for Urban Studies
DCC	Dhaka City Corporation
DGHS	Directorate General of Health Services
DNCC	Dhaka North City Corporatin
DSCC	Dhaka South City Corporation
DSK	<i>Dushtha Shasthya Kendra</i> [NGO – Health Center for the Distressed]
DWASA	Dhaka Water and Sewerage Authority
GoB	Government of Bangladesh
GSS	<i>Gono Shahajjo Sangstha</i> [NGO – Mass Help Agency]
IDH	Infectious Disease Hospital
IGS	Institute of Governance Studies
IPH	Institute of Public Health
JP	Jatiyo Party [National Party]
KII	Key Informant Interview
NASVI	National Association of Street Vendors of India
NBUS	<i>Nagar Bostibashi Unnayan Sangstha</i> [Urban Slum Development Agency]
NDBUS	Nagar Daridra Bostibashir Unnayan Sangstha [Urban Slum Dweller Rights Development Agency]
NGO	Non-Governmental Organisation
NGOAB	NGO Affairs Bureau

OC	Officer in Charge
RAB	Rapid Action Battalion
SDI	Slum/Shack Dwellers International
UN	United Nations
UNDP	United Nations Development Program
WASA	Water Supply and Sewerage Authority
WB	World Bank

Chapter 1: Introduction

1.1 Introduction

Hasan (40 years), a food vendor, sells round bread (*paratha*), chicken shashlik, fried cow's stomach and chicken wrap on the streets of Dhaka. He moved to Dhaka in 2013 with his wife and two children from a village in Bhola district in the very south of Bangladesh, leaving his extended family behind. He previously earned money in the village hauling sand and mud on a boat, but he lost this job and his income. Hasan established a foothold in Dhaka using family and social networks. His two brothers had already established themselves in the city helped to set him up in the food vending business. Eventually he was able to buy a cart. He started this business with 297 USD¹, using 119 USD of his own savings and borrowed the rest of the money from his brothers and kin.

Hasan lives in Sattola slum and sells snacks on the sidewalk of Banani-Mahakhali intersection, a busy commercial and residential area. He has been using this particular vending site informally (without tenure rights) since he started this business. His younger brother used to run mobile food business in the same area but moved to a different area allowing Hasan to establish there. Hasan makes 4 to 5 USD a day. He pays 30 USD per month to a landlord for the rent of a makeshift house in the slum. When the new Mayor of Dhaka North City Corporation took office in 2015 and embarked upon a project to remove street hawkers from public space, Hasan was forced to close his stall for some days until he could re-establish his business in the same place. Earlier in 2014, he also had to close the stall for two months due to a government 'clean up' coinciding with an international cricket match. Hasan told me that he and other vendors would have liked to form a vendors' association to protect their interests. However, they had doubts about the fruitfulness and safety of forming any association to protect their interests.

Hasan is still happy with the move to Dhaka, simply because his village offered him little or no income opportunities. In Dhaka he can earn money, but due to lack of any formal access to space his business constantly runs the risk of disruption. To maintain any security in these

¹ 1 USD = 84.15 BDT (Bangladeshi Taka). BDT refers to the currency of Bangladesh.

informal spaces, he needs to pay rent (protection money) to law enforcement officers, political enforcers and their representatives on a regular basis². To not pay these people guarantees physical reprisals.

Hasan's story is characteristic of rural-urban migration in Bangladesh which has been taking place for decades, accelerating in the mid-eighties with economic liberalization and during slower periods in Bangladesh's progress to democracy and human rights. In this state of complex inequities and powerlessness, the urban poor face numerous hurdles in seeking livelihoods. Hasan is more fortunate than some other migrants. Many of the urban poor do not have pre-existing networks to help establish them in the city. Those who do not have prior networks experience a very different set of challenges. Hasan's story symbolises a range of everyday problems facing the urban poor in a global megacity. I will elaborate on three of these challenges of everyday life below as a means of introducing a research problem that has resonance in many of the rapidly growing cities of the Global South.

Twenty first century cities in the Global South are facing the challenges of very rapid urban agglomeration and growth (te Lintelo, Gupte, McGregor, Lakshman, & Jahan, 2017). By 2050, it is expected that 66 per cent of the world's population will live in cities (UN-Habitat, 2016). Urbanisation is not equally distributed, rather it is concentrated in the cities of the Global South (Anwar, Xiao, Akter, & Rehman, 2017; Cawood, 2017). It is estimated that by 2050 the population growth in Asia will be 5.2 billion, 2.5 billion in Africa, and 0.7 billion in Latin America and the Caribbean (UNDESA, 2017). In particular, "southern towns and cities are dealing with crises which are compounded by rapid population growth . . . lack of access to shelter, infrastructure and services, by predominantly poor populations" (Watson, 2009a, p. 151). Many of these Southern cities are megacities, defined as cities where more than 10 million people live (Pelling & Blackburn, 2014). They are "urban agglomerations, attracting considerable attention because of their population size, economic, socio-cultural, environmental and political influence, and geographical complexity" (Taubenböck et al., 2012, p. 117). Out of the world's 31 megacities 24 are located in the Global South (UN, 2016). These cities are expanding rapidly due to rural to urban migration, climatic migration, job opportunities, and reclassifications of metropolitan areas (Dewan & Corner, 2013; UN, 2012). The rural to urban migration trend contributes to 40 per cent of urban growth in the

² This happened even as I was interviewing Hasan.

developing world (Baumgart & Kreibich, 2011). The situation becomes complex when megacities such as Delhi (Ghertner, 2012), Sao Paulo (Caldeira, 1996) and Dhaka (Ahmed, Nahiduzzaman, & Hasan, 2018; Hackenbroch, Hossain, Altroch, Schoon, & Sterly, 2016) favour elites to make decisions about the use of urban spaces and governments implement policies focusing on the rural poor, ignoring the needs of the urban poor. The end result is the rise of exclusive residential fortresses and ‘gated communities’ (Caldeira, 1996; Roitman, 2008; UN-Habitat, 2016) at one end of the spectrum and the creation of a ‘planet of slums’ (Davis, 2006) on the other end. Dhaka, a Southern megacity, shares these characteristics along with rapid growth of urban population. Dhaka had a population of 336,000 in 1951 (Islam, 2010) which is now roughly 18 million (UN, 2017).

With an annual growth rate of 3.6 per cent Dhaka is the second fastest growing megacity in the world after Lagos Nigeria (Gruebner et al., 2014; UN, 2017). There are three main reasons behind Dhaka’s population growth. First, dwindling income opportunities in rural areas has been caused by an urban bias in economic and employment growth and been further exacerbated by climatic and ecologically induced migration especially from the coastal south (Bertuzzo, 2009). In contrast, people from the north of Bangladesh migrate to Dhaka during the drought season but on a seasonal basis whereas southern poor tend to migrate on permanent basis as they have few assets to go back to. Second, due to the failure of the implementation of decentralisation measures, Dhaka is not only the capital city but also the most dominant economic, political and cultural centre of the country and attracts different groups of people, particularly underprivileged citizens who seek better life (Ahmed, 2014). Third, one of the consequences of Bangladesh’s liberation war of 1971 was the extreme impoverishment of the rural population, which also led to massive rural to urban migration towards Dhaka as refugees sought safety from the war (Bertuzzo, 2009).

Hasan’s story is an example of a common theme of contemporary rural to urban migration. Each year 300,000 to 400,000 rural poor migrate to Dhaka in search of better livelihoods (Hackenbroch, Hossain, & Rahman, 2008). Most of these people end up living in slums³

³A slum is defined as an informal settlement, where poor people individually or a group of individuals living under the safe roof, lacking of one or more of the following services:

- sufficient-living area
- durability of housing
- security of tenure
- access to improved water
- access to improved sanitation (UN-Habitat, 2011, 2016).

(Angeles, Lance, Barden-O'Fallon, Islam & Mahbub, 2009; Corner & Dewan, 2014; Islam, 2005; Rana, 2011). Much of the population in Dhaka lives in absolute poverty with a monthly income of between 45 USD and 75 USD per month (Islam, Angeles, Mahbub, Lance, & Nazem, 2006; World Bank, 2007). In 2015, there were 6,489 slums in Dhaka (BBS, 2015a). Slum residents usually live in small dwellings, made of plastic, timber, bamboo and corrugated iron-sheets and do not have long-term tenure security or access to public services such as water, sanitation, health and education facilities (Islam et al., 2006). Like other megacities, Dhaka is failing to provide housing, health, education and formal employment opportunities for the growing number of poor rural migrants, who migrate with a dream to build a better future.

As the fastest growing megacities are failing to provide support for livelihoods for the urban poor so informality which refers to activities that largely remain unrecognized by 'formal' regimes and includes both housing and livelihood practices, are important to the economies of the Southern cities (Brown, 2001; Roy, 2004, 2009a; Roy & AlSayyad, 2004). Poor people depend on the informal sector for earnings, often with ambiguous legal status and unfavourable outcomes (Anjaria, 2016; Brown, 2017c; Crossa, 2014). The informal economy provides 60 to 80 per cent of urban jobs and up to 90 per cent of new jobs in many cities (Roy, 2005; Varley, 2013). Dhaka, a Southern megacity is no exception. Except for those engaged in the garment sector and other low paid jobs, the majority of slum residents in Dhaka do not have access to formal economic opportunities offered by public or private organisations (Ahmed et al., 2018; Salway, Jesmin, & Rahman, 2005). Most government planning and development strategies in Dhaka have focused on infrastructure and real estate development to cater to formal economies and elite housing needs and less on those that address the housing and employment needs of the urban poor (Hackenbroch, 2013b; Islam, 2014; Mowla & Hossain, 2007). Hence the informal sector has become the most important livelihood⁴ option for the poor. This thesis pays particular attention to the opportunities and challenges of operating informal business using public space in Dhaka for livelihoods.

Among other numerous barriers of informality in income earning opportunities, the urban poor experience barriers in accessing public space to conduct businesses for livelihood

⁴In this study, the concept 'livelihood' refers to "a means of gaining a living" (Chambers & Conway, 1992, p. 5), especially focusing on informality both in terms of economic activities and the use of urban public space by slum residents.

including spaces around locations close to their dwellings (Davis, 2006; Dewan & Corner, 2014; Hardoy & Satterthwaite, 2014) and outside their settlements (Brown, 2006d, 2017a). A number of studies around the world have explored the importance of use of public space for vending activities such as Swider (2015) on Beijing, Crossa (2009, 2014) on Mexico City, Hansen (2004) on Lusaka, Anjaria (2006a, 2006b) on Mumbai and Brown, Lyons and Dankoco (2010) on Senegal, Ghana, Tanzania and Lesotho and revealed that access to public space for livelihoods is very important for the urban poor in the Global South. In most cities of the Global South, urban planning and governance practices have not left any space for the growing number of the urban poor while designing city's space (Kamete, 2013a; Roy, 2009b). In addition, due to continuous population growth, which mostly originates from rural-urban migration, and the demand for lands by the real estate development sector, pressure on land is very high (Hackenbroch, Baumgart, & Kreibich, 2009). As a result, access to public space is one of the main challenges for future livelihood research in megacities (Banks, 2016; De Haan & Zoomers, 2005).

Access to public space is a contested issue all over the world (Brown, 2006a, 2017c; Harvey, 2008). Urban space is socially constructed where different actors have different interests, needs and desires and have differential amount of power to dominate space (Holston, 1999; Kirby, 2008; Marcuse, 2009). Some studies such as Harvey's (1985) and Madden's (2010) have explored how resistance takes the form of social movements and local activism in accessing public space. However, very few studies (Bayat, 1997a, 1997b, 2004) directly address how the poor resist the hegemonic appropriation of urban public space.

In addition to exclusion from public space, the urban poor face the threat of eviction from their dwelling and livelihood spaces either by the government or local level administration or by local residents (Crossa, 2014; Mackie, Bromley, & Brown, 2014; Rogerson, 2016). As appropriation of these spaces for selling products is formally illegal, the urban poor are regularly evicted from public space in violation of their right to the city (Brown, 2017b; Lefebvre, 1996a). In Dhaka, poor people are evicted from public space on a regular basis causing stress to livelihood security.

In terms of accessing public space, another persisting problem is the gendered use of space. Although the discourse on space and gender has changed considerably since 1970s as the old construct of public man and private woman had been broken down due to women's frequent

access to and use of urban public space (Hackenbroch, 2013b; Soja, 1996), access to public space for earning income is still an issue for women in many countries. Access to public space for women depend on social norms, values, religious practices and mostly socially as well as culturally determined gendered vocations that utilise local space for businesses (Brown & Lloyd-Jones, 2002b; Hackenbroch, 2013b; Moser, 1995, 2012; Moser & Peake, 1994). Although most studies on South Asian cities reveal poor women's engagement in home-based work (Bose, 1998; Ghafur, 2001; White, 1990), a few studies have explored women's use of public space for livelihoods (Hackenbroch, 2013b; Salway et al., 2005). Poor women's participation in Dhaka's informal economy is important to the survival of poor households living in the slums, as the head of the household's income is normally not sufficient to maintain the family (Huq-Hussain, 1995; Salway et al., 2005).

1.2 Research questions

Given this background and the challenges to accessing public space to earn a livelihood, this thesis uses a case study of Sattola, a slum in Dhaka, Bangladesh to address three questions:

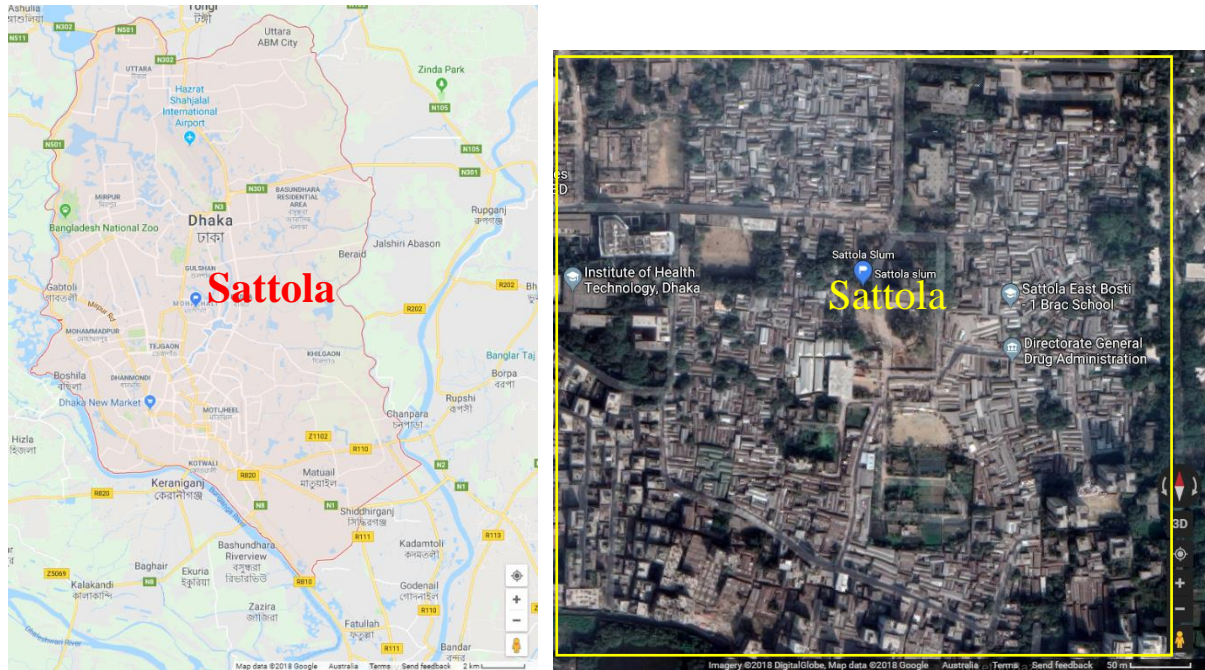
- 1) To what extent does the form and nature of urban governance enable and constrain poor people's access to and use of public space to pursue livelihoods?
- 2) How do street vendors in Dhaka pursue livelihoods in constant negotiation with other more powerful actors in society?
- 3) What are the gendered aspects to the appropriation of urban space for livelihoods in Dhaka?

1.3 Sattola Slum: An informal settlement in Dhaka

Sattola (Figure 1.1) in the megacity Dhaka presented itself as an ideal place to explore poor people's access to public space for livelihoods. It is located on public land and is one of the largest slums in Dhaka, with a range of vending opportunities in nearby middle and upper-middle class enclaves as well as several public hospitals, commercial and industrial hubs, a bus station and a newly renovated public square known as Hatirjheel. This locational advantage assisted me to interview poor people who were conducting businesses in a range of

public places. The research questions are focused on multiple socio-economic, cultural and political factors. Focusing on one slum allowed me to focus on a complementary set of social and spatial practises that influenced poor vendors.

Figure 1.1: Sattola in Dhaka



Source: Adapted from Google Maps

Like many other slums in Dhaka, most residents of Sattola are engaged in informal activities for which they need access to public space. As there are few available public places in Dhaka other than footpaths, the urban poor are in constant competition with other groups for access. They need to negotiate with multiple stakeholders such as police, local enforcers (known as *mastans*) and political leaders to appropriate public space. These negotiations and contestations made me interested to go deeper into social practices and investigate in detail how the poor of Sattola access public space and how they have to negotiate with these different groups. I first became interested in conducting this study after a conversation with an informal teaseller at Dhaka University who told me that political leaders and/or enforcers (*mastans*) and police regularly extorted protection money from poor people using their political and administrative power around the Dhaka University campus. Since then I was interested to know whether the urban poor experience similar extortion in other parts of Dhaka, and how they adapt to this system and whether they resist these powerful groups at all.

I conducted a total of four months fieldwork from November 2015 to February 2016. I spoke with women, men and children living and working in and outside Sattola, including informal businessmen, local leaders, local shopkeepers, local committee members, landlords, NGO staff and new migrants, with ages ranging from eighteen to late eighties. I observed people in their homes, community spaces and their vending places and discussed their lives and livelihoods, local politics, tenure security, negotiation strategies in accessing to space, eviction and resilience strategies. To do this I used a combination of qualitative case study methods, including in-depth interviews, key informant interviews and observation. I also interviewed central and local government officials to get their views on informality and tenure security of the poor and governments policies on these issues.

1.4 Contribution of the thesis

The findings of this thesis contribute to theoretical, methodological and empirical debates on space, gendered space, poor people's right to the city and tenure security over use of public space. The thesis contributes to policy by investigating the existing institutional and structural inequities that are producing spatial inequality for poor people so that the government can take initiatives to establish their rights to access to and use of public space and improve their tenure security. I further argue that women do not only experience legal barriers in accessing space for livelihoods, they also face social and cultural barriers, which need to be addressed by the state and its apparatuses.

I also address a gap in the literature relevant to understanding the way vendors use public space to earn income in their own neighbourhood and in other areas and the kinds of contestation and negotiation that take place in complex and uncertain environments in megacities such as Dhaka. I argue that vendors can construct counter-spaces transgressing the planned order of public space and using public space for livelihoods. They construct counter-spaces through their everyday tactics and making an informal pact with their extortionists in accessing public space due to the state's denial of their right to appropriate space.

1.5 Thesis structure

The following chapters present my research on the form and nature of urban governance and how this governance structure has enabled and/or constrained poor people's access to and use

of public space to pursue livelihoods, and how the urban poor navigate through the contested public space in their everyday lives.

Chapter Two introduces three key theoretical concepts that provide a basis for developing arguments in the empirical chapters. Using conceptualisations of space including Lefebvre's theory of the production of space, I argue that while Lefebvre's theory of the production of space can be utilised to explain the planning and development practices of Dhaka, the idea of the production of a counter-space is more relevant to my case in explaining poor people's creation of informality. The urban poor's continued contested occupation of public space, for informal income generating, can be explained using this idea of counter-space. In this chapter, I also outline the theoretical concept of the right to the city. Particular attention is paid to the components of the right to participation in decision-making processes and the right to appropriate space. This section captures the most important theoretical underpinning of this thesis as this framework is used later to argue that due to a lack of the right to the city, the poor are continually threatened with a denial of their right to appropriate space in Dhaka. I also argue that the way public space is divided based on its functions follows a Northern bias and is not necessarily practiced in a similar way by the marginalised groups of the Global South. Following this, a gendered division of labour in accessing space shows how men and women's access to public space are constrained in different ways, where women's access is constrained by social norms in addition to legal barriers.

Using the literature of space and informal economies, I argue informal economic activities are important livelihood options for the urban poor regardless of a negative view towards informal economies in many parts of the world. This is particularly important in a megacity like Dhaka where the government cannot provide employment opportunities for all.

Chapter Three conceptualises power, governance, and resistance. This chapter outlines the various forms of power and extends the discussion of formal and informal governance and planning and the relation between governance, planning and space. Using this framework, I argue later in Chapter Six that the formal governance processes are state centric in Bangladesh and the state controls the market and NGOs. Due to a lack of access to public institutions, poor people employ an informal governance strategy to get by in their everyday lives. Following this, I explore various types of resistance strategies that marginalised groups utilise in different parts of the world. Later I link this discussion to Chapter Seven in

explaining the reasons for which the vendors of Sattola utilise covert resistance strategies over overt resistance strategies to get by in everyday life.

Chapter Four presents the methodological approach of the research. This chapter explains the theoretical assumptions underlying the methodology, in particular the adoption of a critical realist paradigm. Critical realism combines and balances the two poles of an objectivist paradigm and a more constructivist paradigm that tend to focus only on deeper spatial and temporal context of the study. The critical realist approach allows the researcher to go beyond phenomena and structure such as space, informality and gender and allows them to exist outside of subjective constructions of them. It emphasises that representations of the real are mediated by theory and discourse. So, it opens a way for case study researchers to develop new theory using the context and case study, which can be applied and tested in other similar contexts. This chapter further discusses the processes of selection of the study site, Sattola slum, data collection and the strategies for data analysis and theory building along with reflecting on the researcher's positionality and reflexivity in conducting the research.

Chapter Five commences the empirical analysis. This chapter is divided into three sections. It outlines the historical and contemporary political and governance context within which urbanization processes evolve in Bangladesh. This chapter reflects on informal urbanization, growth of slums and informal economic activities in Dhaka, focusing the emergence of Sattola slum. I present empirical findings on the socio-economic and political life of the urban poor of Sattola to set the scene for discussion on the strategies that the vendors of Sattola utilise to get by in their everyday lives and livelihoods within the existing system.

Chapter Six examines the macro structural factors that constrain poor people's access to public space. In this chapter, I argue that the state and its apparatuses have produced conceived spaces implementing elite centred planning and policies and ignoring poor people's right to the city. This chapter explains the role of NGOs in providing services to slums and points out why NGOs are not in a position to directly organise the poor to claim their right to the city. I demonstrate how state actors extort the poor and collect informal payment in exchange of allowing them to operate vending activities in public space. However, state actors can evict them any time using institutional power and legal barriers that constrain poor people's access to public space for livelihoods.

In an absence of strong state and lack of access to institutional orders, the poor rely on informal governance mechanisms to access public space. **Chapter Seven** focuses on these informal governance mechanisms, particularly the negotiation and resistance strategies poor people utilise to access public space for livelihoods. I argue vendors utilise various sources of power such as political, social and economic in accessing public space in Dhaka as the state has not ensured their security of tenure over livelihood spaces. In particular, they have constructed counter-spaces appropriating public space quietly and making an informal agreement with state and non-state power brokers. I also argue due to lack of institutional support and lack of strong associations, the vendors of Sattola utilise covert resistance strategies over overt resistance strategies to cope with eviction and to resist the extortion of multiple stakeholders such as local leaders, enforcers (*mastans*) and linemen.

This final empirical chapter, **Chapter Eight**, explores the enabling and constraining factors that allow or deny poor women's access to public space and their engagement in the informal economy. This chapter compares women's negotiation and resistance strategies to their male counterparts referring men's strategies from the previous chapter. Few women operate informal businesses in comparison to their male counterparts due to the nature of gendered space and constraints posed by patriarchal norms and *purdah* (veil) in women's access to public space. The comparison between men and women's resistance strategies reveal that they use more or less similar strategies to avoid payment but women often have a favourable position operating businesses in the parochial realm and claim those spaces as their own, denying payment to local enforcers. Women also use their vulnerabilities to avoid payment of protection money.

The thesis concludes with **Chapter Nine** consolidating many of the key theoretical and empirical arguments that are presented as research questions in Chapter One. This chapter further presents contribution to knowledge and directions for future research.

Chapter 2: Space, the Right to the City and Informality

2.1 Introduction

In Southern megacities, the urban poor rely on access to public space, which they use as a means of generating a livelihood. These spaces have become a space of conflict as local governments take initiatives to evict the urban poor (Brown et al., 2010; Cross & Morales, 2007; Crossa, 2009; Etzold, 2011). As a key sector of the informal economy, street trade depends on access to vacant public places in the city, such as footpaths, streets, pavements, and riverbanks and other edge spaces. This contested space is dominated by political and property-owning elites. Street traders are often castigated as criminals and are regularly evicted from their spaces of livelihood (Brown, 2009; Kim, 2015). Similar evictions have occurred in Dhaka, where access to public space is illegal according to the Local Government Act. Yet nearly 300,000 street vendors rely on Dhaka's public space to earn an income. Hence, access to public space for livelihoods and how this access is constrained or enabled by the dominant groups in society is an important research topic and constitutes the main focus of my thesis. To understand accessibility of public space, one needs to understand the production of space and the way it is used on an everyday basis. This chapter reviews literature concerning space, the right to the city, types of space, gendered space and informality, with an aim to provide a macro-level social context that will be helpful in understanding the production of space by different groups and the importance of access to public space for the urban poor in the Global South, especially in Dhaka.

The first of these concepts, 'space' provides a spatial setting for the urban poor, whose very livelihoods are determined by their access to different types of space. This discussion involves two aspects of space. One is related to the production of space and the right to the city – how space is produced and reproduced and whose access to this space is granted or blocked. Scholarship to date suggests that the urban poor's access to public space is constrained by state regulations, so I adopt the theoretical debate on the production of space and the 'right to the city' (RTC) (Lefebvre, 1996a) in exploring its significance to establishing marginalised groups' production and reproduction of space and their rights to cities in the Global South, particularly in Dhaka. The second related issue is the function of space. There are various functions for public, parochial, and private realms (Lofland, 1998)

and these functions are more or less similar for the affluent groups of the Global North and South. For the urban poor, however, these realms are used for earning a livelihood. Within this context, I explore how the urban poor perceive and use these spaces in their everyday lives, whether their everyday practices using these spaces vary in comparison to other groups, and whether access to these spaces and informal practices vary with gender.

The second part of the chapter illustrates the importance of informality. The discussion of informality and related practices is important as the urban poor use public space primarily for conducting informal business (Brown, 2006b, 2015). I begin by discussing how the concept of ‘informality’ has emerged in sociological literature and then consider its links to urban governance and access to public space. The governance literature indicates a contested relationship between street vendors and the state in terms of access to public space (Bélanger, Cameron, & de la Mora, 2012) and also reveals that many governments in the Global South evict street vendors, or create barriers to their access to public space to accommodate the elites (Etzold, 2013; IGS, 2012).

2.2 Conceptualising space and counter-space

Lefebvre (1991) pursues the idea of the production of space and its processes developing a ‘conceptual triad’: spatial practice/perceived space, representations of space/conceived space and representational space/lived space which form a triadic relationship to produce a ‘social space’ (Goonewardena, Kipfer, Milgrom, & Schmid, 2008). Perceived space refers to the physical framework of a place, or the routes, networks, and concrete features that link everyday life and activities to private life and leisure. For the urban poor of Dhaka, any kind of open perceived space can be regarded as their space of livelihood.

Conceived space is tied to the relations of production and to the order that those relations impose, such as ‘to knowledge, science, to codes’ (Lefebvre, 1991). This space is created by planners, architects, geographers, bureaucrats, and state actors, “with governmental and institutional discourses and their products such as decrees, maps, and development plans” (Turner, 2014, p. 140) and is used by the state as a “means of control, and hence of domination, of power” (Lefebvre, 1991, p. 26). Conceived space can be linked to the discussion of public space later as the government decides how public space is constructed and used and whose interests it serves. This discussion is particularly important when

considering how planners and developers have considered or ignored the urban poor's need for housing and livelihood spaces in Dhaka and the impact this has had on their lives and livelihoods.

The last component of Lefebvre's conceptual triad, lived space, refers to "space as lived through its associated images and symbols, and hence the space of 'inhabitants' and 'users'" (Lefebvre, 1991, p. 39). Lived space depicts the images of users and inhabitants rather than the designers or the processes that produce the physical space. As Lefebvre says; "it speaks, it has an affective kernel or centre: Ego, bed, bedroom, dwelling, house; or, square, church, graveyard. It embraces the loci of passion, of action, and of lived situations, and thus immediately implies time" (Lefebvre 1991, p. 42). There is a contested relationship between conceived and lived spaces as the conceived space "seeks to mould the space it dominates, and to reduce the obstacles and resistance it encounters there" (Lefebvre 1991, p. 49). In this way the state and its agencies erase alternative narratives other than the one proposed by planners to construct abstract space (Véron 2016). Consequently, the lived spaces, where daily activities take place, are "boxed in, disrupted, forgotten, if not fragmented and destroyed" (Ng, Tang, Lee, & Leung, 2010, p. 414).

Conceived space has a dominating nature, planned in abstract conceptualisations by technocrats and urban planners, often ignoring the meaning and practices attached to place by users. Conceived space represents the ideals of elite social groups and is produced as "homogenous, instrumental, and ahistorical in order to facilitate the exercise of state power and the free flow of capital" (McCann, 1999, p. 164). The question then arises "whose interests it [conceived space] serves when [the plan] becomes operational?" (Lefebvre 1991, p.413). As Lefebvre (1991) notes, the capitalist mode of production prioritises the production of abstract space and ignores the use value of space over the exchange value. Abstract space also denies the presence of differential space – a space where socio-spatial differences are accentuated and celebrated. Social space is often used by heterogeneous social groups. Consequently, contestations emerge due to hegemonic nature of conceived space as it excludes some groups' spatial needs. I use this understanding of the contested nature of the conceived space to explore how the urban poor access public space – a form of conceived space designed by planners, architects and state officials.

Lefebvre's unitary theory of social space is useful to explore how the hegemonic group constructs space and how ordinary residents use it. Several scholars have criticised Lefebvre's theory of space for being vague and not giving enough direction for the actual production and reproduction of space in any society (Merrifield, 1995; Unwin, 2000). His theory has not clearly explained the connections between various components of space and their interaction (Stillerman, 2006). Yet his theory is still useful to explore the contestation over the processes of the production of space and counter-space.

Lefebvre's theory of space also calls for an exploration of the dominant mode of the production of space and how it is used to exercise power over populations and marginalise and eliminate anyone who does not fit in its normative order. Lefebvre (1991) discusses the possibility of the production of a counter-space by marginalised groups or people 'from below'. Counter-space can be produced by challenging hegemonic power and by reappropriating conceived space, going beyond the purpose for which it was conceived. This reappropriation may challenge the hegemonic group and restructure power relations in urban space which might "shift the control from hegemonic power to the city's inhabitants" (Véron, 2016, p. 1447). In this way, the marginalised group or people 'from below' can transgress the planned and hegemonic order of the city and can produce and reproduce counter-spaces. As Lefebvre (1991) notes, although the state and its bureaucratic and political apparatuses dominate and control the production and regulation of space, the grassroots might loosen the grip of state power occasionally by breaking the state's order.

To produce and reproduce counter-spaces, the grassroots "must therefore also confront the state in its role as organizer of space" as the state controls the urbanization process and

the construction of buildings and spatial planning in general. The state defends class interests while simultaneously setting itself above society as a whole, and its ability to intervene in space can and must be turned back against it, by grass-roots opposition, in the form of counter-plans and counter-projects designed to thwart strategies, plans and programmes imposed from above. (Lefebvre, 1991, p.383)

Lefebvre's idea of the production and reproduction of counter-spaces indicates the call for reform or revolution against the neo-liberal and state dominated production of space.

Lefebvre further argues that the dominant capitalist mode of production of space reproduces spatial inequality by denying marginalised groups' right to the city.

Several studies have used Lefebvre's theory of the production of space and counter space to explore spatial inequality through the production of conceived space (Ng, Tang, Lee, & Leung, 2010; Nkooe, 2014; Véron, 2016). Technocratic planning often ignores the attached spatial meaning created by the inhabitants while reproducing conceived spaces. For example, using the case of Piers Saga (a public space built by the government) in Hong Kong in China, Ng, Tang, Lee and Leung (2010) argue contestations can take place if the government tries to relocate people's lived space (Pier Saga) and people protest against relocation.

Much of the literature has also used Lefebvre's triad to explore how people reappropriate conceived space, use it in their own way transgressing the planned order and defend its reappropriation by the state (Hubbard, Faire, & Lilley, 2003; Ng et al., 2010; Salama & Wiedmann, 2013). For example, Hubbard, Faire and Lilley (2003) draw on oral history from local residents and planners about the redevelopment of Coventry, showing how a city's spaces can be used differently than the planners design conceived space – a point made by Lefebvre that social space transforms ceaselessly and might not follow the same logic that planners apply to design a city. There are various meanings of urban space to different communities within the city and thus are used differently. Urban spaces are perceived and experienced differently by different groups based on their gender, age, and cultural background (Salama & Wiedmann, 2013). Salama and Wiedmann's (2013) study in Doha further reveals urban spaces lack key conditions such as accessibility to space, parking availability, and other visual and environmental conditions amenable to create urban diversity.

However, most governments hold hegemonic power to reproduce space and to control and manage conceived-spaces including public space by the police (Nkooe, 2014). Nkooe (2014) uses the reproduction of the Mary Fitzgerald square in Johannesburg, South Africa, as a case and explores how city's youths, particularly skateboarders and fashion designers, are unable to use the renovated square for artistic expressions due to the regulation and surveillance by the police. The square now looks like an agora due to its elitist and conceived nature that has excluded certain groups of young people from appropriating space and using it for creative practices. Public spaces such as parks and squares are becoming privatised properties in the

neoliberal era where the police approve the elites' use of public park such as Galt Gardens in Canada but prevent homeless, black and poor people's presence in the same park (Granzow, 2017). Yet homeless people reappropriate public space whenever they can (Granzow, 2017). This exclusion of marginalised groups from urban space is one of the crucial factors that produce divided cities. Lefebvre calls for the production and reproduction of counter-spaces to break this kind of state-constructed abstract space that denies marginalised groups right to their city.

An example of this kind of production of a counter-space can be seen from the reappropriation of conceived space such as public space to protest against the state's urban development programs (Taş & Taş, 2014). Taş and Taş (2014) explore the relationship between political protest and street art practices in Turkey with specific reference to the recent 'Occupy Gezi' movement and its aftermath. Although this movement began in Istanbul to contest the government's urban development plan for the Gezi Park on Taskim Square and activists used street art as a form of protest, later it triggered nationwide anti-government demonstrations. Their study shows how street art practices represent an alternative way of communicating political ideas and how it can be used to claim the city by reclaiming city's public space. In this way, citizens can produce a 'counter-space' resisting the hegemonic state and its production of conceived space.

Véron's (2017) study in Macedonia shows how citizens can resist the state's production of conceived space – a church in this case, to claim their right to public space. This study further shows the state could use its hegemonic power and organise a counter-protest using its supporters. In this way, contestations emerge among different groups of space users in the city as they have different interests. In another study in Macedonia, Véron (2016) reveals that the Macedonian government has produced a divided city by revitalising a square for Macedonians and building a square in an Albanian neighbourhood due to pressure of Albanian politicians. However, the government has not done anything to improve the lives and livelihoods of the poor Roma slum dwellers. This kind of production of conceived spaces by the state excluding the powerless and poor people indicates that the state does not only possess hegemonic power to create homogeneous space, it also excludes some groups' spatial need while reproducing conceived spaces.

Yet, marginalised groups can resist the production of conceived space in violation of their right to the city and produce counter-spaces constructing discourses such as publishing newspaper articles (Miller, 2005) and using media (Branson, 2014) and/or defending the state directly (Hesketh, 2016; Schwarz & Streule, 2016). Resisters can create counter-spaces by writing newspaper articles and creating counter discourse in place making (Miller, 2005). Drawing on a series of editorial articles published in a local gay-oriented newspaper about a gay enclave in Vancouver, Canada, Miller argues that the state does not only possess hegemonic power in the production of space, discourse has the power of representation as well. As Miller (2005) notes, Vancouver gay newspaper, *Xtra!* West, has attempted to create a homogeneous 'gay space' called Davie village through a series of territorial and historical narratives although the city council perceive this area as an area of 'diversity'. The discursive construction of the 'gay space' has overlooked alternative narratives by a diverse set of people and their interactions, movements and realities in that neighbourhood. Using this case Miller (2005) has criticised Lefebvre's (1991) simplified version of spatial identity and calls for the power of representation at all levels, which indicates the contested nature of Lefebvre's conceived, perceived and lived spaces.

If protesters cannot directly resist the state, they use media to challenge the state's hegemonic power. Islamist groups such as the Islamist and Salafist activists in Tunisia have used media such as the Internet as a counter-space to challenge the state controlled secular media narrative (Branson, 2014). As Islamists groups were excluded from the mainstream media space to deliver their message, they use the Internet to deliver an alternative message and organise resistance on the ground in opposition to the Tunisian government. As Branson (2014, p. 729) notes, the Salafist "online forums, media pages and engagement with online jihadist networks and members of the wider online Muslim public show how Islamist activism not only redefines the message portrayed in the national media about them, but alters discrepancies in discursive power, by expanding who is listening and who is watching". Although this kind of production of counter-space is not autonomous of state interference, it is still useful to challenge the state's hegemonic power. Miller's (2005) and Branson's (2014) studies have demonstrated how discursive power might be crucial to challenge the hegemonic power of the local and central governments. This kind of discursive power can also be used to break social norm of patriarchy, as women from different parts of the world do not enjoy similar kind of social acceptance if they resist the patriarchal norm directly. As Nair's (2017) analysis of a graphic novel and its use as a mode social activism illustrates that social

activists might challenge the dominant social norms through writings and drawings. As Nair notes about the protagonists in the narratives that they,

occupy the central space of panels and are thus foregrounded spatially. By producing their own space within the panels, they are constructing what Lefebvre called ‘counter-space’, a space which subverts the domains of power. This is achieved through their body performances (including looks) in panels where they challenge and subvert the established hegemonic social codes set by patriarchy. (Nair 2017, p. 266)

Following this understanding of social and cultural constraints that women experience while using urban space, I explore how poor women’s access to public space in Dhaka are enabled or constrained by social, cultural and religious norms and whether they attempt to break these norms and contribute to the production of counter-spaces in Dhaka in Chapter Eight.

A few studies have explored everyday resistance and how marginal groups can produce and reproduce counter-spaces defending state-conceived and state-constructed spaces in the Global South (Stillerman, 2006; Turner, 2014). For example, the Chilean vendors have defended and reconstructed their lived spaces establishing linkages with small farmers and fishermen to develop a supply chain to compete with the agri-business big box supermarket alliance (Stillerman, 2006). Making this kind of alliance and promoting legislative reform, they have ensured their greater participation in urban planning. The urban poor are not much organised in Dhaka. So I explore whether the urban poor in Dhaka are able to defend their lived spaces in this thesis.

While Stillerman’s (2006) study shows a more direct resistance to the production of the abstract space, Turner’s (2014) study demonstrates how street vendors in Hanoi defend their livelihood spaces and shape their lived and social spaces utilising covert resistance strategies. In socialist Vietnam, the state prioritises developing a modern city banning street vending. As a result, the street vendors reappropriate Hanoi’s public space utilising a range of covert resistance strategies. Yet, street vendors in Hanoi are not a homogeneous group and they utilise different covert resistance strategies to use city’s space (Turner, 2014). Some city residents operate fixed-stalls to earn extra income and local officials treat them favourably whereas the itinerant vendors who often travel from peri-urban areas, experience confiscation of their goods and a fine twice their average daily profit. This is because the government

intends to reduce the number of people coming from the countryside (Turner, 2014). The itinerant street vendors mostly use spatial and temporal tactics to avoid the police. As such they operate business using the surveillance gaps of the police and choosing routes based on this knowledge. They also operate businesses around noon on weekdays and on Sundays when the local police are off duty (Turner, 2014). While itinerant vendors utilise temporal and spatial practices, fixed vendors negotiate with local ward officials, bribe the police and utilise their social capital and social status (war veteran) to claim their right to trade. However, the police in Vietnam are also less threatening to residents than they are in Bangladesh, so street vendors publicly appear submissive to local police to show respect to them and continue their businesses (Turner, 2014). In this way, they respond to the abstract space of the central and local governments and defend existing lived spaces and create new ones which can be termed as a 'counter-space'. It is important to note from Stillerman's (2006) and Turner's (2014) studies that street vendors' resistance to the government-constructed conceived spaces often rely on the tolerant attitude of the government and its agencies.

No studies to date use the idea of counter-space to understand how the urban poor in Dhaka produce and reproduce counter-space. A few authors have studied poor people's use of public space in Dhaka (Etzold, 2013; Hackenbroch, 2013b). Hackenbroch (2013b) explores the importance of public space in the everyday life of the urban poor in two slums of Dhaka; Manikpara and Nasimgaon. Her study finds that the residents use public space for economic activities such as vending activities, production activities, storage, leisure activities (chatting and gossiping, watching TV and cinemas), domestic activities (shopping for household, cooking, fetching water, bathing and doing laundry and religious and spiritual activities) and night time activities. Hackenbroch's (2013b) study further reveals that the urban poor negotiate with a number of powerful actors in accessing public space within the slum. While Hackenbroch's study explores use of public space within the slum, Etzold's (2013) study focuses on food vendors' use of public space in Dhaka. Etzold's (2013) study finds that street vendors negotiate with a range of state and non-state actors in accessing public space. His study further demonstrates that state actors can evict food vendors any time without any relocation program. However, these studies have not explored how the urban poor produce and reproduce counter-space by transgressing the planned order of the city in order to earn a livelihood.

Lefebvre's theory of space is useful in explaining how planners and developers can block or grant poor people's access to public space and how the urban poor produce and reproduce a counter-space breaking the planned order of a city. I will further employ Lefebvre's theory of the production of space and counter-spaces to analyse how social spaces are defined, negotiated and produced through social interaction, social conflict and struggles between different groups, and how this affects the prospects of the urban poor for spatial security to pursue a livelihood. This idea can be further linked to Lefebvre's concept of the 'right to the city' where he calls for a revolution to claim everyone's user right to the city, where citizens manage urban space for themselves and prioritise use value over exchange value, going beyond the realm of capitalism and state.

2.3 Space and the right to the city

A related idea to the production of space and counter-space is 'right to the city' (RTC), which was first coined by Lefebvre in his book *Le Droit à la Ville* in 1968 (1991, 1996b). The RTC slogan was later popularised by the writings of Harvey (2003, 2008) and others (Brenner, Marcuse, & Mayer, 2009; Marcuse, 2012; Purcell, 2002). By 'right to the city', Lefebvre refers to

the right to information, the rights to use of multiple services, the right of users to make known their ideas on the space and time of their activities in urban areas; it would also cover the right to the use of the centre. (1991, p. 34)

Based on the RTC Lefebvre (1968, 1996) calls for a revolution presenting a radical vision of a city in which citizens manage urban space for themselves and prioritise use value over exchange value, going beyond the realm of capitalism and state to establish the dictatorship of the proletariat. Lefebvre's idea of a RTC could be a good starting point for claiming disenfranchised groups' rights to the city. However, the modern city has not prioritised common property rights over private property rights, so the residents of a city cannot decide the use value of space (Purcell, 2002). The exchange value of urban space has overtaken its use value due to the dominance of neoliberalism and financial capital (Harvey, 2010).

Following Lefebvre, Harvey links the RTC to a conceptualisation of justice. Harvey's contribution to this discussion is establishing a grounded, process-oriented view of justice,

which is linked to capital and the role of the state to provide benefits for all, especially those who are marginalised (Harvey 2008; Harvey & Potter, 2009). This discussion extends the idea of the RTC to suggest that with better coordination between capitalists and the state, the rights of marginalised groups may also be realised (Walters, Khan, & Ashan, 2014).

Although Harvey goes beyond Lefebvre's revolutionary idea, due to reducing the RTC as participation in governance, Harvey has been criticised for proposing a theory that leads to a 1960s welfare capitalist state system (de Souza, 2010). de Souza (2010) challenges Harvey's interpretation of the RTC arguing that social movements are necessary to establish a just and free society. If necessary, protestors must do it sometimes 'together with the state' for tactical reasons and in a cautious and limited way; however, it is important to protest 'despite the state' and more importantly, 'against the state' (de Souza, 2010). Though de Souza challenges Harvey's interpretation of the RTC, this framework is useful in exploring the current socio-economic practices in the Global North and South that reproduce inequality in accessing available resources and city space.

This issue of process-oriented justice is further discussed by Soja (2010) and Marcuse (2009), who particularly emphasise social and spatial justice for the urban poor and other marginalised groups (Brown, 2013, 2015; Harvey, 2010; Soja, 2010). Adopting a critical spatial perspective, Soja emphasises the spatial dimension of justice whereas Marcuse (2009, 2012), includes other structural aspects and power relations that often result in injustice beyond spatial inequality or segregation based on class, race, or gender. Similarly, subordinate political and social status might constrain poor people's access to public space in Dhaka, which will be explored in Chapter Six. Due to all of these problems, participation in the governance of urban space has become a key criterion in assessing citizens' rights to the city (Attoh, 2011; Jabareen, 2014; Purcell, 2013).

In the Global South, the RTC particularly focuses on socio-economic rights comprising the right to housing (Fawaz, 2009), to livelihood (Bénil-Gbaffou, 2016), to transportation, and to natural resources like water (Bénil-Gbaffou, 2016). Cities in the Global South are experiencing socio-spatial distance between groups of residents who "become increasingly foreign to each other" (Samara, He, & Chen, 2013, p. 13) due to a neoliberal governance regime that has reproduced poverty at a greater scale in many parts of the Global South. Although policymakers, planners, officials, and scholars are working towards building an 'inclusive city', current policy and practice reproduce inequality due to an elite capture of

urban governance (Samara et al., 2013). Many Southern cities such as Beijing, Shanghai, Mumbai, Rio de Janeiro, and Dubai are rebuilding their cities following the Northern model (Samara et al., 2013). The changing nature of the built environment in these cities is reshaping their urban spaces; however, in most cases, poor people's access to housing, livelihood, and other basic services has not been prioritised. The literature portrays them as 'criminals', producers of filth, and encroachers (Bayat & Biekart, 2009; Bhan, 2009). To change the discourse about the poor, Southern scholars prioritise poor people's citizenship rights in the city (Attoh, 2011). To achieve this goal they emphasise poor people's participation in policy and decision-making processes and their right to make decisions about the use of urban spaces (Purcell, 2002, 2003).

Purcell's interpretation of RTC is more useful than others as he provides a clearer explanation of what needs to be addressed in the Global South to ensure everyone's rights are upheld. Purcell (2003) points out the limitation of existing literature using the RTC framework for not fully encompassing Lefebvre's ideas. To date, most authors, including Lefebvre himself, have not offered a detailed explanation of "what the right to the city would entail, and have not developed what benefits or detriments it might have for the enfranchisement of urban residents" (Purcell, 2002, p. 101). To fill this gap, Purcell suggests the exploration of two main rights: "the right to *appropriate* space; and the right to participate centrally in the production of urban space" (Purcell, 2003, p. 577). The right to appropriate space does not refer to private rights to space, rather it focuses on 'full and complete usage' rights to urban space in the everyday lives of a city's residents (Lefebvre, 1996a; Purcell, 2003). In this way, citizens would be able to produce urban space maximising use value over and above its exchange value undermining the neoliberal idea of urban space as property and as a commodity that can be exchanged in the market (Purcell, 2003).

The second component of the RTC is the right to participation, which emphasises every citizen's participation in decision-making processes surrounding the production of urban space (Purcell, 2003). The decision could be under the supervision of the state (such as policy decision), capital (for an investment decision), or any other organisation/institution that affects the production of urban space in a particular city (Purcell, 2003). Purcell further argues that decisions could be made at a range of scales, at any level of the state (national, provincial, local), or corporations (global, national, local). Purcell's typology of the RTC is particularly important in the Global South where the excluded, the working class, and the

small business people's 'right to the city' is undermined (Brenner, Marcuse, & Mayer, 2009; 2012). Purcell's (2003) framework could be utilised to explore how and at what level disenfranchised groups' right to the city has been granted or blocked in the Global South. I employ Lefebvre and Purcell's approach to the RTC for exploring whether the urban poor's right to appropriate urban space and right to participation are undermined in Dhaka, Bangladesh, to answer the first research question in Chapter Six.

To improve citizens' RTC, in recent years, domestic and international NGOs, multinational organisations, and alliances of city governments have adopted the RTC as a guiding concept to improve the contract between the citizen and the state (Brown, 2013). Also a *World Charter on the Right to the City* was adopted by the UN and national and local governments during the World Social Forum (WSF) in Porto Alegre in 2005 (Mayer, 2009) that proposes the RTC as a new right for everyone "without discrimination of gender, age, race, ethnicity, political and religious orientation and preserving cultural memory" (Bélanger et al., 2012; Brown, 2013; Saule Júnior, 2008).

The first government in the Global South to adopt the RTC framework for developing a 'just city' for its citizens is the Brazilian government. In 2001, they passed the City Statute law to recognise the 'right to the city' as a collective right (Fernandes, 2007). The City Statute has four main dimensions. First, it has a conceptual component that interprets the constitutional principle of the social function of urban property and of the city. The social function of property refers to the right of private ownership of property or land in ways that contribute to the collective or common good (Foster & Bonilla, 2011; Ondetti, 2016), which is in line with Lefebvre's idea of the user right over exchange right of space.

Second, it also strengthens the municipal authorities by providing freedom of regulating new legal, urban, and financial strategies to construct a different urban order, predominantly focusing on inclusion of the urban poor. Third, it introduces participatory planning for the democratic management of cities. Finally, it emphasises the identification of legal instruments for legalising slums in private and public areas (Fernandes, 2007). The City Statute of Brazil can be considered as the first legal step towards materialisation of Lefebvre's idea of the RTC for establishing citizens' rights to use space and participation in planning urban space. However, like most other regulations in the South, there have been criticisms of the City Statute in Brazil.

Many municipalities have ignored the City Statute's policy to regulate land as there is a gap between the de jure Statute and its implementation, which is also a common problem for other laws in Brazil (Friendly, 2013). The municipality chooses, regulates, and applies instruments based on its choice of desired urban development plan (Friendly, 2013). Each city also makes this decision based on its particular social and political circumstances (Holston, 2008). There are also problems related to a lack of monetary and human resources to implement the statute in many municipalities and unclear clauses the City Statute about the participatory process and its outcome. The outcome is 'pseudo-participation' (de Souza, 2006; Friendly, 2013) that does not always ensure the interests of the poor. Finally, the democratic government of Brazil has failed to eradicate corruption, clientelism, and co-optation. Thus, the Brazilian government has failed to implement the Statute fully as it relies on democratic and fair decision-making processes (Perlman, 2010). For example, in terms of participation in local government, a segment of civil society always casts votes in favour of the government's decision in exchange for a post in the municipal government. This kind of clientelism is evident in all levels of governance in Brazil (Friendly, 2013), and creates a barrier to the successful implementation of the City Statute.

Other Southern cities, such as those in India and South Africa, have failed to ensure ordinary people's rights to the city although these countries have been practising democracy for a long time and their citizens have voting and constitutional rights to basic services, including a right to work. South African municipalities have failed to secure their citizens' RTC due to technocratic and centralised characters of its national government that have led to a bureaucratic and corporatist vision of urban governance (Beall, Crankshaw, & Parnell, 2002; Pieterse & Van Donk, 2008). This kind of urban governance structure has increased reliance on consultants for urban planning and governance, ignoring community opinions and further reinforcing inequality (Heller & Evans, 2010).

The government of India has also failed to ensure everyone's right to the city, especially their participation in planning and governance due to its "clientelist politics, middle class hegemony, and extra-local power" as well as lack of decision-making and fiscal power of local governments (Heller & Evans, 2010, p. 442; Roy, 2009b). This failure has created vacuums of power at the local level, where formal political parties and party workers step in to make connections between local inhabitants and the state (Bedi, 2016). This intermediary

party cadre is often informal and comprises self-appointed leaders who negotiate with formal institutions and function both inside and outside the rational, legal, and political processes (Anjaria, 2011; Bedi, 2016). This intermediary group mediates relations between the political society and the formal state (Chatterjee, 2004). Though Chatterjee (2004) makes clear distinctions between civil society and political society, fixers and brokers do not belong to either of these categories due to their connections and memberships in political parties (Bedi, 2016). However, in Dhaka, this group plays an important role in mediating relationships between the urban poor and state officials, which will be analysed in Chapter Seven.

Another reason for the Indian government's failure in ensuring everyone's right to the city is that the Indian local government treats its citizens as clients, not as rights-bearing citizens. Instead of rights, these clients receive benefits from the state government based on their loyalties to a particular political party (Heller & Evans, 2010). Consequently, the urban poor experience "double exclusion of a particularly hierarchical social order and a highly skewed distribution of political power" (Heller & Evans, 2010, p. 441), that lead them to become 'citizens without a city' (Appadurai, 2001). The term 'citizens without a city' indicates that the urban poor have constitutional rights of association and speech, and rights to vote to hold their rulers accountable; in practice, however, they have limited opportunities to exercise their citizenship. Yet the urban poor have formed a political society in some parts of India to demand their citizenship rights in collaboration with civil society (Chatterjee, 2004). As such, slum residents in Mumbai use their connections with local and global NGOs not only to overcome the inequalities described earlier, but also to organise themselves effectively to appropriate significant parts of the means of governance and successfully make some demands of the city (Appadurai, 2001). Due to this new rise of political society, Chatterjee (2004) argues that the long-standing, middle class hegemony over urban political space is becoming more contested. The question remains open as to whether the democratisation movements in Indian cities can move the urban political regime to establish an equal society, or, whether it will be able to ensure every citizen's right to the city.

A similar gap between the form and practice of democracy exists in Bangladesh. Like India, middle class hegemony on urban political space and patron-client relations exist in Dhaka, where I conducted my fieldwork. Within this context, I aim to explore whether the urban poor in Dhaka have successfully claimed a right to the city. If not, I explore how and why they have failed to demand their constitutional and citizenship rights in terms of accessing

space for a livelihood in Chapter Six. Apart from exploring poor people's right to a city, I analyse the use of different types of spaces in exploring how the urban poor in Dhaka use different types of spaces in reproducing space through their everyday activities.

2.4 Public, private, and parochial realms – a typology

To understand the nature of urban space and how this space is used by different social groups in different societies in general and in particular, how the urban poor use urban space for livelihoods, this section discusses the nature and function of urban space. According to Lofland (1998), urban spaces can be divided into three realms: private, parochial, and public. Following Hunter (1985), Lofland (1998, p.10) defines the private realm as being “characterised by ties of intimacy among primary group members who are located within households and personal networks”, whereas parochial realms are characterised by “a sense of commonality among acquaintances and neighbours who are involved in interpersonal networks that are located within *communities*” (Lofland, 1998, p. 10). Lofland defines the public realm as including “those areas of urban settlements in which individuals in copresence tend to be personally unknown or only categorically known to one another” (Lofland, p.9). By ‘categorically known to each other’, Lofland means people who are known to each other based on occupational or other non-personal identity categories. This public realm is also a distinct social space of cities as it is almost absent in rural areas or non-traditional societies, where people are known to each other and lead a communal lifestyle.

Public space is defined in various ways. Carmona, De Magalhães, Blum, and Hammond (2004, p. 9) define public space as space that “. . . relates to all those parts of the built and natural environment where the public have free access”. Public space is also defined as a space of social interaction, whether in daily life or during times of festivity (Carr, 1992) or a space for strangers (Lofland, 1998). These definitions of public space are developed in the context of the Global North. Northern definitions of ‘public space’ or ‘urban space’ may be useful to understanding different characteristics of urban spaces and they may carry more or less similar meaning for affluent groups in the Global South. However, there are some limitations to using these definitions in the context of the Global South, where many poor people use urban public space to earn livelihoods.

Criticising this limitation in the discussion of the northern definitions of ‘public space’ and ‘urban space’, Brown (2006d) uses the term, ‘urban public space’ to incorporate urban space including “physical space and an understanding of the social relations that determine that space” (Brown, 2006d, p. 22). Brown’s definition includes all space that is not regarded as private space, and which is to some extent used by public or community such as parks, squares and streets as well as space at the margins such as between the pavement edge and building façade, river banks, or in vacant and unfenced lots – where access to public space is possible but not legalised. Brown’s definition is independent of ownership, ‘urban public space’ may be in government, private, communal or undefined ownership, but it has some sort of accepted communal access or use right (Brown, 2006d), which is also related to the idea of the RTC (Section 2.3).

Lofland’s and Brown’s definitions are useful to explore how the urban poor access these different types of space to earn an income. All of these realms might have the same meaning for affluent groups in the Global South. Yet a number of studies on South Asian cities have suggested that poor people use domestic space and courtyards for production purposes due to a lack of alternative spaces (Bose, 1998; Etzold, 2011; Ghafur, 2002). This is also indicated in the livelihood framework developed by Lloyd-Jones and Rakodi (2014). However, the poor are under constant threat of eviction by the local government and other local authorities from either their dwelling or livelihood spaces (Etzold, Keck, Bohle, & Zingel, 2009). It should be further noted that it is the central government and the city planners appointed by them who decide which group is granted the RTC through the governance and planning framework (Chapters Three and Six). In Dhaka, as in other South Asian cities, the urban poor use public space for informal economic activities (Amin, 1987; Hackenbroch, 2013a). Hawkers sell books, flowers, toothbrushes, pens, and cigarettes on the streets of Dhaka. Apart from public space, poor people also use their private courtyards and other open spaces within the slum, which are part of the private and parochial realm, but they are livelihood spaces for the poor. This thesis explores how public, private, and parochial realms are produced in Dhaka and how this production affects poor people’s access and use of these realms and whether the use of various realms differ based on one’s gender. These questions will be answered in Chapters Six, Seven and Eight.

The existing literature indicates that due to social norms and codes of conduct and behaviour, women are more constrained than their male counterparts when it comes to accessing public

space (Bose, 1998; Hackenbroch, 2013a) even though women's access is crucial to the survival of poor families in urban areas (Kabeer, 2008; Salway, Jesmin, & Rahman, 1998). The next section reviews the relevant literature on women's access to public space for income earning activities.

2.5 Gendered space and informality

Almost from the beginning of urbanisation, “the presence of women in cities, and particularly in city streets, has been questioned, and the controlling and surveillance aspects of city life have always been directed particularly at women” (Wilson, 1991, p. 14). Using a structuralist explanation Rosaldo argues “an opposition between ‘domestic’ and ‘public’ provides the basis of a structural framework necessary to identify and explore the place of male and female in psychological, cultural, social, and economic aspects of human life” (Rosaldo, 1974, p. 23). This model illustrated why women are associated with nature and men with culture (Ortner, 1974) and how women's reproductive role is instrumental in developing feminine and masculine personalities (Chodorow, 1974). This gendered division of labour produces inequality in men and women's social status in society. Although the private-public dichotomy accounted for a variety of women's experiences and perhaps explained women's position in society at that time, subsequent research on women's activities indicated that Rosaldo's model was ‘overgeneralised’ and treated women as ‘too homogenous a group’ (Sharistanian, 1987).

The earlier, dualistic model of public man and private woman indicated segregated, gendered spaces within cities, to which Soja (1989) referred as the ‘spatialization of patriarchal power’. However, gendered spaces have become hybrid spaces and postmodern feminists have criticised this view for failing to include other forms of difference and identity. As Rose (1993) notes, the subject of feminism largely stems from a paradoxical geography, both acknowledging the power of hegemonic discourse and insisting on the possibility of resistance. This geography depicts subjectivity as prisoner and exile by allowing the subject of feminism to occupy both the “centre and margin, the inside and the outside” that generates tension between these poles and it is also structured by the “simultaneous contradictory diversity of social relations” (Rose, 1993, p. 155). The discourse on space and gender has changed considerably since the 1970s as the old construct of public man and private woman was challenged due to women's frequent access to and use of urban public space. Although

labour markets everywhere are still gender-segregated, women's participation in the labour market is greater than any other time in history, which has played a crucial role in breaking the dichotomy of the 'gendered space' (Chant & Pedwell, 2008).

The idea of gendered space is also related to the 'gendered division of labour' (Moser, 1989, 1992), which traditionally considers women's role as 'reproductive', unpaid labour, that includes both care work as well as routine household chores (Budlender, 2010; Chant, 1996; Moser, 1989) while men's role is largely concentrated on 'productive', income-generating work. Women are also engaged in providing unpaid community services. Thus, women in the Global South are often burdened with a 'triple role of work' (Moser, 1989, 1992). In many countries in the Global South, dominant gender ideologies still see women's place as being in the home (Pratt, 2006). In Kolkata, India, which shares some common cultural practices with Bangladesh, women of childbearing age experience the greatest spatial confinement and so tend to prefer home-based activities (Bose, 1998). Operating businesses in urban public space is considered as a last resort for women and is often constrained by social norms in India (Bose, 1998).

Women's access to public space is regulated not only by social relations and social and institutional norms (Banks, 2010; Hackenbroch, 2013b; Salway et al., 2005), but also by the form of unwritten codes of conduct or written legal rules, such as patrilineal inheritance laws that leave widows and daughters with limited rights to property (Deininger, Goyal, & Nagarajan, 2010). Besides legal rules, social and religious norms dictate women's social mobility and access to public space and employment. Due to longstanding social norms of patriarchy and *purdah* (veil) women's access to public space is limited in South Asian countries. In the narrowest sense, *purdah* involves the seclusion of women within the four walls of their homes and the veiling of women when they move outside their homes. In a broader sense, "*purdah* involves the exclusion of women from public space – the 'male' sphere of economic, social, and political life" (Chen, 1986, p. 217). *Purdah* imposes restrictions on women's economic activities in South Asia (Agarwal, 1994; Amin, 1997; Kantor, 2002) and some other parts of the Muslim world such as the Middle East and North Africa (Mandelbaum, 1993). Veiling by women is practiced by Hindu and Muslim women in the northern part (except for Bihar and West Bengal) of the Indian sub-continent (Mandelbaum, 1993). Women veil to show their respect to elders (Mandelbaum, 1993). Yet veiling is just "one feature of the mandatory code for a woman's conduct which requires that

she behave modestly, restrained in speech, restricted in movement” (Mandelbaum, 1993, p. 4) and she must show “shyness of demeanour, avoidance of eye-contact with males, avoidance of loud speech and laughter (in the presence of or within the earshot of males) and the limitation of conversation with non-family males to necessary work-connected topics” (Vatuk, 1982, p. 70).

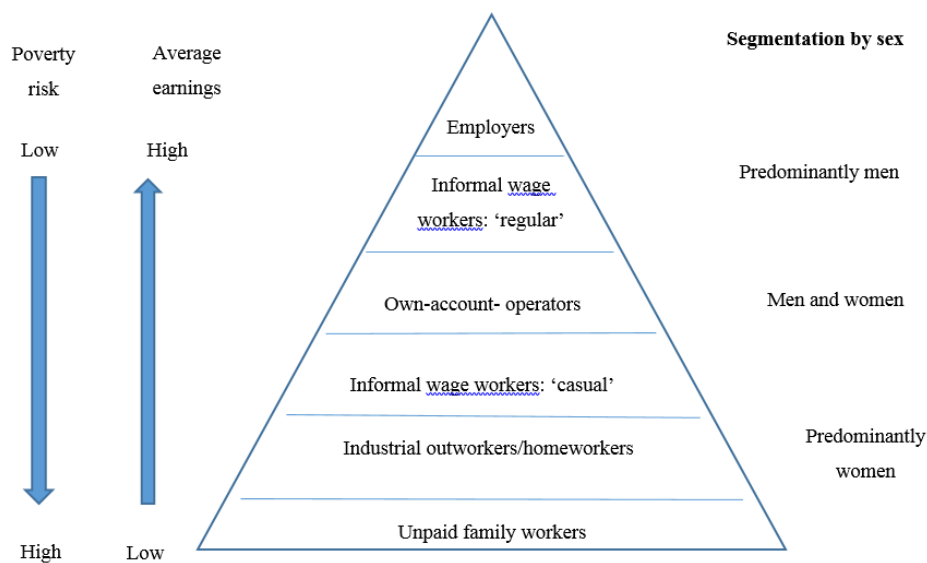
Apart from *pardah*, the traditional idiom of guardianship works as a barrier to women’s participation in income earning activities in South Asia (Kantor, 2002; Sanauddin, Chitrali, & Owais, 2016; White, 2017). As White (2017) notes, traditionally women in Bangladesh should always be under male guardianship and it is the duty of male members to protect and provide for dependents. A similar social norm exists among Hindus and Muslims in India (Kantor, 2002) and Pakistan (Sanauddin et al., 2016). Women live under the guardianship of their fathers in childhood, their husbands and fathers-in-law in their marriage and their sons in widowhood (White, 2017). This is because “a woman without a guardian is highly vulnerable to unwelcome attention or abuse from other men and the gossip that surrounds the suspicion of sexual misbehaviour” (White, 2017, p. 263). A guardian is held responsible if his wife and children violate any social and religious norms. A man’s honour and his family’s honour also depend on women’s compliance to social norms (Mandelbaum, 1993; White, 2017). Thus, the norms of *pardah* and guardianship are not only used to protect women from sexual advances but also used to establish male control over women in the interests of men and the family (Kantor, 2002). This norm of guardianship also plays an important role in women’s dependence on male members as traditionally it is the responsibility of male members of the family to provide for their family members (Amin, 1997).

The social norms of seclusion also vary based on class (Mandelbaum, 1993; Sanauddin et al., 2016), caste (Agarwal, 1994; Ghosh, 1995) and region (Mandelbaum, 1993; Sanauddin et al., 2016). Existing research suggests that living in urban areas offers possibilities for ‘female emancipation’ such as the breakdown of patriarchal family systems and landholding and provide better opportunities for female education and employment (Chant & McIlwaine, 2015). For example, women’s access to education and work varies depending on their social class in Pakistan. Women from higher classes and urban areas have better access to education and paid work than women from lower classes and rural areas (Sanauddin et al., 2016). This is perhaps because cities offer women an escape from some of the time and labour related to domesticity and subsistence provision. Yet most urban women, particularly those who live in

slums, experience disadvantages due to new forms of waged work, limited convenient transportation, lack of social support networks and social stigma (Meleis, 2011). Despite these barriers, a significant number of women are by necessity engaged in the informal economy to support their families, leading to a ‘feminisation of informal labour’ (Chant & Pedwell, 2008).

Recent data on the informal economy in South Asia shows that 83 per cent of women in the non-agricultural sector are informally employed, compared to 82 per cent of men (WIEGO, 2018). The informal economy is also more segregated (Figure 2.1) than the simple wage employment versus self-employment dichotomy (Chen, 2010). Women are more likely to work as self-employed domestic workers, or perform unpaid work in family enterprises, while men are more likely to work as employers and wage workers (Chen et al., 2005). Men and women tend to be engaged in different activities or types of employment even within similar trades. For example, in many countries male traders operate large-scale business, where female traders are more likely to operate smaller-scale business, particularly related to food (Chen, 2001). Women are often over-represented in low-income activities and under-represented in high-income activities (Charmes, 2007; Sethuraman, 1998).

Figure 2.1: Segmentation of the informal economy in the Global South by sex, average earnings, and poverty risk



Source: Chen (2010)

Historically, women have had lower employment rates due to rigid social and cultural patriarchal norms present in South Asian cities (Bridges, Lawson, & Begum, 2011). Due to long standing social norms of patriarchy and *purdah* that prohibit women's access to public space, women's access to the informal economy is to some extent less in South Asian countries than other parts of the Global South. For example, in India (Chen, 2001), Pakistan (Mumtaz & Salway, 2005) and Bangladesh (Salway et al., 2005), women from poor households rather than women from other classes are more likely work outside the home (Kabeer, 2008). As such, studies from rural India and Pakistan show that female participation in income-earning activities is inversely related to household wealth. Women from poorer households are more likely to participate in informal economic activities whereas women from wealthier households are more likely engaged in domestic work (Sen & Sen, 1985; World Bank, 1991).

Yet there is a less clear-cut association between household poverty and patterns of women's economic activity in some parts of the Global South, where women do not experience similar social constraints on accessing the public realm (Kabeer, 2008). For example, in Vietnam, there are high participation rates in paid work for both men and women (over 80 per cent), however, higher levels of poverty were found among female-headed households (Kabeer & Tran, 2002). In contrast to Vietnam, married women's labour force participation rate in India has been surprisingly low and stagnant since the 1980s despite rising growth, fertility decline, and rising wage and education levels. Women's labour force participation rate in urban India has increased around 18 per cent in between 1987 to 2011. The reasons behind this low increase in labour force participation are rising household incomes and husband's education as well as less expansion in those employment sectors, where women prefer to work (Klasen & Pieters, 2015). Similar practices are evident in Pakistan and in many countries of the Middle East and North Africa, where female labour force participation has not increased at a similar pace with the expansion of female education (Gaddis & Klasen, 2012; World Bank, 2003). This is perhaps related to patriarchy and religious practices of *purdah* in those parts of the Global South. As such, Muslim women's spatial mobility is lower than women from other religious groups (Kabeer, 2008).

The rate of female employment has increased rapidly since the mid-1980s in South Asia (ILO, 2008) due to the expansion of market economies that have exploited cheap female labour (Çağatay & Özler, 1995). Yet female participation in wage and salaried employment

in Bangladesh is still lower than other parts of South Asia (Bridges et al., 2011; Elder & Schmidt, 2004). A patriarchal division of labour that sees men as breadwinners and women as homemakers still exists in many parts of the country, especially in rural areas. A recent national study reported that, in comparison to men, 13 per cent of women in urban Bangladesh participate in the labour market, compared to just 6 per cent in rural areas, in part due to the greater availability of employment opportunities in urban areas (Bridges et al., 2011). In addition, highly educated women have a greater capacity than uneducated women to renegotiate rigid gender norms to gain employment. In addition to the educational barrier, women in Bangladesh experience sexism both at home and in the workplace (Bridges et al., 2011). However, due to rural-urban migration and the advent of the ready-made garment (RMG) industry, female labour force participation rates in Bangladesh have tripled since the 1980s (Afsar, 2003). Salway, Jesmin and Rahman's (2005) study on three slums of Dhaka reported 40 per cent of women are engaged in income generating activities outside the home, among them 31 per cent work as maids and 22 per cent work in garment industry. Apart from garment industry, poor women mostly work as maids in urban areas in Bangladesh (Opel, 2000; Ward, Rahman, Islam, Akhter, & Kamal, 2004).

Many poor women are also engaged in informal businesses that require access to public space. Women in the traditional culture, despite geographical differences, mostly use courtyard or backyard to earn an income due to traditional social norm of patriarchy (Mahmud, 2001; Newman, 1972; Pellow, 1992; Rapoport, 1969; Samizay & Kazimee, 1993). Women often operate small-scale businesses within their neighbourhoods, whereas men operate large-scale businesses outside their neighbourhoods (Bose, 1998; Ghafur, 2001; Huq-Hussain, 1996; Mahmud, 2003; White, 1990). Gulati (1990) termed this practice 'backyard employment'. Although the overall area of household spaces differ in slum areas, Drakakis-Smith (2000) argued that in most countries these settlements provide basic requirements to earn a living. One main reason for women's use of domestic space is that the use of home or courtyard reduces travel time and expense (Pacione, 2009). This is also important for the survival of small entrepreneurs as well as it helps them to do household work simultaneously; such as cooking and looking after children (Sinai, 1998). As Mahmud said; "the courtyard plays a significant role as various inter-family and neighbourly interaction take place; it is there that arbitrations occur, cooking is done, children play, stories are told and family celebrations and funerals are held" (Mahmud, 2001, p. 69).

In South Asia, poor women mostly manufacture goods and cook foods to sell using parochial and private realms (Bose, 1998; Ghafur, 2001; Huq-Hussain, 1996; Mahmud, 2003; White, 1990). A number of studies have further explored the importance of private realm in the livelihood practices of poor women (Ghafur, 2002; Hackenbroch, 2013a; KelleTT & Tipple, 2000). In New Delhi, India, women slum-dwellers use their home spaces for the production of bangles and other products and their husbands sell them outside the slum (KelleTT & Tipple, 2000). Ghafur's (2002) study in three cities in Bangladesh revealed that slum-dwellers use their dwelling space both for living (sleeping, cooking and socialising) and income generating activities (cooking, making handicrafts etc.). Women usually work within their home/neighbourhood space whereas men use the outer space for selling products that are produced by women (Ghafur, 2002). KelleTT and Tipple's (2000) and Ghafur's (2002) studies indicate a gender division of labour and a separation of space. Following this understanding of the importance of different realms and the nature of gendered space that might constrain women's access to public space, I use a gender lens to explore the importance of the public, private, and parochial realms, to the livelihood practices of the poor people in Dhaka.

2.6 Space and the informal economy

The informal economy provides livelihood opportunities for a large segment of the population in the South which comprises more than one-half of non-agricultural employment (Vanek, Chen, Carré, Heintz, & Hussmanns, 2014). Informal employment accounts for 82 per cent employment in South Asia, 66 per cent in Sub-Saharan Africa, 65 per cent in East and Southeast Asia and 51 per cent in Latin America (Vanek et al., 2014). Street vending is regarded as one of the important components of the informal economy that often depends on access to public space in the Global South (Brown, 2006d; ILO, 1972). However, the state and its actors do not favour access to public space for vending activities in many parts of the South, including Bangladesh. State actors regulate the use of public space through institutional rules and regulations that emerged from certain historical incidents as will be discussed in Section 2.6.2. Before that, Section 2.6.1 discusses how the term 'informal economy' is defined in Bangladesh.

2.6.1 Conceptualisations of the informal economy

Although the definition of informality includes many economic activities that form part of the informal economy, this thesis focuses on a particular group of informal workers – street vendors, who use public space for earning a livelihood. The use of public space for vending activities is illegal in Dhaka. This regulation, which has emerged following a historical path of the formalisation of informal sectors, is more or less common in the South.

The definition of ‘informal economy’ varies and international comparability is almost impossible as countries use different categories, such as an enterprise’s size, registration status, or a mixture of criteria (ILO, 2002). In Bangladesh the informal sector provides 89 per cent of the total number of jobs in the labour market (ADB, 2012). According to the Asian Development Bank (ADB) definition, the informal sector in Bangladesh

may be broadly characterized as consisting of units engaged in the production of goods or services with the primary objective of generating employment and incomes to the persons concerned. These units typically operate at a low level of organization with little or no division of labour and capital as factors of production and on a small scale. Labour relations – where they exist – are based mostly on casual employment, kinship or personal and social relation rather than contractual arrangements with formal guarantees. (2012, p. 40)

Informal economic activities are among the oldest and most widespread occupations in the world and existed long before Hart officially coined the term (Cooper, 1987). The importance of the informal economy has increased since the introduction of neoliberal policies in the 1970s in different parts of the Global South (Pratt, 2006). In several countries, urbanisation and population growth rates have exceeded the growth of employment in modern industry (Huang, 2009). Consequently, surplus labourers, or ‘working poor’, created their own employment, which led to the formation of what Hart (1973) refers to as the ‘informal sector’. Informal sector workers primarily operate in small-scale, unregulated enterprises rather than regulated, larger businesses and enterprises of the sector (Huang, 2009). Although large, the informal sector offers low wages (Hart, 1973). Furthermore, the informal sector receives mixed reviews in relation to the development paradigm (Chen, 2012). Many observers consider the informal sector to be marginal and not linked to the formal sector or

the modern capitalist economy, whereas others believe that the informal sector in developing countries would disappear with the expansion of industrial development (Chen, 2012). In contrast to the disappearance argument, recent literature shows that the vast majority of poor people are now engaged in the informal economy in the Global South due to the economic recession and structural adjustment policies (Pratt, 2006). The informal economy has not disappeared—rather, more than half of non-agricultural employment in most developed regions and 82 per cent of non-agricultural employment in South Asia is based on this sector (Vanek, Chen, & Hussmanns, 2012). According to the most recent ILO statistics (2014) for 47 developing countries, the percentages of workers in informal economy ranges in Latin America and Caribbean from 40 per cent in Uruguay to 75 per cent in Bolivia, in sub-Saharan Africa 33 per cent, in South Africa to 82 per cent in Mali, in South and East Asia (excluding China) from 42 per cent in Thailand to 83.5 per cent in India. Such evidence suggests the importance of the informal economy in the Global South. Its growth seems to be linked to the process of globalisation, the exclusion of a larger group from the benefits of globalisation, and the increasing urbanisation of poverty (UN-Habitat, 2004). However, not everyone working in the informal sector is poor, and the relationship between poverty and informality is often assumed but not clearly defined (Bélanger et al., 2012).

2.6.2 Public space, gray space and urban informality

Access to public space for all sorts of economic activities is especially important for a large number of urban poor in the Global South employed in the informal sector (Milgram, 2011). However, the production of public space and access to public space are often determined by the state and its agencies. The term ‘public space’ has been used extensively in the literature, however, most researchers focus on either the planning paradigm or the contestation over it (Kim, 2012). For example, Roy (2009b) and Yiftachel (2009b) argue that planning can produce and reproduce spatial inequality determining people’s accessibility and use of city’s space. To explain this kind of spatial inequality, Roy has coined the term ‘urban informality’ that refers to “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, 2009b, p. 80). Though Roy uses the term ‘urban informality’ to describe the state’s planning failure and its role in creating slums or informal settlements, this kind of state informality can also be seen in regulating public space. These kinds of informal practices led to informal urbanisation, where elite groups also encroach on land in the same way as the urban poor yet

their encroachments are ignored by the state, whereas the urban poor are labelled as ‘criminals’ for engaging in the same behaviour (Roy, 2011). This practice further emphasises the importance of power and class relations (Roy, 2011) that often determine whose informality is ‘whitened’ (Yiftachel, 2009b). As Yiftachel (2009b, p. 92) notes,

The understanding of gray space as stretching over the entire spectrum, from powerful developers to landless and homeless ‘invaders’, helps us conceptualise two associated dynamics we may term here ‘whitening’ and ‘blackening’. The former alludes to the tendency of the system to ‘launder’ gray spaces created ‘from above’ by powerful or favourable interests. The latter denotes the process of ‘solving’ the problem of marginalized gray space by destruction, expulsion or elimination. The state’s violent power is put into action, turning gray into black.

Writing in the context of Israel-Palestine, Yiftachel has conceptualised gray spaces to point out a new form of urban colonial relations that have been established through planning paradigm, where the marginalised groups rightful stake in the city is often denied, prioritising powerful interests ‘from above’. This is how “urban plans provide the authorities with an arsenal of categories to define and treat gray space and bodies, such as ‘illegal resident/immigrant’, ‘unapproved development’, ‘illegal housing’, or ‘land invasion’, or alternatively – ‘necessary development’, ‘new employment provider’, ‘urban regeneration’ or in the colonial settings” in the name of “security enhancement” (Yiftachel, 2009b, p. 93). These categories indicate how the state becomes powerful through its planning regulations to ‘whiten’ some groups’ illegality in the name of development and label some groups’ claims to city’s space as criminalised, and therefore, either demolish their houses or leave them in uncertainty. Yiftachel also argues that the marginalised group is often left in ‘permanent temporariness’ and often tolerated by the state. As he notes, “gray spaces . . . [are] lying literally ‘in the shadow’ of the formal, planned city, polity, and economy” (Yiftachel, 2009b, p. 89).

To explore how the state has created informality in terms of use of public space by poor people and how the formal and informal rules, regulations, and norms are used to govern this space (Chapters Six and Seven), I employ this idea of ‘urban informality’ and ‘gray space’ in the thesis. This is also important for understanding how state actors support or undermine this kind of planning dilemma and their impact on governing informal vending spaces. This kind

of state-created deregulation raises the question of to whom the city belongs or, who has a right to the city. As discussed by Holston (1998, 2008), informality can also be used to create a 'differentiated citizenship', prioritising one group's claim on city's space over another. Though Holston has coined the term 'differentiated citizenship' to point out the unequal treatment that the Brazilian citizens receive from their state not only in terms of their right to city's space but also in accessing services, this is also important in analysing poor people's citizenship right in Dhaka which will be discussed in Chapters Five and Six.

Apart from creating gray spaces and differentiated citizenship, the state also controls how public space is used by citizens. Public space is a contested space in many cities. This contestation emerges due to heterogeneous groups' access to, use of, and effective control over public space, which leads to varying degrees of conflict in many cities all over the world (Anjaria, 2010; Crossa, 2009; Etzold, 2013; Keck, 2012; te Lintelo, 2009). However, there is a gap in the earlier literature concerning the politics of public space that determines who is granted access (Kim, 2012). Yet the discussion on accessibility is important as it is often determined by the larger socio-economic structures (Harvey, 2006; Lefebvre, 1991). Previous studies have not fully captured the actual spatial practices of ordinary citizens, who actively create and recreate city spaces with sidewalk vending, parking lot markets, and garage sales (Chase, Crawford, & Kaliski, 2008; Kim, 2012; Thomas, 2002). For example, encroaching public space is a way for the urban poor to make a claim to participating in the city's economy, an economy that usually fails to provide a 'formalised space' for the urban poor (Hackenbroch, 2013b; Milgram, 2011). However, poor street vendors challenge city authorities and the state's hegemonic power through their everyday informal practices, especially the latter's governing power (Etzold, 2013).

Recent studies have addressed this gap informing how the undesirables are excluded from public space through urban planning, how this is intended to perpetuate state ideology and power, and how the real estate market has presented a privatised public space (Kayden, 2000; Loukaitou-Sideris & Banerjee, 1998; Smith & Low, 2013). However, this literature mostly emphasises the relationship between the state and the market. The state and its apparatuses favour the powerful and dominant groups who have historically had the most control over the government and are involved in decision-making and policy formulation in different government sectors. The result is the expansion of privately owned public space and exclusion of the urban poor from public space. This is a common practice in the developed

North, and the South has also recently been following this trend. The rise of gated communities both in the North (Bélanger et al., 2012; Davis, 1998) and South (Caldeira, 1996; Morshed, 2014) is an example of this kind of urban development. Such development has excluded the poor and their demands for livelihood spaces.

Due to their visible encroachments on the streets and other open and accessible city spaces, the urban poor often directly encounter formal modes of urban governance (Bayat, 1997b; Brown, 2006b). Consequently, they experience two types of legal issues while operating informal business using public space. The first problem is related to the regulation of the informal economy. Informal traders operate business outside the state regulations, which is often regarded as illegal. The second problem is related to the state's regulation of the use of public space. Most governments in the Global South follow a Northern standard of public space as described in Section 2.4. Hence informal businesses are often portrayed as 'eyesores' (Rukmana & Purbadi, 2013) and 'unruly' (Recio, Mateo-Babiano, & Roitman, 2017). The encroachment of public space by the urban poor is also regarded as a direct challenge to the hegemony of state and municipal authorities (Etzold, 2013). The urban poor often experience eviction from these spaces as state actors try to establish control over those spaces.

Existing research on informality shows that governments in different parts of the world have adopted different approaches (Recio et al., 2017). Some institutions have approached informality not as a problem for eradication but as a livelihood practice that can be managed in contrast to the antagonistic view of informality (Recio et al., 2017). For example, the UNDP (2008) has developed the Legal Empowerment of the Poor (LEP) initiative based on de Soto's (1988) idea that, if poor informal workers were able to receive state assistance, they would have the potential to improve their living conditions through participation in socio-economic and political processes (Recio et al., 2017). The ILO and World Bank have also supported this legalist approach as a strategy for generating economic growth and income for the poor in developing countries (Pratt, 2006). However, Roy (2005) criticises de Soto's call for legalisation of the informal economy, claiming that he ignores the varying degrees of power and exclusion associated with poverty and informality that might prevent the poor from improving their economic conditions. Roy points out the problem of de Soto's 'enablement' approach, in which the poor help themselves, asserting that it obscures the

state's responsibility (Roy, 2005). This 'enablement' and 'responsibility' approach developed by the UN, along with the ILO and World Bank are also linked to the RTC.

A recent development in the legalisation of informal economic practices was marked by the passage of the national street vending law in India in 2014. This law opens up new opportunities for vendors as it has incorporated certain important aspects of vending activities such as space allocation, governance structure, eviction and relocation procedures, the taxation system, grievance and redress participation (Recio et al., 2017). Although this first law for supporting vendors and recognising their rights to livelihoods is an important step in ensuring their rights to work and the right to the city, it has drawn criticism. Alva (2014) criticises the Street Vendors Bill for creating a legislative mechanism where only vendors with a certificate of vending are allowed to engage in street vending. This may result in police labelling unlicensed vendors as beggars. Another related problem is the issue of obtaining a license and vending site. As Alva (2014, p. 200) notes, "if the number of street vendors is greater than the total holding capacity of all the vending zones, many street vendors might be unsuccessful in securing certificates of vending".

In contrast to accommodating policies, several governments have adopted a tolerant position recognising the role of informal practices in the development and transformation of cities and urban centres as informal practices play a crucial role in alleviating poverty and unemployment issues (Alcazaren, Ferrer, & Icamina, 2011; Chakrabarty, 2001). In Mexico City, street vendors are often tolerated because of either their connections with political parties (Crossa, 2009) or bribes from vendor associations (Peña, 1999). In post-colonial Vietnam, street vending is a common occupation, and local police often ignore the presence of vendors. Although they are sometimes evicted by the police, the vendors always reappropriate the streets after some days (Drummond, 2000; Kim, 2015). If street vendors are elderly or frail, police tell them to stand off the curb of the sidewalk rather than evicting them (Kim, 2015). These cases indicate that several factors are at play behind this tolerant attitude towards street vendors. The first factor is related to the vendors' capacity to engage in the 'politics of the streets' (Bayat, 1997a, 2000; Hanser, 2016; Musoni, 2010) and/or building associations and using them to negotiate with state actors – either by bribing them or by applying political pressure (Cross, 1998; Etemadi, 2004; Recio & Gomez Jr, 2013). The discretionary power of the local officials and street-level bureaucrats also generate a tolerant atmosphere (Etemadi, 2004; Hanser, 2016; Turner & Schoenberger, 2012). The areas and

their accessibility are often determined through dialogues and agreements between hawkers and state officials (Recio et al., 2017). This kind of tolerant approach emerges due to the sympathetic attitudes of policy makers or local government officials, who are aware of the importance of the informal economy to the livelihoods of the urban poor (Recio et al., 2017). Yet this approach cannot offer a permanent solution against eviction; rather, it can encourage the existing patron-client relationships and bribery practices (Turner & Schoenberger, 2012). A legal framework is necessary to enable vendors' access to public space as discussed above.

Yet many governments still take a hostile attitude towards street vending, ignoring its importance to the livelihood practices of the urban poor (Batréau & Bonnet, 2016; Bromley, 2000; Etemadi, 2004; Gibbings, 2013; Roever, 2016). The city government of Mexico City introduced the Programa de Rescate (rescue program) to revitalise and beautify the city's historic centre by upgrading the physical space. One aim of this program was to evict street vendors, who were perceived to be threatening the general vitality of the area (Crossa, 2009). In Belo Horizonte, Brazil, street vendors were relocated to indoor markets to 'clean up' downtown, however Carrieri and Murta (2011) argue that this was a policy aimed at maximising profit by introducing a kind of 'neoliberal' management in the name of an 'urban revitalisation' program. In Zimbabwe, the government launched Operation Restore Order to evict informal settlements and street traders to regain control over public space (Musoni, 2010). In some Asian countries, such as Bangladesh, India, Sri Lanka, And Cambodia, governments run brutal eviction drives without relocating street vendors (Bhowmik, 2005). In Chengdu, China, local authorities have prioritised clean streets evicting vendors as an indicator of the city's wellbeing (Hanser, 2016).

There are three reasons behind these hostile policies implemented by governments (Recio et al., 2017). The first is related to the state's preference for formal or state-controlled arrangements (Gibbings, 2013; Musoni, 2010; Pádua Carrieri & Murta, 2011) to develop a 'global city' image (Donovan, 2008; Xue & Huang, 2015). The second cause is to establish control over public space by relocating vendors to designated markets (Donovan, 2008; Etzold, 2013; Hanser, 2016). However, governments often ignore the negative consequences that emerge from these kinds of eviction and relocation programs. For example, vendors' earnings have declined in many cases (Donovan, 2008; Pádua Carrieri & Murta, 2011). In some cases, relocation programs fail due to choice of location, costly bureaucratic regulations, and a lack of customers (Donovan, 2008; Weng & Kim, 2016). Consequently,

street vendors fail to continue conducting business in designated markets and return to the streets (Cross, 1998; Hansen, 2004; Middleton, 2003). This illustrates how governments in different parts of the Global South ignore poor people's economic needs and welfare to serve the interest of the elites.

The third reason emerges from governments' intention to maintain order in public space, which is often disrupted by the presence of street traders (Donovan, 2008; Rukmana & Purbadi, 2012; Yatmo, 2008). This reasoning appeals to those who argue in favour of the 'broken windows' theory of law and order, which holds that "small, highly-visible forms of urban disorder quickly lead to breakdowns in community standards and to the rapid proliferation of blight, vandalism and crime" (Bromley, 2000, p. 12). For these reasons, informal vending is considered to be a 'blemish' (Hanser, 2016) and 'out of place' (Yatmo, 2008) and consequently treated as an intolerable practice.

2.7 Conclusion

This chapter has examined three key ideas – the production and reproduction of space and counter-space, the right to the city and informal economy in preparation for the more focussed discussion of planning and governance and contestations over public space in the next chapter. These ideas will be developed empirically when I describe the experiences of the urban poor of Dhaka in Chapters Five to Eight. Access to public space is an important area of livelihood research (Bayat, 2000; Brown, 2006d; Brown & Lloyd-Jones, 2002b). Most cities of the Global South are unable to provide job opportunities for their large numbers of incoming migrants (Milgram, 2011). Consequently, they end up operating informal businesses using public and parochial realms. However, existing research indicates that conceived space is dominant and overpowers perceived and lived space under capitalism (Hackenbroch, 2013b; Lefebvre, 1991), where the urban poor are the worst victims, as the government and its apparatuses favour the interests of the elites (Middleton, 2003; Xue & Huang, 2015). This would provide an insight for exploring poor people's right to the city and their agency to reproduce a counter-space in Dhaka. The next chapter will elaborate on this production of counter-space, engaging in the literature on governance and resistance, and this theoretical understanding will be used for exploring the production of counter-space in Chapters Six to Eight.

This chapter has also shown the importance of the informal economy in the livelihood practices of the urban poor in the Global South (Centeno & Portes, 2006; ILO, 2014). Literature on the informal economy suggests that cities in the Global South employ either a hostile or a tolerant attitude, rather than formally accommodating street vendors in the city economy (Bhowmik, 2005; Pratt, 2006), which leads to the discussion on the right to the city. Governments in most parts of the Global South ignore their ordinary citizens' rights to the city, especially their access to public space and their citizenship rights, along with their rights to basic public services. While an extensive body of research explores informality and related government policies worldwide, few studies have focused on poor people's participation in informal economic activities in Dhaka using a spatial approach (Etzold, 2013; Hackenbroch, 2013b). No study has addressed the urban poor's rights to access public space for vending activities in Dhaka. Hence, research question one aims to explore this issue by addressing poor people's right to the city in Dhaka (see Chapter Six). To secure ordinary people's access to public space, it is important to ensure their participation in planning and governance of public space, as state actors and policymakers often determine who is granted access to public space and which practices are labelled as legal/formal or illegal/informal (Recio et al., 2017; Roy, 2009a).

Existing literature has indicated a possible difference in terms of using public, parochial, and private realms in the Global North and South, which will be used to answer research questions two and three. A related theme that emerged from the discussion of access to public space is the importance of gendered space in livelihood research (Chen, 2001; Mahmud, 2003; Salway et al., 2005). Women's access to public space is often determined by social and religious norms in various parts of the Global South, especially in Asian cities (Bose, 1998; Kabeer, 2008). However, poor women's income plays an important role in poverty alleviation, and recent research indicates that women's participation has increased in the informal economy. I employ this understanding of the gendered space and feminisation of informality in exploring men and women's access to public space and informal practices in Dhaka in Chapters Seven and Eight, respectively. The next chapter presents a discussion on governance, planning, power, and resistance for providing a theoretical understanding of these topics and using them to explain informal practices in the upcoming analysis chapter.

Chapter 3: Power, Governance, Planning and Resistance

3.1 Introduction

This chapter explores the theoretical link between power, governance, planning, and resistance, and how these issues influence poor people's access to public space, their right to a city, informalities and livelihoods, to relate them to this thesis's findings later. In various parts of the Global South, urban poor's citizenship rights, including the right to access public space, are routinely ignored by states. This marginalisation is enacted through exclusionary planning and governance practices, resulting in the creation of 'informality from above' (Chen, Roever, & Skinner, 2016). Following this, this chapter explores pertinent theories and concepts of power, governance and planning as they relate to space. This exploration will enable the construction of a theoretical framework from which to examine the macro-micro linkage in governance and power relations between state and non-state actors and their relationships to urban governance, planning, slum governance and the urban poor's access, or lack thereof, to public space.

This chapter begins with the explanation of the importance of power in the discussion of governance, planning and resistance. Power relations are particularly important as they determine whose voices are heard and whose interests are best served in the governing process. Power is also important in studying access to space as it is exercised to control space; either institutionally (such as planning and formal governance), or informally (such as encroaching space that breaks formal rules). As Tonkiss (2016, p. 60) notes, "the geography of political and economic privilege, however, gives us only a partial map of the organisation of power in urban space". This gives us a view of 'landscapes of power' (Zukin, 1993), often neatly designed by architecture. The architecture of authority represents a "compelling but incomplete profile of power relations in urban space" (Leary, 2013, p. 60). Hence, this chapter unpacks notions of formal governance, planning and power to explore the exercise of power in governing urban space and the extent to which poor people can exercise formal and informal modes of power to influence decisions and policies in claiming access to public space.

While most literature on public space has focused on the role of formal governance and planning in accessing space, the role of informal governance is equally important in the Global South. Thus, I review relevant literature on informal governance and power to explore the mechanisms of informal governance that the urban poor utilise to access public space. These processes of informal governance generally operate beyond legal rules and regulations, but are important given that the urban poor is largely excluded from formal planning and governance processes. A review of relevant literature will contribute to an analysis of how do poor people access public space to pursue livelihoods in constant negotiation with other powerful actors in society? As noted in Chapter Two, urban space is often contested as there exists a range of dominant and non-dominant actors who have competing uses and interests in relation to, public space. The second part of this chapter is structured around a discussion of informal governance relations in both the Global South in general and Dhaka in particular, to set the theoretical background for the proceeding analysis chapters.

I argue in the last part of this chapter that the urban poor have agency to influence top down governance mechanisms. Their agency is enacted through participation in formal governance system or through contestation with the state or other dominant actors. Literature related to this ‘clash of informalities’ (Chen et al., 2016) is situated within the ‘resistance’ literature. Resistance is categorised into two main streams; covert and overt resistance. In the contest of street vending and informal economies, resistance is centred on the use of public space and on challenging state regulations that impose restrictions on street vending. As shown in Chapter Two, state regulations are hostile towards street vendors in most parts of the Global South; thus, a discussion of contested governance and street politics in these contexts is important. This chapter extends this discussion, framing resistance as a governance mechanism of the urban poor, who often utilise covert resistance strategies or ‘everyday politics’ to defend their livelihood practices. Chen et al. (2016) refer to this practice as ‘informality from below’. Finally, this chapter develops a conceptual framework that merges ‘informality from above’ and ‘informality from below’ to explain contested governance relations in governing gray spaces and explain the ‘everyday politics’ of the urban poor in the Global South in general, and Dhaka more specifically.

3.2 Power, resistance and governance

Power relations are an important factor in understanding formal and informal planning and governance practices. Whether the urban poor are included in planning and governance processes - and as such their capacity to influence policies in terms of redistributing resources of a city - is vital to understanding how much they can claim public space for earning an income. Lukes (2005) argues power can shape the ways actors perceive their wants, desires, and interests, as well as their participation in politics to express their preferences. As Lukes (2005, p. 135) notes, “A may exercise power over B by getting him to do what he does not want to do, but he also exercises power over him by influencing, shaping or determining his very wants”. Criticising Dahl (1957), Bacharach and Baratz’s (1970) conceptualisation of power, Lukes (1974) has developed a three-dimensional view of power (Table 3.1).

Table 3.1: Three views of power

Views of power	Focus
One dimensional/Public face (pluralist model, consensual, ignored latent conflict of interest, considers ‘non-decision’ as consensus but it can be conflictual) (local level, city and community level)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - decision-making - key issues - observable (overt) conflict - subjective interests, seen as policy preferences revealed by political participation
Two-dimensional/ Hidden face (compliance and coercion, according to Bacharach and Baratz, 1970)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - decision-making and non-decision making - issues and potential issues - observable (overt or covert) conflict - subjective interests, seen as policy preferences or grievances
Three-dimensional/Insidious face of power	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - decision-making and control over political agenda (not necessarily through decisions) - issues and potential issues - observable (overt or covert), and latent conflict - subjective and real interests

Source: Lukes (2005)

Formulating power as domination, Lukes (1974) argues that power has three faces; public, hidden and insidious (Table 3.1). Public power is conceptualised as one-dimensional; it is exercised by powerful actors who have the capacity to participate in decision-making processes. Hidden power is viewed as two-dimensional and is exercised through the

(conscious or unconscious) creation of barriers to the public airing of policy conflicts by an actor or group. Following a Gramscian perspective, Lukes argues that the third, insidious dimension of power is seen when those who are relatively powerless have come to internalise and accept their condition without acting upon their interests in any observable way. This indicates that actors may have the ability to shape the choice of other actors. Lukes' third dimension of power highlights the importance of considering actors' control over political agendas and latent forms of conflict that incorporate "a contradiction between the interest of those exercising power and the real interests of those they exclude" (Lukes, 2005, p. 28). This notion of power is also reflected in Foucault's notion of power. As Foucault (1998, p. 95) has noted:

Where there is power, there is resistance, this resistance is never in a position of exteriority in relation to power . . . [power relationship] depends on a multiplicity of points of resistance: these play the role of adversary, target, support, or handle in power relations. These points of resistance are present everywhere in the power network.

Following Foucault's concept of resistance, it can be argued that the urban poor of Dhaka use resisting power as they lack dominating power, which will be discussed in Chapter Seven. Foucault's power and Lukes' three dimensions of power have raised a number of debates regarding how power affects not only actors who participate in the construction of power relations, but also those who do not (Gaventa, 2007).

Lukes' third dimension of power has been criticised for its bias towards the adverse effects on B due to the exercise of power by A (Morriss, 2002) and its failure to consider the positive aspects of 'power over', which Lukes admits in his second edition (2005). Criticising Lukes, Morriss argues that power is not only exercised over particular actors, it can also enable people— whether or not contrary to someone else's interests. Morriss further argues that the exercise of power is always intentional. Despite Morriss' criticism, Lukes third dimension of power is particularly important when compared to the community power debate and the 'structure-agency' debate (Giddens, 1979). This is due to its consideration of Gramscian ideology within power relationships (Sharp, Routledge, Philo, & Paddison, 2000), which Lukes referred to as 'real interests' of actors. Another contribution of his model is the expansion of the idea of 'power to' to 'power over', where he extended the Marxian debate

“on power in terms of the dominant ideologies fashioned by hegemonic interests, thus speaking of the state being co-opted by dominant classes to exert control, authority and indeed, power over others who conform or occasionally choose to resist” (Sharp et al., 2000, p. 6).

Drawing on Lukes’ three-dimensional views of power, Gaventa (2005, 2007) develops an extended version of power relationships to provide a better understanding of the location and dynamics of power in relation to governance, referred to as the ‘power cube’. Gaventa identifies three levels of power; local, national and global. He then discusses three forms of power, linking them to governance relations and citizens’ participation in governance processes (Table 3.2).

Table 3.2: Forms and spaces of power

Forms of power
Visible forms of power are contests over interests that are visible in public space or governing bodies such as local government bodies, local communities, and legislature bodies. However, it can be also seen in any kind of decision-making processes such as in an organisation or may be while organising a collective movement.
Hidden forms of power are used by dominant actors to maintain their interests by blocking ordinary people’s participation in decision-making processes. It can be seen in politics as well as in other organisational and institutional contexts.
Invisible forms of power are exercised to hide one’s awareness regarding their rights and interests through adaptation of dominating ideologies, values and forms of behaviour by relatively powerless groups.
Spaces of power
Closed spaces are where the elites, such as bureaucrats, experts or elected representatives, make decisions and provide services to ‘the people’, without engaging the latter in decision-making processes. These are often related to macro-governance issues.
Invited spaces are spaces where people such as users, citizens or beneficiaries, are invited to participate in various kinds of authorities such as government, supranational agencies or non-governmental organisations. These spaces may be regularised or institutionalised to ensure ordinary people’s participation and consultation to a project. For example, collaborative planning.
Claimed spaces are spaces that emerged from common concerns or social movements or community associations to achieve common goals.

Source: Gaventa (2007)

Gaventa (2005) extends the forms of power to three spaces of power to capture the interactions between ordinary citizens and other dominant actors, especially state actors. This emphasises the opportunities and power relations through which ordinary citizens can influence policies, decisions, discourses, and relationships affecting their interests in sharing spaces, as shown in Table 3.1. Gaventa's discussion of power is particularly relevant for this thesis as it informs a consideration of both the collaborative and conflicting aspects of governing relations, in terms of both wider urban governance and vending spaces. Furthermore, discussions of spaces of power provide useful insights for unpacking how formal and informal arrangements are developed and sustained, and for examining which actors are able to influence these formal and informal processes, a theme to be discussed in Chapters Six and Seven.

The discussion so far indicates that the social construction of urban space (Healey, 2003) results in processes where different actors have different interests, needs and desires and they can dominate spaces to greater or lesser degrees through differentiated power relations (Holston, 1999; Smith, 2000). As Foucault notes, "power is everywhere: not because it embraces everything, but because it comes from everywhere" (Foucault, 1978, p. 93). However, Foucault's notion of power is considered as "omnipresent, constitutive, positive, as well as disciplinary" (Bosch, 2016, p. 33). This kind of omnipresent and disciplinary nature of power is useful when considering access to space in Western contexts where power can be reduced to Foucauldian discipline. This notion of power is less useful when examining the use of local space in Dhaka as the urban poor in Dhaka have less dominating power and mostly use resisting power to access public space (see Chapter Seven). Power is far more direct, coercive and identifiable in dominating local space in Dhaka; for example dominant actors such as *mastans* exercise power over (largely powerless) street vendors, despite having no institutional authority to do so (Chapter Seven). Following this, it is useful to draw on Sharp et al.'s (2000) conceptualisation of power, that describes entanglements of power as inherently spatial and geographical and as emerging from contestation and domination. Sharp et al. (2000) argue that orthodox theorists equated power with domination and that resistance literature mostly emphasises resistance against this power or domination.

Sharp et al. further argue that power can have both positive and negative connotations, operating "in ways which can be repressive and progressive, constraining and facilitative, to be condemned and to be celebrated" (Sharp et al., 2000, p. 2). The word power originates

from the Latin word '*potere*' meaning 'to be able'. Hence power should not be only viewed as the power to dominate, it is also expressed through the ability to resist. Sharp et al. distinguish between dominating and resisting power. Dominating power refers to:

that power which attempts to control or coerce others, or manipulate the consent of others . . . Dominating power can be located within the realm of the state, the economy and civil society, and articulated within social, economic, political and cultural relations and institutions . . . Dominating power engenders inequality and asserts the interests of a particular class, caste, race or political configuration at the expense of others. (Sharp et al., 2000, p. 2)

This notion of dominating power is important exploring how the state and local level dominant actors enable or constrain the urban poor's access to public space, using formal and informal rules and regulations. In Dhaka, dominating power mostly arises from political power and affiliation with the ruling political party (Hackenbroch, 2013a).

The second source of dominating power for claiming and dominating space for livelihoods is coercive power, which is closely linked to political power. Referring to Tilly, Marcuse argues coercive power includes:

. . . not only physical coercion but any exercise of power by the more powerful over those with less power, thus any action (or failure to act of the powerful) in a way that is to their advantage and the disadvantage of those without power. (Marcuse, 2010, p. 472)

Along with political power, coercive power is often used by local leaders in cities of the Global South to create a 'climate of fear', often furthering the interest of elite populations (Mitlin, 2014; Skinner, 2008a). Coercion has many forms such as physical coercion, disempowering political coercion, economic coercion, cultural coercion and spatial coercion (Marcuse, 2010). In terms of access to public space, the urban poor often encounter physical and spatial coercion. By 'physical coercion', Marcuse refers to "the use of violence, legitimately only exercised by the state, but also manifest in violence tacitly permitted by the state" (Marcuse, 2010, p. 474). On the other hand, 'spatial coercion' refers to control over public space by restricting access to public space, residential segregation, restrictive zoning

and the construction of mega projects, all of which reinforcing hegemonic power structures (Marcuse, 2010). Politicians in Dhaka often use local enforcers (*mastans*) to control public space using coercive power. Political power and coercive power are often entangled and used together to dominate space, which will be discussed in detail in Chapter Seven. Apart from informal actors such as politicians and *mastans*, formal actors such as police and other state officials often use coercive and institutional power to control public space. These aspects of power are also useful when interrogating planning and governance issues in the governing of public space.

3.3 Governance, planning and space

In many cities of the Global South, institutions have barred the use of public space for earning livelihoods, following a Northern notion of public space (Bhan, 2009; Swider, 2015). However, for many people in these contexts, public space continue to serve as livelihood spaces. Most governments evict these people without relocation to maintain an ordered city and take a hostile attitude towards the urban poor if they use public space for livelihoods (Batréau & Bonnet, 2016; Roever, 2016; Swider, 2015), denying poor people's right to the city (RTC). In Chapter Two, the RTC framework showed that exclusion from public space emerges from the exclusion of participation in formal planning and governance. Furthermore, cities are largely designed to serve the interest of elites, thus excluding poor people's needs for housing and livelihoods spaces (Davy, 2009; Roy, 2003, 2009b; Watson, 2009a, 2009b). The following section discusses the nature of formal governance and planning in preparation for Chapter Six which addresses the first research question; to what extent has the form and nature of urban governance enabled and constrained poor people's access to and use of public space to pursue livelihoods?

3.3.1 Governance and planning

The term 'governance' has been widely adopted in international development discourse to expand the narrower concept of government, which is underpinned by the view that governments have "both the authority and the capacity to govern effectively and to implement their policies and plans" (Devas, 2004, p. 24). This traditional government centred view has changed in the last two decades due to a greater global focus on the participation of local actors, market forces, and civil society in planning and decision-making processes, in

addition to the state (Healey, 2003). Government controls and “shape conduct in certain ways in relation to certain objectives” (Rose, 1999, p. 4) which Foucault refers to as ‘governmentality’ (Foucault, 2000a). Governmentality, the art of government, refers to the “rationalities and mentalities of governance and the range of tactics and strategies that produce social order” (Merry, 2001, p. 18). The state’s relationship to informality is embedded in this type of governance where informal practices pose a challenge to the state’s regulatory power. This kind of governmentality that emphasises the ‘conduct of conduct’ (Foucault, 2000b) is relevant in explaining the state led eviction which are often conducted to maintain planned order of the city which will be discussed in Chapters Six and Seven. Foucault’s governmental practices are aimed at making modern subjects such as business people, consumers, workers, traders, and so on. Thus when the state attempts to make informal groups behave in certain ways, such as operating from a fixed spot or not operating at all, it is actually making up subjects whose orderly behaviours are regulated by the state’s rules and is compatible with the state’s vision of the modern city (Kamete, 2013b, 2017).

Governance not only refers to the state but all the stakeholders involved in decision-making processes for city planning. The term ‘governance’ incorporates “the role of the state in policy making and implementation but extending beyond that single actor to include the roles of the private sector (market) and community (civil society)” (Minnery, 2007, p. 327). Governance also accounts for the complex and broad set of relationships between these actors and development agencies and provides the institutional framework to manage the civic public realm (McCarney, 1996; Minnery, 2007). Governance, when understood in this way includes all actors, who work together within government and non-government forces to achieve a particular goal. The issue of power is also inextricably linked to an understanding of governance. As Minnery (2007) notes, the power relationships among the state, market and civil society are not equal rather one of the three players often takes the lead. Porio (1997) identifies two areas where power plays an important role in producing desired outcomes in urban governance. First, decisions and outcomes are influenced by the nature of the relationship among stakeholders at certain political and economic conjunctures. Second, stakeholders’ negotiation of power often indicates whether they have strong or weak positions in urban governance.

Urban governance falls under wider governance discourse (Minnery, 2007), where the state, market and civil society interact. Urban governance refers to the “processes of direction-

setting, policy making and implementation that incorporate the roles and responsibilities of government, the private sector and civil society in urban settings, as well as the partnerships and conflicts amongst them” (Minnery, 2007, p. 333). What happens within a city is determined by relationships and interactions between these three sectors (Devas, 2004). The specific actors and institutions involved in urban governance are “private sector businesses, both private and informal; civil society, including community based organisations, NGOs, political parties, religious groups, trade unions and trade associations; and the whole range of governmental agencies of national, regional and local government, including traditional authorities where they exist” (Devas, 2005, p. 25). Individual citizens and all households irrespective of incomes are also involved in governance. Since the beginning of the 1990s, urban governance literature has highlighted the critical role of civil society (in conjunction with national and local governments, market, and individual citizens) in governing urban space.

The term ‘civil society’ has various meanings in the discourse of international development (Devas, 2005; Mitlin, 2001). The term accounts for formal and informal organisations beyond NGOs; some of which have played crucial roles in promoting participatory democracy through social movements in Eastern Europe, Latin America and the Philippines (Mitlin, 2001). For this thesis, I use the term civil society to refer to any organisations or groups in the space between the family, the state, and the market that undertake activities for the public good (Salamon & Anheier, 1998). These activities may be operated by NGOs, Community Based Organisations (CBOs), trade organisations, religious and community organisations, or any other local and national grassroots organisations or small informal groups that work individually or together to demand poor people’s right to the city. Such a conceptualisation of civil society and governance is important for studying informality as it includes ordinary people’s participation in governance, thus representing one of the goals of the right to the city, as discussed in Chapter Two. This conceptualisation further points out that informal governing relations are equally as important as formal relations in governing urban space (Devas, 2005).

While discussing the importance of participatory planning and governance, Healey (2003) emphasises the engagement of ordinary citizens and social groups in managing collective affairs to address material inequalities and the distribution of resources to reduce ‘disadvantage’. However, ‘participatory planning’ as a governance process has not yet been

adopted in Dhaka and instead Dhaka's planning and governance system is highly state centric, technocratic, bureaucratic, and mostly dominated by political power and kinship-based relationships (Kabir & Parolin, 2012; Morshed, 2014).

3.3.2 Informal governance in accessing space

Previous literature has adopted an institutional perspective when examining governance, which positions state agents as central to planning and the production of rules, even in cases where participatory governance and planning occurs. To effectively participate in institutional functions (such as rule making procedures, processes of political participation, and confrontation and debate) actors require a detailed knowledge of existing rules and procedures, as well as skills in negotiation (Etzold, 2013). In many parts of the Global South, the urban poor lack this detailed knowledge of institutional arrangements due to lack of education and exclusion by the state and its apparatuses. In these contexts, institutional arrangements ignore poor people's right to appropriate space and their participation in formal planning and governance. Consequently, the urban poor are left on their own to govern their lives and livelihoods. Hence the urban poor in the Global South often rely on NGOs, CBOs and other local powerful actors to govern everyday practices, rather than seeking assistance from state actors.

3.3.2.1 NGOs and informal governance

In terms of the role of civil society in promoting participatory governance and planning (an important factor in poor people's right to a city) NGOs have played a crucial role in capacity building of grassroots organisations towards transformative political engagement and demanding poor people's rights for housing and livelihoods (Bhowmik, 2005; de Souza, 2006; Recio, 2015). Most NGOs emerged in different parts of the world during the 1970s and 1980s, with an aim to offer innovative and people-centred approaches to service delivery, advocacy, and to empower the urban poor in response to failures of state-led development approaches (Banks & Hulme, 2012). There are two types of NGOs that provide these services; NGOs that are based in one country that provide development services abroad are known as International NGOs (INGOs) or northern NGOs (NNGOs). This contrasts with Southern NGOs that largely depend on donor funding for delivering services; these are referred to as domestic or local NGOs or Southern NGO partners (SNGOs). Though relations

between INGOs and SNGOs are often portrayed as partnerships, these relations are “highly unequal, balanced heavily in favour of those with the funding and resources” (Banks & Hulme, 2012, p. 4). This indicates that many Southern NGOs run donor driven projects that ignore the needs of local residents. The activities of NGOs (who provide advocacy and human rights related services) may be regarded with suspicion and hostility by governments (Banks & Hulme, 2012; Rose, 2011). Despite this, collaboration with national governments for the provision of welfare services can increase the sustainability of NGO programs (Barr, Fafchamps, & Owens, 2005; Rosenberg, Hartwig, & Merson, 2008). Thus, it is important to consider prevailing institutional arrangements in the emergence and proliferation of NGOs in the Global South (Lewis, 1998).

In South Asian countries such as India, Pakistan and Bangladesh, government-NGO relationships have been influenced by a mixture of local socio-political environments, NGO activities, donor driven agendas, and global policies and pressures (Nair, 2011). For example, in India, NGOs have expanded their activities among marginalised groups due to a diminishing of formal representative institutions, as well institutionalised NGO participation in government initiated slum upgrading programs (Appadurai, 2001; Clarke, 1998). In the Philippines, NGOs have been incorporated into local government; they advocate for poor people’s participation in local planning and governance, particularly in response to the inability of political parties to represent the needs and interests of large portions of the population (Clarke, 1998). In contrast, NGOs in Indonesia and Vietnam operate within the limited political space available to civil society, due to state’s hegemonic character (Clarke, 1998).

In contrast to Asia, NGOs in Africa operate on a limited scale and often join the patronage networks of political leaders; this is due to Africa’s history of active associational life in which indigenous membership organisations have long played an important role in community development (Brass, 2012b; Hearn, 2007). Conversely, NGOs in Latin America conduct activities with an aim to bring structural changes to politics and economy to provide more opportunities for the urban poor, opposing the authoritarian regimes across the region (Bebbington, 2005; Drabek, 1987; Miraftab, 1997). Some NGOs operating in Bangladesh have also followed similar paths (Stiles, 2002). However, NGO led resistance activities hamper organisational relationships with the government. Hence donor agencies discourage these kinds of politicised activities. Consequently, even NGOs in Latin America have

curtailed their overt focus on social justice and instead limit their activities to service delivery (Brass, 2012a; Kamat, 2004). With the introduction of the World Bank's 'good governance' policy in the 1990s, NGOs began to play an important role in civil society driven political reform (Harsh, Mbatia, & Shrum, 2010). This newly established political character of NGOs again poses challenges to the state, which have hampered government-NGO relationships, often leading to state imposed restrictions on foreign aid (Clarke, 1998; Dupuy, Ron, & Prakash, 2016). Hence most NGOs role as development organisations takes precedence over their role as political reformers (Clarke, 1998).

In recent years NGOs have channelled their reformist character into forming and empowering grassroots community organisations to enable them to pressure governments and demand their rights to participate in planning and governing processes, and thus their rights to housing and livelihood opportunities. For example, Shack/Slum Dwellers International (SDI) is an alliance of country level organisations that support urban poor populations across 33 countries, in which communities negotiate with the state, and NGOs provide them necessary support to function properly (Banks & Hulme, 2012; Mitlin & Satterthwaite, 2007). NGOs in different parts of the Global South have played an important role in forming community organisations, ensuring poor people's participation in planning and governance, supporting them to fight for tenure security, and providing them with basic services (Mitlin, 2001; Shatkin, 2009; Vakil, 1999). This indicates the importance of informal and community governance for establishing urban poor's right to the city. Grassroots community organisational formations allow the urban poor opportunities to participate in formal governance structures, from which they are otherwise largely excluded.

3.3.2.2 CBOs and informal governance

Existing research shows that the urban poor in the Global South form collective organisations either independently or with the support of NGOs to pursue their rights to basic services and to participation in formal governance (Mitlin, 2001). Recently, the World Bank has encouraged participation of grassroots organisations in development projects and local decision-making. These kinds of participatory programs are introduced to the urban poor through NGO supported local Community-Based Organisations (CBOs) or People's organisations (POs) (Van Kampen & Van Naerssen, 2008). These types of participatory development programs are known as 'community driven development' (Dasgupta and Beard,

2007). Most CBOs are usually “unregistered, informal, local, or grassroots organisations that obtain their finances primarily from their members or NGOs” (Otiso, 2003, p. 224). CBOs may receive support directly from the state if intermediary organisations such as NGOs initiate communication. Following World Bank’s mandate, local governments and NGOs in the Global South have supported CBOs when implementing housing and service delivery projects (Appadurai, 2001; Satterthwaite & Mitlin, 2013; Van Kampen & Van Naerssen, 2008). There are certain advantages of engaging communities in NGO projects. First, it creates a sense of project ownership in the community, lowers implementation costs, and creates more sustainable projects. Second, working with NGOs enables CBOs to pursue community demands to governments and donor agencies; as explored by Shatkin (2009) in the Philippines. Third, CBOs can ensure that the beneficiaries of low cost housing and services are distributed among local people, not usurpers from wealthier segments of society (Mitullah, 1992). Fourthly, CBOs can deliver better services if they are empowered to do so as they do not follow a bureaucratic hierarchy (Vakil, 1999).

CBOs have successfully established connections with local governments with the help of NGOs to claim their basic rights in different parts of the Global South such as Asia (Dasgupta and Beard, 2007; Appadurai, 2001), Africa (McEwan, 2003), and Latin America (Kamat, 2003). Existing research shows that CBOs often lack the capacity to implement local housing and service delivery schemes unless these projects are initiated by other agencies such as NGOs (Danso-Wiredu & Midheme, 2017; Mitlin, 2001; Otiso, 2002). Apart from dependency on NGOs, CBOs are often dependent on charismatic leaders, whose absence may impair their activities (Vakil, 1999). Furthermore, CBOs have less power and authority to influence dominant actors such as the state and local government (Shatkin, 2009). Many CBO members are selected from well-off segments of the community, which may hamper these organisations commitment to serve the poorer members of the community (Vakil, 1999). Thus, CBOs may often represent communities only partially, and may rely heavily on local powerful leaders and their connections with local government. This does little to ensure equal distribution of resources and power within communities, but rather produces new forms of patronage relations that de Wit and Berner (2009) refer to as ‘progressive patronage’. The notion of ‘progressive patronage’ usefully theorises the extent to which municipalities and NGOs have (wittingly or unwittingly) accepted informal, vertically organized power and patronage relations. This is because the urban poor’s demands for services exceed local government and NGOs capacities in any city, so the latter must choose beneficiary

communities (de Wit and Berner, 2009). Thus, in most poor communities ‘patron-client’ relations emerge, which is sometimes more effective on the local level than institutional governance (de Wit & Berner, 2009; Huq, 2016; Mitlin, 2008).

3.3.2.3 Patron- client relations and informal governance

Apart from criticisms of CBOs, critics of formal/institutional multi-stakeholder governance argue that this kind of governance assumes an ideal democratic model that is practiced in the West, where it is believed that participants have an equal division of power; however this power distribution is often not realised in Global South Cities (Van Kampen & Van Naerssen, 2008). In many cities of the Global South, the urban poor are not officially included in institutional governance systems, and so rely on local dominant actors to get public services (Heller & Evans, 2010). Discussions on planning and governance also indicate a ‘gray space’ (Yiftachel, 2009b) (Chapter Two) created by formal institutions, where informality often operates utilising informal power relations and making connections with state actors through local political leaders and their enforcers, who are popularly known as patrons. Many countries in the Global South have authoritarian traditions, where patron-client relationships dominate governance structures (Devas, 2005; Van Kampen & Van Naerssen, 2008). As de Wit and Berner (2009, pp. 931-932) note:

Patronage is a good example of a very important, widely prevalent and informal indigenous relationship – an institution pre-dating industrialization and democracy. It is culturally rooted, endogenously enforced and upheld by mutual agreement among the social actors involved, even though the relationship can be exploitative. It is fundamentally based on – and also sustains – a difference of power, as it is governed by norms and actions which lead to the widespread construction and maintenance of social inequality.

One of the reasons behind these existing patron-client relations is that the poor experience severe problems in accessing government agencies and institutions to claim basic services such as housing and employment (de Wit and Berner, 2009). This is related to scarce resources in the cities of the Global South. Consequently, these resources are distributed among local political elites or bureaucrats and this group mostly favours their clients (Heller & Evans, 2010; Van Kampen & Van Naerssen, 2008). Following this patron-client tradition,

some community organisations have successfully utilised their political connections and voting rights to protect their slums from government eviction. Chatterjee (2004) refers to this group as ‘political society’. In contrast to ‘civil society’, the subaltern group has used their collective political power to influence local power structure to pursue their demands to the state. Yet the ideology of the Communist Party played an important role in this formation of ‘political society’ in West Bengal in India (Chatterjee, 2004). However, other socio-economic and political factors often constrain forming and operating this kind of ‘political society’. More importantly, this kind of success is temporary; Chatterjee further demonstrated that in 2002, the Congress government attempted to evict the rail colony again that he used as a case to make his arguments on the formation of ‘political society’.

Yet due to local socio-political cultures, the urban poor’s capacity to form this kind of ‘political society’ to utilise their political connections to claim rights to basic services, including rights to appropriate space for livelihoods, is limited (Bayat, 1997b; Etzold, 2015; Etzold et al., 2009). In some cities of the Global South, local level state actors extort the urban poor by demanding bribes in return for the use of public space for livelihood practices. As discussed earlier, the state has created informal spaces and labelled informal trades as illegal. This state led informality is used by both elites and subalterns, however, state actors often perpetuate ‘predatory space’ (Anjaria, 2006a) by either exploiting the urban poor or evicting them from vending space. Anjaria’s (2006a) study in Mumbai shows how state officials collect ‘*hafta*’ (weekly bribe) from street vendors by not legalising vending activities and keeping vendors in ‘a constant state of flux’. In Dhaka, Etzold’s (2013) study reveals how evictions of street vendors are not carried out ‘once and for all’, and instead evictions serve as a reminder of state power and demonstrate state actor’s ability to gain from state created informality. Due to the dichotomous state of urban space, both state and non-state actors determine access to public space (Hackenbroch, 2013a). Some of these actors have two-dimensional power and are part of formal governance structure. For example, police and ward councillors (WCs) are powerful due to their official position in the local governments. They have political power to govern the residents under their jurisdictions. However, the urban poor hardly resist against these state and non-state actors due to the lack of dominating power (Hackenbroch, 2013a).

3.4 Resistance in public space

The urban poor might have less dominating power and participatory power in decision-making processes in some parts of the Global South, however, they have the power to resist, which they utilise to protest against powerful state and non-state actors (Kerkvliet, 2009; Scott, 1990). Sharp et al. (2000) argue that the ordinary citizens have power to resist, if not directly then indirectly. By ‘resisting power’, Sharp et al. (2000, p.3) refer to “power which attempts to set up situations, grouping and actions which resist the impositions of dominating power”. Resisting power ranges from very small, subtle and trivial moments to more developed moments; this occurs when discontent translates into a form of social movement that coordinates people, materials and practices in the pursuit of specific goals (Sharp et al., 2000). To understand poor people’s agency to resist dominant actors and claim access to public space, it is important to explore how they utilise power to resist. Resistance can be either covert, everyday resistance or overt collective resistance (Hummel, 2017; Scott, 2008). Sharp et al. (2000) further argue that resistance occurs only when ordinary people on the ‘grassroots’ level understand that leaders exercise power over them, and only if the former have the power to take initiative to change these structures. This also allows for consideration of the structural barriers imposed on ordinary people that limit their power to resist. This type of power focuses more on ordinary people’s everyday politics and resistance strategies. Resisting power varies depending on the socio-economic and political culture of a society (Bayat, 2000; Hummel, 2017). For example, the social movement literature shows collective action decisions are often shaped by political contexts and depend on encouraging or repressive regimes and legislation (Goodwin, 2001; McAdam, Tarrow, & Tilly, 2003; Tarrow, 1981). Depending on these structural constraints, resistance can take the form of overt collective resistance or covert individual resistance. Conversely, resistance may involve a combination of these main two forms of resistance, depending on rebels’ organisational capacity and their access to power.

3.4.1 Overt resistance

Research on social movements has suggested that people can mobilise and form collective movements due to grievances (Gurr, 1970), emotional cycles (Luthfa, 2012; Seawright, 2012) and identity politics (Yashar, 2005). However, these explanations play little or no role in the organising logic of the urban poor in the Global South, especially in forming street vendor

organisations or other informal worker organisations (Hummel, 2017). Furthermore, political economy perspectives mostly favour a Marxian model of overt collective resistance by subaltern groups (Bayat, 2000; Draper, 1986). However, historically the urban poor as a subaltern group has had limited agency and power to form collective movements in most regions of the Global South, with Latin America as an exception to this (Bayat, 2004). Hence the ‘urban movement perspective’ has largely emerged from the writing of Latin American scholars (Bayat, 2004).

In Latin America, Mexican street vendors utilise their political connections with national political parties to claim their rights (Crossa, 2009). They have managed to reoccupy their space in the Historic Centre of Mexico City, utilising long established associational power and connections with different social networks (Crossa, 2009). The success of these collective movements can be linked to political practices in those countries. India has a long history of resistance and trade unionism dating back to the colonial period (Bhowmik, 2008), whereas the Mexican government encourages street vendor organisations (Crossa, 2009, 2014).

The prevalence of urban movements varies considerably from country to country due to the multiplicity of competing interest groups such as governments, private interests and others (Bayat, 2002, 2004). For example, even in Latin America, grassroots organisations have had better opportunities for collective action in Peru than in Brazil during the periods that Brazil was ruled by military dictators (Bayat, 2004). In Brazil, the poor have less opportunity for resisting as they “seek their betterment through the paternalistic, individualistic channels of favours and exchange of interests” (Leeds & Leeds, 1976, p. 211). In contrast to Brazil, the poor in Chile were organised more extensively due to the episodes of political openness and radical groupings at that time (Bayat, 2004). This movement has its roots in the socio-spatial conditions of the Latin American region, where local soup kitchens, neighbourhood associations, church groups, or street trade unionism have historically been active in pursuing marginalised groups’ demands. In contrast, these kinds of associations are hardly visible in the Middle East, Asia or Africa (Bayat, 2004), except in countries such as India (Jhabvala, 2010; Schindler, 2014) and South Africa (Skinner, 2008b).

In some cities of the Global South, vendors have been able to use collective agency to resist state power (Crossa, 2009, 2014; Mackie, Bromley, & Brown, 2014; Roever, 2016). Unlike

the Bangladeshi urban poor, urban poor populations in India and the Philippines have more opportunities for collective action due to political openness and governance structure of those countries. The urban poor of India have used their collective political agency actively to create greater livelihood security. According to Chatterjee (2004, p. 40), the urban poor of India, whose very “livelihood or habitation involves violation of law”, have established a ‘political society’ to press claims for housing and livelihoods. In India and South Africa, the urban poor have successfully formed associations and collective movements due to their connections with national and international NGOs and advocacy groups; for example Self Employed Women's Union (SEWU) in Africa, Self Employed Women's Association (SEWA) in India, National Association of Street Vendors of India (NASVI), StreetNet International and Women in Informal Employment: Globalizing and Organizing (WIEGO) (Jhabvala, 2010; Lund & Skinner, 1999). These associations have helped the urban poor to demand their rights to livelihoods and form collective movements against governments in India, South Africa and Latin America (Bhowmik, 2012b; Schindler, 2014; Setšabi & Leduka, 2008; Skinner & Valodia, 2003).

In India, collective movements successfully led to the passing of the National Street Vending Law in 2014. Indian street vendors have exercised their political agency to pursue demands utilising patron-client relationships and strong leadership, which emerged from their leaders’ earlier engagement with trade unions (Chatterjee, 2004; Jhabvala, 2010). Indian vendors were also able to turn the NASVI into a trade union federation and pressured leaders to operate neutrally by cutting their ties with political parties (Bhowmik, 2003). Vendors also formed coalitions with International organisations such as Streetnet International and WIEGO (Jhabvala, 2010). All these examples indicate the importance of considering the contextualised political economy of a country before analysing poor people’s agency to form a collective movement against the state and its apparatuses.

In some parts of the Global South, street vendors have collectively pursued their demands whereas in other parts vendors cannot organise to resist collectively. In terms of the right to appropriate space for earning a livelihood, most governments in the Global South have hostile policies towards street vending (Bhowmik, 2012a; Donovan, 2002; Huang, Xue, & Li, 2014). These governments run eviction drives to re-purpose land, to provide greater returns on capital, or to give their cities a more ‘global’ aesthetic to attract foreign investment (Dupont, 2011), as discussed in Chapter Two. Consequently, vendors are regularly subject to

intimidation, coercion and exploitation by a range of formal and informal power holders. Informal street vendors have little ability and few resources to resist these sources of power (Anjaria, 2010; Etzold & Keck, 2009). Hence, they resort to everyday resistance.

3.4.2 Resistance by stealth – everyday resistance

To gain a better understanding of street vendors' political agency and outcomes, it is important to consider indirect resistance strategies employed by actors to access urban space other than 'heroic' accounts of organised resistance (Abu-Lughod, 1990). Resistance has multiple and varied forms and collective resistance is not the only form that street traders employ to resist the state and private sector rather the subaltern group use covert resistance, as noted by Scott (1985), Kerkvliet (2009), and Bayat (2000a, 2000b, 2013). In his work on peasants in Malaysia, Scott (2008) argues that the form of resistance depends on relations of power between subaltern and dominant groups. Scott (1985) has categorised two main forms of resistance: everyday resistance and a more direct open confrontation. In direct confrontation, one seeks the 'formal de jure' recognition, whereas in everyday resistance 'tacit de facto gains' are prioritised (Scott, 2008). Direct resistance evolves into a pattern of resistance that often demands drastic change of social structures (Bayat, 2004; Scott, 1985, 2008). This section focuses on everyday forms of resistance. Everyday forms of resistance are small scale, and require little or no collective mobilisation and are often hardly recognised by the group being resisted.

Scott (1985) introduced the term 'everyday resistance' to describe "quiet, dispersed, disguised or otherwise seemingly invisible" (Vinthagen & Johansson, 2013, p. 4) resistance; this is in contrast to dramatic, visible, and often collective or confrontational forms of resistance. Scott (1990) refers to this form of resistance as 'infrapolitics'. Infrapolitics refers to a form of politics, where individuals or groups adopt covert resistance strategies to go beyond the gaze of authority (Scott, 1990). This kind of resistance strategy includes foot-dragging, sarcasm, escape, passivity, laziness, disloyalty, misunderstandings, slander, avoidance or theft (Vinthagen & Johansson, 2013). Subaltern groups employ these forms of covert resistance when they find it is too risky to confront dominant groups directly (Scott, 1985, 1990). Similar kinds of resistance strategies are explored among street vendors in Dhaka who hardly resist state and non-state actors' practices of eviction and extortion.

Like Scott, Kerkvliet's studies on peasants in Vietnam and the Philippines provide an analysis of resistance and relations of power in everyday life. Everyday politics "involves people embracing, complying with, adjusting, and contesting norms and rules regarding authority over, production of, or allocation of resources and doing so in quiet, mundane, and subtle expressions and acts that are rarely organised or direct" (Kerkvliet, 2009, p. 232). This form of politics is important in studying informal traders' behaviour as it indicates a form of politics where individuals or small groups behave in a certain way to make a living, raise their families, and to solve their problems associated with interacting with others (peers, superiors, and/or subordinates). Like Scott, Kerkvliet also argues that people may be unaware of their political agency whilst acting.

According to Kerkvliet (2009), everyday politics can take four forms: support, compliance, modifications and evasions, and resistance. All these forms of everyday politics are important in studying the urban poor's daily life as they offer a theoretical lens to explain poor people's political behaviour at the local and national level. For example, the urban poor are supported mostly by their powerful neighbours and local politicians in exchange of complying with their demands for protection money or votes. Though modifications and evasions cannot be directly linked to resistance against state authorities or immediate political leaders and rules, it can provide a useful explanation on how people negotiate governance systems by modifying their daily behaviours. Kerkvliet's definition offers individualistic, covert resistance strategies, as a way for poor people to survive in a coercive social structure. Kerkvliet's understanding of compliance and modification is helpful in explaining street vendors' compliance to payment of protection money to intermediary groups in Dhaka. In Dhaka, street vendors have modified their attitude towards extortion by turning this practice into an informal governance mechanism, which will form a key discussion of Chapter Seven.

Kerkvliet and Scott's perspectives on covert resistance usefully indicate ordinary people's agency to make changes in normative social systems through everyday practices. However, their studies mostly present individuals' intention to resist in a covert way without challenging dominant groups. Challenging this existing notion of resistance, Katz (2004) argues that resistance is an autonomous and deliberate action against powerful actors. She differentiates between resilience, reworking and resistance. By 'resilience', Katz refers to people's everyday practices of recuperation and re-articulation through which people get by each day. 'Reworking' refers to situations where people are able to alter their conditions of

existence. However, Katz does not consider the structural constraints that affect people's everyday life, their decisions, or the extent to which historical and geographical conditions of oppressions and exploitations determine people's agency to make changes to social and political systems. Katz's classification is more in line with Scott's (1990, p. 190) 'infrapolitics' that differentiates between "disguised, low-profile undisclosed resistance" and "open, declared forms of resistance". However, by distinguishing in this way, she does not consider the importance of resistance as a coping strategy. Katz definition can be employed when analysing street traders' confrontations with state actors and policies, and when considering the resilience strategies used by the urban poor for surviving eviction drives. However, Katz placed less importance on covert resistance strategies that are often used by the powerless marginalised groups in the Global South.

Bayat (1997b) has established a connection between Scott's covert resistance and overt collective action. Bayat (1997b) provides an outline through which atomised action or individualistic agency could subsequently be transformed to collective action, proposing a new form of politics – 'street politics', "a set of conflicts and the attendant implications between a collective populace and the authorities, shaped and expressed episodically in the physical and social space of the 'streets' – from the alleyways to the more visible pavements, public parks or sports areas" (Bayat, 1997b, p. 63). Bayat (1997b, 2000) argues that the urban poor utilise an informal and contested governance in accessing public space such as street pavements, crossroads, urban land, and spaces for assembly. Bayat (2000) refers to this spatial practice as the 'quiet encroachment of the ordinary'.

The term 'quiet encroachment' refers to "the silent, protracted but pervasive advancement of the ordinary people on the propertied and powerful to survive and improve their lives . . . marked by quiet, largely atomised and prolonged mobilisation with episodic collective action" (Bayat, 2000, pp. 545-546). This practice of quiet encroachment of the ordinary often leads to forms of resistance against formal rules and regulations, forming a 'passive network' among the people who use public space while working on the street. This type of mobilisation emerges due to these peoples' shared interests in using public space. This passive network and atomised groups of people might extend their network to others outside their immediate members, who might experience similar structural barriers to achieve their goals such as students, factory workers, or women's organisations. Additionally, collective movements of ordinary people are possible if states allow some degree of openness and

competition between political parties (Bayat, 1997b). Bayat's framework of 'street politics' raises questions regarding leadership in transforming atomised agency to collective agency in the context of authoritarian governments. As governments in the Global South impose restrictions on meaningful political participation and the development of effective civil society organizations (Bayat, 2013; Huang et al., 2014), it is hard for the urban poor to form strong collective movements by themselves unless and until the state ensures their democratic rights or opens up possibilities for forming organisations to pursue their demands.

Another related problem is leadership among the marginalised groups. This might be a problem when grassroots associations are co-opted by political parties, which prioritise party interests over poor people's interests (Adnan, 2007; Karim, 2001), however, there are many grassroots organisations that have successfully pursued collective demands for vending sites without any political connection such as the Association of Small Scale Businesses in Dar es Salam, Tanzania (Nnkya, 2006) and the Kampala District Market Vendors' Association in Kampala, Uganda (Lindell & Ampaire, 2016).

A major challenge for collective movements is that sometimes marginalised groups struggle to find a common interest and fight for it when their members are too diverse and have different needs. Marginalized groups are differentiated in nature and sometimes use contradictory methods to oppose state power (Crossa, 2014). However, Bayat's work still offers an excellent opportunity to explore how 'street politics' might enable or constrain ordinary people's mobilisation power to form collective action against state and state actors in general.

I adopt the above mentioned theoretical contribution of resistance and street politics in exploring street vendors' everyday politics in Dhaka and their agency and intention to transform their atomised action into collective action (see Chapters Seven and Eight). Constitutionally, Bangladesh has a democratic government; however, much like in India, state activities often reflect 'clientelist and authoritarian' governance structures (Heller & Evans, 2010). As such, the urban poor have little opportunity for collective action against the state. As Kabeer (2003b, p. 9) notes,

the concentration of power among a privileged few and the pervasiveness of patron-client relationship in securing any form of access for the rest of society has served to

fragment and isolate the poor along vertical lines and to prevent the emergence of horizontal, class-based solidarities which could challenge these hierarchies.

Due to this kind ‘clientelist and authoritarian’ governance structures , a micro-political perspective of power and governance will be useful to explain the resistance strategies of the urban poor against the hegemonic modes of governance in Dhaka, which are often carried out by nation states and supra-national players (Etzold, 2013). This micro-political perspective of power and resistance will be utilised in exploring poor people’s resistance strategies in Dhaka to answer research question two in Chapter Seven.

3.5 Conclusion

This chapter has outlined a contested governance approach based on existing theories and literature. Power relations play an important role in the development of contested governance approach as access to power ultimately determines whose interests are best served in decision-making processes. Hence it is important to explore how much power the urban poor have to influence policies in terms of redistributing resources of a city, which in turn determines their claims to public space for earning an income. This framework will be used to ask: to what extent has the form and nature of urban governance enabled and constrained poor people’s access to and use of public space to pursue livelihoods in Dhaka? This question will be addressed in Chapter Six.

Existing research shows that the urban poor in most cities of the Global South are excluded from participation in formal planning and governance structures, although the World Bank has introduced community driven development and participatory governance since the beginning of the 1990s in an effort to respond to this. Though some governments have adopted this participatory approach and included poor people in formal planning and governance, there is an imbalance in terms of exercise of power by different stakeholders. In most parts of the Global South, formal planning and governance decisions are still dominated by state actors and politicians more so than the NGOs and community organisations. In some cities of the Global South, the urban poor are not included in institutional planning and governance processes. In addition to excluding the poor from decision-making processes, many governments do not provide necessary services to the poor. Moreover, poor people

have fewer opportunities to access local governments and establish connections with institutions to directly demand for the provision of basic public services.

In most cases, ordinary people have less access to local governments unless their access is institutionally permitted, as in the case of the Philippines. Thus the urban poor depend on NGO services and their CBOs to pursue their demands (Appadurai, 2001; Dasgupta & Beard, 2007). Apart from NGOs and CBOs, the urban poor also rely on local dominant actors to access state actors and services. This indicates the importance of patron-client relations in the local level in many parts of the Global South. In terms of governance in slums and public space, residents often informally reproduce local governance and connect with local government actors by utilising informal networks and power relations. The urban poor maintain relations with a number of state and non-state actors to access basic services, including access to public space for livelihoods.

An examination of these locally situated governance processes highlights the importance of understanding urban informality, gray space, the volatile relations between formal and in-state actors (known as 'patron-client' relations), and most significantly the role of informal governance within these processes. This conceptual understanding will be used and further developed in answering the following research questions: (1) to what extent does the form and nature of urban governance enable and constrain poor people's access to and use of public space to pursue livelihoods? (Chapter Six), (2) how do street vendors in Dhaka pursue livelihoods in constant negotiation with other more powerful actors in society? (Chapter Seven), and (3) what are the gendered aspects to the appropriation of urban space for livelihoods? (Chapter Eight).

The conceptualisation of power and resistance presented in Section 3.3 indicates that actors have differential amounts of dominating and resisting power, however, the urban poor do not possess much dominating power on the local level. Consequently, they utilise resisting power. Using this resisting power, the urban poor in many parts of the Global South have formed collective movements; establishing organisations to resist dominant actors and their extortion (Chatterjee, 2004; Crossa, 2009). However, resistance literature has revealed that collective resistance depends on local political cultures and democratic practices. Collective action also depends on people's agency to form organisations to pursue demands, which is often expensive and time consuming. More importantly, when governments are authoritarian

in nature, they curb collective expression of grievances. Consequently, in some parts of the Global South, the urban poor resort to covert resistance strategies due to their powerless position in society and their unwillingness and/or failure to form strong organisations (Bayat, 2000; Scott, 1985). This understanding of various types of resistance will be useful to explain the resistance strategies that the urban poor of Dhaka utilise to claim their right to the city in general, and access to public space in particular; questions that are discussed in Chapters Six and Seven. However, Chapter Seven mainly deals with men's access to public space for earning a livelihood, whereas women might utilise differing strategies as they experience social and cultural constraints in addition to institutional constraints. Following this discussion on gendered space (Chapter Two), Chapter Eight addresses what barriers women experience while accessing public space and how they negotiate with different actors to access public space for earning an income.

Finally, this chapter has explained the dichotomous relations between formal and informal governance in governing gray spaces. This leads to the importance of a contested governance approach in understanding the everyday politics of the urban poor in accessing public space. This conceptual framework, along with the research findings and methodological debate on contested governance and everyday politics in accessing public space, offers an analytical framework to explain informal practices for utilising public space in similar socio-economic context apart from the case study of Sattola slum. This contested approach also encompasses an enmeshed approach of macro structures and poor people's agency, which is related to critical and subtle realism that I have adopted as the ontological and epistemological position for the thesis. The methodological underpinning and empirical elements that are used to conduct the case study of Sattola slum are presented in the next chapter.

Chapter 4: Methodology

4.1 Introduction

The aim of this chapter is to detail how I examined the nature and form of urban governance that enabled or constrained poor people's access to public space to pursue livelihoods and the strategies and tactics poor people utilise to access public space. I employed a qualitative case study approach, a method of inquiry that emphasises in-depth exploration of a particular case from multiple perspectives to get an understanding of the complexity and uniqueness of the particular phenomenon under study (Simons, 2009). The case under investigation for this study is that of the urban poor, especially street vendors in Dhaka's Sattola slum. A qualitative approach allowed me to conduct a deep exploration of how street vendors access public space to pursue livelihoods in constant negotiation with other powerful actors in society and the gendered aspects to the appropriation of urban space for livelihood.

This chapter first describes the ontological and epistemological assumptions that have been used to conduct the case study. The research was conducted following a 'critical realist' paradigm. This approach enables the researcher to draw on the research participants' experiences to incorporate subjective understandings of an objective reality that includes social structures, social processes, power relations, agency, and inequality. Combining these subjective and objective understandings, the researcher is able to make theoretical generalisations to other similar contexts (Hammersley, 1992). I provide a detailed discussion of the case study approach and its application to producing theory, along with a discussion of the case I have chosen for the study. I also discuss the processes through which I collected and analysed data for the study using Sattola slum as a case. Finally, I describe the main ethical issues and reflect on the positionality that I adopted while conducting the study.

4.2 Developing an appropriate methodology: a subtle realist perspective

The research questions outlined in Chapter One and theoretical and conceptual discussions in Chapters Two and Three indicate the importance of subjective understandings of an objective reality, in this case the reality of the pre-existing social structures that shape street vendors' livelihood practices and access to public space. The theories and concepts reflect a critical

understanding of the causal relationship between social structure and actor. The theories and concepts of space, gendered space, informality, right to the city, power and resistance presented in Chapters Two and Three show social actors are influenced by the wider social structure and vice versa. This understanding of an existing reality that influences the research subject conforms to the ontological tradition of ‘critical realism’, which acknowledges the causal nature of social structures (Bhaskar, 2008). Since Bhaskar first proposed this ontological tradition, a number of differing views and approaches to realism have subsequently emerged (Hunt, 2003). Critical realism acknowledges that a reality external to human consciousness exists which can only be partially known through discourse and representation (Dyson & Brown, 2005). Critical realism also argues that “all description of that reality is mediated through the filters of language, meaning-making and social context” (Oliver, 2011, p. 374). Since it is impossible to completely close the gap between the real world and our knowledge of it, “our knowledge of the world is fallible and theory laden” (Sayer, 2010, p. 5). Knowledge is not a constant truth and knowledge production is a social practice.

Apart from identifying the fallible nature of knowledge, critical realism has become popular in critical social research as it addresses the problems of structure and agency in the social sciences (Easton, 2010; Williams & Karahanna, 2013). Bhaskar (2008) proposes a link between structure and agency in developing knowledge criticising purely structuralist positions of determinism whereas individualistic approaches fail to take into account the influence of social context on social action. Critical realism considers actors’ actions and structures to be two separate ontological domains (Bhaskar, 2008). Both structures and actors are in constant interaction and produce events or outcomes that the researcher studies. In this case I have explored how urban informality is produced in Dhaka. In the social sciences, a phenomenon could be explained either using a structuralist or agent based focus or a mixed of the two. Critical realism best fits this kind of combined model which accounts for both structural constraints and the individual’s agency to navigate through these structural properties.

Critical realists have developed a stratified model of reality for the three domains: the empirical, the actual and the real (Bhaskar, 2008). The ‘empirical domain’ of reality is the domain where actors have direct access to, and experience, events; however, not all events are experienced (Collier, 1994). Structures have causal powers that can influence events.

Causal power exists independently; prior to our knowledge. Causal powers are seen as being trans-factual in critical realism, emerging from the belief that the social world is an open system in which different causal powers may coexist (Archer, 1998; Sayer, 1992). The actual domain refers to 'real world' events and experiences that are produced when the powers or mechanisms of the real are activated (Collier, 1994; Danermark, Ekstrom, Jakobsen, & Karlsson, 2002; Sayer, 2000). The real domain consists of structures, tendencies and causal powers that can produce events in the actual domain (Bhaskar, 2008). Sayer (2000) argues that the real domain exists independently whether or not we experience it or have knowledge of its disposition. It is in this domain that mechanisms, experiences and events exist (Bhaskar, 2008). The empirical domain of reality is the domain where actors have direct access and experience events yet not all events are experienced (Collier, 1994). Thus, the domain of the real is distinct and greater than the empirical domain which is a 'contingent relation' to the actual and the real domains (Bergin, Wells, & Owen, 2008).

Critical realism assumes that events are generated through underlying mechanisms and intransitive structures that can never be directly empirically accessed but can be known through their contingent effects. As such, critical realism helps us to explore existing structures that enable or constrain poor people's access to public space for a livelihood. To develop a theory of counter-space, informality and informal practices, it is important to understand that an ontological reality (underlying political, economic and socio-cultural factors that have contributed to unequal or equal access to public space) exist *a priori* to actors' construction of the social world, which is in line with the real domain of critical realism. The actual domain refers to the actors' informal practices and experiences which are influenced by structural factors, are only accessible by the researcher through the experiences of those actors.

While doing business, the subjects of this study negotiate and use different strategies to continue informal businesses and it is through these experiences that they are then able to make sense of these strategies (the empirical). It is the role of the researcher to interpret multiple empirical accounts of these events (the actual) to access the causal mechanisms behind them (the real). Critical Realism's focus on agency helps to explain how individuals actively produce informal practices in the context of formal and informal state regulations. The interplay between structural factors and actual events enables us to explain how informal practices are rooted in social structure, including the history and culture of an area, and it

explores how social actors also produce and reproduce informal practices in using their agency to access public space.

Using critical realism, I have attempted to identify the mechanisms and processes behind the ways in which street vendors access public space for earnings. Critical realism, unlike more positivist realist ontologies, recognises that knowledge of social structures can only be incomplete and is mediated by social actors' experiences, discourses and understandings, rather than existing at the empirical level which a more positivist approach would imply (Bhaskar, 2008; Danermark et al., 2002; Scott, 2005). Hence objective reality is not fully comprehensible by the researcher or research participants. Accordingly, this study explores the strategies poor people use to appropriate spaces within and beyond their own neighbourhood and other public space to survive. This study further investigates how access to public space for livelihood practices is constrained/enabled by informal and state actors, with a view to understanding the underlying mechanisms of access rules. In particular, this study explores the power imbalances that produce spatial inequality for poor people and the processes by which they are able to change urban spaces into the space of livelihoods.

The epistemological paradigm that best fits with critical realism and this study is known as 'subtle realism' (Hammersley, 1992). Critical realism produces theories such as the 'transitive domain' of fallible knowledge (Bhaskar, 2008). The transitive domain includes our concepts, theories and discourse of research (Platenkamp & Botterill, 2013). So the theories we produce in this domain remain open to change (Bhaskar, 2008). Like critical realism, subtle realism acknowledges that an external social reality might exist beyond the subjective understanding that can only be known through the constructed meanings of the participants (Hammersley, 1992). This view also recognises the importance of acknowledging multiple and valid descriptions and explanations of the same phenomena and so defines knowledge as the "beliefs about whose validity we are reasonably confident" (Hammersley, 2002, p. 73). Following subtle realism, I consider the possibility of the existence of multiple explanations or contradictory social conditions about the production of livelihood spaces by the poor and the strategies they apply to access and use those spaces in Dhaka, from the one that is obtained from this study. This approach allows the researcher to build contingent theory using context-specific experiences and also recognises the power of agency and interpretation by and through social actors.

4.3 Case study

Aligning with the critical and subtle realist view, a case study approach has been adopted as it allows the researcher to use multiple data collection methods, concentrating on one site, to provide the best chance of apprehending the structural reality beyond the observed (Danermark et al., 2002). As a research strategy, a case study approach allows the researcher to explore the dynamics present within a single case (Eisenhardt, 1989). A case study is also suited to a critical realist approach that intends to understand phenomenon in context (Wynn Jr & Williams, 2012). It allows the researcher to study phenomenon in “its natural context, bounded by time and space” (Hancock & Algozzine, 2015, p. 15). Case studies can be utilised to study events, situations, programs or activities (Hancock & Algozzine, 2015). Another reason for choosing a case study approach is that it enables the researcher to make a theoretical generalisation (Eisenhardt, 1989; Flyvbjerg, 2006). A single case is particularly useful for collecting in-depth information about a specific phenomenon (Flyvbjerg, 2001). I chose a single case study to explore poor people’s access to public space for earning an income. The case study selected for this thesis is an informal settlement, Sattola slum in Dhaka, where poor people live and often earn livings using public space both within and beyond the slum. Thus my case allows me to go beyond the bounded context of Sattola slum to explore livelihood practices of the urban poor in Dhaka. I also explored the structural conditions that have enabled or constrained poor people’s access to public space aligning with the critical realist view.

A reason for choosing a case study approach is that it enables me to make a theoretical generalisation, which is different from empirical generalisation. Theoretical generalisation refers to the development of a theory based on findings of a case study or case studies that can be extended to the context of a particular theoretical debate rather than being generalised for a larger collectivity based on the typicality of some sample in relation to a parent population (Davies, 2008; Sharp, 1998). A case study approach enables the researcher to explain the relationships between variables and theories and concepts can be developed using a single case, which can be used for examining future cases that might have similar features (Eisenhardt, 1989; Flyvbjerg, 2006; Ruddin, 2006). Thus case study research can produce “theory with stronger internal validity, wider generalizability, and higher conceptual level” (Eisenhardt, 1989, p. 544). For example, I can theorise what structural mechanisms enable or constrain poor people’s access to public space in Dhaka using Sattola slum as a case. This

theoretical generalisation can then be used to compare future cases if the study cases have similar properties/context and/or similar socio-economic, political and cultural conditions. I intend to develop a normative case (Thacher, 2006) presenting the prospects and problems of street vendors and their accessibility to public space for earnings. A normative case study is one that “aims to contribute to our understanding of important public values – to ideas” (Thacher, 2006, p. 1632). I emphasise understanding the present access issues related to street vendors’ livelihood practices and recommend what can be done to improve their livelihood conditions ensuring their right to access public space, using a normative case study framework.

4.4 Case study: Sattola slum

Sattola slum (Figure 4.1), which is located on public land, was selected as a case to explore the strategies poor people use to appropriate spaces within and beyond their own neighbourhood to survive. Due to the lack of official updated data on land ownership of slums, it is difficult to find an ‘ideal slum’. There were two main reasons behind my decision to focus on one slum, rather than two or more. First of all, I chose Sattola because it allowed the opportunity to interrogate aspects of participants’ lives and kinship relations which gave further depth to accounts of their livelihood activities. I interviewed people both at home (important for women) and in public space, which provided greater access for those who play a supporting role to activities in public space. Second, Sattola slum is one of the largest slums in Dhaka established on public space. Selecting this slum allows me to explore diversified informal practices along with the collection of rich data on access issues to public and parochial realms.

Sattola is located in the middle of the wealthier neighbourhoods of Niketon, Gulshan and Mohakhali in Dhaka (Figure 4.1). The houses are made of corrugated tin, bamboo, and mud. The residents pay rent, and electricity and water bills to their landlords. The central government has not provided the residents with any education or healthcare facilities. With the exception of some very narrow streets, there are few open spaces left in the slum. Vehicles cannot move within the slum and the residents use these spaces and their household spaces to make various products to sell in the street. A detailed description of Sattola slum and its local socio-economic, political, and cultural contexts are provided in Chapter Five.

Location: To answer the research questions, it is essential that the chosen slum is situated close to affluent and middle class neighbourhoods to be able to enable the researcher to have potential social interactions with their residents to understand the accessibility issue for the poor beyond the slum. Sattola slum is located at the centre of the city and it is surrounded by a diverse group of affluent neighbourhoods.

Size: The slum needs to be large enough to provide a considerable number of residents to be interviewed and to have a relatively self-dependent urban settlement. The total number of households of Sattola is 12,893 (BRAC, 2016). There are few large slums in Dhaka as, apart from government property, there is a lack of open spaces in Dhaka. The local government is vigilant and often evicts slums that are established on government land (Hackenbroch, Hossain, & Rahman, 2008).

Age of the Slum: An established slum is needed so that its inhabitants have regular contact with established urban structures and institutional/organisational set up to be able to answer the research questions, which focus on strategies the poor apply to use spaces within and beyond the slum. Sattola slum is almost 46 years old (Shiree-DSK, 2012).

Selecting Sattola slum as a case enabled me to draw a picture of a particular urban setting and a particular group, the poor, who deal with different issues in terms of accessibility to urban space, and hence apply different strategies to get access to those spaces to earn their livelihoods.

4.5 Methods

An interpretative approach was used to conduct the study. The interpretivist paradigm aims to understand and interpret the meanings in human behaviour rather than to empirically generalise or predict causes and effects (Neuman, 2014; Schwandt, 2000). Interpretivists remain open to new knowledge throughout the study and develop new knowledge with the help of participants (Neuman, 2014). It is important for an interpretivist researcher to understand meanings, motives, reasons, and other subjective experiences which are time and context bound (Neuman, 2014; Schwandt, 2000). Critical realism encourages the use of multiple methods to explain and understand observable reality, as well as interpretations, discourses and relationships (McEvoy & Richards, 2006). A combination of qualitative case

study methods was used to collect data: in-depth interviews, key informant interviews and observation. This choice of methods is drawn from spatial research (Bertuzzo, 2009; Etzold, 2011; Hackenbroch, 2013b) and is also driven by the theory, research questions and the ontological aspect of the study (Danermark et al., 2002; Pierce & Martin, 2015). This choice is also shaped by issues of access, time and resource constraints, building relationships with participants and my past experiences of local contexts as a result of living for 16 years in Dhaka city.

An overview of the methods used in this study is presented in Table 4.1.

Table 4.1: Techniques of data collection

Techniques of data collection	Sample	Further details
Semi-structured, in-depth interviews	99 interviews in total; 71 men and 28 women	Interviews were conducted with 74 street vendors and those who had a close relationship with the vending 'supply chain' such as 11 maids, six rickshaw pullers, five garment workers, one security guard and two grocery shopkeepers (Appendix F).
Key informant interviews	37 key informant interviews (persons with specific knowledge about different institutions); 16 government officials, an academic, eight local leaders/politically influential persons, three NGO officials, five NGO formed community members (popularly known as CBOs) and four landlords	Key informant interviews were carried out to gain in-depth knowledge about the institutional and non-institutional but politically influential actors' view regarding access issues, use of public space and livelihood practices by the urban poor.
Non-participant observation and photographs	I regularly visited (from early morning to late at night) and, as I walked through the settlement, I observed people and their activities. I also moved beyond the settlement, where they sell their products. I took photos of different parts of Sattola, vending sites, and various types of vending practices.	The purpose of non-participant observation was to gain an in-depth understanding of the strategies through which poor people use urban public space within and beyond their settlement. Photographs were taken for illustrative and descriptive purposes.
Summary	Total semi-structured, in-depth interviews= 99 Total key informant interviews = 37 Total site visits = 110 days	

Source: Author

4.5.1 Semi-structured and key informant interviews

The semi-structured interviews were used as the main research method to understand how poor people use public space for earning an income and what strategies they apply to access public space in Dhaka. Semi-structured interviews enable participants to describe and frame issues according to their perspectives, going beyond the researcher's theoretical framework, which provide in-depth information about a particular theme or generate new themes (Di Ruggiero, Cohen, & Cole, 2014). In a face-to-face interview, a researcher develops rapport with research participants and also enters into their historical and social context (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2009). In-depth interviews widen researchers' knowledge of the personal and social fields of participants. In social research, interviews are carried out with social agents who are either directly involved in the investigated phenomenon, or who have knowledge of this phenomenon (Rubin & Rubin, 2011). Researchers collect data in an interactive way and build trust and rapport with interviewees, providing them with opportunities to share their knowledge about a particular theme. I also incorporated new themes to the interview guide (Appendix A) that emerged from previous interviews.

Fieldwork was carried out over four months in Dhaka, from November 2015 to February 2016. Given the limited time frame, I hired four students from the University of Dhaka (where I have worked since 2014) as research assistants. I ran a workshop on research aims and research design for my research assistants prior to conducting fieldwork so that they would be equipped with the necessary information to assist me in my fieldwork. The research assistants initially accompanied me while I conducted interviews. This was to show them how I asked the questions so that they could follow my lead. Later, I also accompanied them at various times to oversee the process and quality of their interviews. I maintained regular contact with them to receive feedback and provide guidance. A total of 136 interviews were conducted. My research assistants interviewed 40 participants and I interviewed the remainder. Due to a lack of official government data on socio-economic and demographic characteristics of the residents of Sattola, before recruiting interviewees, we asked people's occupation to identify the extent and identities of informal workers of Sattola and to recruit participants who were using public space for earning an income.

Most of the residents of Sattola slum were engaged in informal, small-scale businesses; however, their business locations differed. Some residents occupied spaces near and within

the slum and some others visit neighbouring areas to sell goods. Some residents have permanent shops, some have semi-permanent shops, some sit temporarily, and some sell goods from their pushcarts. Apart from small shopkeepers, I identified all other small businesspeople as either hawkers or vendors. Those who sell goods roaming around the city without remaining in one place for long are known as hawkers. They usually carry a wooden stand and a big bowl full of food, and they sell the food as they roam around different parts of the city (Figure 4.2). Vendors are those businessmen who use pushcarts to sell their goods/products, and in most cases, they occupy a permanent space in which to operate their businesses. For the purpose of this research, I interviewed both groups, those who sell within and beyond the slum.

Figure 4.2: A vendor setting up a pushcart and hawkers selling wares (from the top)



Source: Author⁵

⁵ All photographs except maps in this thesis were taken by me unless otherwise stated in the captions.

Selection criteria for the interviews included a gender balance as men and women experience and use space differently and apply different strategies to appropriate public space, livelihood practices (those who are engaged in informal economic activities) and length of stay.

Participants were chosen based on the following criteria:

- level of engagement in informal businesses
- use of public space for vending
- age, gender, and occupational category (different mobility types and business items)
- relative power in the field (within and beyond Sattola)
- knowledge of local practices and the social system of Sattola
- knowledge of Dhaka's public space and poor people's livelihoods (key informants)
- regulators of public space in Dhaka (key informants).

An interview guide was used to interview the urban poor ([Appendix A](#)). The general interview checklist covered the following themes:

- spatiality of livelihoods
- use of public, private, and parochial realms for economic purposes
- access rules and arrangements to urban space
- legitimation of using/claiming public and parochial realms
- contestations and power
- negotiations and strategies
- resistance strategies.

A combination of purposive and snowball sampling techniques was used to develop theoretically and empirically grounded arguments (Mason, 2002). Some interviewees were initially recruited with the assistance of local NGOs, such as *Shastho, Odhikar o Narir Icchapuron* (Women's Health, Rights and Choice, popularly known as Shokhi), *Dushtha Shasthya Kendra* (DSK) and BRAC. I attended a meeting organised by Shokhi and met some women there. DSK officials also introduced me to some of their members. I was a lecturer at BRAC University for five years and was able to use my connections to find interviewees and

collect data on BRAC's health program. I initially used their assistance to build rapport with local people and to organise some interviews with local women. However, all of these NGO members were female and most were not engaged in informal economic activities. Thus, most participants were recruited based on the above-mentioned queries about people's occupation. Data were collected by conducting in-depth interviews of 99 participants (71 men and 28 women) including 74 street vendors and those who had a close relationship with the vending 'supply chain' such as 11 maids, six rickshaw pullers, five garment workers, one security guard and two grocery shopkeepers ([Appendix F](#)), to further contextualise life and livelihoods in Sattola, and 37 key informants ([Appendix G](#)). I recruited participants until I felt no new information was being obtained from further interviews. When selecting participants, it was important to recruit both female and male vendors due to the stark differences between men and women's access to, and experience of, public space in Dhaka. Few women operate business in public due to traditions of patriarchy and *purdah* (confinement of women), so accordingly, there are more men than women represented in my sample. As there were not many female vendors, I interviewed 11 maids and five garment workers to gain a better understanding of women's access issues to public space and the alternatives available to them. All interviewees were recruited from Sattola slum, with the exception of 16 government officials and an academic. Interviews lasted from 30 to 90 minutes. All interviews except one were conducted in Bangla. An interview with a DNCC official was conducted in English.

One of the challenges of interviewing poor people was that they have no spare time to sit quietly and talk as they are involved with their business from early morning to late at night. Consequently, most participants were interviewed in their work places. Most interviews were carried out in an informal manner, where participants chatted with me while selling wares to their customers. The advantage of interviewing in this way was that we also received additional information from their fellow businesspeople and observed their business mechanisms while interviewing them. Some participants were interviewed in their homes while they were preparing their food for sale. We ensured that no loss occurred to their businesses while participating in this research project. Most vendors offered food or other business materials to show their hospitality; however, in most cases we declined and offered money in exchange for the food.

Each interview opened with a question asking participants how long they had been in business and how they had started out in the business. We asked them to briefly tell us their life stories, such as why they moved to Dhaka, what they used to do before migrating to Dhaka, and whether their relatives also lived in the same slum. We also talked about how their neighbours and relatives helped to access this vending site and provide start-up capital and business ideas to set up their businesses. This helped me to explore their livelihood practices and social networks. Additional questions were asked about their relationships with powerful actors and protection money. We asked these more sensitive questions at the end of the interviews and endeavoured to preserve their privacy. However, in some interviews the neighbouring vendor's shop was so close that they also participated in the discussion and provided input. We also assured our participants that we would not disclose their personal information to anyone.

Key informant interviews

Apart from interviewing informal business actors, I also carried out interviews with those who regulate public space to explore how they influence poor people's access to those spaces using legal/institutional or illegal/political power. Key informant interviews are useful to gain expert knowledge about the topic under study (Di Ruggiero et al., 2014). They also provide in-depth knowledge about power structures, social norms, and practices of the people under study (Marshall, 1996). Thirty-seven key informants, including sixteen government officials, an academic, eight local leaders, three NGO officials, five NGO formed community members (popularly known as CBOs) and four landlords were interviewed. Government officials and Professor Nazrul Islam⁶, founder of the Centre for Urban Studies (CUS), were asked about institutional rules and arrangements regarding access to public space in Dhaka, eviction, relocation and other official plans regarding poor people's livelihoods and their perception on use of public space for earnings by the urban poor. These state actors work in formal positions of power, for example, for the Dhaka North City Corporation (DNCC) and the police, who oversee public space and implement regulations regarding usage rules of public space in Dhaka. Data from these interviews are analysed in Chapter Six. Local leaders and CBOs were interviewed to understand the local power structures, community, and informal practices related to access to public space and to identify which groups constrain or enable

⁶ All interviewees' names are pseudonyms except Professor Nazrul Islam and Ward Councillor Nasir. They had consented to use their real names.

access to public space within Sattola slum, and what strategies poor people employ to use public space within the slum. NGO officials were interviewed to gain in-depth knowledge about the formal and informal access rules that structure poor people's access to health, education, water, and sanitation services provided by these NGOs, as well as their knowledge of local power structures and access rules to public space within Sattola.

4.5.2 Observation and photographs

Data on interviewees' informal economic activities, interpersonal interactions and contestations that take place in public and parochial realms were collected by observation (Hackenbroch, 2013b; Patton, 2005). Observation is the "systematic description of events, behaviours, and artefacts in the social setting chosen for study" (Marshall & Rossman, 1989, p. 79). Observations enable researchers to "learn about the activities of the people under study in the natural setting through observing" (Kawulich, 2005, p. 2). Observation is a useful data collection method in the sense that researchers can collect primary information of the study setting by observing people. For example, researchers can observe people's interaction with others, patterns of interaction and time spent on different activities in a particular place (Schmuck, 1997). This information can be employed later to recruit participants for the study.

At the beginning of my fieldwork, I observed each open place within the slum in segments and maintained a log book of events taking place in the segments for routine daily life. Later, I observed spaces beyond the slum that are used by residents to earn their living. This initial time/space observation was helpful to identify the important public space that the urban poor utilised for livelihoods. Based on my initial observation, I decided which public space needed to be observed regularly within and outside the slum at a specific time of day and weekend days with an emphasis on documenting the informal economic activities and people engaged in those activities. Moreover, I observed how poor people use these spaces in relation to other groups, what kinds of constraint or cooperation they experience while using urban public space and what tactics they apply to settle the disputes. This observation enabled me to understand the internal and external structural barriers that restrain poor people's access to public space and their agency (strategies) to change the structure.

Apart from observation and note taking, I also took photos of the study slum, vending sites, vendors and their informal practices. I sought permission from individuals to use their photos. The photographs are useful not only for complementing observation and field notes but also for providing contextual information and help communicate themes while sharing findings in presentations and discussions in different academic platforms.

4.6 Data analysis: producing theory using a critical realist perspective

Critical realist ontology advocates that there are generative mechanisms beyond our understanding that might influence an event (Oliver, 2011). This structured my analytical approach to the data as critical realism allows us to redescribe or develop alternative theories and concepts, models and frames of interpretation that go beyond the traditional inductive or deductive logic and emphasises creative reasoning processes (Danermark et al., 2002).

Critical realism emphasises establishing links between observed events and the deeper generative mechanisms underneath (Sayer, 1992). As Sayer notes, “To ask for the cause of something is to ask ‘what makes it happen’. What ‘produces’, ‘generates’, ‘creates’ or ‘determines’ it, or, more weakly, what ‘enables’ or ‘leads’ to it” (Sayer, 1992, p. 104).

Critical realism advocates going beyond the surface of the data to depth (Sayer, 1997). This approach is not completely unique to data analysis, however, it expands the researcher’s analytical skills introducing abductive and retroductive methods of reasoning that emphasises going beyond the observed reality and explaining the inner generative mechanisms of phenomena or social events (Danermark et al., 2002). For example, in this research project, I have carried out data analysis to explain how poor people’s access to public space for livelihoods in Dhaka are enabled or constrained by wider social structures in two ways.

At first, all voice interviews were transcribed by my research assistants and me and translated into English from Bangla. Later all data were stored, managed, manipulated and reduced with the aid of NVivo. Though NVivo has its own analytical functions, I mostly used it to manage and organise data generated from my study. I then read the collected data to understand the internal mechanisms that enable or constrain poor people’s access to public space in Dhaka and to develop open coding along with predetermined themes based on my interview guide (Charmaz, 2014). To this end, I employed abduction and retroduction approaches to analyse data (Danermark et al., 2002). An abductive approach seeks to connect between concrete events, objects and behaviours and link them to broader social structures (Danermark et al.,

2002). Abduction differs from induction in the way that it allows the researcher to draw conclusions from circumstances and structures that are not directly present in empirical data (Danermark et al., 2002). Abduction is neither an empirical generalisation nor an analytical inference rather it emphasises recontextualisation (Oliver, 2011). The aim of recontextualisation is to redescribe and give “a new meaning to already known phenomena” (Danermark et al., 2002, p. 91). Danermark et al. (2002) argue that discoveries in social science largely emerge from the process of recontextualisation as social scientists are unable to discover new events rather they discover connections and relationships. In this way, social scientists can “understand and explain already known occurrences in a novel way” (Danermark et al., 2002, p. 91). For example, using a materialist conception of history Marx recontextualised the history of man and society (Danermark et al., 2002). However, abductive conclusions in the social sciences cannot be considered as absolute truths, rather they can be judged as the truth of a particular version as new explanations or recontextualisations of the observed events are always possible (Danermark et al., 2002; Easton, 2010).

Abduction also advocates for “considering all possible theoretical explanations for the data, framing hypotheses for each possible explanation, checking them empirically examining data and pursuing the most plausible explanation” (Charmaz, 2014, p. 188). For example, I explained the blurred relationships between formal and informal actors in accessing public space using Roy (2009b) and Yiftachel’s (2009a, 2009b) ideas on ‘urban informality’ and ‘gray space’. From this, I was able to recontextualise access to public space is not only a matter of institutional governance, but informal governing practices are equally important to determine whose access is enabled and constrained and for what purposes. In this way, I made connections between observed events and structures, and used theoretical and conceptual understandings to recontextualise findings of my research in the following findings and analysis chapters.

Once I identified important themes for analysis, I used retroduction to re-read my initial coding of the data. Retroduction is concerned with the internal mechanisms that generate events or influence social reality (Danermark et al., 2002). Retroduction emphasises asking “the transcendental question ‘what must be true for this to be the case?’ before abstracting potential casual mechanisms and seeking empirical evidence for the abstractions” (Oliver, 2011, p. 379). For example, in my data if I want to explore why poor people’s access to public space are restrained by other actors, I need to pose the question: what are the

conditions or mechanisms that generate this kind of unequal access to public space, and how is access determined by powerful actors rather than the urban poor? These questions are raised to explain “What properties must exist for X (unequal access to public space) to exist?” (Danermark et al., 2002, p. 97). To re-examine data, I retroductively inquired what structural and institutional factors or other processes enable or constrain poor people’s access to public space in Dhaka guided by theories and concepts on space (Lefebvre, 1991), governance (Minnery, 2007) and the right to the city (Purcell, 2003) in Chapter Six. In Chapter Seven I consider that if the urban poor are not allowed to use public space for livelihoods, what mechanisms enable them to access these spaces guided by theories and concepts of power (Sharp et al., 2000), space (Lefebvre, 1991) and resistance (Bayat, 2000; De Certeau, 1984; Scott, 1985). Finally, I inquired whether access to public space for informal economic activities differs for men and women, and if it is different for women, what social, cultural and other structural factors pose as barriers to women’s access to public space. I then explained these issues using gender theories (Chen, 2001; Molyneux, 2001; Moser, 1989). A retroductive approach further allows the researcher to develop a new conceptual framework or theory using an existing set of theory or empirical observation of events (Danermark et al., 2002). Hence I used this approach to present my study findings in comparison to existing research and theories. Using this approach, I also explained the impact of underlying mechanisms and social structures as well as the agency of the poor in the context of use of space by residents in Dhaka and theorised my findings in the broader context of the Global South using the case of Sattola slum.

4.7 The politics and ethics of research

Ethical approval was obtained through the University of Queensland’s Behavioral & Social Sciences Ethical Review Committee (BSSERC) before commencement of fieldwork as BSSERC application requires elaboration on engagement with ‘special groups’, which includes people from other countries. My research was based on five ethical responsibilities to participants including “voluntary participation, informed consent, no harm, confidentiality anonymity and privacy” (De Vaus, 2002, p. 59). As my research participants were poor, the principle of ‘do no harm’ was particularly important (Liamputtong, 2010). Research participants’ participation was voluntary and I informed them that they could terminate the interview at any stage. Written or verbal consent (see [Appendix E](#) for consent form) was obtained prior to all interviews. I sought verbal consent from those interviewees who were

illiterate. Beside this, all participants were informed about the purpose of the study, where this research outcome would appear and who might potentially use this research ([Appendix D](#)) and consent was obtained prior to interviews. Most interviews were recorded on a digital voice recorder with the permission of interviewees and stored on my laptop. Some interviews were conducted without being recording if that was the participant's preference. In those cases, one of my research assistants took notes while I conducted the interview. To maintain confidentiality, anonymity and privacy of the interviewees, pseudonyms were used, and transcripts were kept securely on my laptop, to protect participants' privacy and confidentiality.

4.8 Reflexivity and positionality

The researcher's role is important in producing knowledge as all 'data' are outcomes of the subjective interpretations of researchers, who may be outsiders, insiders, or a combination of these identities (Acker, 2000). Most rapport building literature suggests that trust can be built with participants through social interaction and experiences (Sztompka, 1999), reciprocal interaction (Rashid, 2007; Umaña-Taylor & Bámaca, 2004) and showing respect and empathy towards participants (Elliott, Watson, & Harries, 2002; Liamputtong, 2006). To establish a trusting relationship with marginal communities, researchers first need to break or minimise the power relations between the researcher and the participants (Emmel, Hughes, Greenhalgh, & Sales, 2007). In the case of research conducted amongst the urban poor, it could be argued that any university educated researcher qualifies as an outsider, however there are various degrees of outsider status. Much literature on 'insider-outsider' identity suggests that researchers, like me, who share the same culture and language as their research participants enjoy 'insider' status (Ergun & Erdemir, 2010; Kusow, 2003). However, there are both advantages and disadvantages to being an inside or semi-insider in terms of gaining access to marginalised communities. The advantages that an insider or semi-insider might utilise to gain trust is based on having similarity within the broader social and cultural context, such as sharing the same language and understanding local cultural practices whether they follow similar cultural practices or not. Thus, an insider can interpret the findings and offer valuable insights that an outsider might find impossible to access (Labaree, 2002). The disadvantages of being an insider or semi-insider is that researchers might not be treated as an insider due to their class position. In terms of identity, I simultaneously belong to insider, outsider, both and neither (Gilbert, 1994) due to my class position in Dhaka. As Lal (1996)

notes, the native can be 'other' through class privilege. I was aware of my middle-class position and educational privilege while conducting fieldwork. I am a young educated woman with a professional position working at a university in Dhaka. My positionality creates a distance with participants and also affects power relations between me and my participants.

I was aware that my class position is different than my interviewees; however, I had conducted previous studies in different slums in Dhaka. I used my earlier experiences to assist with reflexivity and build up rapport with participants. For example, I tried to minimise social distance by sitting on the floor or having a cup of tea with them as I was well aware of my powerful position as a university teacher. Sometimes I also bought fruit or other snacks from participants to show my empathy towards them. All these strategies helped me to gain their trust and encouraged them to be open about their business. Moreover, the culture of Bangladesh also encourages the poor to treat anyone like a guest. Consequently, I was invited to have a cup of tea or other snacks by participants. However, I often offered them money in exchange. Sometimes participants declined to take money. All these 'informal acts of reciprocity' further cement trust relationships as observed by Rist (1981).

Some researchers have indicated that class position might create obstacles in building trust and rapport with participants (Rashid, 2007; Sultana, 2007). In contrast, I found that my class position helped me to build trust with my participants and local community. As teachers are respected and trusted by most people in Bangladesh, I used to introduce myself in my role as a university teacher, who was interested in knowing about poor people's lives and livelihoods and what kinds of problems they were facing while operating informal businesses every day. Initially I followed the ethical procedures and introduced myself in my parallel role as a PhD student of The University of Queensland, however, my local university teacher position was far more effective in gaining trust and building rapport than my role as a PhD candidate. As most participants were illiterate or had limited educational qualifications, they did not understand the concept of a PhD. So, I started explaining that I was interested to learn about their lives and livelihoods and that I would write something like a book in the future, recommending that the government improve their living and working conditions. As they are unfamiliar with the concept of a doctoral thesis, this simplified explanation was far more effective in terms of building rapport. This indicates the importance of considering local

context, culture, and being reflexive, rather than unreflexively following Western research methods or ethical procedures (Sultana, 2007).

Gender plays an important role in shaping relations between researchers and participants. As Van Maannen (1988, p. 4) notes: “Women in the field . . . find some doors open more readily than others”. Women get better access to participants of the same sex if they study Muslim communities as these communities are more gender segregated than the others (Saktanber, 2002). I enjoyed easy access to women participants, who also shared many private stories that were not part of my research. However, I listened to them patiently. Men were equally cooperative and enthusiastic to share their experience with me, which I did not expect. However, men were also curious what I was doing in their locality, so they just wanted to talk to me giving me easy access to interview them.

4.9 Conclusion

This chapter has outlined a case study based research process that draws on critical realism to explore poor people’s access to public space in Dhaka. A critical realist perspective emphasises the generative mechanisms or structural properties in producing events along with participants understanding of the phenomenon, such as access to public space in this research. Critical realism also advocates that realities cannot be accessed directly; they can only be accessed indirectly through the lived experience of the research participants, including the researcher. A critical realist perspective further allows the researcher to critically examine the social conditions of the research participants and allows the researcher to develop a critical contextual theory as well as a normative theory – “to views about ideals and obligations that we should accept” (Thacher, 2006, p. 1635). Production of this type of normative theory is particularly important for the case of this research as it deals with the poor people’s right to access public space.

Consistent with critical realist perspective’s focus on in-depth and contextually bounded data collection approach, a case study method was adopted using Sattola slum in Dhaka as a case to explore how street vendors’ access to public space are enabled or constrained by other powerful actors. Aligning with critical realism, data was collected using a combination of semi-structured interviews, key informant interviews, observations and photographs. Fieldwork was carried out for four months in Dhaka. The analysis of the data followed a

theory laden path where I read data several times to generate open themes along with predetermined themes based on my interview guide and incorporated them in a theoretical discussion using existing theories and concepts. Following an abductive and retroductive approach, I analysed data and developed contextual theory to explore poor people's access to public space in the Global South using the case of Sattola slum in Dhaka. The following Chapters Six through Eight comprise the empirical part of the thesis beginning with the description of the physical, socio-economic, political and cultural environment of Sattola slum in Chapter Five.

Chapter 5: Politics, Poverty, and Urbanisation and the Formation of Sattola Slum in Dhaka, Bangladesh

5.1 Introduction

This chapter situates the research within the broader political, economic, and social context of Dhaka, Bangladesh. Poor people's right to the city depends on their participation in governance processes as indicated in Chapter Two. This is also related to power relations among a range of actors, some of whom are more powerful than others. Based on access to differential amounts of power, various actors influence decision-making processes in different ways as outlined in Chapter Three. Following the existing literary background on space, informality, gendered space, right to the city, power, governance, and resistance discussed in Chapters Two and Three, this chapter situates the study slum, Sattola, within the broader socio-economic and political context of Bangladesh to explore how its residents survive in Dhaka without access to public services or constitutional rights to housing and livelihood.

This chapter is divided into two main sections. Section 5.2 outlines the historical and contemporary political and governance context within which urbanisation processes evolve in Bangladesh. This is important in understanding the rise of slums and informal urbanisation in Bangladesh. This section also reflects on how rapid urbanisation processes have led to informal urbanisation, the growth of slums, and informal economic activities in Dhaka, focusing on the emergence of Sattola slum. Following this, Section 5.3 discusses how Dhaka's urban poor survive on a daily basis within the existing system using the example of Sattola.

5.2 Politics and governance in Bangladesh

To better understand the growth of Sattola and the various opportunities and challenges its residents encounter, especially in relation to housing, service provision, and access to livelihood spaces, it is important to understand the historical, political, economic, social, and governance arrangements within which urbanisation has occurred in Bangladesh, as well as the factors that have contributed to rapid and informal urbanisation, the growth of slums, and

a range of informalities that the poor adopt as strategies to secure livelihoods. The next section begins with a discussion of the political economy of Bangladesh.

5.2.1 A ‘neopatrimonial’ state

Since its inception, Bangladesh has undergone significant political and economic changes that have witnessed successive military coups followed by two long periods of authoritarian rule (Basu, Devine, & Wood, 2018; Jahan, 2004; Van Schendel, 2009) and a popular uprising in 1990 which led to the introduction of parliamentary democracy. The personalisation of power (especially at the hands of the ruling Prime Minister) has transformed the country into a ‘neopatrimonial state’ (Islam, 2013) promoting a system of patron-client relationships at all levels of society. The ruling party misuses its power for partisan purposes and political gains (Jahan, 2007). Patronage is mobilised both vertically, based on kinship, localised and personalised ties and maintained through a chain of leader-worker (*neta-karmi*) relations, and horizontally, where support groups receive resources and benefits in every sphere of public life from the ruling party in exchange for their political support (Khan, 2005; Osman, 2010). In this scenario, political opposition is suppressed (Hackenbroch, 2013b).

At the economic level, successive policies prioritising export-oriented industries that rely heavily on foreign direct investment have spawned an urban-centric growth pattern against the backdrop of a rising population, dwindling rural livelihood options but relatively abundant opportunities in cities, rapid rural-urban migration, the rising spectre of urban poverty, and the growth of slums in urban areas. Owing to Bangladesh’s centralised governance system, Dhaka boasts the bulk of the country’s income-earning opportunities and attracts the largest number of rural poor migrants. As a primate city, Dhaka is experiencing shortage of land supply as well as environmental problems (Ahmed et al., 2018). Most political decisions are made in Dhaka following a state-led planning legacy (Ahmed et al., 2018).

5.2.2 Two-tier government

Bangladesh follows a two-tier governance structure composed of national and local governments. The local governments are organised through 11 city corporations and 324 *Pourashavas* (municipalities of over 15,000 inhabitants). This kind of two-tier governance

system has a negative impact on planning, development, and service delivery systems. In particular, the local government bodies are assigned to implement the policies of their local government. As there are many authorities in charge of local-level development, their tasks overlap and responsibilities are occasionally left for another government organisation to bear. This coordination problem constrains policy implementation.

At the local level, Dhaka city was previously governed by the Dhaka City Corporation (DCC), which has since been divided into two entities, the Dhaka North (DNCC) and Dhaka South (DSCC) City Corporations (Liton & Hasan, 2011). Dhaka City is divided into 90 wards. DNCC and DSCC are each headed by an elected mayor and an elected ward councillor administers each ward. Wards operate at the most localised level of local government. As the closest representatives of their constituents, ministers and ward councillors (WCs) play an important role in city governance (Cawood, 2017). There are 36 Wards under the DNCC (DNCC, 2018) and the WCs are normally elected every five years. The local government officials, including WCs, have limited accountability to residents due to several reasons, such as poorly defined roles and responsibilities, a lack of empathy for the poor, and insufficient resources for the residents of the large wards (Banks, 2008). Their performance largely depends on their own initiative and commitment (Banks, 2008). WCs do not visit their wards regularly; rather, they rely on politically affiliated local leaders to manage these relationships (Banks, Hulme, & Edwards, 2015). If large urban areas are controlled by opposition parties, the incumbent government may potentially lose the next election; so, they prefer to control local areas through these local leaders and enforcers (Hossain, 2013). Corruption is rife within the two major political parties and government agencies (Hackenbroch, 2013b).

5.2.3 Corruption and rent seeking

Deeply rooted in the Bangladeshi social structure, corruption is also reflected in the *chadabaji* (extortion) practised by the local *chadabajis* (extortionists) and *mastans* (local enforcers) who often carry out these activities either in collusion with or with the backing of the ruling party's local leaders and law enforcement agencies (Hackenbroch, 2013b), promoting a practice known as *mostanocracy* (Van Schendel, 2009). The *mastans* and the local political leaders are integrated to the neopatrimonial political arrangement. In this

scenario, the *mastans* facilitate basic services, such as gas, electricity, and water to slums and also operate as intermediaries to secure rental space for the residents' livelihood activities.

As explained above, while the *mastans* facilitate services for a price (especially those that are supplied by government agencies, such as electricity and water) several NGOs provide water, sanitation, health, and legal facilities to slums. But NGOs' capacity for political activism under the conditions of neopatrimonial semi-autocratic governance arrangements of the country is limited by different social and political values, such as local or international traditions of philanthropy and left-wing political ideology emerged from their involvement with the left political activists (Devine, 2006; Lewis, 2017). However, unable to withstand pressure from the government and donors, the radical NGO subsector subsequently merged with the development NGOs (Devine, 2009; Lewis, 2018). At present, most NGOs deliver services such as micro-credit, health, education, and skills development training. Despite over four decades of development work and support by NGOs, poverty in rural Bangladesh remains significant. The proportion of rural extreme poverty fell from 44 per cent in 1991-2 to 21 per cent in 2010 (Sen & Ali, 2017).

5.2.4 Ambivalence towards and neglect of the poor

It is against this background of ambivalence and neglect that urbanisation and urban poverty have been rising in Bangladesh since 1970 (most significantly since the 1990s) (Islam, Shafi, & Nazem, 2007; UN, 2017). The annual urban population growth was more than 6 per cent from the mid-1960s to the mid-1990s and at present the growth rate is 3.6 per cent annually (Islam et al., 2007; UN, 2017). Dhaka accounts for nearly 32 per cent of total national urban population (RAJUK, 2015). Due to Dhaka's status as the primate city, it attracts nearly 400,000 new migrants each year (Ahmed, 2015). However, the government is failing to mitigate the growing number of urban poor's needs for housing and livelihoods. Since the 1970s, the government's poverty eradication plan has focused on rural poverty reduction. As a result, Bangladesh's first Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper (PRSP) of 2005 noted the central government's tendency to equate urban poverty with life in a big city slum, which is linked to perceptions of illegality, criminality, and unsanitary environments (GoB, 2005). These traditional views of the urban poor have also contributed to a hostile environment for poor people, whereas the perception of poor rural farmers as a vulnerable population has

resulted in their receiving more support and investment from the government (Hossain, 2005).

Another factor that has constrained the urban poor's lives in cities is the ongoing perception that rural areas are the 'legitimate' place for the poor (Banks, Roy, & Hulme, 2011). It is thus unsurprising that successive urban development plans have disregarded the urban poor in the design and planning of Bangladesh's cities (Banks et al., 2011). The national planners have not considered appropriate space for the urban poor, apart from including some rhetoric in the recently announced Dhaka Structure Plan (DSP) that recognises urban poverty without specifying concrete actions relevant to urban poverty alleviation (Mowla, 2016).

Furthermore, the notion that investment in the urban poor would encourage more rural poor to migrate to cities has discouraged investment in urban poverty reduction-related activities (Banks et al., 2011).

These factors have contributed to the growth of informality to enable the poor to reduce risks and exploit opportunities. These factors have further contributed to the growth of slums and informal urbanisation in Dhaka. Informal urbanisation represents the informal space –the slum – which often represents the unplannable city, a city and/or urban space that lies beyond the formal sphere of planning regulations, norms, and codes (Roy, 2012). Such informal spaces are perceived as “either dismal concentrations of poverty, a tangible manifestation of economic marginality, or as alternative and autonomous urban orders, patched together through the improvisation and entrepreneurship of the urban poor” (Roy, 2012, p. 1). In relation to the discussion of informal urbanisation, one of the most prominent view of third-world cities is Davis's apocalyptic account of a 'planet of slums' where he marked informal urbanisation as a manifestation of 'overurbanisation' (Davis, 2006). At least one billion people currently live in slums, the vast majority of whom are in the developing world (UN, 2015). Like many cities of the Global South, one-third of Dhaka's population lives in the city's 6,489 slums (Angeles, Lance, Barden-O'Fallon, Islam, & Mahbub, 2009; BBS, 2015a). Almost half of Dhaka's population lives in slums or informal settlements or low-income neighbourhoods (Islam, Angeles, Mahbub, Lance, & Nazem, 2006). In Sattola, one of Dhaka's slums, nearly 50000 people live without tenure security over their dwelling spaces (BRAC, 2016).

5.3 Formation of Sattola slum: An overview

Sattola is surrounded by a commercial hub (Mohakhali) and two wealthy residential and commercial areas, Niketon and Gulshan (Figure 5.1). The southern part of Sattola, known as Dokkhin Para, is a place of mixed income groups, where mostly lower and middle-income people live. There is a government hospital, the Infectious Disease Hospital (IDH), adjacent to the slum.

Figure 5.1: Sattola and its adjoining neighbourhoods



Source: Ahmed, Hasan, & Maniruzzaman (2014)

5.3.1 Socio-economic configuration of Sattola

Sattola consists of four distinct sections (Figures 5.2 and 5.3), popularly known as Pora Basti⁷ (burnt slum), Boundary Basti, Hindu Para⁸ (some residents call it Chowdhury Para), and Staff Moholla⁹ (Shiree-DSK, 2012). Pora (burnt) Basti is so named because it was incinerated several times by cooking fires and other domestic accidents. Another section of the Sattola, Boundary Basti, is so named because this part of Sattola was evicted by the government in 2003. After eviction, a wall was erected to discourage resettlement, but the residents did return and built houses inside the boundary wall, giving this part of Sattola the name Boundary slum. Most food vendors live in this part of the slum. The majority of the home-owners of Hindu Para are Hindu¹⁰. The majority of Sattola's residents are migrants from the rural areas of Barisal division, and some have migrated from the Khulna, Mymensingh, and Kishorgonj areas. Apart from landlords, most residents operate informal businesses. A number of female residents work in the nearby garment factories and in the nearby affluent areas, where they work as domestic workers.

⁷ The Bangla word '*bosti*' or '*basti*' (which often to slum or squatter or informal settlement in English) has two meanings in the Bangali-Bengali Lexicon (Bandyopadyaya, 1988). The first comes from the Sanskrit root '*vasati*', meaning house or living area, locality and village (Hackenbroch, 2013). The second meaning has a negative connotation that refers to "filthy dirty living area of the low class" (Bandyopadyaya, 1988, p. 1476). However, people usually refer to this second meaning when they speak of slum or *basti*. The residents of the slums are also pejoratively known as slum-dwellers. I refer to these people as residents, rather than using the term 'slum-dwellers'.

⁸ The Bangla word *Para* refers to area or neighbourhood.

⁹ The Bangla word *Moholla* means an area of a town or a community.

¹⁰ The second-biggest religious group, constituting 10% of the total population of Bangladesh.

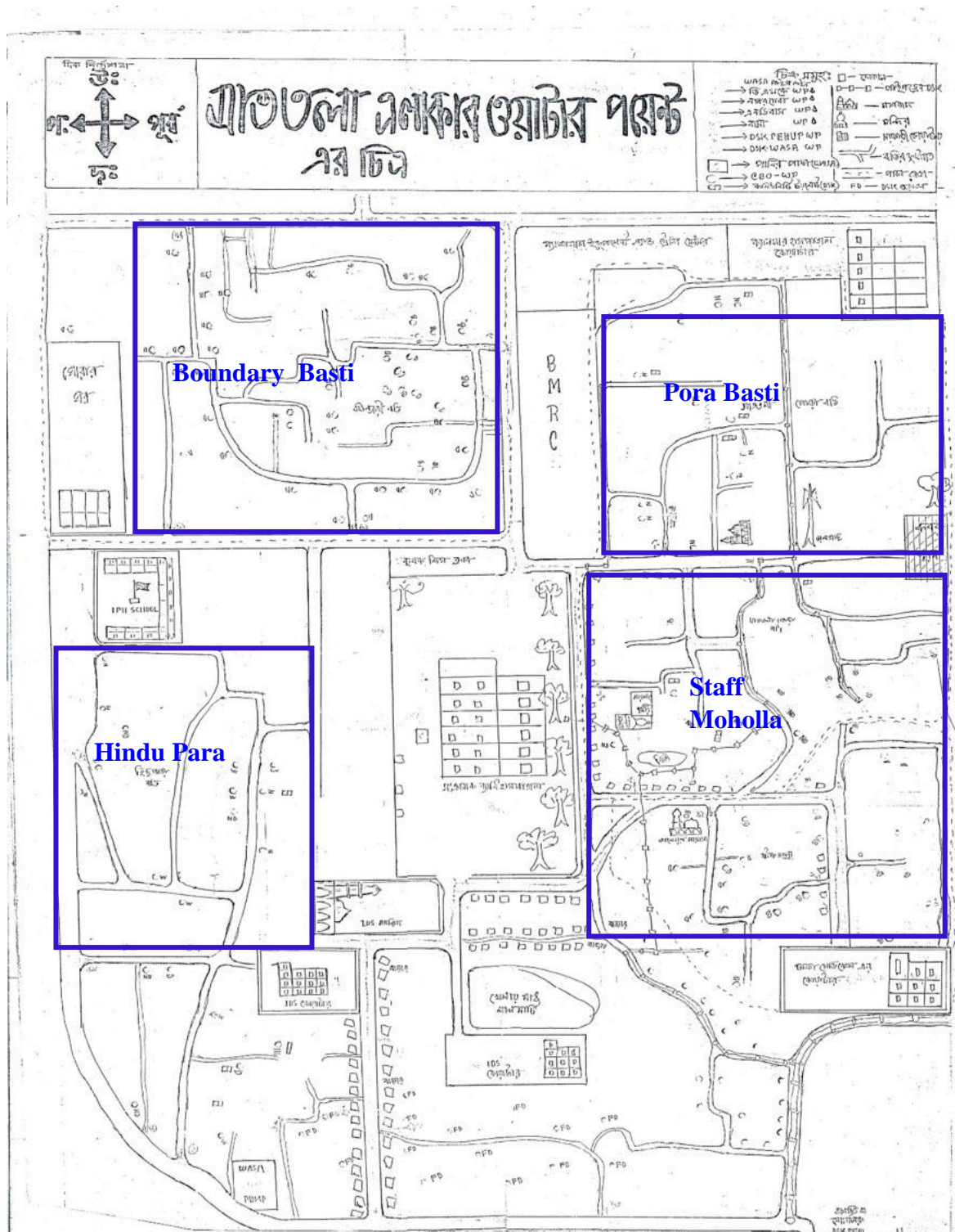
Figure 5.2: Different sections of Sattola slum (from the top left – Pora slum, Hindu Para, Boundary slum, and Staff Mohalla)



The last of Sattola's neighbourhoods is Staff Moholla where the initial residents were third and fourth-class employees – two bottom strata of public servants – engaged in errand and clerical activities. Employees of the adjacent government hospitals, some of these people (and their children) still live in this part of Sattola where most houses are made of concrete/tin roofs locally known as in *paka*¹¹ houses. These residents also sublet rooms to other people.

¹¹ The Bangla word '*paka* or *pucca*' refers to houses made from durable materials, (i.e. bricks in the context of housing). In terms of road networks and open spaces, this term refers to the quality of the pavement (e.g., a paka road or space would be concrete or tarmac) (Hackenbroch, 2013).

Figure 5.3: Sattola slum at a glance



Source: DSK (2016)

The history of Sattola differs somewhat from other slums in Dhaka as it was established by these third and fourth-class public hospital employees. Following the Bangladesh Liberation War of 1971, this slum was established by the Directorate General of Health and Services

(DGHS) and other adjacent public health institutions and hospitals. The land on which Sattola slum is built is owned by the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare and each third and fourth-class employee of these public health institutions and hospitals received a 900 sq. foot (30 ft. X 30 ft.) area on which to build their houses following Bangladesh's independence from Pakistan in 1971 (Shiree-DSK, 2012). In 1971, the area in which Sattola is located was on the periphery of Dhaka and sparsely populated, and the third and fourth-class employees were required to travel long distances to work. To assist them to overcome these transport challenges, both in terms of travel time and means of travel, their employers gave them verbal permission to use the open space. The third and fourth-class employees of the adjacent government institutions cleared the land and built houses and settled there. As the city started to grow and waves of rural poor started to migrate to Dhaka looking for places to stay, they found an opportunity to earn extra income through subletting, which over time has become a source of supplementary income for these employees (Shiree-DSK, 2012). Today, Sattola is a densely populated slum with houses that are made of anything from bamboo to concrete and brick reflecting the economic status of the occupants. There is little room left for the construction of new housing but continuous improvement of existing households has been observed in different parts of the slum.

The occupants of Sattola have no formal tenure to this land, but all occupants pay house rent, electricity, and water bills to the house owners. The house rent, including electricity and water bills for a corrugated iron (CI-Sheet) built room, ranges from 21 to 30 USD per month, and the rent of a *semi-paka* room (cement and tin built) is 51 USD per month. Landlords often live in the same house as their tenants and play an important role in mitigating quarrels among them. Some two-storied buildings can also be seen within the slum. The owners of these are mostly staff of public hospitals or their children. However, a few landlords have built apartment houses due to a lack of formal tenure and fear of eviction.

Like most rural migrants in cities, the Sattola migrants continue to maintain a strong bond with their place of origin in the countryside (Etzold, 2014). Some migrants leave their spouses and children with their parents or in-laws in their villages as it is difficult for them to do their jobs in Dhaka with their children living with them and, in comparison, the cost of living is cheaper in the village. They visit their parents and relatives during religious festivals. Even after living in Dhaka for more than 30 or 40 years, migrants maintain that in comparison to Dhaka, village life is better. Most Sattola interviewees expressed their desire

to return to their villages after saving enough money because they have no tenure security over their land and/or residences. As most migrants in Sattola have used pre-existing kinship and/or social networks to migrate to and settle, the majority of them also seem to originate from the same region of the country. Sattola has undergone many changes over the years and is not a homogeneous entity. Although most of the residents of Sattola are poor, their poverty levels vary. There are also variations in terms of their tenancy rights.

5.3.2 Evictions and resettlement in Sattola

As the residents have no tenure rights over their land or homes, they often face evictions. Large-scale evictions took place between 1975, 2003, and 2008. In Bangladeshi cities, slum residents are often evicted forcefully through deliberate arson or through use of law enforcement agencies. More than 154 slums have been evicted since 1975 (Rahman, 2001; Nawaz, 2004). In some cases, slums were evicted using police and armed forces; for example, 173,000 slum residents were evicted from different slums in Dhaka with the aid of the police and paramilitary forces in the first week of January, 1975 (Rahman, 2001). A one-party government was in power at that time and they ignored the slum residents' right to shelter as the slum residents neither had voting rights nor were required to participate in or organise political rallies (Mizanuddin, 1994; Rahman, 2001).

Apart from large-scale evictions, small-scale evictions are common around key political events (Mohit, 2012). Despite being a signatory to international conventions affirming the poor's right to housing, the government of Bangladesh has evicted 102 slums in Dhaka since 1999 without any resettlement program (Rahman, 2001; Nawaz, 2004). Though the government has developed several housing policies to provide shelter to slum residents, little has changed since the country's independence in 1971. Thus, slums continue to grow, as do the incidence of evictions.

Interviews with local leaders reveal that the government tried to evict the residents of Sattola in 2003 to build the Bangladesh Medical Research Council (BMRC) building. As the evicted land remained vacant for a considerable period after the eviction, the residents returned to live and pursue livelihoods as before. In some cases, the judiciary intervenes, and the government fails to evict residents. In 2003, faced with the threat of eviction, the local leaders of Sattola filed a case in the High Court and were awarded a 'stay order' stating that

the government cannot evict the slum residents without rehabilitating them. When the military-backed emergency government came to power in 2007 and all civil laws were suspended, another eviction took place. The emergency government evicted the slum in February 2007 (The Daily Jai Jai Din, 2007) to build a cancer hospital; however, since the end of military rule in 2008 and the Awami League (AL) government winning the parliamentary election, the site has remained vacant. Some residents remained on the vacant land, living in tents, to ensure their informal ownership over the public land; and if they leave the vacant area, they risk losing their land to other people.

In 2010, the Hindu Para neighbourhood was evicted by the DGHS, which had planned to establish a new campus for the Physiotherapy College. However, their eviction attempt failed when local leaders mobilised a group of house owners, active tenants, local politically influential people and supporting enforcers to resist the eviction (Shiree-DSK, 2012). They collected 1188 USD from the residents within a short time to pay a lawyer to file a case against the eviction in the High Court. Some representatives from the major political parties negotiated with the DGHS and declared that the authority would not evict them. However, the DGHS razed the entire Hindu Para slum with heavy bulldozers as soon as the local leaders left the slum. The residents later filed a case in the High Court against this eviction which resulted in a stay order. The residents subsequently rebuilt their houses (Shiree-DSK, 2012).

Due to a lack of tenure rights and illegal occupation on government land for both living and livelihood vocations, slum residents often face evictions from both their dwellings and livelihood spaces. To survive and overcome the challenges of such evictions, they have devised various methods, including recourse to the justice system, political lobbying, and organised movements.¹² Despite organised resistance, the government's position on the issue has remained firm, as revealed in interviews with officials from the DNCC and Local Government Engineering Department (LGED), the agencies responsible for local government infrastructure development. All resettlement plans are unpopular with the government,

¹²In recent times, the slum residents have organised their movement around the idea of the 'right to city' and argue that the three million slum residents who work as transport workers, domestic aides, security guards, and employees at different offices are an integral part of the city and thus must not be evicted arbitrarily without a resettlement option. By getting the attention of the Prime Minister, the slum-dwellers have collectively petitioned the government to build multi-storied apartments with ownership rights and long-term payment options to purchase/own allotted apartments (New Age, 2016).

regardless of whether they concern housing or relocating the hawkers and vendors. One senior official stated:

We are running an Integrated Traffic Management project with the Asian Development Bank (ADB), where we are paying the displacement cost to the hawkers and vendors to compensate their loss. The government can evict them anytime without arranging any relocation program for them. Why do the government need to resettle them?

However, street vending provides an important source of livelihood for the growing number of urban poor in Bangladesh due to the lack of formal employment opportunities (Etzold, 2013). It is difficult to ignore the importance of the informal sector in the livelihoods of the urban poor in Bangladesh, where 75 per cent of the total urban population is engaged in informal economic activities (BBS, 2015b).

5.3.3 Livelihoods in Sattola

In Bangladesh most slum residents are illiterate or have limited education and lack of technical skills to be engaged in the formal sector, thus they are typically engaged in the informal sector. Ninety one per cent of youths (aged 15-29) and 84 per cent of the adults (aged 30-64) are engaged in informal economic activities (ADB, 2012). Among different types of informal activities, street vending is the second most important livelihood option for the growing number of the urban poor in Bangladesh after rickshaw-pulling, in particular this is a major source of income for young and middle-aged men who migrated to Dhaka in the past five to ten years (Ahmed et al., 2018; Etzold, 2013). Nearly 300,000 street hawkers are engaged in vending activities in Dhaka (Etzold, 2013). Dhaka has the highest numbers of hawkers among world cities (Bhowmik, 2010). Similar large numbers of vendors are seen only in Mumbai (250,000), Delhi (200,000), Calcutta (150,000) and Bangkok (100,000) in Asia (Bhowmik, 2010).

In most other cities in Bangladesh, street vendors are tolerated as their numbers are not as great as the numbers of street vendors in Dhaka. Street vendors sell everything from fresh vegetables and fruit to prepared foods, garments, crafts, building materials, consumer electronics and haircuts. Not everyone in the city is capable of buying clothes, books, food

and other necessary items from the expensive shopping malls in Dhaka. As street vendors provide low cost goods and materials, nearly 60 per cent of Dhaka's population depend on street vendors to buy daily necessities (Etzold, 2011; Hasan & Alam, 2015). Despite their contributions to the city and economy, street vendors face many challenges due to lack of tenure security over use of public space. Street vendors are often blamed for creating traffic congestion (New Nation, 2016). Pedestrians also complain about street vendors sitting or standing on footpaths create difficulties for pedestrian traffic (New Nation, 2016). As a result, their access is regulated by the local government act. Municipal policies and practices hinder their business including occasional eviction drives. Consequently, street vendors operate their business under constant threat of eviction despite the important service they provide to the city.

Like many residents in Dhaka, most residents of Sattola, who are part of the urban poor, are engaged in vending activities, such as operating small businesses, rickshaw/pushcart pulling, tailoring, and selling rice cakes, fruits and other processed food, use public space to operate their businesses (Figure 5.4). Many residents operate small businesses such as selling vegetables, groceries and meat, doing carpentry mainly using the narrow lanes of the slum or nearby streets and footpaths catering to local demand (Figure 5.4). During my field research, I noticed several tea stalls or grocery and vegetable stalls in the nearby Sattola bazaar. Some operate vending businesses in adjacent commercial and affluent residential areas. Apart from vending activities, many residents provide services to the surrounding affluent areas such as working as maids, security guards, and rickshaw pullers, as will be discussed in Chapters Seven and Eight.

Figure 5.4: Bazaars in Sattola – a vegetable market on the main road beside the boundary of the IDH and Pora slum, a fish market within Pora slum, shops on both side of the road of Staff Moholla, shops on the footpath and main road near the Boundary slum and the BMRC, shops and AL party office beside the main road near the Boundary slum and Hindu Para (from the top left)



The household income of informal workers depends on the size and type of business they operate. Food vendors usually have higher incomes than other traders. However, most residents are not able to save much money and tend to spend what they earn. This will be analysed in detail in Chapters Seven and Eight. Figure 5.4 shows how dependent the urban

poor are on public space for their livelihoods. As most residents operate their businesses on public land without tenancy rights, they face eviction from their livelihood spaces as well. For reasons of public safety and sanitation, the city police and DNCC occasionally evict them from their vending spaces without prior notice. Hawkers and vendors also face the threat of eviction by local *mastans* if they fail to pay regular protection money.

5.3.4 Politics in Sattola

To protect slums from eviction, the urban poor follow the trend of national politics and support the ruling political party and build party offices within the slum. There were six such party offices in Sattola (Figure 5.5) representing different wings of the ruling political party, AL, such as Awami Krishok (Farmers) League, Awami Jubo (Youth) League and Awami Sromik (Labourers) League.

Figure 5.5: AL Party offices in Sattola



The discussion so far shows that most slum residents in Bangladesh, including the Sattola residents, face numerous uncertainties and costs related to their dwellings and livelihood spaces. To deal with these challenges they have developed a number of negotiation strategies to overcome these challenges and continue to deal with a range of crises on an almost daily basis.

5.3.5 Gender and livelihoods in Sattola

Most women in Sattola are not engaged in any income-earning activities, which are discouraged by the religious norms of *purdah* – a Muslim custom that restricts women's

movements, clothing choices, and work activities. Engagement in outdoor income-earning activities is also regarded as a sign of extreme poverty (Amin, 1997). As a result, only 3 per cent of rural women work in wage employment in comparison to 24 per cent of rural men; and women's participation in the paid, non-agricultural sector is 18 per cent (Chowdhury, 2010; White, 2013). This is because women's paid labour is not compared with their reproductive roles such as responsibilities of care and other domestic duties (Maître, 2017). More recently, however, women are being recruited for paid work, especially in Bangladesh's expanding readymade garment (RMG) sector. A number of Sattola's young female residents work in this industry, a burgeoning sector in Bangladesh of which 80 per cent of employees are female (ILO, 2014). NGOs and several government-led rural development initiatives are empowering women and helping to reduce social prejudice against women working outside the home, albeit slowly, as the social barrier of *purdah* norms still exists, especially among the rural poor and rural migrants (Maître, 2017).

Figure 5.6: Women from Pora slum selling vegetables at the Pora slum bazaar and women cooking and socialising in the kitchen/courtyard, (from the top)



Women who were not engaged in income earning activities, did household chores and socialised with their neighbours in the middle of the day (Figure 5.6). However, a number of women whose husbands conduct small-scale food businesses (selling snacks), help their husbands to prepare their merchandise in the morning. As will be discussed in Chapter Seven some women sell vegetable, spice, and fruit sitting on local streets or footpaths (Figure 5.6). Others make rice cakes to sell in the slum's open spaces and on nearby streets in the afternoon. Very few women venture beyond the slum to conduct business due to social norms and fear of sexual harassment.

5.3.6 Service Provisions and Governance in Sattola: A complex formal/informal milieu

Most of Dhaka's slums, including Sattola, are not recognised by the government planning bodies. This is one of the main reasons why these slums are under constant threat of eviction. In fact, Sattola is not even marked on the DCC map. The detailed area plan (DAP) map of the Capital Development Authority (acronym RAJUK) identified Korail and Sattola slums as residential areas, but there are no plans to improve the conditions of the residents of these slums. Instead, the DAP's report indicates the development of Gulshan, an affluent area adjacent to Sattola slum, as part of its long-term plan, which will include converting Sattola into an affluent residential area. As a result, no government agencies approve or provide any services in Sattola except Dhaka Water Supply and Sewerage Authority (WASA). *Dushtha Shasthya Kendra* (DSK, Health Centre for the Distressed), a local NGO, provides water and sanitation facilities in collaboration with Dhaka WASA.

Several NGOs provide services to Sattola's residents (Table 5.1) and their activities are channelled through the Mayor and Ward Councillor's office. The residents of Sattola had a good relationship with the local WC, Nasir, who won the last ward council election. Not all WCs are helpful and many of Dhaka's WCs are corrupt and unresponsive to the needs of the poor. Even though AL, the ruling party, did not nominate Nasir, he won the election as an independent candidate due to his popularity within the slum. Nasir formed a local committee selecting members, who are followers of AL, from Sattola and other adjacent neighborhoods to solve local problems. Members of this local committee have the power to oversee most matters within the slum. For example, this group determines the use of space both within the slum and in nearby areas. They also oversee NGO activities within the slum. Some of these local leaders have good relations with local-level government service providing officials

whom they bribe to supply illegal gas, electricity, and water. As the government does not provide these services to slum areas, local enforcers are able to extort a large amount of money from residents in exchange for supplying these services.

As the government regards residents of slums as illegal occupants, it refuses most services and a number of NGOs fill the gap and provide services including health and education for all residents and microcredit for women. Some also provide legal aid and do advocacy work for violence against women issues. Shokhi, a Dutch-funded project run by four local NGOs; *Amrai Pari* (We Can), Bangladesh Legal Aid and Services Trust (BLAST), Marie Stopes Bangladesh and Bangladesh Women's Health Coalition (BWHC), provides local residents with information, legal aid, and health services (Table 5.1). The Shokhi project also provides information about women's rights, facilitates domestic violence awareness, and offers legal aid. DSK provides microcredit to poor women. BRAC, the largest local NGO in Bangladesh, provides health and education services. Apart from the BRAC schools, there is also a government-subsidised private high school, referred to as the Institute of Public Health (IPH) School.

Table 5.1: Role of NGOs in Sattola

Name	Services	Objective	Target group
<i>Dushtha Shasthya Kendra</i> (DSK, Health Centre for the Distressed)	- Water and sanitation - Loans/microcredit	- To provide legal water and proper sanitation facilities - To support marginalised groups through credit provision	- Home owners - Women
BRAC (MANOSHI)	- Maternal, neonatal, and child health care services	- To provide maternal, neonatal, and childcare services	- Women and children
BRAC	- BRAC School	- To provide education	- Children
NDBUS	- Improve housing conditions of urban poor and defend their basic rights, including access to shelter, water, sanitation, and drainage	- To improve housing conditions of urban poor and defend their rights to shelter, water, sanitation, and drainage. Awareness-raising and exercise of municipal rights in these domains, and they have recently initiated a major campaign for community saving, with the aim of enabling communities to purchase land for future resettlement	- Urban poor

Shokhi project: BLAST	- Women’s rights and awareness regarding domestic violence and the provision of related legal aid	- To enable women’s social, economic, and legal empowerment to overcome barriers in the slum and their work environments, based on the consideration that a healthy worker is able to contribute meaningfully to society	- Mostly women and adolescent girls
Marie Stopes	- Information on health and the prevention and treatment of disease	- To increase women’s freedom of movement and help them to develop their decision-making and negotiating skills. Occasionally providing legal services for family issues (e.g., divorce, separation, and domestic violence)	
Bangladesh Women’s Health Coalition (BWHC)	- Syndromic management of RTI/STI, family planning (Distribution of FP Commodities and referral for LAPM), general health services, child health services (limited), health and nutrition advice and personal hygiene advice		
Amrai Pari (We Can)	- Provides information against domestic violence of women and raise awareness against it		

Source: Adapted from Shokhi (2017) and Soltesova (2011)

In addition to development NGOs, a few advocacy NGOs, such as the Law and Mediation Centre (*Ain O Salish Kendro*) and Bangladesh Legal Aid and Services Trust (BLAST) provide legal services to the poor. In addition, *Nagar Daridra Basteebashir Unnayan Sangstha* (Urban Poor Slum Dwellers' Development Organisation), popularly known as NDBUS (formerly BOSC), was formed by local civil society organisations to protect slum residents' rights. BOSC have made demands of Dhaka's ward commissioners and managed to gain access to water supply, sanitation and electricity in some slums (Banks, 2008). At present, NDBUS has more than two million members. Its key focus is to improve housing conditions for the urban poor, including ensuring their access to water, electricity, and drainage. They also have initiated a major campaign for community saving to enable communities to purchase land for future settlements (Soltesova, 2011). Some residents of Sattola are also members of NDBUS and united against the recent slum eviction threat under the banner of NDBUS in February 2016 as discussed in Section 5.3.2.

5.4 Conclusion

This chapter has situated the research and the study slum, Sattola and its residents within the contexts of dynamics of Bangladesh's political, social and economic evolution especially since 1971, the year of country's independence. This chapter has highlighted how urban-centric production arrangements and urban-based job creation in the wake of dwindling livelihood opportunities in rural areas, especially since the 1990s integration of Bangladesh's economy with the global market has bolstered its manufacturing sector and induced rapid rural-urban migration, contributed to a sudden increase of slums in all cities but more prominently in Dhaka of which Sattola is a major one.

This chapter has also revealed how the existing, quasi-democratic planning and governance arrangements that compromise the poor's right to city are based on patronage distribution. These impede the Sattola residents' access to services and ability to find space for livelihood opportunities and thus like many other urban poor in Global South that encounter similar challenges, resort to informalities to secure housing, basic services such as water supply and sanitation, health and education including space for livelihood activities both within and outside the dwellings (Brown, 2001; Roy, 2004, 2009a; Roy & AlSayyad, 2004). This chapter has also highlighted how several NGOs are filling the gap and providing basic services to the residents of Sattola and how faced with challenges of lack of democratic

space. As a result, they have also opted to shy away from political activism related to the poor's rights to the city.

Viewed within the constraints of neopatrimonial governance arrangements and Bangladesh's overall socio-cultural milieu that are unique to most Muslim majority countries following chapters explore the way Sattola's residents resist barriers and negotiate space (Chapter Seven) and gendered perspective of slum living and accessing space for livelihoods (Chapter Eight). The next chapter begins the series of findings chapters, with a discussion drawn from qualitative engagements with state actors and Sattola's informal traders. It examines how poor people's right to a city, including their right to access public space, is enabled or constrained by the state and its apparatuses.

Chapter 6: Urban Governance, Planning and Informality in Dhaka

6.1 Introduction

The purpose of the first of three empirical analysis chapters is to discuss the tension between the formal and informal governance mechanisms in terms of the urban poor's access to public space to address the first research question addresses the form and nature of urban governance and how they enable and constrain poor people of Sattola in the access and use of public space to pursue livelihoods. Due to the lack of available formal job opportunities and financial resources, the urban poor rely on access to public space to earn an income. However, the central and local governments have constrained poor people's access to public space through the Local Government Act and often evict the urban poor from public space without any relocation program. State actors also neglect slum residents and do not provide basic services to slums. The central government's poverty alleviation policies are mostly directed towards the alleviation of rural poverty rather than urban poverty (Planning Commission, 2015). They mostly focus on water and sanitation services for the urban poor in the Seventh Five Year Plan (Planning Commission, 2015). Consequently, the urban poor have to pay bribe to state and local powerful non-state actors (see Chapter Seven) to access public space and other basic services such as gas and electricity. Within this context, following the literature on the right to the city, governance, power and planning discussed in Chapters Two and Three, this chapter addresses the planning and governance problems in terms of poor people's access to public space for livelihoods and explore how the urban poor access public space by making an informal deal with local level state officials. The next section begins with the exploration of government policies and government officials' attitudes towards the street vendors in Dhaka.

6.2 Governing relations between the state and street vendors

This section analyses governance problems related to access to public space for livelihoods by street vendors and the contested relationship between the state actors and street vendors in accessing public space. Governance, as discussed in Chapter Three, refers to the process of involvement of several actors in the production of space. It includes policy making, implementation and the power relationships among the state, market and civil society. In

Bangladesh, urban planning and governance are state-centric, where the government has not incorporated market and civil society in the governance of urban areas. The central government has not introduced decentralisation in its full form rather decentralisation is more rhetoric than reality in Bangladesh (Panday, 2011). The central government often uses the local government as its right hand to implement policies in the local level (Panday & Jamil, 2011). As such, the state is still the key player in Bangladesh although there are many centres of power.

In Bangladesh, historically, the state has served the interests of the elites and their focus on the rights to private property as they are either directly connected with state mechanisms through their appointment in different offices or their relations with policy makers or other dominant state actors (Adnan, 2013; IGS, 2012). Consequently, most public policies are made reflecting middle class preferences and excluding poor people's need (IGS, 2012). The elites are benefitted mostly from public expenditure than the poor. As Sobhan (1998, p. 39) showed "top two deciles in Bangladesh benefited from 42 per cent of public expenditure compared to 9.8 per cent going to the lowest two deciles". Even policies and programs that are directed towards marginal groups are hijacked by the elites. Crook and Manor (1998) found that the local councillors of Bangladesh do not distribute resources such as wheat, that was sent to rural areas to distribute among poor people rather resources are allocated among their followers. They further argued as decisions on resource allocations are centralised, it is highly unlikely that token decentralisation would curtail political corruption.

To understand how the political corruption impact poor people's lives and how street vendors in Dhaka are excluded from formal planning and governance, one needs to understand the complex roles of central and local government bodies and patron-client political culture of Bangladesh. The field of institutional governance is highly linked to politics in Bangladesh (Lewis, 2017). The urban poor are connected with the structures of urban governance through their dependence or exclusion from the basic services by urban institutions as well as by the impact of meso and macro level policies (Beall & Kanji, 1999; Katepa-Kalala, 1997). In Bangladesh, business and politics are to some extent synonymous as access to power is largely determined by one's involvement in politics that ultimately offer people better opportunities for financial gain through legal, extra-legal (informal) and illegal interactions (Etzold, 2013). Public officials often prioritise the elites' demands rather than focusing on poor people's needs as the elites are historically linked with politics (IGS, 2012).

Additionally, there are problems of coordination among central and local government bodies regarding implementing policies. Public officials and city authorities often fail to tackle the most pressing problems of the megacity rather it creates more problems due to “a total lack of coordination in the management of Dhaka city” (Siddiqui & Ahmed, 2004, p. 408) . In addition, there is a lack of accountability that manifests itself in bribery, corruption, nepotism and political patronage in all levels of governance: from local bureaucrats such as ward councillors and police officers to mayors (Panday & Jamil, 2011). Similarly economic wealth grants people’s influence in local and national governance processes. Winning the election is the main aim of national party politics to gain entry into the arena of power (Banks, 2008). Then they utilise their political positions to dictate other arenas of society as well as governance processes (Siddiqui et al., 2016).

In Dhaka, personal ties are equally important to enter into the world of formal institutions, where public services are distributed by not only following legal rules but also paying bribe to city officials (Siddiqui, 2004). In most parts of the Global South, municipal officials are the most powerful actors for providing structural facilities for shelter and livelihoods of the urban poor as they determine poor people’s civil and political rights (Lloyd-Jones & Rakodi, 2014). Dhaka North area is under the jurisdiction of the Dhaka North City Corporation (DNCC). However, DNCC is not an autonomous body rather its activities are monitored and dictated by the central government and the planning commission. Dhaka City Corporations (DCCs) and other parallel organisations often determine whether street vendors’ access to public space is granted or not.

In Dhaka, the urban poor have no tenure security over their dwelling and livelihood spaces. They mostly encroach on public space to build houses and operate businesses, which is illegal. Consequently, they often experience eviction from their spaces of dwellings and livelihoods. Though many cities of the South have successfully implemented different slum-upgradation programs and offered improved housing facilities and livelihoods for the urban poor (Bhowmik & Saha, 2012; Rodrigues & Barbosa, 2010), the DNCC has not taken any initiative to improve the life and livelihood practices of the urban poor. Instead, following the Northern urban ethos, the Mayor of DNCC had a mandate to build a ‘clean and green’ city. As such he had been evicting all illegal structures of Dhaka North since November 2015. As Watson (2009a) argues the planned city sweeps away the poor. This is also observed in Dhaka. As the DNCC officials had evicted many street vendors violating their ‘right to the

city' (see Chapter Two), particularly their right to appropriate space, I asked an elected official of DNCC about his responsibility to ensure poor people's 'right to the city'. Initially he denied his responsibility to ensure their rights, "*It's not my responsibility. My responsibility is to create a good atmosphere for citizens*". When asked whether he does not consider the poor as citizens, he said:

Yes, they are. Does that mean they will do illegal activities? I'm poor. I will kill people. To grab land is illegal . . . It's not my job. It's the job of the central government to rehabilitate them, to create job, to create facilities that will keep them in villages. My mandate is to keep the city clean, is to keep it liveable. These are my mandates. And I'm very very cordial to them. But cordiality does not help always. I've to weigh which is the best. So, I have to do the best for the citizens of Dhaka (an elected official of DNCC, 64 [KII 18]).

This is how the representatives of the local government have denied their responsibility to improve the housing and livelihood conditions of the urban poor. The state-centric governance approach in Dhaka influences the local government's priorities as well, which is channelled towards meeting needs of the growing middle class. Similar attitudes are evident in other developing Asian countries. This is because developing Asian countries tend to follow policies unfavourably disposed towards the informal sector, which emerged from uncritical continuations of colonial policies (McGee, McGee, & Yeung, 1977). During the colonial period, the local government was created to collect tax from local residents, DNCC's role and attitude have not much changed since its colonial inception (Panday & Jamil, 2011). Consequently, the officials of the local government mostly blame the urban poor for making the city dirty and unliveable following the middle class ethos, which confirms the 'hostile attitude' view of the state as discussed in Chapter Two. As this representative further said, "*You cannot always have the heaven and everything together*". This statement indicates the urban poor are the barriers to make the city heaven. So he had been sweeping away the poor to build a 'clean and green' Dhaka since he won the election. Similar views are prevalent among other city officials of different cities in the South such as Ho Chi Min city (Kim, 2015) and Peru (Bromley & Mackie, 2009). A city official in Peru said, "the street traders caused congestion, worked in unhygienic conditions and generated a huge problem of rubbish, associated with an environment favourable to the proliferation of rats, the spread of disease and street crime" (Bromley & Mackie, 2009, p. 1491).

The elected official of DNCC supports this existing view and working towards building a clean Dhaka evicting street vendors yet he cannot be blamed completely for his inability to relocate vendors. The DNCC has no authority over allocating land for street vendors, no allocated budget for buying land for the poor, and no authority over making urban development plans (Panday, 2017). The RAJUK (Capital Development Authority), under the Ministry of Housing and Public Works, is the main planning and development agency for the Dhaka Metropolitan area (Begum, 2007). The RAJUK is regarded as an elitist institution that mostly serves the interests of the upper-income group and private developers rather serving the ordinary citizens of Dhaka (Begum, 2007; Kochanek, 2000). As Haque (2016) argues the RAJUK has so far developed only affluent residential areas such as Gulshan, Banani, Baridhara, Nikunjo, Uttara Model Town, Jhilmil and Purbachal. Though ‘Uttara Model Town’ was initiated to provide housing facilities for low-income residents in the 1980s, only 13 per cent (135 plots) were allocated to low-income group. Many of these land owners also sold their plots to high-income group due to lack of financial capabilities to build a house (Haque, 2016). There were also corruption and politicisation in the distribution of RAJUK’s plots. RAJUK’s plans mostly facilitate the housing needs of the high-income group, who are already the owner of multiple land properties in Dhaka whereas RAJUK has completely failed to materialise a single housing project for the urban poor or low-income group (Haque, 2016). This is an example of how the state and its agencies can ‘whiten’ the illegality of the elites whereas ‘blackens’ the urban poor’s appropriation of city’s space, thus create gray spaces through its planning and distribution mechanisms (Yiftachel, 2009b). This exclusionary land policy is one of the main reasons for losing faith in the governance system by the urban poor.

Due to the lack of tenure security the urban poor are often evicted from their livelihood spaces. The local government runs eviction drives with the permission of the central government. This indicates the state has enormous power, however, it is mostly used for evictions rather than resettlement programs. Moreover, most government officials want the urban poor to go back to their villages. The ward councillor (WC) of Sattola, who was sympathetic towards the urban poor, initiated some development programs in Sattola with the financial assistance of some NGOs such as building a permanent structure for fish market and providing primary health care. However, when asked about resettlement programs or what options are available for the urban poor other than encroaching public space, he said:

That is a difficult question to answer. For example, where did I come from? Suppose I came from Barisal. But I appropriated huge amount of property here but it is not my property. It is the property of the government. I should not grab the government's property. I should go back to my village (WC, DNCC, [KII 13]).

Several government officials including the elected official of DNCC repeated this view. The state and the local government have not taken any initiatives to improve the livelihoods of street vendors or to ensure their tenure security over public space apart from the establishment of three hawkers markets in 1975 and 11 hawkers markets established by the military backed government in 2007 (Etzold, 2013; First News, 2016). However, state actors had not consulted with the hawkers at all while establishing these markets. This is an example how vendors' right to participation is denied by the government and its organizations even if it is for their relocation. Later the hawkers were evicted from three markets without relocation in 1978 (First News, 2016). Twenty massive eviction drives were carried out between 1989 and 1998 without any relocation program (First News, 2016). In 2007, the military backed government brutally evicted most vendors and some slums (Etzold, 2013). As a reaction to the compensation demands of the Communist Party of Bangladesh and different NGOs, the government set up 11 hawkers markets in some selected areas in 2007. However, these markets failed to accommodate the nearly 100,000 displaced vendors, causing unsustainable competition among vendors and inevitable corruption in the allocation of space (The Daily Star, 2007; Etzold, 2013). Consequently, all markets except two were closed in late 2007 and street vendors reclaimed the streets as soon as police reduced their presence at old vending sites (Etzold, 2013). Establishing some hawkers markets do not solve problems of livelihoods rather relocating street vendors to fixed markets often decrease their incomes as found by Donovan's (2008) study in Bogota, Colombia. Additionally, vendors have to pay for vending spots if they are moved to a formal market, which becomes an additional burden for street traders. Consequently, they move out from formal market and encroach public space again (Donovan, 2008; Etzold, 2013). Though some sidewalk management initiates advocate for creating vending districts or issuing official carts, they are not useful and often remain unused by vendors in places like Los Angeles because they were done without understanding of the 'social systems' (Kim, 2012) and vendors' logic of using public space.

Apart from setting up 11 hawkers markets by the military backed government, the RAJUK and the DNCC have not taken any initiatives so far to improve the livelihoods of street vendors or to ensure their security of tenure over public space. However, an elected official of DNCC said they are working on it:

We are thinking about relocation plan by building evening market and holiday market but nothing has been fixed yet . . . We are planning to relocate them. I already talked with Bangladesh bank about loans and if necessary, we will arrange loans for them to make them operate business in a structured way so that they do not sit on streets . . . The Bangladesh bank has agreed or we [with central government] mutually discussed and a plan is there so that we can rehabilitate them. When, where and how, still yet to be known (An elected official of DNCC, [KII 18]).

This indicates several problems in planning and governance of Dhaka city. First, the DNCC has no authority over public land or making a plan for the relocation of the urban poor, however, it has the responsibility to keep the city clean and clear roads and footpaths for vehicles and pedestrians (Siddiqui, 2004). Second, the local government cannot make any decision independently rather the Planning Commission and the RAJUK develop urban development plan. Third, this statement indicates the problem of ambiguity of planning – they have no fixed relocation plan though they are running eviction drives.

Most urban development plans are vague and unrealistic as pointed out by Mowla (2016) regarding the Dhaka Structure Plan (DSP) 2016-2036. This plan has 13 Chapters where Chapters Seven and Eight of DSP present a discussion on enhancing Dhaka's employment and productivity and public facilities for better living, however, these are rhetoric without any guidelines for implementation. Similarly, the above backup plan shown by the elected official might never be implemented. Perhaps he mentioned about that plan to provide justification for eviction but the important question is whether and how much power and resources the local government hold to make this plan a success. Previous studies have also indicated that the local government bodies in Bangladesh have very limited power and resources to make and implement plans independently (Islam, 2013; Khondker, Mohith, Mannan, & Mannan, 2015) . To solve the problem of hierarchical management, the central government has accorded mayors of Dhaka similar rank and status as ministers so that mayors can implement their decisions independently (Islam, 2013). However, mayors have not taken any effective

measures yet to promote ‘spatial’ and ‘social’ justice for the urban poor although spatial and social justice are important areas to address the needs of marginalised groups in neoliberal cities (see Chapter Two).

The discussion so far has shown that the state and its apparatuses have created a ‘differentiated citizenship’ (Holston, 2009) prioritizing elites’ demand of the city and ignoring poor people’s need for basic housing and livelihoods in the city. This can be seen in the failure of government housing apparatuses such as RAJUK to provide living and working space for the urban poor. The state, through its actions and policies have made it very clear to the urban poor that they have no rights as citizens to a place in the city, so they should go back to their rural villages. In this way, the state and its apparatuses have denied the urban poor’s rights to ‘full and complete’ (Purcell, 2003) use of urban space in their everyday lives, and created ‘urban informality’ (Roy, 2009b) through its governing processes, leaving the urban poor in a constant state of uncertainty and fear of further exploitation by state and non-state actors. State actors further stigmatize the urban poor using the law and labelling them as land grabbers, criminals and polluters to justify eviction drives – a practice Yiftachel (2009a) calls ‘blackening’ the gray space.

Recently the central government has taken some initiatives for the first time by making a chapter in the 7th Five Year Plan. Section Nine of Chapter Nine of this plan focuses on urbanisation strategies where the government has proposed that there should be special zones for the urban poor (Planning Commission, 2015). However, the government has not taken any initiative yet to implement these policies. Also, establishing some zones for street vendors are not an effective solution as zones are often created far from the central areas of a city, which lead to reduction in income for vendors or the need to development new livelihoods. Chapter Nine of this Plan further emphasises on providing support for income, space for accommodation and work for poor people; however, no attempt has been taken yet to make these policies a reality for the poor.

This section so far has shown how Dhaka’s space is produced by planners and state actors ignoring poor people’s right to appropriate space. This is how ‘conceived space’ – a space produced by dominant actors such as planners, architects, capitalists and state officials is produced overpowering ‘perceived’ and ‘lived’ space of users and inhabitants (Lefebvre, 1991). Yet the framework of the ‘right to the city’ (Lefebvre, 1968; Purcell, 2003) (Chapter

Two) and ‘governance’ (Minnery, 2007) (Chapter Three) indicate the emergence of a participatory governance, where the civil society plays an important role in planning and designing city’s space apart from the state and the market.

6.3 Governing relations between the civil society and street vendors

The term ‘civil society’ includes any organisations or groups that undertake activities for the public good (Salamon & Anheier, 1998). NGOs and other grassroots organisations are part of the civil society. When the state denies poor people’s right to the city through its exclusionary policies and limiting poor people’s participation in decision-making processes, one might be curious to explore the role of civil society organisations in mobilising poor people in Dhaka. Although there are some world renowned NGOs in Bangladesh such as Grameen Bank and BRAC, who have gained appreciation for their micro finance and poverty alleviation programs, most NGOs cannot participate much in urban governance.

NGOs in Bangladesh are highly depoliticised and do not work for capacity building of grassroots organisations due to donors and state’s pressure of not getting involved in politics. As Lewis (2017, p. 19) notes, “the dominance of clientelistic parties in Bangladesh restricted opportunities for NGOs to create political space in which horizontal forms of social capital could be created, or to evolve organisational structures that are more democratic in terms of leadership and decision-making, and in terms of their capacity to represent the poor”. Recently NGOs have also become “vehicles for corporate interests rather than for consolidating democratic structures by confronting local power structures or challenging the state” (Lewis, 2017, p. 19). For example, some NGOs, notably BRAC, have established market-based enterprises (such as Aarong and BRAC Bank) to generate significant income, which reduce donor dependency, but at the same time this strategy has moved them away from radical political work (Lewis, 2017).

However, some NGOs such as *Gono Shahajho Sanghsta* (Mass Help Agency, GSS), began participating in the local level elections in 1992 by motivating their beneficiaries and selecting candidates among the poor to ensure poor people’s participation in the political system; however, mainstream political parties did not like their initiatives and vandalised their project schools (Ulvila & Hossain, 2002). Other local NGOs such as PROSHIKA, NIJERA KORI (We do it ourselves) and Association for Social Advancement (ASA) also got

pressure from donor agencies not to get involved in politics (Stiles, 2002). The reason behind this donor pressure is associated with the election results of Nilphamari District in 1992, where the first election results show that the GSS members would win all seats. The government and the local elites got the sense that NGOs were not only providing services to poor people, they had the organisational skills and resources to defeat national party leaders (Karim, 2016). The ruling government, BNP, ordered an investigation against GSS's activities. Based on the investigation report, where NGOs were held responsible for financial irregularities, the government filed police charges against several foreign nationals and NGOs for financial irregularities and revoked the operating licenses of some of the major NGOs (BRAC, CARITAS, GSS and PROSHIKA) (Karim, 2016). Although the government had to withdraw these charges due to donor pressures and western governments, this incident led the government to establish the NGO Affairs Bureau (NGOAB) to control NGO projects and funds based on a series of meetings that held between government officials and NGO leaders facilitated by the ambassadors of western countries (Karim, 2016). Due to all these factors, donors did not like activist NGOs approach in rural activities. Consequently, activist NGOs curtail their consciousness-raising activities and began working like mainstream NGOs, who mostly provide utility services and provide support for poverty eradication, education, health, family planning, women and environment issues (Karim, 2016; Rahman, 2002).

The state does not trust NGOs and constantly raises questions about their transparency and accountability, forcing NGOs to work under strict state regulation (Mir & Bala, 2015). One example of this kind of regulation is the incorporation of NGOs under the DNCC. NGOs need to have permission from the DNCC before implementing any development program in slum areas. Some NGOs in Bangladesh that have connections with ruling government are occasionally invited to participate in decision-making processes although it is often argued that more flexible, action-oriented and participatory plans, seek to integrate between public and private agencies that are involved in urban development due to failure of traditional 'end-state' plans (Clarke, 1992; Davidson, 1996). This type of governance is known as 'multi-stakeholders governance' in the context of neoliberalism (de Wit & Berner, 2009). This type of governance and planning further advocates including the urban poor along with other actors to make a balance in decision-making power and distribution of resources (Healey, 1997). In governance literature, most authors neglected the conflict components rather they argued that governance relationships are consensual and cooperative (Minnery, 2007).

However, governance relationships are multilayered and different groups have different interests. Hence it is important to consider conflict among different stakeholders along with cooperation (Innes, Connick, & Booher, 2007). This conflictual relationship is particularly important for the thesis as the central government is the central actor in urban governance in Dhaka. Local governments work as an extension of the central government and the market has a working relation with the local and central governments; however, the state has conflictual relationships with NGOs. Because of patron-client relations with political elites, NGOs in Bangladesh are unable to pressure the state to include the poor in decision-making processes (Lewis, 2017). Apart from NGOs, sometimes the local government of Dhaka delivers services in collaboration with other donor agencies, public and private organisations:

Poor people are also part of the city. A zone should be planned for the poor. The DNCC has a project to improve the living condition of the poor, known as the 'slum development project'. This project aims at providing facilities for generating income and education. In this project donors, NGOs, the DNCC and the government work together (A Town Planner of DNCC, [KII 20]).

The DNCC has a slum improvement project, however, this project is run by the finances of NGOs and donors. This program is directed towards providing water and sanitation to different slums rather than addressing the issue of urban poor's access to public space for livelihoods.

Civil society organisations such as NGOs so far have failed to ensure poor people's tenure security over spaces of livelihoods or to mobilise them to initiate grassroots movement to claim their rights although several studies have pointed out the role of NGOs in capacity building of grassroots organisations towards transformative political engagement and demanding the latter's rights for housing and livelihoods (Bhowmik, 2005; de Souza, 2006; Recio, 2015). For example, Bhowmik's (2005) study in India shows National Association of Street Vendors of India (NASVI), a federation of street vendors in India in cooperation with other NGOs has successfully initiated vendors' rights to the national policy. Recio's (2015) study in the Philippines pointed out the role of NGOs in strengthening the capacity of street vendors' organisations, their participation in political processes and acting as policy champions. de Souza (2006) also recognized NGOs roles as 'critical urban planning agents'.

Recently some advocacy NGOs have been providing legal aids to the slum areas against forced evictions without providing resettlement for the urban poor, which was adopted in the National Housing Policy (Rahman, 2002). NGOs such as ASK, BLAST, DSK and NDBUS help slum residents to empower them to protest against evictions as in the case of Sattola and Korail slum. Due to imposing limits on NGOs activities in mobilising the poor to claim their rights, the only organisation that can mobilise the urban poor is *Nagar Doridra Busteebasheer Unnayon Shangstad* (NDBUS). NDBUS was formed by the Coalition for the Urban Poor (CUP) – a network coalition for the 53 NGOs that are working to reduce urban poverty in Bangladesh (Banks, 2008). Later, NDBUS was registered formally with the government in 2007 (Ahmed, 2014). NDBUS has started working on their needs and negotiating with the local service providers to get access to water, electricity and tenure security for housing (Soltesova, 2011). Some residents of Sattola were also members of NDBUS and they raised their voice against the recent eviction threat under the banner of NDBUS in February 2016 (New Age, 2016). However, NDBUS has not taken any initiative yet to fight for vendors' right to the use of public space for livelihoods. Hence street vendors govern their businesses quietly encroaching public space. No NGO is working to ensure vendors' access to urban space to earn an income. Thus, the urban poor are on their own to fight against the state to demand their rights to use of public space for livelihoods.

Apart from NGOs, the participation of local community organisations such as CBOs in urban governance is important. Healey (1997) argues that different stakeholders participation in urban governance is important as they share spaces and power relationships among these groups, which affect governance as well as distribution of resources. The residents of Sattola have not formed any organisation other than becoming members of NDBUS, however, not all residents are members. As a result, they have limited power and agency to influence policy makers or even local government officials due to lack of transparency, accountability and corruption among those state agents, who often cater needs of elites as discussed in Section 5.2. Yet due to the emergence of NDBUS, members of NDBUS are now capable of communicating with local ward councillor (WC) and put pressure to provide services to slum areas (Cawood, 2017; Banks, 2008). NDBUS was formed on the assumption that WC would provide access between the poor and DCC (Banks, 2008). This is the only way through which the urban poor are able to participate in urban governance, however, in reality, the WC is the main gatekeeper who determines the poor's participation in the municipal governance. If this

relationship breaks down, the urban poor's demands to services cannot be reached to DCCs (Banks, 2008).

More importantly, a multitude of agencies are involved in urban governance, so the WC is not always the right actor on whom to press demands (Banks, 2008). Moreover, WCs do not always maintain regular contact with slum residents rather their followers often govern the local space. Hence slum residents either inform the local NGOs about their needs or meet some local leaders and WCs and negotiate with them about their access to public space. Yet the WC has limited power to help the urban poor and his followers often extort the urban poor using their connections with local politicians and the impact of this kind of 'patron-client' relationship will be discussed in Chapter Seven. Due to all these practices and lack of accountability of local level state agents, the urban poor have limited agency to influence formal planning and governance sectors. This finding accords with Banks' (2008) study in two wards of Dhaka, where slum residents of Ward A failed to communicate with their WC and felt neglected whereas WC of Ward B used to visit slums regularly and tried to listen to and mitigate poor people's needs within his reach. Apart from the lack of accountability of WCs, the state is repressive and run eviction drives to establish its control over public space as discussed in Section 6.2. State actors often utilise existing rules to evict street vendors. The next section provides a brief overview of formal rules and regulations that are used by state actors for blocking vendors' rights to use public space.

6.4 Formal rules and regulations regarding street vending in Dhaka

In 1972 the ILO noted in its report that "informal-sector activities are largely ignored, rarely supported, often regulated and sometimes actively discouraged by the government" (ILO, 1972, p. 4). The same holds true for the governance of street trading in Dhaka today. Although some old, outdated legal rules on street vending exist in Bangladesh, most of them are not implemented in real life except for evicting vendors. However, the informal economy is not 'unregulated' as it is commented by some scholars (Castells & Portes, 1989; de Soto, 1990). In Dhaka, the everyday practices of the urban poor are highly regulated by social values, social control, personal agreements and other types of informal and formal institutions, which will be discussed in Chapters Seven and Eight. The use of public space is highly governed by both formal and informal actors in Dhaka. These powerful groups draw

their authoritarian power using their political and legal positions and drawing upon a continuum of social and political institutions, from formal to informal ones.

As shown in Chapter Two the legal academics of informal economy have emphasised the importance of legalisation and trade licences for street traders (de Soto, 1990; te Lintelo, 2009). However, there are positive and negative connotations regarding trading licence for informal traders as indicated by Anjaira's (2011) and Bhowmik's (2003) studies in India. A trading license is useful in the sense that it prevents hawkers from police harassment, extortion and eviction. However, it is often hard to get a trading license due to complicated rules and limited number of licences provided by the municipal authorities and hawkers' financial inability to pay for a municipal license (Anjaria, 2011; Setšabi & Leduka, 2008). Moreover, the number of licenses is often limited, so the unlicensed hawkers have to pay more bribes to police for operating business. Thus license is not the only solution against eviction rather governments need to make an individual governing body and legal rules for governing vending activities and vending sites so that they can independently decide where vendors can operate business and how identity cards can be provided in exchange of simple registration system.

It is almost impossible for street vendors in Dhaka to obtain a license from the municipal authority though Dhaka City Corporation (DCC) Ordinance 1983 stipulates the process to get a licence. According to the DCC Ordinance 1983 (Ministry of Law Bangladesh, 1983), Clause 115 [1], no one is allowed to “make an encroachment, movable or immovable, on, over, or under a street or a drain, or any land, or house-gully or building or park except under a license granted by the Corporation and to the extent permitted by the licence”. In reality, most vendors in Dhaka do not have a vending licence. Etzold's (2013) study in Dhaka and a study conducted by Consumers Association of Bangladesh (Faruque, Haque, Shekhar, & Begum, 2010) revealed that none of the mobile vendors or semi-permanent shop owners had a vending license, only one third of the permanent shop owners had one, however, they were not registered by the DCC rather by local business committees. Hence all street vendors operate businesses illegally occupying public space in Dhaka. Some street traders told me that they heard that they would get license from some survey people, who promised them to provide vending license, however, those people never came back to give them any license. In particular, the street vendors of Banani said: *“Some people have taken our name and other demographic information and told us that they would give us a card for operating business.*

Almost 2/3 months have passed since then. However, we have not heard anything from them”. This excerpt further indicates the problem with formal authorities in Dhaka, who have failed to implement their programs in different periods. Consequently, the urban poor have lost their faith in the formal system.

Apart from DCCs and RAJUK’s exclusionary policies for the urban poor, there is also ambiguity regarding governance of urban space due to overlapping jurisdiction on Dhaka’s public space. It is often not clear which urban governance body is in charge for the implementation of the law and how it is enforced. Another relevant question is where restrictive rules should be implemented and where not (Etzold, 2013). As Etzold’s study revealed answers to these questions often depend on the place of sale, whether it is a public, parochial and private space, and on the governing logic in each arena of street vending. For example, the police control most public space in Dhaka such as streets, footpaths, parks and other public squares – which are under the jurisdiction of DCCs. However, different institutions have institutional authorities and follow separate rules for controlling vendors. Also, local government officials are either unable or because of political pressure fail to address the basic needs of the urban poor in many cities in the Global South (Benjamin, 2000; Roy, 2004).

So far the discussion has revealed that the urban poor including vendors’ rights to use of public space have been denied by the state. Moreover, the civil society and the urban poor have limited agency to influence urban planning and governance. The question might then arise, how the vendors of Sattola access public space and what kinds of negotiation strategies they employ to deal with state actors for using public space.

6.5 Gray space: where formal meets informal

In Dhaka the key figures in the national governments such as ministers and secretaries, and the military, senior police officers, mayors and other high officials are the most influential in terms of governance and policy making. Street vendors belong to the opposite spectrum in the national and local power structure. However, vendors’ livelihoods are not directly influenced by central government officials; rather, local officials such as the officials of DNCC, police and other public servants of the nearby hospitals and research institutes of Sattola held the power to determine access to public space for the residents of Sattola. Using

their formal authoritarian and bureaucratic power, these local actors often determine whether poor people's right to access to public space is granted or not. To understand this complex relationship, one needs to understand the functioning logic of the state and the bureaucratic field, which is the micro-cosmos of state agents who tries to profit utilizing the state's monopoly of physical and symbolic violence (Bourdieu, 1998). A basic tension of state bureaucracy always exists between the formal rule of law in theory and its implementation in practice (Bourdieu, 1998; de Wit & Akinyoade, 2008).

As playing with the rules is part of the rules of the game in an environment like Dhaka, formal institutions do not necessarily provide guiding principles for social practices, rather they use their authority to accumulate material or symbolic profits from their institutional or bureaucratic position (Bourdieu, 1998). State agents make profits in both cases; either by 'playing by the rule', where they earn recognition with peers and superiors as tough advocates of the law enforcing formal standards rigorously such as evicting street traders. Or they can 'play with the rules' on the backstage and circumvent formal regulations to serve their own interest or a protectorate, earning appreciation by subordinate, dependent or closely related agents (Bourdieu, 1994, 2006). This 'double power' of state agents in their official roles often "manifests itself in the abuse of authority, misappropriation of (public) funds, corruption, rent seeking and other forms of profit-making, and through the non-application or non-enforcement of the rule of law which are all too apparent phenomena (not only) in post-colonial development states such as India (Corbridge, 2005; Zimmer & Sakdapolrak, 2012) or Bangladesh" (Etzold, 2013, p. 42) but also this is evident in other parts of the Global South such as Iran (Bayat, 1997a), Tanzania (Cleaver, 2005), and Caracas (Garcia-Rincon, 2007).

Similar practices of institutional authority by state agents are observed in Dhaka. The state officials often 'play by the rules' to evict traders from their vending places. Street vendors cannot resist this group due to lack of tenure security over public space. For example, the Bangladesh Medical Research Council (BMRC), which adjoins the study slum, is one example of this kind of authority, where officials recently evicted street vendors from the nearby footpaths and put bamboo fences so that vendors can no longer operate shops. Several studies have found hawkers and vendors are bound to pay local police and other actors due to the nature of the space they occupy for their business (Brown, 2006c; Pratt, 2006). They occupy an ambiguous legal position even though their business is legal (Pratt,

2006). Due to this ambiguity of public space, police may evict street traders anytime if they operate business on footpaths near the various main roads of Dhaka.

In terms of institutional power, three groups of state agents are powerful in Sattola. The most influential group is the police and the officials of DNCC; however, the officials of DNCC usually make decisions regarding the eviction of illegal structures. Hence vendors have less scope for negotiation with this group. Vendors are usually forced to negotiate with public officials through local politicians, *mastans*, linemen and police, despite the fact these people are often the face of exploitation. These public officials, especially police often ‘play with the rules’ to earn an extra income; however, police usually do not collect money from street traders. In most cases a middleman who is known as lineman collects money from vendors and later it is distributed among police, police station and local political leaders (See Chapter Seven for detail discussion on non-state actors’ extortion). This is how state actors extort informal workers using their institutional power illegally. This practice is reflected in Sakib’s account:

My brother pays 3.57 USD [he explains it as rent for space] for doing business in Banani [an affluent neighbourhood in Dhaka]. He pays 0.24 USD to a lineman for the Police, 1USD to a local AL leader and 0.48 and 0.59 USD to two other leaders. They are local leaders. That is why we have to pay them whether we like it or not. Otherwise they will not allow us to run our business there. Police do not help us in this regard (Sakib, 16, a food vendor).

Despite the regular informal payment, police sometimes evict vendors due to the change of an Officer- in- Charge (OC) of a local police station or to follow orders of a senior police officer:

S: The senior police officers forced them to evict us . . . Not everybody gave money. The new traders often argue with the police that they won’t move from the place.

L: So police don’t collect money directly?

S: No. If police collected money from us directly that would be good. They have mediators [linemen] for that. They get a share from the collected money . . . There are

duty cars of the police, who drive around the road at night. They take money. They collect 0.24 USD from us. There are also police from the camp . . . There are also civilian police. If we don't give them money, they will come again wearing civilian dress and take money from you. The big terrorists of Dhaka city are police. They arrest innocent people and pick them up in their car and if the victim pays them 2 USD, they release him (Sohel, 35, a food vendor [78]).

In some cases, police come directly to collect protection money from vendors. Some interviewees said police directly collect money from scrap metal traders because they run illegal business. By 'illegal business' they meant those shopkeepers buy stolen materials such as telephone wire and electric wire. That is why police can demand money. There is a lack of power to resist the illegal demands of the police due to the illegal nature of their business. However, police also collect money from the permanent shopkeepers and the vendors, who run legal business using 'public' and 'parochial' realms (see Chapter Two).

Apart from collecting protection money, sometimes police arrest street traders if they do not move their vending equipment following police's order as mentioned earlier in Soheli's narrative. Salman and Fahim shared their experiences of being arrested by police during evictions in Gulshan and Mohakhali. Salman used his political connections to get a bail. On the contrary, Fahim paid a fine to bail out from prison as he did not have political connections like Salman. These narratives illustrate how police collect money forcefully from vendors, destroy shops, confiscate vending equipment, beat and arrest them if they do not listen to them which is consistent with previous studies in different cities of the South (Brown, 2001, 2006a, 2006c, 2006d; Pratt, 2006). The DNCC officials and the police in Dhaka drive this kind of eviction in the name of beautification of the city as well as demolishing illegal structures from the streets to ensure better traffic and movements of the pedestrians. The state controls access to public space using these strategies.

Street traders repeatedly blame police for their misery and loss during eviction drives; however, there are some structural factors related to this practice in Bangladesh. For example, a lower ranking police constable only receives a monthly salary of 59 USD without any bribe, which is significantly less than 101 USD that is earned by the food vendors on an average (Etzold, 2015). However, police's role is important in the livelihood practices of street vendors in the sense that at least they provide temporary security over livelihood spaces

in return of money and food. Police often inform linemen prior to an eviction drive so that linemen can tell vendors to clear the footpaths and other spaces that are used for vending activities. Sometimes police also order street vendors to move their vending equipment away prior to demolish their shops. Similar practices are also evident in Anjaria's (2010, 2011) study on street traders in Mumbai and Etzold's (2013) study in Dhaka.

6.6 Summary

Urban planning and governance is highly state centric in Bangladesh, where state often dictates how much participation of civil society and market are welcomed in urban governance. In Dhaka, most decisions regarding allocation of spaces and urban development plans are made in 'closed spaces' (see Chapter Three). Gaventa (2005) coined the term 'closed spaces' to refer to participation and decision making processes in terms of governance and policies, where a set of powerful actors elites such as bureaucrats, experts or elected representatives make decisions behind the closed doors without broadening the boundaries for participatory planning and governance, including excluding the ordinary people's ideas or demands for services. In Dhaka, urban governance related decisions are often made in these closed spaces, where decisions are mostly made in the parliament. Then local government bodies implement those decisions as discussed in Section 6.2.

Consequently, these policies and programs often produce 'conceived space' (Lefebvre, 1991) – a space designed by planners, geographers and state officials, to serve the interest of the elites ignoring poor people's needs for housing and livelihood spaces. This is a common problem in many other postcolonial societies including Dhaka such as Mombasa, Kumasi, and Colombo (Devas, 2001). In these cities, local governments often deny poor people's right to use of urban space following the colonial spatial order that their colonial masters introduced long back (Devas, 2001). Similar trends are evident in Dhaka, where DCCs still follow the colonial mentality in managing urban space. For example, the local government still follow the DCC Ordinance 1983 that was introduced during Pakistan period following the trend of maintaining colonial spatial order to build a 'clean and green city'. This notion of Western idealised urban space have mostly produced conceived spaces excluded poor people's needs for using public space for livelihoods in many parts of the South such as India (Bhan, 2009), Malawi (Tonda & Kepe, 2016) and Mozambique (Lindell, 2008).

Another important player in urban governance is the ‘civil society’ (see Chapter Three). However, due to top down governance and planning in Dhaka and repressive and/or controlled nature of the state, the civil society has not been able to participate actively in urban planning and governance other than delivering services to slums. Civil society organisations can only participate if government agencies invite them to participate in any decision-making process as discussed in Section 6.3. Their participation in urban governance can be termed as ‘invited spaces’ (Gaventa, 2005), where people are invited to participate by various kinds of authorities such as government, supranational agencies or NGOs (Cornwall & Coelho, 2007). Invited spaces may be regularised or institutionalised to incorporate people’s participation in governance. In Bangladesh, poor groups are not ‘invited’ and play no role in decision-making on the growth and improvement of the city.

NGOs in Bangladesh are to some extent working with city governments to implement their projects as shown in Section 6.3. However, their participation is still very limited and they mostly deliver basic services to slums. Apart from forming NDBUS, NGOs have failed to raise consciousness among the urban poor for demanding their rights to access public space for livelihoods. Though this is a constitutional right, the NGOs are not allowed to organise any political movements against the state and the central government strictly maintain this rule. If necessary, the government or followers of ruling political party take initiatives to vandalise NGO activities as discussed in Section 6.3. Consequently, mainstream NGOs in Bangladesh do not mobilise vendors to demand their rights to access to public space except a few advocacy NGOs.

In contrast, NGOs in other countries of the Global South have motivated street vendors to fight for their rights to livelihoods and access to public space. In the Philippines, NGOs strengthen the capacity of street vendors and acted as policy champions (Recio, 2014). This is because the government of Philippines are tolerant enough to allow NGOs in urban governance, whereas, NGOs and their activities are under constant surveillance by the government of Bangladesh (White, 1999). Also, NGOs are not beyond criticism as most NGOs maintain some kinds of political connections with various political parties following the national patronage culture (Lewis, 2011; Stiles, 2002). Some NGOs have extended their activities to market activities such as BRAC (Ahmad, 2000). Some NGOs have misappropriated donor’s money. Therefore, NGOs have failed to prove their accountability to the government and the poor, which created mistrusts against NGO activities (Hashemi,

1995). Hence NGOs need to practice democracy, transparency and accountability within their own organisations first to rebuild poor people's trusts on them. This might also provide better opportunities for NGOs to participate in urban governance and planning to raise poor people's demands for use of public space.

NDBUS – an NGO operated by the urban poor, is also part of civil society. However, due to top down governance in Dhaka, NDBUS has not been invited by the local or national governments to participate in any decision-making related to urban planning and governance despite the urban poor's right to participate in decision-making processes regarding the use of city's space (Lefebvre, 1996; Purcell, 2003). The right to participation encourages the involvement of inhabitants in institutionalized control over urban life including participation in the political life, management, and administration of the city (Dikeç, 2001). As the government has not invited NDBUS to participate in urban policy making, NDBUS is pursuing their demands for housing, basic services and livelihoods to DCCs as discussed in Section 6.3. This kind of governance can be referred to as 'claimed/created spaces' (Gaventa, 2005), where less powerful actors create their own spaces. The problem related to this kind of governance in Dhaka is that local representatives are not accountable to the poor due to the latter's lack of agency to influence the political system. Very often these local level state officials also extort the urban poor in various ways (Banks, 2008; Walters et al., 2014). However, the urban poor do not protest as they are aware that state officials can use their institutional authority to repress any movement. The state has not ensured their 'right to the city' (RTC) (Lefebvre, 1996a), so they have little hope that their resistance will bring any change in the system.

In the literature of the RTC (see Chapter Two), the concept 'right to the city' emerges within its two main rights: the right to appropriate urban space or use right, where every inhabitants will have rights to 'full and complete' use of urban space in their everyday lives and the right to participation in decision-making regarding any kind of production of urban space at any scale whether the state, capital, or any other entity (Fenster, 2005; Purcell, 2003). Urban governance and planning create 'gray space' (see Chapter Two) denying poor people's rights to participation in formal planning and governance and rights to appropriate and use of urban spaces. This kind of gray space is produced by urban authorities and policy makers in many cities of the Global South including Dhaka, where the informal groups are perceived as a residual category (Crossa, 2014). Informal people or practices are often portrayed as problem

that can be controlled by the formal mechanisms of the state or may be tolerated silently as a problem (Crossa, 2014; Kamete, 2017).

However, informality is often produced due to profound structural inequalities or institutionally produced realities and often naturalised by the state and reproduced in practices of everyday life (Crossa, 2014). Similarly, in Dhaka, urban governance and planning processes have created 'urban informality' in the first place by restricting poor people's access to public space. Then using this informality, the state, especially the local government bodies, has denied poor people's rights to the use of urban space. Though the term 'urban informality' was coined by Roy (2009) to address the planning problems of India (see Chapter Three), however, similar planning and governance problems exist in Dhaka. The state apparatus and state actors create 'gray spaces' (Yiftachel, 2009b) using planning regulations as demonstrated in Section 6.5. Yiftachel argues that the state and its agencies can use planning ideology to violate marginalised groups right to appropriate space, however, it allows illegal encroachment of elites – a practice Roy (2011) refers to as 'elite informality'. By utilising this kind of ever-shifting planning and governance system, state actors in most cities of the Global South, including Bangladesh and India, deny or allow temporary security over livelihood spaces in exchange of protection money.

Yet, state actors can evict vendors any time using legal power. Similar practices are evident in other countries of the Global South such as India (Roy, 2004), Egypt (Bayat, 2000, 2013) and Mexico (Crossa, 2009). Also, states become powerful and able to ignore the urban poor's rights to the city when it can successfully label poor people as illegal encroachers or criminals or deviant (Ramanathan, 2004). As national citizens, the urban poor cannot be, under any condition, denied their constitutional rights to work and use of public space. Thus, ethically to justify denying a citizen's constitutional rights, the state and its apparatuses label the informal trader as 'improper citizen' (Bhan, 2009).

The Indian courts are performing this act by labelling the slum residents as 'encroachers' and 'thieves' (Bhan, 2009). Similar practices are evident in Dhaka, where the state actors and planners mostly denied vendors' access to public space or their rights for basic services, housing and livelihoods, by labelling them illegal encroachers, who have no right to appropriate those spaces and labelling them as criminals and creators of traffic congestion. Thus, they deny the urban poor's right to the city like other cities of the South. For example,

in Maseru, street traders are evicted in the name of maintain order, city aesthetics, public health and apparent social decay and disorganisation (Setšabi & Leduka, 2008). This is historically a way to marginalise the urban poor in the South. This kind of labelling further helps state actors to make the urban poor feel inferior and powerless so that the former can easily sweeps the latter away from the planned city.

As vendors' right to use of public space to earn an income are denied by formal rules and regulations in Dhaka and the dominant mode of production of space produce mostly conceived spaces denying poor people's right to appropriate space, vendors have no other alternative other than negotiating with state actors either by paying them protection money or relying on their sympathy and kindness to gain access to public space as illustrated in Section 6.5. Due to a lack of tenure security over public space, the state actors often extort vendors for using public space. This is how, state created informality has made state actors powerful whereas the urban poor have become powerless and victims of coercion by different powerful actors. Following this idea of urban informality and state and its agencies denial of poor people's right to the city, the next chapter explores how the urban poor, especially male vendors, navigate Dhaka city's public space to earn a livelihood.

Chapter 7: Urban Informality, Power and Resistance

7.1 Introduction

Access to public space is important for the livelihood practices of the urban poor; however, as discussed in Chapter Six, this access is denied by the state and its apparatuses through their dominant mode of production of space. The state has not provided the poor with any income-earning space. Consequently, the urban poor have few alternatives other than to use public space. To varying degrees, state actors ignore the urban poor's presence in 'gray space' or allow them to use this space in exchange for informal payments (bribes). Where necessary, they rely on formal legal power (see Chapter Six). This dichotomous state of public space is problematic in that it not only allows state actors to determine to whom access is granted, but also grants non-state or informal actors control of access to these 'contested spaces', often acting as pseudo proxies of the state (Brown, 2006b). Using the concepts related to space, power, governance, informal economy and street vending activities, this chapter provides an exploration of the empirical findings in response to the second research question that asks, how do street vendors in Dhaka, especially men (Chapter Eight deals with women's use of space), pursue livelihoods in constant negotiation with other powerful actors in society? I discuss various strategies that the urban poor employ to access these contested spaces and resist eviction and extortion by powerful non-state actors.

The first part of this chapter explains the multiple sources of power arrayed against the poor and power relationships between the urban poor and powerful actors to present an analysis on the use of power and powerful networks by the urban poor. I investigate how they construct counter-space with the aid of a range of state and non-state actors and utilising a range of covert resistance strategies in accessing public space. To do this, I refer to the theoretical frameworks of counter-space, power, domination, and resistance introduced in Chapters Two and Three. The second part of the chapter illustrates how the urban poor, particularly street vendors, use covert resisting power to access and use urban space for income earning. This part of the chapter references the theoretical frameworks of informality, resistance to power, and negotiations discussed in Chapters Two and Three.

7.2 Power and resistance in informal spaces

Access to urban public space in the Global South is often determined by actors' access to power sources (see Chapter Two). Due to scarcity of space, public space is contested and “negotiated in a hybrid institutional setting of entanglements between actors and institutions both rooted in statutory and informal spheres” (Hackenbroch, 2013b, p. 53). Urban informality as a mode of production of space can be discussed in two ways: as either an expression of domination or an expression of resistance (Hackenbroch, 2013b). In terms of production of space, power has both positive and negative dimensions (Sharp et al., 2000). Sharp et al. (2000) emphasise the diffuse nature of power and argue that power is not only restricted to the formal process of governing. Rather, researchers need to consider the more nuanced ways in which the ability to shape social action takes place. In Dhaka, Sharp et al.'s last point, “other forms of dominating social (class) power” (2000, p. 26), is particularly important. In Dhaka's slums, the state plays a peripheral role, and local forces, despite their close ties to formal power brokers are characterised as informal in their activities and legitimisation, and through this process they negotiate social space and power relations (Etzold et al., 2009; Hackenbroch, 2013a; Hackenbroch & Hossain, 2012). In these informal spheres, local contestations bring to the fore forces that can be considered de facto state power (Roy & AlSayyad, 2004).

The urban poor usually have limited power to resist dominant groups due to the lack of tenure security over livelihood spaces. Due to a lack of dominating power over appropriating public space, the urban poor of Dhaka employ other forms of resistance, which can be regarded as covert resistance (see Chapter Three) which will be discussed in the second part of this chapter. The following empirical analysis applies the conceptual framework of power and resistance to establish linkages between power relations, negotiations, and contestations among different actors, both within and beyond Sattola slum.

7.2.1 Political power

The political system and affiliation with the ruling political party are the most important sources of power for the urban poor in all negotiation processes regarding access to urban space for livelihoods in Sattola. This is also evident in previous research conducted in other Southern cities (Anjaria, 2011; Pratt, 2006). Street vendors in the South often make links with

political parties or particular local politicians to gain support for their livelihood (Cross, 1998; Singh, 2000). Cross's (1998) study in Mexico and Anjaira's (2011) and Singh's (2000) studies in India show that vendors make connections with political parties or local politicians to secure livelihood space. This arrangement of patron-client relationship (see Chapter Three), in which a political party provides support in return for political backing or votes is the most common type of power that the urban poor in Southern megacities utilise to access livelihood space (Cross, 1998; Etzold, 2011; Hackenbroch, 2013a, 2013b; Singh, 2000). This type of patron-client relationship has become part of political culture in Bangladesh (Box 7.1), where a 'winner takes all' governance system has historically been adopted, in which the degree of control over public resources determines the behaviour of interacting political actors (Basu, Brown, & Devine, 2018; Etzold, 2013). In this confrontational political system, the two major political parties in Bangladesh have stood in opposition to each other since 1991. The losing party in the national election typically boycotts all efforts towards consensus-oriented politics. In the last two elections *Awami* (People's) League (AL), the winning party established "hegemonic control over the use of public resources to further their partisan interests (under the façade of public interest)" (IGS, 2009, p. 5). This exercise of power results in everyone attempting to maintain some kind of connection with politicians or politics to gain support in almost all aspects of socio-economic life. Due to this kind of personalisation of Dhaka's governance system, both national elections and military coups have a severe impact on the livelihood practices of the urban poor. Therefore, the street vendors of Dhaka try "to stay well-informed about the very local party politics, which constitute a crucial part of street politics" (Etzold, 2013, p. 260).

Residents of Sattola use political connections to access urban space for income-generating activities. Almost all of the interviewees claimed to support the ruling AL government and some further praised different development initiatives taken by the AL government. This is a common strategy to protect their settlements and vending sites from eviction. This practice is reflected in Mahid's statement. Mahid (50), a street hawker, said that during a visit to the Bangladesh Medical Research Council (BMRC) in 2014, the health minister had faced traffic congestion on the nearby BMRC road and that the following day, the Dhaka North City Corporation (DNCC) sent a magistrate and bulldozers to demolish all shops by order of the

minister¹³. Although his shop was evicted, Mahid did not utter a negative word against the ruling government while describing the incident. Rather, he said, “*They gave us time. The government doesn’t do anything forcefully. They always stand beside the poor and do some good work for us. They serve the poor. They do whatever is good for the people.*”

This eviction story further reveals how the politicians of Bangladesh exercise power directly over other government officials. Although it is common practice among politicians in the Global South, this kind of use of political power is difficult to find in the Global North (de Wit & Berner, 2009; Etzold et al., 2012). Patron-client relationships coexist with the formal governing system in most parts of the South. For example, as Mahid observes, members of the parliament also order the city government (DNCC) to evict street traders from footpaths and other public space. This is a common governance problem in postcolonial cities where ministries of the national government override the city government when controlling city space. The DNCC and Dhaka South City Corporation (DSCC) are governing bodies of Dhaka city, however, the central government exercises significant power over the DNCC and DSCC and is able to control them using standing orders.

Box 7.1: Power and politics in Bangladesh

There are four major political parties in Bangladesh: *Awami* (People’s) League (AL), Bangladesh Nationalist Party (BNP), *Jatiyo* (National) Party (JP), and *Jamaat-e-Islami*. Established in East Pakistan in 1949, the Awami League is the oldest political party in Bangladesh. At the time of its inception, its founder broke with the Pakistani Muslim League and dubbed it the Awami Muslim League. In 1955, it was renamed the Awami League to reflect its secular character, and its identity was based on language rather than religion, (Hackenbroch, 2013b). Sheikh Mujibur Rahman, the founding leader of the AL, was the first President of independent Bangladesh. Sheikh Hasina Wazed, the daughter of Sheikh Mujibur Rahman, became the president of the AL after her father’s assassination during a military coup on August 15, 1975. Sheikh Hasina is the current Prime Minister of Bangladesh and has been in office three times (1996-2001, 2008-2014, and 2014-present).

¹³ The local newspaper also published a report regarding this eviction. The news reported that a team of DNCC officials led by Deputy Secretary Mahbubur Rahman commenced the eviction drive at 11 am. The Deputy Secretary for Health, Hafizur Rahman Chowdhury, further told the journalists that the DNCC team would evict all illegal structures from in front of the hospitals in the Mohakhali area. He said, “Some 145 acres of land of the directorate in the area had been occupied by illegal establishments for many years” (newsnextbd.com, 2014).

(Major General) Ziaur Rahman was Bangladesh's first military dictator and ruled the country from 1975-1981. He created his own political party, the Bangladesh Nationalist Party (BNP) in 1978 and reintroduced Islamic elements into politics (Van Schendel, 2009). The BNP is a right-wing party, which was created based on the ideology of nationalist conservatism (Van Schendel, 2009). (Begum) Khaleda Zia was chosen to be Vice President of the BNP following her husband Ziaur Rahman's assassination by a military coup in 1984. Khaleda was Prime Minister of Bangladesh twice (1991-1996 and 2001-2006). The BNP boycotted the last election as it was held under the AL government. The BNP demanded the election under the auspices of a neutral government; however, the caretaker system was abolished by the AL government in 2010. Bangladesh's caretaker government was a form of government in which the country was ruled by a selected government for an interim period during the transition from one elected government to another, after the completion of the former's tenure.

(General) Hussain Muhammad Ershad, the founding leader of the Jatiyo Party (JP), was Bangladesh's second military dictator. He created his own right-wing party in 1986 and ruled the country from 1986 to 1990. Ershad was forced out of power by a popular uprising in 1990, led by Sheikh Hasina and Khaleda Zia. Since then, Ershad has failed to form any government independently. His party usually forms government in coalition with either the BNP or AL.

Founded in 1941, the *Jamaat-e-Islami* (Islamic Gathering) is a right-wing Islamic political party of Bangladesh. Golam Azam, an ex-war criminal, became the *Jamaat-e-Amir* (president) in 1978. Like the JP, the *Jamaat* has never won a national election and they often form government in coalition with the BNP.

Either the BNP or AL has formed a ruling government since Bangladesh returned to an electoral system in 1990. However, regardless which party or military ruler is in power, they display a similar highly personalised leadership style “based on patrimonial authority and loyalty, and maintained through a complex, informal network of patron-client relations” (Kochanek, 2000, p. 547). This results in ego battles, in the form of either furtive negotiations or public displays, such as mass demonstrations, general strikes, and police charges (Blair, 2018; Van Schendel, 2009). Due to these kinds of political practices and ‘patron-client relations’, ruling politicians and members of parliament often exercise undue power over

other public officials and control almost all aspects of people's everyday lives. Hence, political connections and affiliations with ruling political parties serve as the most important sources of power among the urban poor and they use these connections to appropriate public space to earn a livelihood, as discussed in Section 7.2.1.

Source: Author

The ward councillor¹⁴ is the local face of power whose authority is often manifested in the activities of his or her followers. The ward councillor holds an office under the DNCC. Local leaders use their political affiliations to dominate the social space of an area by taking over different management committees (de Wit & Berner, 2009; Hackenbroch, 2013b). For example, there is an AL party office near the Infectious Disease Hospital, and the ward councillor and his followers sometimes visit the local residents. The ward councillor formed a committee to handle local disputes after the election. Both male and female AL supporters from different neighbourhoods, including Sattola, have been selected as committee members. However, all of the committee's female members are from Sattola. Local leaders often dictate the sitting arrangement of street vendors within the slum and occasionally collect money from vendors by exploiting their relationship with the ward councillor. In this way, local politicians exercise power over the poor using their political connections.

Existing research on street vending in the different parts of the South reveals that street traders operate their businesses with the help of politicians (Cross, 2000; Etzold, 2013; Pratt, 2006; Singh, 2000; Wood & Salway, 2000). Similar practices between street vendors and local politicians can be found in Sattola. Manik (48), a member of the ward councillor's committee, said that committee members are aware of the money being collected from the vegetable sellers on the corner of the main road in Sattola and that shopkeepers are forbidden from demanding money from small traders.

The ordinary residents of Sattola also described how their social spheres are dominated by AL leaders and their followers. Interview participants described Nasir, the ward councillor of Sattola, as helpful and kind to the poor, possibly because he was also raised in a poor family. However, Nasir's followers often dictate the use of Sattola's public and parochial realms. For example, Tania used to operate a semi-permanent tailoring shop (Figure 7.1) on the footpath

¹⁴ Ward councillors are elected by direct election on the basis of adult franchise from each ward. In addition, there are 18 reserved seats exclusively for female commissioners who are elected by the mayor and the commissioners. Dhaka city is divided into 90 wards.

adjacent to the AL office. However, Nasir’s followers recently ordered her and some other semi-permanent shopkeepers to move their businesses away from the footpath, saying, “*It looks bad if they run shops in front of the local party office*”. They told Tania and the other shopkeepers to find other open spaces within Sattola. Tania selected a place near the party office and asked Manik to give her that space. However, Manik allocated the space to another shopkeeper, Ujjol, who had already set up a tea stall nearby. Tania believed that Ujjol offered Manik a bribe.

Figure 7.1: Tania’s old (left) and new (right) shop



Tania managed to find another place in front of the BMRC and was operating her tailoring shop (Figure 7.1) there; however, the BMRC officials evicted all shops from the footpaths adjacent to their offices. Tania now operates her shop from her bedroom. She used the same strategy when the health minister evicted local shopkeepers from the footpaths of Sattola. When I first met Tania in November 2015, she complained about Manik, saying that he had often directed her to remove her shop from that space; however, on this more recent occasion, she seemed very confident that the ward councillor would not evict her because she had campaigned for him during the Ward Council Election. However, as an ordinary resident, Tania misjudged her level of influence and failed to reappropriate her place due to a lack of strong political connections. This is how power operates from the upper level to the lowest level in terms of accessing space. This accords with Lukes’ (1974) third dimension of power (see Chapter Three) where the relatively powerless internalise and accept their situation

without directly challenging powerful actors. However, this is not always the case for poor people in other parts of the South.

The urban poor of India (Appadurai, 2001; Roy, 2004; Schindler, 2014) , Pakistan (Hasan, 2007; Van der Linden, 1997), Africa (Brown et al., 2010; Valodia, Habib, & Ballard, 2015) and Latin America (Crossa, 2009) are highly organised and pursue their demands following

. . . active strategies to increase their options moving between clientelist relations and a rights or entitlements-based discourse as the occasion demands. Confrontation is tempered with negotiations as movements accept the need for reforms within the existing political framework rather than revolution and regime change. In some cities and countries, movement pressures have led to opportunities for participatory governance, and local and city-wide associations have taken advantage of these opportunities. (Mitlin, 2014, p. 298)

In contrast, the urban poor of Dhaka have failed to utilise clientelist relations to pursue their demands for livelihood and shelter due to a lack of organisational skills and a lack of knowledge regarding their constitutional rights. The urban poor of Dhaka occasionally successfully defended slum evictions. For example, the residents of Korail defended their slum from eviction in 2012. On 4 April 2012, an attempted eviction of Korail took place and 2,000 houses were demolished (Subramanian & May 2012). The residents of Korail protested this eviction by forming a human chain on Airport road (Hackenbroch, 2012). They occupied the airport road peacefully until they received assurance from the government that they would not be evicted without a resettlement program in place. This was a successful and peaceful movement, however it should be noted that this demonstration was organised by local landlords, rather than the tenants, of Korail who have a stake in this eviction. My interviews with several Sattola residents revealed similar processes when they resisted slum eviction in 2010 when powerful local actors, including local political leaders and landlords, organised other residents to resist the eviction, for reasons of self interest.

However, these movements are still important as they raise consciousness among ordinary residents about their right to the city. Also, living conditions for the urban poor are likely to improve in future as NGOs, such as BRAC and the Coalition for the Urban Poor (CUP), as well as legal advocacy institutions, such as Bangladesh Legal Aid and Services Trust

(BLAST) and Ain o Salish Kendra (ASK, translated as Legal Aid and Human Rights Organisation) have been working to empower the urban poor by informing them about their social and constitutional rights. Beside these organisations, NDBUS¹⁵, a local NGO for the urban poor, was established in 2007. NDBUS is working to improve housing conditions for the urban poor, including ensuring their access to water, electricity, and drainage. NDBUS has also initiated a major campaign to organise community savings groups to enable communities to purchase land for future settlements (Soltesova, 2011). The next section moves the discussion from political power to the separate, but closely related, field of coercive power and how this power is used to control access to space.

Coercive power

Coercive power (both physical and spatial, see Chapter Three) is used by state (state, police, and state officials) and non-state (*mastans* and politicians) actors of the Global South to extort the urban poor. This section focuses on the *mastans*' (Box 7.2) role in granting vendors' access to public space in Dhaka.

The appropriation of public space is a point of contention between different dominant and subaltern groups, such as politicians and police, and ordinary citizens, such as street vendors. These relationships must be understood to understand power relationships in slums and informal business in the Global South, where access to public space is mostly denied under the formal system (Pratt, 2006). As a result, the urban poor often have to negotiate with non-state actors to access public space. These actors can be divided into two categories: dominant and the oppositional (Marcuse, 2010). In other cities of the Global South, these opposing groups are in constant conflict in a bid to appropriate space (see Chapter Three); however, in almost all cities in the South, the urban poor have limited power to resist armed gangs or organised crime due to the latter's connections with politicians and their access to illegal arms (Bayat & Biekart, 2009; Hagedorn, 2005; Henry-Lee, 2005).

Armed gangs have different names in different parts of the world, although they engage in similar types of criminal activities. In Dhaka, they are known as *mastans* (Box 7.2). *Mastans* are local power brokers, who use coercive power to extort money from the urban poor and

¹⁵ Nagar Daridra Basteebashir Unnayan Sangstha (NDBUS) can be translated as 'Urban Poor Residents' Development Organisation'.

mediate their relationships with politicians and state officials. To understand how ‘urban informality’ (See Chapter Two) works in Dhaka, one has to understand how *mastans* control public space. Clientelist agreements are important in the cities of the Global South and street traders in African (Brown et al., 2010), Indian (Bhowmik & Saha, 2013; Singh, 2015) and Latin American (Setšabi & Leduka, 2008) cities have used these agreements to fulfil their demands; however, the street traders of Dhaka have failed to organise themselves due to a lack of organisational skills and the fragile nature of their businesses. Informal traders in other parts of the South such as Indian (Anjaria, 2010; Bhowmik, 2010), South African (Brown, 2006b; Setšabi & Leduka, 2008) and Latin American (Cossa, 2009; Lindell, 2010) cities have strong trade unions and trade associations. Vendors’ organisations can effectively lobby political parties and the administration as shown in the formulation of India’s National Policy for Urban Street Vendors (Singh, 2015) (see Chapter Three).

However, street vendors in Dhaka have failed to form any associations apart from a few party-affiliated ones. There are some hawkers’ associations for local informal traders who operate business in a fixed place, such as the Nilkhet Hawkers’ Association, which was established by the bookshop owners of Nilkhet. However, most mobile vendors in Dhaka are sceptical about unions and associations for four reasons. First, most interviewees said they do not have time to be involved in organisations. Second, due to their vulnerable and powerless position in society, street vendors feel that street traders’ associations are unable to protect them from dominant actors and the state. Third, vendors are not aware of their right to the city or constitutional right to work, which can be exercised to use public space for livelihoods. Article 20, clause (1) of the Constitution of Bangladesh declares, work is a right, a duty and a matter of honour for every citizen who is capable of working, and everyone shall be paid for his work on the basis of the principle “from each according to his abilities, to each according to his work” (Constitution of the People's Republic of Bangladesh, 2000, p. 6). Finally, street traders cannot operate businesses in a fixed vending place due to the lack of security in livelihood spaces. This is perhaps the main reason for not forming associations. This lack of organisational skills leaves the urban poor, particularly vendors, vulnerable to *mastans*. The following box shows how ‘*mastanocracy*’ works in Bangladesh.

Box 7.2: Origins of the *mastans* and the ‘*mastanocracy*’ of Bangladesh

Mastans are mafia-type groups that organise political crime and maintain close associations with politicians and police (Atkinson-Sheppard, 2017; Shafi, 2010). *Mastans* hire street children to conduct drug selling, extortion, ‘land grabbing’, contract killings, and political violence (Atkinson-Sheppard, 2015). In this way, street children involved in organised crime later become *mastans*. This ‘*mastanocracy*’ allows *mastans* to exist in the urban political economic culture of Bangladesh due to three factors: (i) cultural perception of the *mastan* as ‘hero’; (ii) The *mastan*’s role in civil society; and (iii) existing state practice (Khan, 2000).

The first factor is connected to Bangladeshi popular culture, including films (such as *Munna, the Mastan* and *Women can also be Mastans*), plays, novels, and short stories. These cultural products often represent the *mastan* as a philanthropic character, who collects protection money from the affluent to help the poor. For example, Baker *bhai* (brother), the central character of Humayun Ahmed’s (Ahmed, 1997) television series, *Kothao Keu Nei* (No One is Around), is portrayed as a *mastan* who helps the oppressed in the community while punishing their oppressors. As a result, Baker *bhai* became a popular character. Prior to the final episode airing, a huge demonstration was staged by fans (predominantly youths) of the series, who urged the director not to hang Baker *bhai*. The reason for this huge support for a *mastan*, probably arises due to his fight for informal rights of the urban poor. As Van Schendel (2009, p. 252) explains: “The figure of the *mastan* is especially attractive to young people who have been disappointed in what independent Bangladesh has to offer; he symbolizes rage, promises to avenge injustice and gives a voice to lower-class ambitions”.

The second factor is related to the historical role played by *mastans* in civil society (Khan, 2000). The civil society that resisted colonial and Pakistani rule was exposed to violence and polarisation, which continued into the post-independence era following the Liberation War of 1971 and the violent and polarised civil society used the *mastans* to gain political benefits (Khan 2000; The Daily Star, 1999). However, Mohammad (1987) argues that the rise of the *mastans* is closely linked to the political failure of the state to use resourceful youth of the country, who fought for the independence of the country.

The third factor is related to the fact that Bangladeshi politicians use *mastans* to make money or display power. As one of Bearak's (2000, p. A4) participants said: "Politics is said to run on 'money' and 'muscle', both of them being the required tools of an infant democracy where politicians find it easier to express themselves with street violence than parliamentary debate".

The role of *mastans* in the lives of the urban poor

Mastans' role is contradictory in the sense that they play both positive and negative roles in the lives and livelihood practices of the urban poor. Their role is 'positive' in the sense that they often provide illegal gas, water, and electricity connections to slums in return for money; and they distribute a proportion of this money to the local gas, electricity, and WASA offices to continue their business. Despite this, *mastans* are generally considered to be 'negative characters' due to their involvement in party politics and participation in political conflict. They are also seen as extortionists as they collect *chada* (protection money) from street traders in exchange for either providing temporary security of their livelihood spaces or controlling their informal jurisdiction over a particular area/neighbourhood. They are also sometimes considered terrorists as they often carry illegal firearms and have been known to kill supporters of opposing political or business groups (Atkinson-Sheppard, 2017). Hence, ordinary people are afraid of them and the urban poor often pay them protection money without question.

Source: Author

Much of the literature on African and Latin American cities reveals organised gangs, more commonly known as 'mafia' or 'slumlords' in Latin America (Davis, 2006) and 'block captains' and 'hired assassins' in Africa (Hagedorn, 2005), as the most intimidating among all groups in the South (Dowdney, 2003; Hagedorn, 2005). Due to gross inequality and social segregation in Latin American and African cities, these groups have emerged and often fight for the domination of slums, particular neighbourhoods, or businesses (Hagedorn, 2007; Kaldor, 2013; Pick, Ross, & Dada, 2002). However, this kind of gang violence can be almost non-existent in other parts of the Global South, where conflict remains strictly political (Bayat & Biekart, 2009). These informal actors are known as *mastans* or '*dada*' (big brother) in Bangladesh and India (Etzold, 2013; Weinstein, 2008). India's *mastans* usually act as

brokers between the poor and state officials to provide “land, services, information and security in exchange for money and political patronage” (Weinstein, 2008, p. 25). Similar behaviour is evident in the slums of Bangladesh; however, *mastans* in Bangladesh also extort money from the urban poor for providing temporary tenure security over public space; whereas police and officials of municipal authorities usually collect money from street vendors in Indian (Anjaria, 2011; Pratt, 2006), African (Hagedorn, 2005) and Latin American (Donovan, 2008) cities.

Mastans are the second-most powerful group of actors after politicians, who play a dual role in the life of the urban poor in Bangladesh and often directly dictate the use of space (Box 7.2). They act “officially as the leader of a locality, pushing aside respected elders and appointed authorities. An upstart, he rules through fear, sometimes avenging wrongs but more often committing them himself” (Van Schendel, 2009, p. 252). In the development discourse, two terms are used to refer to the role of *mastans*: *mastani* and *mastanocracy*. *Mastani* refers to the criminal activities (Khan, 2000) that *mastans* commit in a neighbourhood or city; whereas *mastanocracy* refers to an illegal political practice where *mastans* are being used to enforce *hartals* (strikes) and generate party funds through extortion. *Mastans* of the ruling political party are always more powerful than those of the opposition. *Mastans* of opposition political parties often end up in prison or are killed in crossfire with the Rapid Action Battalion (RAB)¹⁶ or police who often ignore the criminal activities of the *mastans* of the ruling political party. *Mastans* belong to the lowest level of the political party, yet they play a crucial role in times of political conflict as they are hired to kill opposition leaders or political supporters or to vandalise demonstration of the opposition political party.

Due to the lack of essential public services in the slums of Dhaka and the scarcity of employment opportunities, the urban poor rely on *mastans* and the *mastani* organisational culture both for access to public amenities, such as water, electricity, and gas and for livelihoods and livelihood spaces. In exchange for providing these facilities, *mastans* “operate in the interstices between the informal and imperfect official worlds of welfare. And where the poor are not labelled for rights based entitlements, the *mastans* step in to provide” (Wood, 2015, p. 143). Similarly, in Sattola, *mastans* provide water, gas and electricity

¹⁶ The Rapid Action Battalion (RAB) is an elite anti-crime and anti-terrorism unit of the Bangladesh Police Force.

services for its residents in return for money. *Mastans* are occasionally killed as a result of internal group conflict over the distribution of extorted money. In 2013, for example, Anwar, a local power broker and gas businessman in Sattola, was killed by a renowned *mastan*, Bangkok Sumon. Siffat, a landlady, said, “*The killer [Bangkok Sumon] shot him [Anwar] in front of many residents. They shot him three times. He died on the scene* [KII 7]). Bangkok Sumon himself died in a gunfight with the RAB on November 10, 2015.

Mastans also collect money from landlords in Sattola once a month. Commonly referred to as ‘big brothers’, these *mastans* typically hail from other areas (such as Dokkhin Para) and are more powerful than their local counterparts. Anyone planning to build a house in Sattola is expected to pay the big brothers. If someone wants to sell their house to an interested buyer, both parties must pay the big brothers. This is a common practice in slums in Bangladesh, where an individual’s temporary land ownership is determined by their connections with the ruling political party and the payment of protection money (Suykens, 2015; Hackenbroch, 2013b). As *mastans* are above the law, the urban poor pay *mastans* instead of taking risks with their lives and livelihoods and protect themselves from being evicted. One of the Sattola street vendors, Ruhul (55), a plastic utensil seller, explains, “*Can the administration watch over you 24 hours a day? . . . No, the administration cannot serve you 24 hours. Are you the PM [Prime Minister]? That is not possible*”. Ruhul’s statement reveals how powerless the local residents of Sattola are in the face of the big brothers’ demands. This scenario indicates how public space is appropriated by one group (landlords and shop owners), how other groups (such as the *mastans* and police) benefit by terrifying them, and finally, how the ordinary residents of Sattola are exploited by both groups.

In addition to collecting protection money from slums in Dhaka, *mastans* collect money from street traders and take free food (*fao khaowa*) or cigarettes from vendors without paying them if the latter operate businesses using any kind of public space in Dhaka. Vendors cannot complain to police about *mastans* for fear of retribution. The *mastans*’ payment varies depending on the value of the public space in question (Table 7.1). As Banani bazaar is located in an affluent area, its food vendors can potentially make higher profits. Hence, they also pay more money to the *mastans*. This practice is described in Kollol’s comment:

I had to pay 0.59/0.71/0.28 USD for selling at Mohakhali. Yes, a lineman used to collect money . . . I have to pay a lot at Banani. I pay 4 USD every day. Three people

collect this money. The one who has higher rank [higher position on the political ladder] gets more. The one who has lower rank, he receives less . . . This is the age of Awami League. The leaders of AL collect money. Who else? We do not pay much to the police at Banani; rather, we pay more to local leaders . . . Whenever I go there with my pushcart, they come to collect the protection money after a while. They do not bother whether you have made a profit yet. As long as you have sold the amount of their protection money, they would come to collect their portion. Whenever they would show up, you would have to pay them (Kollol, 28, a food vendor [96]).

The *mastans* often appoint one or two ‘linemen’ to collect payment their behalf. A lineman is a bribe collector, also known as a ‘middleman’, who works as a mediator between the police, *mastans* and vendors, and collects money from street vendors regularly. After collecting the money, these linemen then distribute it to other groups, such as the police, local police station, *mastans*, and politicians. Accountable to the *mastans*, the linemen occupy the lowest position in the hierarchy of actors. In some places, both the linemen and *mastans* make the collections; however, in most cases the linemen collect the money and pass it on to local *mastans* who distribute it to their informal bosses (politicians and police). *Mastans* and linemen hand over a large amount of money to the local police station to buy temporary security over public space. Linemen also allocate vending places to individual vendors if there are any open spaces left at a vending site and determine different prices for vending activities and vending sites (Table 7.1).

Table 7.1: Vending activities and payment of protection money

Types of street vending	Vending places	Payment of protection money (USD) (1 USD = 84.15 BDT)
Food vendor	Banani	2-4
Food vendor	Mohakhali	1
Hawker and food vendor	Sattola	0.06-0.12
Hawker and food vendor	In other slums (such as Korail, Kunipara)	0.12-0.24
Permanent tea stall	TB Gate	0.24

Source: Author

Most street vendors pay between 0.12 USD and 6 USD to local linemen who then hand this this money over to local *mastans*, who take a cut before handing payment to affiliated

national political parties or trade unions (World Bank, 2007). The amount of protection money differs based on the nature and size of the shop and business volume. As Etzold's (2015, p. 12) study in Dhaka shows, "the bigger the shop and the higher the business volume, the more the vendors have to pay". The least successful street traders have to pay (0.06 USD) less than the semi-mobile (0.12-0.48 USD) and semi-permanent vendors (2-4 USD), whereas most permanent vendors were not required to pay, because of their own powerful position as a local with connections to local politicians or the ward councillor.

Mastans and linemen also have interests in this game as they keep a percentage of extorted money before handing it over to their official paymasters. If vendors cannot operate businesses, *mastans* and police cannot collect money. Shipon (45), a cloth seller said, "*The Lineman [bribe collector] has to live. He also pays house rent*". Rather than demonstrating a negative attitude towards linemen for exploiting them, it seems that the street traders are sympathetic to them. This is perhaps due to the linemen's class position and the role they perform as mediator between street traders and other dominant actors. The linemen also belong to a poor group and may not be able to find other ways to earn an income. The linemen often dictate who sits where and for how long on a footpath or pavement. For example, the street traders of Mohakhali (Figure 7.2) operate businesses in two shifts. One group sells wares in the morning and the other group sells from late afternoon to midnight. Fruit sellers usually trade in the morning and snacks and clothes sellers trade in the afternoon (Figure 7.2). Both groups pay protection money to the police who are in charge of the nearest police box.

Figure 7.2: Street vendors in Mohakhali



In some cases, the police directly collect protection money from linemen as discussed in Chapter Six (Section 6.5). This is how state officials abuse their power in the illegal

exploitation of informal workers. This practice is reflected in Jashim's account, who has been selling snacks for last nine years. Like some other participants, while interviewing Jashim, I noticed he used the term rent (*vara*) for the use of public space instead of protection money (*chada*), so I asked him using the term rent:

L: How much rent do you pay every day?

J: Daily 1 USD.

L: Does an individual collect money?

J: We give money to an individual. That means, suppose there are 10 shops and one of us collects money from everyone and then gives the money to the main collector [lineman].

L: That means you give 1 USD to only one man?

J: Yes. After that he takes the responsibility to manage everyone. He gives some money in the police station, some to the police directly, and different other places . . . I do business on the footpath. I must have to know the rules of the footpath (Jashim, 35, a street food vendor [83]).

Another shopkeeper, Tanvir, who had a small tea stall near TB gate, told me that one of their fellow shopkeepers collected money from all the vendors on that road every evening. A police jeep approached the area around 10pm every night to collect the money. New vendors are told about this ritual of payment of protection money by existing vendors. This practice has been in place for a long time as described by Jashim. Payment of protection money is a 'compliance' (Kerkvliet, 2009) strategy that enables the urban poor to get support from powerful actors only by complying with the latter's demands without directly challenging the system. Although it might appear that vendors are simply extorted by police and *mastans*, vendors use this payment in return to receive temporary security to use public space. Vendors utilise networks of extortion rather than each other to guarantee continuing access to public space. There is an informal agreed upon relationship between vendors and state and non-state actors, where vendors not only comply with the demands of extortionists but in some places also practice a form of self-control. As Foucault (1977) noted, control can be consensual, particularly if it serves the purpose of weaker actors. Consequently, the payment of regular protection money is normalised. In return for this payment, local *mastans* allow vendors to

sell at their 'usual place', providing them with information regarding police evictions, and serve as middlemen in negotiations with other powerful actors. This practice is also reported in local newspapers. For example, an official of the DNCC said in an interview with a newspaper reporter, "*There is a group of corrupt ruling party leaders, city corporation officials and law enforcers [police] who collect tolls from these hawkers. In exchange, the hawkers come back to set up their business illegally only hours after eviction*" (Khan & Mahmud, 2016).

Resistance against this payment has become a deviant act where resisters are often evicted and physically assaulted by the police and *mastans*. For example, Milon, a young street vendor, once refused to pay 1USD to a police constable, whom he met in front of the Eden College on his way back home to Azimpur:

I did not want to pay him, I argued with him and at some point I kicked him and ran away [leaving my pushcart there]. Another police constable saw this incident, demanded 6 USD, and told me to leave that area [Azimpur] as soon as possible. Later I moved here [Sattola] (Milon, 21, a fruit vendor, [81]).

Another vendor, Kamal (40) explained how they are bound to comply with the police and *mastans*' demand for protection money while expressing his feeling regarding the payment of protection money:

I feel really bad. I feel like someone is ripping apart my heart [kolgeda chire jay] while handing over 2 USD to the lineman. But there was nothing to do. We have to give them this money otherwise they will not allow us to sit here [Banani]. If we protest, the police will arrest us and file false charges against us (Kamal, 40, a food vendor, [38]).

This is how the police and *mastans* use coercive power to extort vendors. However, this extortion has become an established norm as all parties have some interests in this game. Mayors of both city corporations and some police officials expressed similar views and one of the DNCC officials said that these groups are very powerful and work as a barrier to hawkers' eviction in Dhaka (Khan & Mahmud, 2016). The DNCC Mayor also pointed out that they even bribed an earlier DNCC Mayors' office to protect hawkers from eviction

(Khan & Mahmud, 2016). They faced similar obstacles from *mastans* empowered by local leaders of Awami *Jubo* (youth) League, Bangladesh *Chattra* (student) League and Bangladesh *Sramik* (labourer) League – all are wings of the ruling political party, Awami League, when they launched eviction drives in 2016. My interviews with two police officers confirmed the fact that some corrupted local police constables and police officers receive regular payment from this group in return for turning a blind eye. For example, 20 linemen in Gulistan area collect 17825 USD every day and pay half of this money to Gulistan Police Station (Khan & Mahmud, 2016). Sohel, a food vendor, also confirmed this practice, “*The people [linemen/mastans] who collect money from us, make a deal with the police station that they will give 1188 USD to the police station every month to allow us to continue business on the footpath*” [78].

This extortion is widespread and normalised in a Foucauldian (1977) sense of power as street vendors have hardly any other option to access public space other than paying protection money. If they do not pay regular protection money, they will experience eviction and physical assault by either police or *mastans* as discussed above. As they operate businesses using gray space (see Chapter Six), they cannot complain about police and *mastans* to police station due to the fear of further physical assault. As a result, they have formed an informal pact with their extortionists to access public space for a living. As they are protected by this intermediary group, they do not resist their extortion. Instead, vendors construct a counter-space in public space transgressing the planned order of the city with the tacit support of a range of powerful state and non-state actors.

So far, this chapter has analysed relationships between powerful intermediary groups and street vendors about the use of space for livelihoods. This shows how the boundary between formal and informal, legal and illegal often overlap in the context of an informal economy, as argued by several scholars (Anjaria, 2011; Bayat, 2013; de Wit & Berner, 2009; Etzold et al., 2012). In addition to maintaining relationships with politicians and other dominant actors, vendors also use their own limited socio-economic power to access public space for livelihoods.

7.2.2 Social power

Informal traders have their own informal groups, rules and arrangements, institutions, and structures for providing mutual support and building trust, providing loans, organising training, transferring technology and skills, trading and market access, and enforcing obligations (Brown, 2017c; Lindell, 2010; Lourenço-Lindell, 2002). Many of these depend on the social capital of family, friends, and kinship networks as suggested by previous studies in the South (Brown, 2006c; Hays-Mitchell, 1993). Similarly, I found social power is the most important sources of power in dominating local space, such as the local space of Sattola.

7.2.2.1 Social status

Social status confers power which Bourdieu (1989) termed ‘symbolic capital’ which can be generated through family status. Symbolic capital grants power to those “who have obtained sufficient recognition to be in a position to impose recognition” (Bourdieu, 1989, p. 25). Hackenbroch’s (2013b) study on slums in Dhaka also highlights the importance of this kind of symbolic capital for claiming space. Social status often depends on family status (Hackenbroch, 2013b) and political affiliation (Mitlin, 2014). In Sattola, some residents are more powerful than others because their family members have lived there for a long time, or their parents were staff or still work as staff in surrounding public hospitals. Residents, who have lived in Sattola for more than 25 years, are more powerful than other groups. This is supported by Hackenbroch’s (2013b) study in Dhaka, where she found ‘being a local’ is a significant source of power for residents. These locals generally support the ruling AL. This group is the owner of most of the rooms and shops in Sattola, which they let to others. Some of them work as members of different NGOs. As this group holds a substantial amount of power in the neighbourhood, they do not pay money to linemen and *mastans* to operate businesses. Rajib (36), the owner of a tea stall, said nobody collects money from them as they (local residents) have lived in Sattola for a long time.

Apart from their family status, longstanding residents of Sattola have political and financial power. Those who are involved in community activities also hold social power to dominate space and other aspects of social life. For example, most Sattola CBO members of the DSK, a local NGO, are known to the residents of Sattola, as the former are monitoring and supervising the DSK water and sanitation project along with DSK officials. Some of the

members of DSK are also the ward councillor's committee members. These local committee members play an important role in solving local conflicts. Manik shared his experience of resolving a case in Sattola recently, where a woman, Mira, complained about her husband, claiming that her brother is the owner of their room. Manik said her informal deed (a legal sealed document, where two witnesses sign to show the legal right of the new owner) was a fraudulent one as he checked her deed with someone, who works in the High Court. They declared Mira's husband as the owner. This is how local committee members exercise social power to resolve disputes among slum residents. They also sometimes determine residents' user rights over public space within the slum. As Mina, who is the Joint Secretary of Mohila [women] AL in Sattola, said that she could exercise some social power in dominating local space due to her involvement with the ruling political party:

I gave them space for doing business, such as selling rice cake . . . No, I don't collect money from them [as they are very poor/vulnerable]. So, there is no one to collect money from them. If anyone disturbs them, I will take action against them [local mastans/leaders]. When I was a child I saw how the terrorists used their power and terrorised people here [she indicated she has some power like those terrorists] (Mina, 35, Joint Secretary of Mohila [women] AL, Sattola [9]).

7.2.2.2 Social networks and kinship

Kinship networks are the most important sources of power for appropriating space and earning income in Sattola. Following Johnson (2000, p. 625), kin networks can be defined as 'extended family', including those who are connected by "blood, marriage or self-ascribed association" beyond the "marital dyad, the nuclear family of parents and dependent children or one parent households". The structure of a kin network depends on the number of members, social ties, the frequency of contact between members, the directness of interaction, household composition, and other indicators of physical proximity (Angel & Tienda, 1982; Johnson, 2000). This practice is to some extent different from welfare states in the Global North, which often provide safety nets for the marginalised groups (Korpi & Palme, 1998; Pierson, 2001). However, Southern states do not provide the urban poor with many employment opportunities or other public services. Most poor households do not earn sufficient income to meet their own needs, nor do they have access to the formal market economy due to a lack of economic capital. Hence, they create and maintain supportive

relationships within their community to ‘dilute economic insecurity’ (McGee, 1974) which shows the importance of kinship ties among the urban poor.

In Dhaka, poor people rely on their kin networks for operating businesses and finding vending spots. Although the formal economic sector in Dhaka is operated by the principles of the neoliberal economy, the informal economic practices are still embedded in social relationships such as kinship. Polanyi (1968) refers to this kind of economic practices as ‘embeddedness’ of economic activities. The residents of Sattola use their social networks to avoid disputes regarding their livelihood spaces. They maintain good relationships with fellow traders even if they are not kin. For example, three hawkers sell a popular snack of puffed rice and chickpeas near the Infectious Disease Hospital. Sohul (35), one of the three hawkers, denied that there was any competition or verbal conflict among them: “*No . . . I have good relationships with everybody. They come to me and I go to them . . . we are good. We don’t have any misunderstanding with anybody*”.

Apart from friends and other weak social networks, vendors depend on their kin network to appropriate space to earn a livelihood. Vendors often get assistance from their kin and fictive kin. Kinship is the most crucial factor in a new migrant’s successful integration into Dhaka (Box 7.3). First, in most cases, the rural poor migrate to Dhaka with a view to earning an income, encouraged by relatives who have migrated earlier (Figures 7.3 and 7.4). This is also reflected in Etzold’s (2016) study of food vendors in Dhaka. The migrants initially either move in with their relatives or rent a room nearby. Kollol explained:

I have been living in Dhaka for five years. My relatives live here. I did not like my village. So, I talked to them first and then decided to come to Dhaka. My uncle’s son and aunt’s son live here . . . The month I came to Dhaka, I did not rent a room. I used to live with my cousins. I rented a room the following month . . . At first, I started my business in Mohakhali. I used to use other people’s space at the beginning. If anyone took a break from their work on a particular day, I used to sell in their place. Sometimes they also gave me space as I was new in this business. They did this favour saying, “I am not going today, you may go. You are new [in this business], so you go” (Kollol, 28, a food vendor, [96]).

Figure 7.3: From the top left: a vendor preparing food, frying chicken shashlik, frying bot chop, and on the bottom right, a food vendor selling chotpoti (a popular snack made with chickpeas and other spices)



Second, the vendors of Sattola appropriate public space with the help of their kin networks, as Kollol indicated. Most food vendors get their first vending place from their relatives (who are more familiar with Dhaka's public space and ways to appropriate new livelihood spaces). This practice further indicates that the old migrants have more social power than the new migrants, which is consistent with Anjaria's (2010) study in Mumbai.

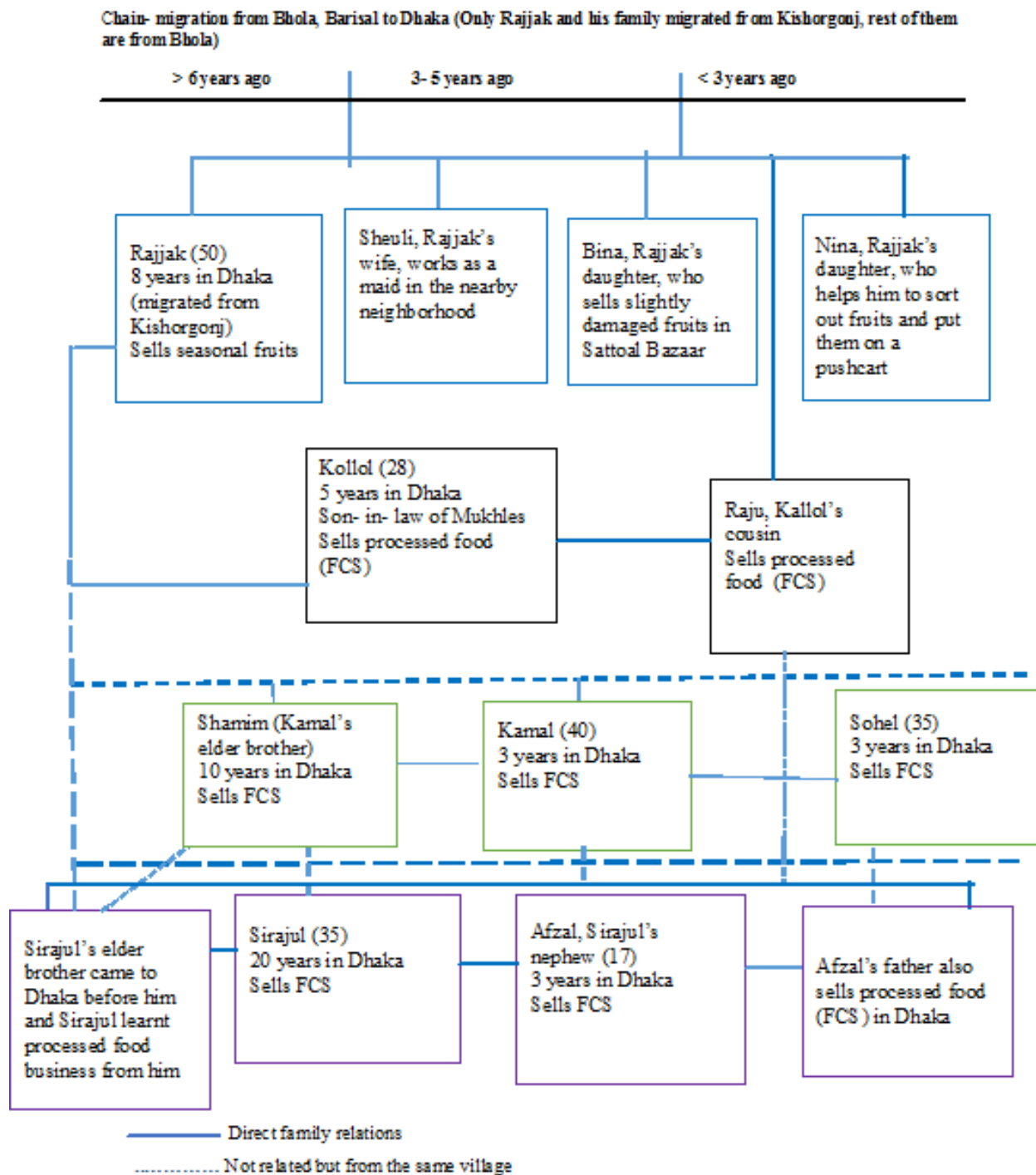
Box 7.3: Kinship and food vendors in Sattola: A case of fried cow stomach sellers

Most of the food vendors in Sattola sell processed food. Sold by 40-45 of the street vendors, 'bot' (fried cow stomach (FCS)) is the most popular snack and is prepared with cow's stomach, vegetables, and spices (Figure 7.3). The vendors often sell *paratha* (flat, round bread) with FCS. However, some food vendors also sell chicken shashlik along with FCS and *paratha*. Most food vendors learnt from Ahmed Bepari, who used to operate this business before his death. A pioneer of the business, Bepari introduced food vending to the residents of Sattola. This group of street vendors claimed that everyone in the food vending business in Dhaka migrated from Bhola, Barisal (Figure 7.4). Due to river erosion and a lack of employment, most rural poor of Bhola migrated to Dhaka and used kinship and social networks to start up their business. Kin networks are very strong among this group. The vendors live very close to one another's houses/rooms. They learn the business from their relatives and very often they get their first vending place either from relatives or neighbours. For instance, Afzal (13) is Sirajul's (35) nephew and lives in a room with his parents in Boundary Slum. His room is in Sirajul's house. They both sell *bot*. Sirajul operates a pushcart in Gulshan 2 and Afzal runs his business near Niketon gate number 5 in Dokkhin Para. They remarked that four or five [actually more than 10] families from Boundary Slum run the same business. A supplier brings chicken for them. Kollol explained which materials they buy daily to operate this business:

A supplier comes to [Sattola to] supply chicken to everyone, whoever is engaged in this business. Today I bought 4 kilos [kilograms] chicken. I bought 20 kilos of cow's stomach at 14 USD from wireless gate. I always buy cow's stomach from him. I also bought 2 kilos of papaya (0.71USD), 3 kilos of cucumber (0.36 USD) and spices of 1/2 USD. I bought spices and vegetables from Sattola market . . . If I can sell 24 USD, I can make a profit of 2/4 USD (Kollol, 28, a food vendor, [96]).

Source: Author

Figure 7.4: Role of kinship and migration in appropriating public space for livelihood practices



Source: Author

Third, vendors usually receive their initial business capital from their kin network (see Table 7.2). They borrow money from their kin as banks and other government financial institutions do not provide vendors with loans due to their lack of collateral.

Table 7.2: Business capital for vending activities, sources of capital, and profit

Type of vending activity	Business capital (USD)	Sources of business capital	Profit per day (USD) (1 USD = 84.15 BDT)
Processed food (food vendors who sell food in pushcarts)	143-238	Bother/Brother-in-law/other relatives/kin groups, village cooperatives and sometimes from NGOs	5-7
Hawking (Hawkers, who sell food carrying baskets or bags)	12	Own savings	2
Tea stall	297	Borrowed from BRAC (119 USD)	2
Rice cake	4- 119	Kin, NGOs, own savings	7-8
Fruit	95-119	Own savings Loan from NGOs	4-6
Boiled egg	14	Own savings	1-2
Vegetable and spice	18	Borrowed from neighbours/fictive kin	2
Basket	119	Own savings	36-59

Source: Author

Fourth, vendors learn business strategies from their kin network, as Kollol mentioned in the above interview excerpt. Sometimes they serve as apprentices to their relatives for the first couple of months and later begin their own business. Finally, vendors also first learn from their kin that they must pay an agreed amount of money to linemen if they intend to operate their business on footpaths. The reason for this dependence on kin groups and other social networks is the lack of associational power among the informal traders in Dhaka as discussed in Section 7.2.1. Apart from kin and social networks, street vendors utilise their economic capital to make connections with local politicians and *mastans*.

7.2.3 Economic power

Weber (2009) and Bourdieu (1986) explain the importance of economic capital in gaining social status, something which is also evident among the urban poor in cities of the South (de

Wit & Berner, 2009). Economic capital refers to ownership of houses or shops in Sattola. These resources are useful for generating power as they are directly associated with holding a respectable position in society. In Sattola, landlords have more economic capital than other groups and have strong connections with local politicians and often hold positions on local committees. They also resolve disputes among their tenants. The landlords of Sattola are often owners of shops adjacent to the roads and footpaths. They often run small businesses (such as tea stalls) in those shops; however, they also make money by renting those shops to other merchants.

This kind of ownership and economic capital helps them to avoid having to pay the *mastans*. As Ruhul, a landlord, said, *“If I sell them [his house or rooms] no one takes money from me. If others sell, they have to pay around 594 USD to the big brothers. I do have some power in the area”*. However, it should be noted that although economic capital helps vendors to maintain connections with dominant groups, operate business, and appropriate space for housing and livelihoods, sometimes they pay more money to *mastans* and police to secure their business. For example, Chadni, a CBO member of Sattola mentioned that local drug dealers pay 36 USD to police every day to continue their illegal activities.

So far I have demonstrated that sources of power have multiple faces that the vendors of Sattola draw upon in negotiating spatial claims for livelihoods, and that individuals often have access to various sources of power to claim space. The more connections an individual can establish with different groups of powerful actors, the more likely they will be able to secure their livelihood space in Dhaka. Although the discussion so far indicates vendors’ agency to make structural changes or adapt to the city’s macro socio-economic and political structures, this section has not explored the tactics and resistance strategies they may use to avoid direct conflict with other dominant actors in the city. This will be analysed in the next section.

7.3 Resistance and resilience in accessing public space

The vendors of Sattola hardly directly resist the dominant actors due to the lack of organisational skills and lack of awareness regarding their right to the city and constitutional right to work. However, apart from overt collective action (see Chapter Three), resistance takes many other forms, such as taking localised individual action, passive collective or

individual action, and appropriating symbols of dominance and using them in new ways (Scott, 1985). The vendors of Sattola mostly utilise these other forms of resistance strategies to transgress the regular boundaries and practices of urban space. De Certeau (1984) labels these the ‘tactics of the weak’. Here, De Certeau refers to the spatial tactics, such as walking, moving, and dwelling in space, by which the ordinary users appropriate and use urban space and make spatial meanings and reproduce urban space breaking the planned order. Similarly, Katz uses the term ‘resilience’ to refer to everyday practices that people adopt to deal with new circumstances and find new and creative ways of surviving without challenging existing social relations. An example of Katz’s (2004) resilience strategy might be a strategy used by the ordinary people of the city to appropriate public space for shelter and to earn livelihoods, something Bayat (1997a, 2000) describes as the ‘quiet encroachment of the ordinary’ and ‘street politics’ (see Chapter Three). In this way, the ordinary people lead their everyday lives without directly confronting the state and state actors. The following section discusses how vendors either conform to or break traditional state rules and the strategies to resist dominant actors and construct counter-space for livelihoods.

7.3.1 Quiet encroachment of the ordinary

In response to the various effects of power ranged against them, the vendors of Sattola have become adept at quietly appropriating (Bayat, 1997b, 2000) and using available urban space to earn livelihoods. Most of Sattola’s residents use space adjacent to the settlement for vending. They are often evicted by officials of the nearby public hospitals, officials of DNCC or police as those places belong to those hospitals; however, they are able to reappropriate their livelihood space within a very short time. My interview with Saiful, a street vendor in his late fifties, revealed how vendors quietly reappropriate space for livelihoods after a sudden eviction drive by DNCC. He described regular monitoring by the police following an eviction. Any evicted shopkeepers found to have reopened for business were immediately arrested. To avoid arrest, Saiful often hid under his tea table when he saw police approaching. Taking advantage of the fact that police rarely arrest female shopkeepers (to be discussed in the next chapter), his wife ran the business and told the police that her husband was away.

Saiful’s case represents one of several strategies employed by the street vendors in Dhaka to survive an eviction, whether it is an eviction of shops or their settlement. First, they remove their equipment very quickly. Sometimes they are unable to save all their equipment; other

participants informed me that government officials do not allow traders much time to do so. Second, they do not reopen their shops immediately due to police monitoring. They may take advantage of the days away from the site to engage in other income-earning activities. Finally, they reopen their shops again as soon as it is safe to do so, applying Kerkvliet's (2009) modification and evasion strategies (see Chapter Three) instead of directly resisting state actors such as the police. Modification and evasion strategies avoid direct resistance, and people can get around the system by modifying their behaviour.

However, street traders are sometimes forced to wait for long periods before reopening their shops due to strict police surveillance. This is the case for anyone with a shop on a footpath near any main road in Dhaka. For example, Shipon (45), a textile vendor in Mohakhali, shared his experience of massive eviction drives due to an international cricket match hosted by Bangladesh in 2015. He was affected because his shop was on a footpath near the intersection of the new airport and Mirpur Stadium Roads. Mohakhali (Figure 7.5) is at the intersection of many important areas. Hence police cleared all shops from the footpaths and did not allow street traders to operate their businesses there for five months.

Yes, yes, they (police) sometimes evict us [our shops]. I was at home at that time . . . Suppose, high officials will pass through this road. Foreigners will pass through this road . . . Police evicted us last year when that cricket match took place. At that time, we could not operate business for five months. Then one or two vendors started their businesses again. Eventually we reopened our shops after five months (Shipon, 45, textile vendor, [73]).

This is consistent with previous studies on Southern cities, such as Dupont's (2011) study in Delhi and Nadvi's (2008) study in South Africa which show the repressive role of the state in making cities into 'global cities'. Moreover, Nadvi's (2008) study shows how city officials of the eThekweni Municipality continuously relocated or arrested street traders and confiscated their goods to 'clean up' the inner city to 'world class' standards to host the 2010 FIFA World Cup tournament. Various confrontations took place between street traders and the eThekweni metro police in May and June of 2007. Police arrested 500 street traders who demanded the release of 25 previously arrested fellow traders.

Figure 7.5: Vending sites in Sattola, Gulshan, Banani and Mohakhali



Source: Adapted from Google Maps

The food vendors of Banani (Figure 7.5) experienced similar kinds of evictions due to a change in Mayor of the DNCC. For example, Kallol, a food vendor, said they were not allowed to operate their businesses due to the DNCC's road improvement work in the Banani area. The new Mayor of the DNCC promised to transform Dhaka into a clean, green, and safe city (BBC Bangla, 2015). In an effort to honour these commitments, he had been clearing all footpaths under his jurisdictions and evicting street traders from footpaths until 2017. The street traders of Banani were ordered not to operate businesses in that region for a long time.. However, most street traders reappropriate their vending sites within a short period of time. It may take one hour to one month or more; however, they continually return to their vending places. Consequently, the cat and mouse-like police raids often fail to discourage the street trade. This demonstrates the power of the state and is a reminder that vendors need to pay for their acclaimed 'right' to conduct their businesses (Anjaria, 2011; Etzold, 2015). Vendors ability to return to these places relatively quickly are only the result of the web of payments made to local officials and their proxies as discussed above (7.2.1) Vendors are able operate successfully in spite of higher level directives which operate at a more abstract level. Those who are appointed to enact these higher level directives are compromised by benefits they derive from more socially embedded relationships with vendors.

7.3.2 Frequent change of livelihood space

Apart from quietly appropriating space, many participants run businesses moving from one place to another to protect business materials from police or to avoid the payment of protection money. Several vegetable and fruit vendors utilised this strategy in Sattola. Some hawkers also sold their wares moving to different parts of the city either by walking or by travelling by bus. Mahid (40), a hawker from Pora slum, uses these tactics to operate his business. He carries combs, prayer books, moneybags, and nail cutters in a small bag and then sells them while riding on different buses from Mohakhali (Figure 7.5). He travels to Mohakhali by CNG/auto rickshaw and then boards any bus. Some days, he rides on the bus bound for Gazipur; other days, he rides on the bus to Shahbagh and Motijheel. Mahid conducts his business while moving around the city to avoid paying protection money. Although most hawkers who sell goods in transit use this as a strategy to avoid protection money, some mobile hawkers of Mohakhali still have to pay small sums to linemen or police.

7.3.3 Negotiations with local shopkeepers

Street vendors sometimes operate their businesses sitting in front of a grocery shop. They negotiate with shopkeepers after appealing to their sympathy, disclosing the details of their vulnerable and poverty-ridden life and seek their permission to sit in front of a corner of their shop. Using this strategy, they are sometimes also able to avoid paying protection money as the shop owner tells the linemen or police that that individual is running their business. Salehin (46), the owner of a grocery shop near Mohakhali, allowed a banana seller to operate his business sitting in front of his shop. He said, *“That space [where the banana seller sits with his basket] was open. So, he sits over there. As he is poor, I did not tell him anything . . . Sometimes police come and ask us about these people. We tell them they are our people.”*

Not all shopkeepers are as empathetic as Salehin. Most shopkeepers demand some amount of money from street traders in exchange for allowing them to trade in front of their shops. For example, a fruit vendor informed me that he is not permitted to stand in front of any grocery shop near Wireless Gate. Those shopkeepers demand 1 to 2 USD if traders want to set up their pushcarts in front of their shops and operate businesses there. Since they are unable to be in one place for long, they frequently move from one place to another.

7.3.4 Keeping business materials in a shop

The poor vendors also sell business materials (both goods and products) by keeping their goods in a shop. They have this advantage when the shopkeeper is known to them. They use this strategy to operate business in affluent areas, such as Gulshan, Bannani, and Baridhara, which are situated in a diplomatic zone. Due to recent political instability and Islamic extremist groups' attacks on foreigners, hawking is strictly prohibited in these areas. However, some hawkers still operate business with the help of local shopkeepers. Here the social networks become important (Section 7.2.2.2).

Figure 7.6: Salman's baskets



Street traders in the Gulshan and Banni areas pay more protection money than other areas as they make higher profits. For example, Salman (29) a handicrafts seller, related his experience of making good profits by selling palm leaf and hedge leaf baskets of different sizes and shapes (rectangular, square, and round). These baskets look identical to those made from cane (Figure 7.6). He runs this business with his nephew. When asked why he is not expanding his business, since he makes a good profit, and whether he has to pay protection money, Salman responded:

If I want to involve more people in this business, I will have to pay political leaders of this area (Gulshan). Some years ago, I paid 24 USD to some leaders of Gulshan area

for running this business. Now I have good relations with them and I do not pay anything. Now the leaders do not create any problem. I have good relationships with everyone and I also joined in the political convention twice . . . I have been doing business in Gulshan for three years and I used to live in a flat in Gulshan that is owned by a political leader and developed political connection further using his contact [political leader]. Sometimes the traffic police create problems. They collect 0.12 USD from us regularly. We cannot protest against them. If we protest they will catch us and file a case against us (Salman, 29, a basket seller, [33]).

Salman's strategy of selling baskets aligns with Katz's (2004) resilience (Chapter Three), where people circumvent the system finding new and creative ways of surviving without challenging existing social relations. His relations to political leaders also confirm the importance of maintaining patron-client relations in operating businesses, repeated by many participants.

7.4 Summary

This chapter has described the multiple sources of power and everyday resistance strategies the vendors of Sattola utilise to access public space in an absence to their right to the city, particularly their right to appropriate space. In terms of access to space, disputes are not restricted to vendors and state actors as discussed in Chapter Six; other local actors, such as debt collectors, permanent retailers, and minor officials also determine who is granted or denied access to a particular space. Yet vendors have very little direct access to local government officials, so they have to rely on local *mastans* to make informal deals with local government officials to access public space. Police turn a 'blind eye' in return for payment and inform vendors via their linemen prior to any eviction.

The local space in slums is controlled by this intermediary group, where new migrants pay older residents to access public space. Due to the nature of 'gray space' (Yiftachel, 2009a), vendors are unable to resist these informal payments. As vendors fall on the wrong side of the power structure and have limited agency to change the existing social and economic structures, they often internalise and accept their powerless position rather than challenge powerful actors (Lukes, 1974). They have created an informal contract with this intermediary group to access public space. This acceptance of informal governance and everyday politics

by the poor is a form of Foucauldian self-governance (Foucault, 2000b). Foucault also used this form of governance to explain the processes through which the state regulates citizens' behaviour using indirect control of self-regulation, and poor people's adoption of informal governance to access public space follow a similar path of self-governance.

Although this informal governance system generally works, vendors also experience occasional eviction by state and non-state actors as discussed in Section 7.3.1, where the state takes a more coercive role in administering power. Chapters Six and Seven explain a separate regimes of governance in terms of controlling public space. State actors attempt to control the use of public space following institutional rules, and revert to coercive power where necessary. This kind of governance is observed in the eviction of street vendors by the DNCC officials, who use institutional power to evict vendors. While vendors are not well organised to resist the state, they are able to employ more indirect means, the so-called 'quiet encroachment' of space. These "alternative, fragmented and often individualised practices" (Steel, 2012, p. 1018) play a more important role than dominating or coercive power (Sharp et al., 2000) in the livelihood practices of the research participants.

This 'quiet encroachment' (Bayat, 1997b) of space is only made possible by the mutually beneficial arrangements that the street vendors of Sattola have with more local sources of power. These include the police, local politicians and their enforcers, who provide the means for vendors to keep trading in order that they may continue to collect rent in the form of bribes and other corrupt payments. These more socially embedded relations are often in direct contradiction of the wishes of the city and the state.

Street vendors in other parts of the Global South, have successfully claimed their right to appropriate space and vending rights making better use of patron-client relationship (Crossa, 2009; Schindler, 2014; Setšabi & Leduka, 2008) through strong vendors' associations. Crossa's (2009) study in Mexico shows that street traders would sooner die than relinquish control of their livelihood space; and are in a stronger position than the vendors of Dhaka to do this. City governments in India (Anjaria, 2011), Africa (Setšabi & Leduka, 2008) and Latin America (Crossa, 2009) have allocated hawking zones to formalise vendors' right to trade. Street traders can also obtain a license to operate business in these cities, though there are fewer licensed traders due to complex licensing regulations, so informal trade continues. Street traders in other cities of the Global South use patron-client relationships to achieve

longer term demands, where the street traders of Dhaka have a more short term and contingent relationship with patrons and officials. As Mitlin and Patel (2014, p. 298) put it, “the urban poor may have lost autonomy but they have not entirely lost agency”. The street vendors of Sattola must apply innovative covert and individualised resistance strategies to continue businesses due to a lack of power and agency and the absence of formal vendors’ associations or any other form of collective representation. The existing literature has revealed the importance of vendors’ associations and their leaders in pursuing vendors’ demands (Bhowmik & Saha, 2012; Hummel, 2017; Lindell & Ampaire, 2016). Yet these studies often do not consider the local power structures that might negatively impact the formation of vendors’ associations as discussed earlier.

Furthermore, the state’s role is equally important in determining the nature of resistance. As Bayat notes:

under exceptional circumstances . . . the unemployed or street vendors may be invited to form unions. This happens mainly in relatively democratic periods, when political parties engaged in completion inevitably attempt to mobilise the poor in exchange for electoral support. (1997b, p. 59)

Mainstream political parties have only attempted to mobilise vendors or the urban poor in Dhaka to serve party interests and win national elections rather than serving poor people’s interests. The government of Bangladesh uses its police force to quash any kind of rebellion against the state (Keck & Etzold, 2013; Luthfa, 2012). The use of repressive policies, such as destroying vendors’ wares and pushcarts or arresting them, makes it unlikely that vendors will be able to exercise their agency to organise collective movements.

The vendors of Sattola have followed Bayat’s (1997b) first two steps of ‘street politics’, such as ‘quiet encroachment’ into public space and forming a ‘passive network’ (see Chapter Three, Section 3.3.2). However, they form networks with local state and non-state powerbrokers rather than forming associations with members of the same social class, which limits their ability to resist dominant groups. They have little choice but to comply with demands for protection money and to employ other types of covert resistance strategies to oppose powerful actors. The vendors’ implication in traditional systems of paying protection money to *mastans* and the police might be considered as one of the reasons for failure to

develop class consciousness among vulnerable group, but in the political and cultural environment of Dhaka, it allows for at least a precarious livelihood.

Bayat further argues that ordinary people need an external leader to help them pursue their collective demands. For example, the Phulbari movement that took place in Phulbari in Dinajpur, Bangladesh, against a coal mine project proposed by Asia Energy Corporation Bangladesh Ltd, a UK-based multinational mining company, was successful due to its leadership by national and local activists. The local protesters organised against this coal mine project by a communist party known as the National Committee to Protect Oil, Gas, Mineral Resources, Power and Port (Faruque, 2017). The Phulbari activists used the land and livelihood issue to gain support and mobilise local peasants who were afraid that the mining company would not be able to compensate them for land (Faruque, 2017). However, most communist parties in Bangladesh typically fail to organise such a movement, like Phulbari, framing dominant discourses of neoliberal market economy and displacement. Another factor is that poor people do not support the ideology of communist parties in Bangladesh as they have been diverted by NGOs and micro-credit programs since 1975 (Karim, 2016). The rise of military rule in 1975 had a devastating effect on political parties of the left as the military rulers supported NGO activities in rural areas in an effort to neutralise the left parties. As Karim (2016, p.4) notes:

This had a devastating effect on left political parties since rural people preferred the NGO that gave them loans or other forms of assistance, whereas left parties preached a liberation ideology minus resources, and wanted them to join in a left movement without a clear message of how their enlistment would change their economic lives for the better. The incursion of the NGO into rural politics also increased friction between the conscientization NGOs and the left who fought over rural subscribers, and they viewed each other as potential enemies as opposed to comrades working against the economic oppression of the poor. In the fight between the resource-rich NGO and the left political parties, the left lost out.

As a result, the left political parties can effect little change to the lives of the poor; whereas in India, and especially in West Bengal, the communist party has made rural farmers aware of their rights and taught them to claim their rights to the state, which has given birth to Chatterjee's (2004) 'political society' (see Chapters Two and Three). Any existing hawkers'

associations in Bangladesh are really just party political organisations representing more established vendors in the formal economy and have failed to pursue informal hawkers' demands for public space or ability to form a collective movement (Mahmud, 2016). Also, mainstream hawkers' associations prioritise the current government's interests over those of the poor.

Apart from political organisations, civil society organisations, including NGOs, can raise awareness among poor people to claim tenure security or some other forms of arrangement to access public space as demonstrated by the advocacy work of the National Association of Street Vendors of India and the Self Employed Women's Association in Ghana (Bhowmik, 2012b; Schindler, 2014; Setšabi & Leduka, 2008; Skinner & Valodia, 2003). However, NGOs in Bangladesh do not support street vendors in forming associations due to the state regulations constraining them as discussed in Chapter Six.

Following Scott (1985), I argue that resistance and rebellion are too costly for the poor, whose daily survival depends heavily on their access to public space. As a result, most street vendors of Sattola, who are too poor to dedicate time to protesting, avoid overt resistance against powerful actors and instead employ 'everyday politics' (Kerkvliet, 2009) to get by. This system works for them, as police and local politicians support them to continue their businesses on the streets, out of self-interest. They have options to quietly encroach other public space in Dhaka if they are evicted from their vending sites. In this way, street vendors claim and reclaim their livelihood spaces after every eviction drive and produce 'counter-spaces' (see Chapter Two, Section 2.2) by breaking the planned order of public space. They do not directly confront the state apparatus to break this order rather they produce counter-spaces in direct or indirect negotiation with a range of state and non-state actors and claim public space quietly. Their negotiation strategies range from the more informal (family, kin, and social networks) to the extra-legal (patron-client relationships, relationships with *mastans*, linemen and police, and payment of protection money). Though kinship and social networks play an important role in appropriating public space and constructing counter-spaces, *mastans*, politicians, police, and other government officials hold more power than the street vendors' kin groups.

This chapter has discussed the negotiation and resistance strategies used primarily by poor men and how they construct counter-spaces through their everyday politics. Women traders

while are able to use these strategies in some cases, but they are often forced to use other methods to appropriate space to earn an income. The next chapter examines issues related to the gendered spatial practices through which poor women access public space to earn an income.

Chapter 8: Women, Space and Urban Informality

8.1 Introduction

While Chapter Seven examined poor men's access to urban public space and the strategies they use to produce counter-spaces to earn an income, this chapter focuses on poor women's access to public space and how it varies in comparison to their male counterparts. Access to public space is important for women, who may be supplementing their husbands' income, or as head of households may be supporting their family. Men and women experience similar types of governance problems in accessing public space (discussed in Chapter Six) and similar challenges in accessing powerful actors (discussed in Chapter Seven). However, women face acute challenges in the public realm in comparison to men due to the constraints of long-standing patriarchal, cultural, social, and religious norms. Thus, this chapter provides a deeper investigation into the strategies women employ to operate their businesses in the streets of Dhaka, and why women's participation in the informal economy occurs at a lower rate than their male counterparts. This chapter addresses research question three, which explores the gendered aspects to the appropriation of urban space for livelihoods.

Following the literature on the feminisation of poverty and women's participation in informal economic activities in the Global South discussed in Chapter Two, I argue that poor women's choice of employment is subject to the constraints of long-standing patriarchal, cultural, social, and religious norms as well as their age, children's ages, marital status, and household power relations. All of these factors serve to restrict women's mobility and choice of employment. I explore how and why women's occupational choice follows a 'gender division' of labour. Women's access to business capital and the role of their social and kin networks will be compared with that of their male counterparts. The final section of this chapter presents a discussion on issues related to women's empowerment, resistance strategies against powerful actors, and women's consciousness of their rights and power relationships both within and beyond the household. This discussion shows the importance of changing patriarchal norms. I argue that women's empowerment and participation in the labour market, including operating businesses in public space, is critical for the urban poor to alleviate household poverty and to change cultural norms and stereotypes.

8.2 Gendered space and urban informality

Several studies have shown the importance of women's employment for the economic and social wellbeing of poor households in Bangladesh (Banks, 2013; Huq-Hussain, 1995; Mahmud, 1997; Salway et al., 2005). However, poor women's access to public space for income-earning activities is constrained by social and religious norms, as discussed in Chapter Two. Accordingly, poor women's participation in the informal economy in Dhaka is limited than in other cities of the South. Although like men, poor women operate informal businesses yet women's use of public space for conducting businesses is constrained by social norms of patriarchy and religious norms of *purdah* (veil) (Chapter Two).

Most migrant women in Sattola worked as domestic and garment workers rather than operating independent businesses. These jobs are significantly different from traditional roles. Traditionally, even the poorest rural women do not work outside their homes (Amin, 1997; Mahmud, 1997). If a husband depends on his wife's income, he suffers from social stigma (Amin, 1997). A woman's work affects power relations in the home (Banks, 2013), as her employment is considered by the wider community as a reflection of her husband's inability to run the family (Salway et al., 2005). As Banks (2013, p. 14) notes, "men widely – albeit reluctantly – recognise the necessity of their wives' labour to household stability, they are not yet ready to accept the additional challenges this brings to their authority and dominance". Accordingly, many women in Sattola only performed household chores and some women helped their husbands, as in the case of processed food businesses, or when there are some constraints. For example, Mahinoor began selling boiled eggs recently when her husband became ill. She explained:

I was in debt and after I paid my debt, I quit working. My husband doesn't want me to work outside rather he preferred me staying home with our children. He used to pull rickshaw before. He made that decision because our daughter was growing old and we could not leave our daughter to anyone else (Mahinoor, 29, a boiled egg seller).

This quote further indicates how women's reproductive roles are prioritised over their productive roles, as will be discussed in Section 8.3. Some other participants sell vegetables, spices (Figure 8.1), and tea (Figure 8.2) in the nearby streets and Sattola bazaar.

Figure 8.1: Women selling vegetables and spices in Sattola



A small number of poor women sold rice cakes during the winter. This is a seasonal business, although some women sold *chittoi pitha* (a kind of rice cake) with mustard, green chilli sauce, and dried fish throughout the year. Most women sold rice cakes sitting beside their houses in the parochial realm – a communal space that are located within communities (Lofland, 1998).

Doing business in the parochial realm does not raise questions regarding their *purdah* as this space is to some extent a bounded space. However, the majority of these women operate alternative businesses during other seasons. For example, Mirajan (50) sold rice cakes during winter near the Niketon gate; however, she also sold bananas throughout the rest of the year. Her daughter sold boiled eggs in the same vending place.

Figure 8.2: A woman selling tea in a semi-permanent stall in Sattola



Very few women used to go outside the slum or nearby neighbourhoods to sell goods and wares due to social and religious norms that discourage women's spatial mobility and participation in trading activities. Women who used to go outside the slum to earn an income experienced sexual and other forms of harassment due to breaking social and religious norms. Of 17 informal traders interviewed (Table 8.1), only four women operated businesses outside the slum. I tried to find more female vendors operating businesses outside the slum, but could not find many. Rebeka sold rice cakes at Mohakhali intersection in the evening, but she was accompanied by her brother (Figure 8.3). Maria (60), a hawker, who had separated from her husband, sold water, cigarettes, and chips in front of the parliament building. Tahera (60), a widower, had been selling flowers in front of a school gate near Tejgaon for 35 years. Some demographic similarities among the female vendors who ran businesses in the streets outside the slum are observed (Table 8.1). Most of these women were older and single—either

divorced or widowed. When a woman's husband dies, she loses all sources of income if her husband was the family's sole breadwinner. As a result, widowed women were more vulnerable than the others. They became the head of their households after their husbands' death. They often had three or four children and no alternative sources of income. In female-headed households, female incomes are often the sole income unless their children work for earnings. Most vulnerable and destitute women started businesses in the nearby streets.

Figure 8.3: A semi-permanent rice cake shop in Mohakhali run by a woman



Apart from single women, some married women, whose husbands were alive but sick and unable to earn an income for their family, operated businesses on the streets (Table 8.1). In most cases, those men accompanied their wives. For example, Moyna (60) sold lentils and spices near the Bangladesh Medical Research Council (BMRC) gate accompanied by her husband. Mirajan's (60) husband and daughter accompanied her while she sold rice cakes in Dokkinpara. Mahinoor (29) sold boiled eggs to earn an income to pay for her daughter's education. Two participants sold tea part time when their husbands were busy with other chores. Tashfia (26) had a small tea stall and her husband sold meat in a nearby shop. She began selling tea and other snacks when her husband was sick for a while. The rest of the married women were engaged in informal businesses, such as selling rice cake, tea, and vegetable to support their family incomes, as their husbands' income was not sufficient to maintain family expenditure.

Table 8.1: Women participants’ engagement in informal economic activities by various factors

	Number of women
Age group	
0-15	1
16-25	1
26-35	8
36- 45	4
46-55	2
56- 65	1
Marital Status	
Married	10
Unmarried	1
Divorced	3
Widowed	2
Separated	1
Sex of household head	
Female	5
Male	12
Total	17

Source: Author

Older women’s access to public space does not significantly affect their social status; it is socially acceptable because people acknowledge that these women have no other alternatives for earnings. Older women occasionally engage in several income-earning activities. For example, apart from selling rice cakes and working as a maid in a house in Dokkhinpara, Mirajan also worked as a health worker at BRAC’s Manoshi project. However, women’s employment is not only limited by restrictions on their movement in public space, but also by expectations around, which was evident in Sattola. This is how social norms constrain women’s engagement in productive work and constructs a gendered division of labour emphasising women’s reproductive role.

8.3 Women and gendered divisions of labour

A ‘gendered division of labour’ (Chant, 1997, 2013; Chen, 2010) is evident in Bangladesh like many other parts in the Global South (Kabeer, Mahmud, & Tasneem, 2017). Also, it is well documented that there is a gender division in paid work in the formal economy

(Arulampalam, Booth, & Bryan, 2007; Kabeer, 2016). This is also the case for the export-oriented garment industry in Bangladesh (Amin, Quayes, & Alam, 2015). The majority of young women in Sattola work in garment factories. This finding is consistent with Salway et al.'s (2005) study on three slums of Dhaka that reported 40 per cent of women are engaged in income-generating activities outside their home, of which 22 per cent work in the garment industry. As this thesis mainly focuses on the livelihood practices of the informal workers, the accounts of garment workers will not be discussed further.

In Sattola, many women worked as maids, or sold processed food or vegetables and spices, whereas most men typically engaged in manual labour (Figures 8.4 and 8.5). This gendered division of labour was in part informed by social norms around work that was considered acceptable for women and men, and proximity to their homes. Most women preferred to operate their businesses close to their homes as they also had to cook for their families and look after children (Figure 8.4), which supports the notion of 'private women' and 'public men' (Chapter Two).

Very few women travelled outside Sattola for work. Similarly, those who worked as maids usually moved between their homes and workplaces in nearby affluent areas. Women's mobility outside the slum was very limited in comparison to that of men's (Figures 8.4 and 8.5). Few women had spare time to visit the city, as they were responsible for household chores in addition to their income-earning activities whereas men were only engaged in income-earning activities without taking any responsibilities of household chores (Figures 8.4 and 8.5). This is an obstacle that women in the Global South encounter when entering the market economy. As discussed in Chapter Two, they are faced with the challenge of balancing work and domestic duties. Although women's participation in both the paid and unpaid labour force has increased across the Global South, men's participation in domestic labour has not increased at the same rate. Consequently, women continue to experience a 'double burden' of work (Ferrant, Pesando, & Nowacka, 2014).

One such example of how women maintain a 'double burden' (Figure 8.1) may be understood from Sweety's (38) case. A former maid working in Banani, Sweety worked in an apartment from 7.30am to 4pm until she left the job due to her pregnancy. Although her husband was unemployed, he did not perform any household chores. Sweety was responsible for all household chores in addition to her job. Most of the female participants from Sattola

identified with this problem. This problem is not exclusive to the poor women in Dhaka, but is experienced by women from all social classes (Ward et al., 2004) all over the world (Hochschild & Machung, 1989). However, whereas middle class women are able to afford maids poor women are often forced to work as maids in addition to performing their household chores.

Such practices reinforce gender and income inequality and a female-biased 'reproduction tax' (Palmer, 1992). Like many female residents, Sweetie left her job due to pregnancy; however, she was in a good position. Her employer had agreed to keep organise a temporary replacement in her absence and she was able to return to work after having her child. Not all employers agree to re-employ a maid after a long interruption, and many women face the challenge of losing their jobs due to pregnancy. Most of the female participants had experienced this kind of joblessness due to their reproductive role and had faced further pressure to return to work after having a baby.

Figure 8.4: Visualisation of five female participants' daily routines



Source: Author

Figure 8.5: Visualisation of five male participants' daily routines



Source: Author

In addition to performing their productive and reproductive roles, women in the cities of the South provide voluntary services in their communities. Moser (2012) refers to these as ‘community activities’ (see Chapter Two). In Sattola, very few women and men were engaged in ‘community activities’. Women with better economic resources were usually involved in these community activities. For example, some female participants were working with DSK to provide water and sanitation facilities in Sattola. However, the majority of key informants rented many rooms in the slum and were not occupied with other income-earning activities. Therefore, they were able to support the community by providing free services, while the poorest of the poor women were busy earning a livelihood. These women experienced barriers to earning an income using public space. In addition to informal traders, domestic workers faced constraints, as explained in the next section.

8.3.1 Gender divisions of labour and the domestic industry

After the garment industry, the second most common type of work for poor women in Sattola was domestic work in the nearby affluent areas. This finding is in line with Huq-Hussain’s (1995) study in Dhaka, which found that most newly migrated women worked as domestic workers, day labourers, and garment workers. Domestic work is a large and growing sector of employment for poor women (Chen, 2011). Domestic workers account for four to 10 per cent of the total workforce in developing countries (ILO, 2010). In Bangladesh, poor women and children work as domestic workers which account for more than 3 per cent of the total workforce (Ashraf, 2015). Most poor women prefer to work as maids for four reasons. First, as a maid, women perform similar chores to those they do in their own households. As a result, they do not need additional skills, such as literacy or numeracy, or other relevant business skills. Second, this work offers regular monthly payments and job security, and maids sometimes receive additional food and clothing. Third, poor women are able to take days off work. Finally, and most importantly, they do this work in the private sphere. As a result, when compared street vendors they are less visible in public space, which help them to maintain their social status to some extent.

The domestic workers of Sattola secured their jobs using their social networks, such as contacts of their extended family members and neighbours. However, some women went door-to-door looking for work. Shumona explained:

I used to work in four houses when I was pregnant with my son. Then I left those jobs and went home. When I returned from time at home, I didn't have any job. Then one day I got a phone call from the house I used to work. I went to them and started working as a home maid again . . . I got this work through a mobile phone contact . . . I searched in Niketon [a nearby affluent neighbourhood]. I found that work by searching . . . I went from house to house and searched for work (Shumona, 20, a maid, [5]).

The above discussion indicates that a number of women work as maids and garment workers in Sattola; however, very few women engage in informal business in the streets.

8.3.2 Gender divisions of labour and the informal economy

Previous studies have found that pay gaps in the informal economy between women and men are compounded by several factors including women's restricted use of space, limited skill levels and work experience, limited access to start-up business capital, and most importantly, their secondary and unpaid roles in 'family businesses' (Chant & McIlwaine, 2009; Chant & Pedwell, 2008). As a result of constraints placed on women's mobility outside the home, which are shaped by religious and social norms and their reproductive roles, very few women in Sattola were engaged in street trade in comparison to their male counterparts.

Consequently, very few women in Sattola operated independent small-scale business in the nearby streets (Figure 8.1) or close to their home (Figure 8.4) as discussed in Section 8.2.

The urban-centred 'feminisation of labour' in the South has increased in the informal economy since the debt crisis of the 1980s and the introduction of the neoliberal economic reforms (Chant, 2013). This has impacted heavily on the poorest workers in the informal economy, of whom the majority are female (Chant, 2007a). However, reproductive time burdens constrain their livelihood options and flexibility (Chant, 2007a). Accordingly, most women were either only engaging in household chores or garment factories, or considering flexible job options such as working as maids, rice cake vendors, or vegetable and spices vendors in the nearby streets as demonstrated in Section 8.2.

Another factor influencing female residents' reduced participation in business is the competition among women in similar situations who may have had limited opportunities to

engage in a narrow range of under or small-capitalised activities. This has led to a ‘discouraged labour effect’ and drop outs from the work force (McDowell, Ward, Fagan, Perrons, & Ray, 2006). Another related problem is the scarcity of vending places. Most of the female participants stated that they preferred to conduct business in or near the slum because of familiarity. However, almost no space was available to new migrant women wanting to start a business. This is why newly migrated women tended to look for jobs in the garment or domestic industry.

The nature and size of women’s businesses contributed to their earning less than their male counterparts. This is reflected in the cases where men and women both operated fruit and vegetable businesses; however, men sold produce out of pushcarts outside the slum and earned more than the women who sold in the nearby streets. This happens due to two factors: first, women invest less capital in their businesses compared to men. Second, their customers are poor slum residents who are less likely to pay the same for their produce as their middle class counterparts outside the slum.

School aged adolescent girls engagement in family businesses or their employment in garment factories, may constrain their accumulation of human capital, which then contributes to them earning less than their male counterparts. Parents sometimes employed their school-aged daughters rather than sending them to school. This was common practice among the poorer households in Sattola, where daughters were sent to work in garment factories. Some school-aged adolescent girls worked with their parents in their family businesses, constraining their accumulation of human capital. For example, Rajjak’s daughters helped to load fruit on his pushcart in the mornings. One of his daughters travelled to the nearby bazaar to sell leftover fruit from the day before, while another daughter helped her mother with household chores and took care of their youngest sister. Although Rajjak’s daughters said they studied in the nearby state school at Wireless, I never saw them going to school during my time at the slum. Other studies, such as Gonzalez De La Rocha’s (1994) study in Mexico and Moser’s (1992) study in Ecuador, have found inter-generational implications in gendered labour, whereby daughters have a greater responsibility to share household chores. One in ten children aged five to seventeen work in developing countries (OXFAM, 2018). This may cause truancy or dropping out of school, which further constrains their own accumulation of human capital; and, as previous research has shown, this will lead them to a future of poverty.

In addition to participation in income-earning activities by all or the majority of their family members, poor households in the South make use of social connections to secure employment and/or start businesses (Lourenço-Lindell, 2002; Lyons & Snoxell, 2005).

Similarly, in Sattola, poor women use their social and kin networks to enter into informal businesses.

8.4 Women, informality, social and kin networks

Most women in Sattola get their first job with the help of their kin networks or neighbours, much like their male counterparts as discussed in Chapter Seven. This study has found that most domestic workers also found a job with the help of their neighbours, while some maids found a job with the help of their extended family members and other social networks. For example, Rehana (50) used to work as a day labourer in Niketon. During that time, she asked the gateman of that building to inform her if he knew of any families that were looking for a maid. She was later offered jobs in two apartments in that building. She also found a job for her daughter in another apartment in the same building. This finding confirms earlier studies that found poor migrant women usually manage to secure their first job with the help of their relatives, friends, and other social networks (Huq-Hussain, 1995; Islam, 1996; Opel, 1998)

In appropriating vending places in Sattola, like the male vendors (see Chapter Seven), the female vegetable vendors utilised similar social and kin networks. Mina (25), a new migrant, learnt business skills, secured a vending place, and sourced capital with the help of her roommates. She migrated to Dhaka after her husband's death and began vegetable and spice business near Sattola bazaar the day after she arrived. She went to Karwan Bazar every morning to buy vegetables and spices at retail price with fellow businesswomen, but she did not pay any protection money as she was very poor. Another participant, Moyna (60) said, "*No, they [mastans] don't ask for money. We are old. They can see that we are having a bad time. Although we have children, our children don't help us*". This finding indicates that even *mastans* are sympathetic to the poorest of the poor women's economic conditions, allowing women in these circumstances to continue running businesses without protection money.

Both male and female vendors are able to sell their wares alongside their fellow shopkeepers for a short time. Tahera (60), a flower seller, sold flowers sitting near a school gate in Tejgaon, but on public holidays, such as February 21, she sold them in Sattola. Although her

fellow businesswoman, Anika, was a bit annoyed by the proximity of Tahera's temporary shop to her plastic utensil shop, she did not create any conflict. Anika simply requested Tahera to move her shop a bit further away. Tahera gave Anika's son a rose free of cost and treated him like her grandson. She said, *"Her mother is like my relative. We are from the same village. If I take money from them, it does not look good. See, I also sell sitting near their shop. Money is not a big deal [she emphasises that maintaining relationships with kin groups is more important than money]"*. For male and female vendors, maintaining good relationships with social and kin groups is just as important as making profits. This finding is in line with Salway et al.'s (2005) study on slums in Dhaka which revealed that women maintain good relationships with their kin groups. Sometimes kin groups and neighbours provide support by looking after working women's children. For example, Shumona (20) worked as a maid in Niketon. When asked who looked after her children when she was at work, she said: *"I leave my son [4 months] to my daughter [6 years old]. Her grandmother comes at 3pm. Then she takes care of them."*

Female traders must take their children to work with them if they are unable to find anyone to mind them. Tahera, who began her business with the help of her Noakhali neighbour, had no one to look after her children; so, she used to take them with her, which hampered their education and decreased their chance of social mobility. Tahera's second-oldest son currently sells flowers and her other son pulls a rickshaw. When asked why she did not send her four children to school, she said that she was concerned about them walking to school unsupervised and feared that they may be hit by traffic while crossing roads. This is a problem for most female-headed poor households in the slums of Bangladesh. Although women are able to earn an income to provide food for the family, they sometimes fail to provide their children with educational opportunities. This finding extends to Delap's (2001) and Salway et al.'s (1998) findings on the slums in Dhaka, where they found that most of the time, all members of the poorest households, including children work to survive.

8.5 Women's business strategies

In Sattola, women's business strategies differ to men's due to the nature of their businesses. Most female vendors conducted businesses near their house or the closest bazaar; this space is known as the 'parochial realm' (Lofland, 1998) (see Chapter Two). As most women operated their businesses using the parochial realm, they did not have to pay protection

money to *mastans*. However, women who conducted their businesses on footpaths near the Sattola bazaar paid 0.06 to 0.12 USD every day to contribute to the salaries of the security guard and cleaner.

To avoid harassment by *mastans* and police, female traders occasionally employ innovative tactics. Female hawkers sometimes carried their wares in their handbags. Maria (60) sold mineral water bottles and cigarettes in front of the open space of the parliament building near the Asad Gate. Hawking is strictly prohibited in this area to protect the security of the parliament building, and the police confiscated hawkers' goods and materials. Sometimes police arrested the hawkers and sent them to police station. The police had already warned Maria several times, saying that if they saw her there again they would send her to the police station. However, Maria had no one to support her and her life depended on her income. She told me that she used to carry her wares in her handbag and roam around outside the parliament building, asking people if they wanted to buy cigarettes or water bottles because her livelihood depended on it. As this building is a tourist spot in Dhaka, she could potentially make a good profit selling goods there. Her business was always under threat, however, during my fieldwork she asked me if I would agree to help her avoid arrest, or make bail if the police arrested her.

Female and male (Chapter Seven) vendors employed similar tactics to reappropriate vending places. For example, if the staff of the nearby hospital instructed female vendors not to sell goods or food in the hospital compound, the vendors temporarily moved on to other places. However, they returned to their usual positions after some time:

I started this business with the idea of Beauty [her daughter] . . . I have some permanent customers. I make a profit of 0.36 to 0.48 USD. What shall I do? I am happy as I am earning the money for my betel nuts . . . I go to the tea stall in the evening. I go there at 4pm and come back home at 8 or 9pm. I sit in front of the medical [Infectious Disease Hospital]. Sometimes the security guard use bad language. The staff kick us out of the compound (Afifa, a tea seller [51]).

Although Afifa said that the hospital staff kick them out of the compound, she also said that they returned to their usual positions after some time.

8.6 Women, informality and business capital

The first barrier women face when starting a business is the problem of business capital in addition to spatial constraints and the patriarchal contract. As women have limited access to ‘physical capital assets’ (Lloyd-Jones & Rakodi, 2014) or ‘non-labour resources’ (Kabeer, 2003a) such as land and property, most poor women must depend on their own limited savings. Moreover, formal financial institutions do not extend loans to them without collateral. These may be the reasons why many women do not start an informal business. This trend has changed over the last three decades with the introduction of micro-credit for women by the NGOs in Bangladesh. The problem with micro-credit is that many women hand over credit to their husband, who usually operates business using the loan. As Karim’s (2008) study on the effects of micro-credit on rural women in Bangladesh found men use 95 per cent of the loan despite the fact that the women are the borrowers.

Another related problem is that very often a poor family fails to use that business capital due to the small amount of capital and its high interest rate, which they pay from the following week after the disbursement of their loan. Many poor families fail to repay the loan after suffering a loss in their businesses or being evicted from their vending places. Tashfia (26), ran a tea stall near the Infectious Diseases Hospital. She had previously borrowed 713 USD from Bureau Bangladesh, an NGO, and opened a butcher shop. She said, “*We made a loss of 1188 USD due to selling on credit (baki) and our [business] partner also cheated on us*”. Although Tashfia managed to repay that loan, she was forced to close her old business and recently reopened her tea stall with a loan of 594 USD from the same NGO. Tashfia’s case is an exception in the sense that she managed to repay her first loan. That is why she received a second loan from the Bureau Bangladesh. However, most poor families fail to repay their loan once they face this kind of unforeseen circumstance and face difficulties in recovering business losses.

Table 8.2 suggests that most vendors began business using their own savings from their prior jobs such as working as maids or garment workers and borrowing money from NGOs, and kin and social networks. . Some women made some savings by minimising the household expenditure and later invested that savings in their businesses. Salway et al.’s (2005) study found poor women save money by either putting money aside from their earnings or taking it

directly from the household budget or saving rice from the household allocation. Similar practices are evident among women in Sattola. As Taslima, a rice cake seller, said,

I saved 2 to 4 USD by cutting down household expenditure. I started the [rice cake selling] business with that small amount of money. Now I can go to any shop and order ingredients for rice cake up to 12 USD. Even I don't have to go, if my daughter goes, they give those ingredients to her (Taslima [87]).

Table 8.2: Women's occupation, business capital, sources of capital, profit, advantages, and disadvantages

Occupation	No of women	Business capital (USD)	Sources of capital	Monthly salary/ profit (USD)	Advantages	Disadvantages
Domestic worker/maid	12	-	-		- Up to three meals a day may accompany salaries - Also get sarees during religious festivals	- Long working hours - Low salaries - Poor treatment by employers - 'Low prestige' job
Tea and cigarette seller	5	4-12	Kin networks, NGOs,	14	- Easy to make - Daily income - People buy regularly	- Sometimes people do not pay money for the product. - Loss in business
Rice cake seller	4	4-119	Kin networks, NGOs, own savings	95	- Easy to make - Daily income - People buy regularly	- Sometimes people eat without paying the price. - Loss in business
Vegetable and spice seller	3	2	Social network, neighbour, own savings	53	- Daily income - Easy to buy and sell	- Sometimes they cannot sell all vegetables. - Loss in business
Tailor	1		own savings		- Independent business, - Business can be operated from home in times of eviction	- Lose customers if they move their shops from one place to another due to eviction
Flower seller	1	.001-594	Social network		- Daily income - Flowers can be sold both within and beyond the slum	- Sometimes they cannot sell all flowers. - Loss in business
Boiled egg seller	1	14	Own savings	53	- Easy to make - Daily income - People buy regularly	- Sometimes they cannot sell all products - Loss in business
Landlady	3		Own savings, kin networks, NGOs		- Regular monthly income without any work	- Payment of security money to <i>mastans</i>

Source: Author

Apart from personal savings, sometimes very poor or vulnerable women get financial assistance from their neighbours and roommates. As Tahera said:

I began this flower business with the help of my neighbour [after my husband's death], who was a flower businessman . . . I began this business with a capital of 0.001 USD. People laugh after listening to this small amount of capital. But I could have 100 roses at a price of 0.0004 USD at that time . . . I began my business long time back. I cannot tell you the exact year (Tahera, a flower seller, [97]).

Figure 8.6: Tahera's flower shop



Tahera (Figure 8.6) is an exception among women traders in Sattola. She had made a good progress in her business. She took lease of a flower garden at a price of 594 USD per year, however, she failed to educate her children, a barrier to alleviate poverty as discussed in Section 8.4.

8.7 Women, informality, security and sexual harassment

Women face threats to their security while operating business in streets. Women in the South, especially in South Asian cities, encounter a vulnerable situation in doing business in streets (Bose, 1998) due to breaking the social and religious norms of *purdah* (Amin, 1997) and

‘patriarchal contract’ (Kabeer, 2002) that emphasise women’s seclusion and veiling from the gaze of unrelated males. These norms further emphasise women should stay within the ‘private’ sphere of the household (Bose, 1998; Salway, Rahman, & Jesmin, 2003). Consequently, women, even elderly women, who had broken these gendered boundaries and went beyond their homes to earn an income faced sexual and verbal harassment and other types of harassment and maltreatment. Men spoke ill of their character for breaking the border of social norm. Most participants, who were engaged in informal trades, had experienced this even though they sold goods and vegetables sitting nearby their homes on a daily basis.

When I sell tea, some men irritate me. They sometimes touch my body to harass me (Afifa, a tea seller [51]).

As I sell rice cakes sitting beside the road, many people say many things but nobody ever demanded any money. I like this slum but sometimes I do not like living here (Sahera,35, a rice cake seller [46]).

As I am a woman, who is doing business, many people speak ill. Still after that I have to run this shop to educate my children (Tashfia, 26, an owner of a tea stall [27]).

Some women simply ignored other people’s opinions as they were too poor and vulnerable to pay heed to other people’s words. As Mahinur, a boiled egg seller said, “*different people have different mentality and I don’t care about that*” [28]. Very often poor women operated businesses on the streets because they have no other alternatives to earn a livelihood. For example, Moyna’s husband was sick and unable to do any work and her son was a drug addicted and did not stay with them, so she has to operate the business. When the officials of BMRC evicted them, she started selling on the main street of Sattola. When asked how she felt when she began this business, she said:

At the beginning I felt shy . . . I used to do work at home. I used to cook for my family. I used to do my household chores. But suddenly I was exposed before everyone. I had to speak to a lot of people . . . Now I am used to the situation. If I don’t go to the shop for one day I think that I am making loss . . . I am sick and need body massage. I have

to give myself an oil massage the whole night. I have to earn money and if I don't do it, I cannot eat (Moyna, 60, a lentil and spice seller [8]).

Most women traders go through this kind of transformation when they begin business. Huq-Hussain (1995) found poor women engage in some kinds of income-earning activities to combat poverty and to earn some extra incomes where their husband's income is not sufficient to maintain the entire family. However, some women face extreme sexual harassment by men. If women roam around in a particular space and sell goods or food, sometimes men treat them as 'prostitutes'. As Maria shared her experience when she first started selling bottled water and cigarettes near parliament building after losing her job from the garment factory:

I used to walk in front of the Parliament House [Sansad Bhaban] and people thought that I am a prostitute. Different men proposed me for different things. The police tell me that they haven't seen me before . . . I told them I have just come to walk. But people approached me again and again. I was ashamed of their behaviour. I don't have any wish to go through this line [to become a prostitute]. I cannot lose my status. Starting from the police, the hawkers, passers-by, everyone respects me now because I don't smile and behave badly with unknown men. If someone asks for cigarette, I sell cigarettes to them. Everyone says that I am a good woman (Maria, a water and cigarettes seller [32]).

This notion of the 'good' and 'respectable' woman is important to gain respect in Bangladesh as it supports traditional social and cultural norms that perceive good women are good wives and look after their homes as reflected in White's study in rural Bangladesh (White, 2017). This notion of 'good woman' is further related to women's safety and security as men will treat women as prostitutes if they have a lack of respect for them, as the common perception is that good women do not roam around public space alone or without any purpose. So, most poor women do not want to lose social status breaking the boundary of the private sphere unless it is a necessity.

Women who operated businesses outside the slum were accompanied by their older brothers, neighbours, husbands or children. For example, when Tahera began a flower business, her Noakhali neighbour used to accompany her so that she did not experience verbal and sexual

harassment by other men. This leads to the discussion of women's employment and empowerment as it is often argued that women's earnings would empower them. Yet this seems to be a myth for the poorest women of Dhaka where their (physical) security depends on having a male companion.

A related problem with the security issue is that some women in Sattola maintained abusive relationships with their husbands, who kept several wives without earning money, to avoid sexual harassment by neighbouring men. An official of Bangladesh Legal Aid and Services Trust (BLAST) said, "*women often go back to their husbands, who abuse them physically and mentally, even after providing counselling and legal aid to them by BLAST officials*". This is also evident in other slums of Bangladesh, India and Kenya, where women maintain abusive relationships with their 'real' or 'make-do' husbands to ensure their physical security (Joshi, Fawcett, & Mannan, 2011). Poor women accept their husbands domination undermining their 'strategic gender needs' (Molyneux, 2001) such as overcoming subordination and demanding for equal rights and power. This raises the question whether women's empowerment increases due to their participation in the market economy.

8.8 Women, informality and empowerment

Since women occupy different positions within the society based on their class, race, ethnicity, and other factors, their gender needs are complex and hard to generalise (Molyneux, 2001). Moser (1995; 1989; 2012) conceptualises two types of gender needs: practical and strategic gender interests or needs. Poor women are mostly concerned with their 'practical gender interests' (Molyneux, 1985). Practical gender interests emerge as a response to an immediate perceived need felt by women within a specific context according to their socially accepted roles in society, rather than generating a long-term strategic goal such as 'women's emancipation or gender equality' (Molyneux, 1985). Practical gender needs are "concerned with inadequacies in living conditions such as water provision, health care, and employment" (Moser, 2012, p. 40). They show different needs between men and women due to their biological differences, but they do not imply changes in power relations. In contrast, strategic gender needs arise from women's identification of their subordinate position to men and "relate to gender divisions of labour, power and control and may include issues as legal rights, domestic violence, equal wages and women's control over their bodies" (Moser, 2012, p. 39). Women's empowerment increases if they enter into the market economy (Blumberg,

2005; Hashemi, Schuler, & Riley, 1996). Earnings offer women the opportunity to make decisions regarding their household expenditure and other family matters. In Sattola, women's engagement in the market economy has provided them with earnings; however, it does not empower them fully. They are still under the control of their husbands. Men are unwilling to allow their wives to work outside the home due to fear of losing control over their wives if they earn an income (Banks, 2010). Although migrant women's access to employment has increased in Dhaka, they hardly break the patriarchal order:

I can work in Dhaka without covering my head/veil but this is impossible in the village. I have to live in the village accordingly [following the norms of purdah]. I cannot do outside work. In Dhaka I have to do work for my food . . . I need money. I have to work if I want to live (Shumona, a domestic worker [5]).

Living in an urban slum has opened up new opportunities for work and mobility for Shumona. When asked whether her husband forbade her to go to the Sattola bazaar to buy something, she replied, “no, if he says something I don't care. I needed to go”. This indicates that she has some decision-making power. Yet she was repaying her husband's loan with her salary as he did not have a permanent job and worked casually as a construction worker in the slum. Her husband did not perform any household chores, such as grocery shopping, taking care of their children, or helping her to prepare food for the family. In addition, Shumona was forbidden by her in-laws to walk around the Sattola bazaar unless she needed to buy something. This demonstrates how social norms constrain women's spatial mobility. Although Shumona could disobey her husband's orders, she could not disobey her in-laws. She said: “There are many men in the market. That's why they do not send me. They are ashamed because they have to send their daughter-in-law to a public place breaking the norm of purdah”. Shumona's case further emphasises the traditional idea of the gendered space, where public space is considered as the domain of men, where women's access brings shame on the family. This idea of ‘shame on the family’ was repeated by many female participants, in particular, they mentioned this while talking about the norm of female unemployment in rural areas. This finding confirms Amin's (1997) study that shows women who live in extreme poverty are unable to work outside their homes in rural Bangladesh as female seclusion is regarded as a symbolic expression of status differentiation in rural Bangladesh.

Research into women’s empowerment often reveals that poor women can be empowered through engaging in economic activities (Blumberg, 2005). However, several studies on poor women’s empowerment in Dhaka showed that earning an income does not mean that poor women have become empowered; rather, it sometimes makes them more vulnerable as they often relinquish their salaries to the head of the household (their husbands or fathers), while remaining burdened with their unpaid domestic workload (Baruah, 2010; Kabeer, 2012). For example, Shumona was repaying her husband’s loan of 1783 USD by working as a maid as discussed in Section 8.7. Her husband had not made much of an effort to find work, preferring to spend his time playing carom board (Figure 8.7) and socialising at tea stalls. Shumona said, *“My husband has a debt of 238-357 USD . . . I left for work at 7am in the morning and come back at dawn. I gave him money but he wasted it . . . He gave it to different people and did not get his money back. It was a complete loss”*. Some other participants also mentioned that their husbands behaved in a similar way. Chant (2012) observed these practices, noting that when a woman becomes the ‘chief breadwinner’, a man turns into the ‘chief spender’. The position of ‘chief breadwinner’ has not increased women’s freedom of movement or decision-making power over family matters due to long-standing social and cultural norms, as supported by Banks’ (2013) study in Dhaka. Banks (2013) found that if their wives work, some men become lazy and spend time socialising at tea stalls instead of contributing to the family income.

Figure 8.7: Men playing carrom board at a party office in Sattola



Even empowered women with a regular income rarely divorce their husbands; rather, they live with their unemployed husbands to avoid being sexually harassed by other men in the slum as discussed in Section 8.7. This is perhaps a reason for men's unemployment in slum areas in Dhaka, as women will give their husbands money regardless of the way they are treated by them. For example, although her husband married her ex-colleague, Siffat did not divorce him; rather, she continued to pay him from her earnings [KII 7]. Many poor women in Dhaka choose to live a subordinate life to protect themselves from verbal and sexual assaults from other men and perhaps also because they lack external support (e.g., women's shelter, family, or friends). There are some other factors that contribute to poor women often accepting their husbands' decisions. If they divorce, their parents will not provide them with essential long-term support. Also, most poor women are illiterate, or only have primary-level education. Hence it is difficult for them to obtain a prestigious job. Due to all these factors, the majority of women in Sattola worked in their households and helped their husbands to prepare business materials, yet their direct engagement in income-earning activities was very limited. Poor women from rural and urban Bangladesh practise tolerance and compromise to avoid open conflict and divorce (Salway et al., 2005). Poor women's empowerment is related not only to their earnings, but also with some other factors, such as 'women's consciousness' about their legal and human rights and their communication and leadership skills (Baruah, 2010; Karim, 2008). Thus, I argue the existing notion of empowerment that supports the view that women with economic power gain more equality and control over their own lives (Blumberg, 2005) has limitations as it has not captured other structural factors that constrain poor women's empowerment.

In Sattola, women's consciousness about their rights and communication and leadership skills are improving due to their participation in various NGO activities. Many women have derived some power from their membership in community-based organisations (CBO)¹⁷ of DSK and WC's committee members, work as health worker at BRAC's Manoshi project. This group of women is relatively powerful and more aware of their rights and responsibilities than the ordinary women of Sattola. A local NGO officer informed me that members of CBO of different NGOs make the initial decision as to how resources will be distributed among slum residents; *hence*, participation in community activities and

¹⁷ Although the community-based organisation (CBO) is primarily composed of slum residents from other countries in the Global South, NGOs mostly help local slum residents to form CBOs in Dhaka, Bangladesh.

established social networks empowers poor women.

Women's active participation in local politics further empowers them to make decisions about critical situations. Mina, a local leader of *Awami League*, sent a sick woman to a hospital and collected money from the slum for her treatment [KII 9]. However, not all women are able to be CBO members of the different NGOs. In addition, only two female participants were actively involved in politics. Mostly the long-standing female residents with a better financial condition become CBO members of the various NGOs. Shokhi, a local NGO, provides legal advice regarding women's rights. This kind of governance system is also practised in other slums in the South such as slums in India (de Wit & Berner, 2009; Sen, 1999), where NGOs and CBOs work together to improve poor people's working and living conditions (see Chapter Two). In India, women have formed some effective organisations with the help of NGOs, such as Slum/Shack Dwellers International (SDI) (Mitlin & Patel, 2014) and Self-Employed Women's Association of India (SEWA) (Baruah, 2010) to help themselves, whereas poor women in Dhaka have failed to form any associations to improve their economic conditions. However, they do use some other forms of resistance to operate businesses using public space as will be discussed in the next section.

8.9 Women, informality and resistance

In many cities of the Global South, female vendors are highly organised and protest against all kinds of eviction drives, as revealed by Crossa's (2009) study in Mexico and Bob-Milliar & Obeng-Odoom's (2011) study in Ghana. By contrast, the female vendors of Sattola did not confront any powerful group directly, whether they experienced eviction from their shops by local *mastans* and leaders or by other institutional authorities, as they were more concerned with meeting their practical gender needs (Molyneux, 1985) such as child care, family health, and food provision (Moser, 2012). Although these things are required by all family members, they are usually identified as being the practical gender needs of women (Moser, 2012). So poor women in Sattola are more concerned with mitigating practical gender needs rather than forming associations to fight against those powerful groups. Instead of organising themselves and protesting against eviction drives initiated by different actors, the female vendors individually raised questions about the payment of protection money as they believed they were operating businesses on footpaths. Another reason for resisting payment was their smaller business units and smaller earnings in comparison to their male counterparts. Most

female vendors' (including those who are the only or main breadwinners in the household) earnings were not sufficient to support the family, so they mostly refused to pay *mastans*:

Why shall we pay money? We sit on the footpath. I do not have the ability to pay 60 USD for an open place. I started my business with a capital of 4 USD. I sold betel, betel nuts, cigarettes, and tea. I borrowed the capital from my niece but haven't repaid it [she did not repay her loan that she borrowed for her business capital]. I often borrow money from my niece and repay. I sell a cup of tea at 0.04 USD. We sell tea in three stalls. If they [hospital staff] kick us out of the hospital compound, we hide [leave the place] for the time being and sit back again when they leave the place (Afifa, 30, a tea seller [51]).

Sometimes people do not repay their relatives in Bangladesh if their relatives' financial situation is better than their own. As such, Afifa did not repay the business capital that she borrowed from her niece, however, she frequently borrowed money from her and repaid those loans. This quote further illustrates the fact that male and female vendors employ similar 'hide and seek' strategies in conducting businesses and avoiding payment of protection money. However, in some cases women use their gendered advantage to avoid paying protection money, whereas male vendors must pay if they operate businesses in public space. Women apparently have this advantage because of the long-established social norms of not behaving badly with women. Although women are often harassed verbally, they are rarely physically assaulted by men during daytime. Consequently, most female participants used this advantage to avoid protection money, as indicated by Mirajan's (50) interview, who sold rice cakes near the Niketon gate number 5 and refused to pay anyone.

In terms of resistance to power, the female vendors of Sattola would not confront any powerful group directly whereas domestic workers in Bangladesh have shown some progress over the last few decades. However, the domestic workers in Bangladesh have failed to raise their voices as strongly as Brazilian domestic workers, who have pursued their demands since the 1920s and finally been granted the right to a minimum wage (Cornwall, Oliveira, & Gonçalves, 2013). Domestic workers' salary bargaining power has increased due to the development of the garment sector in Bangladesh. Previously, poor women were expected to work in exchange for a minimum salary or whatever their employers offered them. Chen (2011) found that most employers in the Global South exercise considerable power over

domestic workers' salary and work contracts due to a lack of regulation. However, with the rise of the garment industry in Bangladesh, many women (especially young women), now work in the garment factories; and the supply of maids has decreased while women's bargaining power has increased. The government of Bangladesh also passed a new policy for protecting domestic workers' rights including four months of maternity leave and recognised their profession under the current labour act on 21 December 2015 (bdnews24.com, 2015). However, it will undoubtedly take some time for domestic workers in Bangladesh to properly understand this policy and claim their rights.

8.10 Women, informality and gender disparities in power and rights

An issue related to resistance is women's consciousness about their rights to work and their agency to make desirable changes to their workplace. In a patriarchal society like Bangladesh, it is hard for a marginalised group such as poor women to demand their rights. They have such limited power to make decisions about their own bodies, mobility, and work that it is difficult for them to organise collectively such as in trade unions or other associations to pursue their demands. Previous studies on women in Bangladesh also suggest that women must negotiate work activities and socio-economic changes as less powerful actors and workers than their male counterparts as women have less control over reproduction and are deprived of educational advantages (Khan, Townsend, & D'Costa, 2002; Ward et al., 2004). In addition, women are often victims of violence, and face a lack of protective legislation (Rahman, 1998).

Women's participation in national politics or political parties is minimal as well. Unlike their male counterparts, most of the women had not actively participated in political activities. As 'dominant power' (Sharp et al., 2000) emerges from the participation in political activities as explained in Chapters Two and Seven, women are less powerful in making decisions at the local and national level due to lack of participation in political activities. Only two of the seventeen women interviewed were actively involved in politics in Sattola. Although some women had campaigned during the Ward Council Election, they had such limited power that they failed to protect their own appropriated space for businesses, as Tania revealed in her interview (Chapter Seven). This indicates women's lack of agency to access powerful actors and use that power to appropriate space for livelihoods unlike their male counterparts as discussed in Chapter Seven. This is related to social norms, *purdah* and wider socio-

economic and political structures that challenge women's participation in politics. Women in Sattola failed to make use of patron-client relationships to operate business. This is the case for the Muslim slum women in Calcutta (Bose, 1998). Roy's (2004) study showed that women are excluded from party-managed patronage in Calcutta, which reinforces patriarchy and 'women's subservience' (Scheper-Hughes, 1993).

Apart from a lack of political connections, most women were also unaware of their rights to work at an individual or household level, partly because of patriarchal and family expectations around men as providers and protectors. Following this social norm, most women from more affluent households in Sattola had a negative attitude towards working outside the home, with the exception of work in garment factories. This is because garment workers are engaged in an official job. Most of these women, whose husbands owned a number of dwellings in the slum, did not work outside their homes. Sometimes their husbands were unemployed. They maintained their family expenditure with house rents. In Bangladesh, women from more affluent households are less likely to be manual labourers as they consider that kind of work to be demeaning and undesirable (Kabeer et al., 2017). In Sattola, most women from the poorest households were working to help their husbands, whose incomes were not sufficient to maintain the family. This trend does not indicate that women are aware of their right to work, but it is a reflection of necessity. Consequently, these women were occupied fulfilling their practical gender interests, rather than fighting for their broader, strategic gender rights.

Like male vendors (Chapter Seven, Section, 7.2.2.2), female vendors are not conscious of their constitutional rights to work and their right to the city. When asked what they expect from the government to improve their lives and livelihoods, most female vendors echoed what their male counterparts said.

The government will do nothing for us. Nothing, nothing, nothing. The government will do nothing. What has the government done for us so far? Nothing, nothing . . . If the government builds a house for me, gives me a good position for my business, I will then be happy. But the government will not do that [laughing loudly]. What is the point of demanding [laughing continues]? We are poor people. The government would rather evict us and demolish our house. If the government demolishes my room, I don't have a room back at my village that I will go over there. I have to stay at

someone else's place. Then I have to organise everything by myself again (Nargis, 32, a rice cake seller [86]).

This quote clearly illustrates why female participants did not mobilise for their rights to the city. They already believed that the government would do nothing for them. So, they did not waste their time appealing to the government for rights. In addition, they were well aware that they were living on government land and the government could evict them from their shops or houses at any time. So, most residents in Sattola believe their efforts would change nothing – in particular, they do not trust that the government would ensure tenure security over their dwelling or livelihood spaces. This lack of trust regarding the government's commitments has also been identified by other researchers in Dhaka (Sarker & Rahman, 2007).

8.11 Summary

This chapter has compared poor men and women's livelihood strategies to answer research question three. Poor men and women's choice of occupation and their accessibility to public space for earnings are also compared. Drawing on gender literature and feminist understandings of participation and negotiation, I have analysed how women's agency and empowerment are played out in the various strategies that women use to make their choice of occupation.

My findings show that poor women have limited agency and power to make changes in their lives and livelihoods. Social and religious norms of patriarchy and *purdah* further constrain poor women's access to public space in comparison to their male counterparts. This is not only the case for poor women in Dhaka; rather, in many parts of the Global South, women's access to public space is constrained due to the "social and cultural norms and the acceptability of different types of work" (Brown & Lloyd-Jones, 2002, p. 191). Poor women in Bangladesh rarely present challenges to their traditional gender identities and comply with traditional division of labour, although women in other classes are actively participating in different types of income-generating activities both in formal and informal sectors (Salway et al., 2005).

Poor and rural migrant women have failed to break the gender dichotomy of labour, and so

maintain a 'feminine identity' (Salway et al., 2005) following societal expectations. Perhaps poor women follow Irigaray's 'mimicry'¹⁸ (Irigaray, 1985) embracing their subordinate position within the household knowing their powerless position in society. This is reflected in their choice of occupation and limited spatial mobility. In most cases, poor women choose their occupation in such a way that limits their visibility and mobility in public space such as working in garment factories, working as maids, selling rice cakes, establishing a semi-permanent shop beside their houses, or selling vegetables in the nearest street as discussed in Section 8.3. By contrast, poor men can operate businesses in any kind of public space without considering security issues, whereas the problem of security in public places is a barrier to women's participation in informal trade, as discussed in Section 8.8. This finding suggests there is a gendered division of labour in the informal economy among workers in Sattola, which also confirms previous research findings (Chant, 2007b; Chen, 2010).

However, poor women do occasionally break the old order of private space and step into the parochial realm (Lofland, 1998) rather than entering the public realm. A few female vendors operated businesses outside Sattola. This finding further indicates that public space in Dhaka still represents the characteristics of 'gendered space' where women's access to public space for informal business is perceived as a threat to traditional gender norms although this dichotomy of space has been waned in many parts of the Global South such as Africa (Levin et al., 1999; Yankson, 2000) and Latin America (Chen, Vanek, & Heintz, 2006; Little, 2005). Due to the nature of gendered space in Dhaka, women further experience social stigma, and sexual and verbal harassment if they operate businesses in public space. The social stigma associated with women's informal business is not only related to their businesses and use of physical labour but also associated with "the cultural association between their lower class status and greater proclivity towards sexual misconduct" (White, 2017, p. 262).

Another problem related to poor women's participation in the informal economy is their undermined position in patriarchal society, particularly within the household. As discussed in Section 8.8, women's powerlessness indicates how income-earnings are not a real measure of empowerment. Women's earnings have not empowered them enough to make meaningful decisions about their lives and livelihoods. Also, women's earnings have not reduced the

¹⁸ By 'mimicry', Irigaray (1985) refers to the practice of the historically established stereotypical feminine role that society has constructed for them. In other words, women are supposed to be deliberately mimicking the 'female' role.

violation of their human rights within their own households. However, their consciousness about their legal and human rights and their communication and leadership skills have been rising due to their participation in community development programs organised by NGOs as demonstrated in Section 8.8. This finding suggests women's empowerment will not be fully achieved unless they become conscious about their legal and human rights. Most poor women in slums are illiterate and lack the required skills to access employment. In addition, poor women depend on their husbands' earnings. They also seek their husbands' permission to go outside the home. In a traditional culture like this, if we use Northern definitions of women's empowerment in policies and try to make changes to the lifestyle of poor women, it will be a catastrophe for most women, as shown by previous studies (Kabeer, 2001; Karim, 2008; Schuler, Hashemi, & Badal, 1998). It appears that the definition of women's empowerment needs to be revised in the context of South Asian cities, as suggested by Kabeer (2012). In Bangladesh, NGOs mostly follow Northern definitions of empowerment to create awareness of women's rights, which leads to increasing family discord and it sometimes ends in divorce (Goetz & Gupta, 1996; Montgomery, Bhattacharya, Hulme, & Mosley, 1996).

A related issue to economic empowerment is women's access to business capital. Both groups utilise their social and kin networks to gain access to public space and borrow business capital. Although women are able to access microcredit loans provided by NGOs, these funds are mostly used by their husbands. In terms of business strategies, male vendors buy temporary security over public space by paying regular protection money to intermediary group whereas female vendors use their vulnerability and helpless situation to avoid the payment of protection money. More importantly, a few women utilise public space for vending activities, so exempting them from protection money does not affect the intermediary group's income much.

In terms of resistance, men and women use 'covert' rather than 'overt' strategies (Chapters Two and Seven) to continue trading. While domestic workers negotiate with their employers to increase their salary, street vendors buy temporary security by paying regular protection money to intermediary groups or utilise covert resistance strategies to avoid eviction or extortion. The relationship between the female street traders and the linemen or other powerful actors is not such a direct class relationship, but rather an informal one that enables powerful actors to exploit female street vendors. Hence, like male traders, female street

traders have less power and agency to protest against the powerful actors who collect protection money. Female traders may benefit from forming associations to demand their rights to work and a safe working environment. Domestic workers have greater power, as they can resist their employers and resign from their jobs if their salaries are not increased, because there is a direct working relationship between employers and employees, just like the relationship between the proletariat and the bourgeoisie (Engels & Marx, 2004).

However, domestic workers in Dhaka have failed to do so, due to the lack of knowledge and information regarding their rights. For a long time, poor women were dependent on their employers' mercy due to a high supply of domestic workers. As a result, most domestic workers do not bargain for their salary. Although this has changed somewhat due to the high demand for maids, women's agency is still limited by their need to work for earnings. So instead of Marxian 'class conflict' (Engels & Marx, 2004), domestic workers in Sattola are mostly influenced by 'dominant ideology' (Gramsci, Nowell-Smith, & Hoare, 1971), which is inscribed in the economic and social system that has inherently taught them to be content if their employers increase their salary by a small amount. However, certain optimism about the prospects for revolutionary changes in the terms and conditions of the domestic workers is evident, as shown by the Brazilian domestic workers. Brazilian domestic workers have struggled for their labour rights and welfare since the 1920s and the Brazilian constitution finally guaranteed "the right to the minimum wage, advance notice (30 days), one day off a week, maternity leave (120 days), paternity leave (five days) and an extra third of a minimum salary before taking holidays" (Cornwall et al., 2013, p. 150) in 1988. In 2000, the right to unemployment compensation was included to extend these rights.

Female vendors and domestic workers in Sattola do not directly resist social inequality or the violation of their rights. As many women are likely to experience violations of their rights at the micro level of their own households, it remains difficult to combat violations at the macro level of society or the state. As was often expressed by poor women, discrimination and violence is their destiny and they are not in a position to effect change. This further explains why poor women in Dhaka have not formed any association to place their demands and why they are so reluctant to fight against the state and raise their voices in defence of their citizenship rights and right to the city. These macro-level interests are difficult to obtain given the constraints placed on them within their immediate households and neighbourhoods, which Molyneux (1985) refers to as 'practical gender interests'.

In terms of reducing gender disparities in women's participation in politics, the state has an important role to play in changing the political culture. The government needs to ensure women's human, legal, and labour rights. Women's human and legal rights are ignored in male-dominated institutions, following Irrigaray's argument that those in power enact and reproduce their own power (Fermon, 1998). This practice is evident at both the micro level of households and the macro level of the state. Consequently, women have very little faith in the distributive justice of the state, as outlined in section 8.10. To date, the government and NGOs emphasise women's 'strategic gender interests' although they have been working to assist women's participation in work, providing them with small loans to fulfil their 'practical gender interests' (Molyneux, 1985) such as earning a living. However, they need to improve women's working conditions and provide other facilities, such as day care centres, that might constrain women's labour force participation. If the government and NGOs fail to fulfil women's practical gender needs first, all of their efforts – all government rules and regulations that the government introduced for women empowerment so far – will fail to yield meaningful outcomes. The next chapter, Chapter Nine, draws together the main findings from Chapters Six to Eight, and concludes the thesis with reflection on the theoretical, empirical and methodological contributions of the research.

Chapter 9: Conclusion

9.1 Introduction

This thesis has explored how the forms of urban governance enable and constrain access to public space and how the urban poor access public space through constant negotiation with formal and informal power brokers in Dhaka, Bangladesh. Due to the state's failure to recognise their housing and livelihood needs, the urban poor residents of Sattola, like their counterparts across the rest of Dhaka, rely on available public space for a livelihood. However, they continue to face eviction and extortion at the hands of powerful actors. This chapter revisits the three research questions of the thesis:

- 1) To what extent does the form and nature of urban governance enable and constrain poor people's access to and use of public space to pursue livelihoods?
- 2) How do street vendors in Dhaka pursue livelihoods in constant negotiation with other more powerful actors in society?
- 3) What are the gendered aspects to the appropriation of urban space for livelihoods in Dhaka?

These questions were guided by theories of space, informality, the right to the city (as presented in Chapter Two) and power, governance, and resistance (as discussed in Chapter Three). I have focused on access to space as a key factor influencing relationships between different groups of actors – powerful state and non-state actors and vendors. I have drawn upon Lefebvre's theory of the production of space and the right to the city to explore how state actors promote or deny the poor's right to the city and how poor people manage, in their everyday lives, to pursue a livelihood in constant negotiation with other powerful actors in society.

9.2 Conceived space, right to the city and counter-space

The first question addresses how the form and nature of urban governance enable and constrain poor people of Sattola in accessing public space. Critical urban theory including the

production of space, the right to the city, urban governance, and planning perspectives were adopted to examine the role of the state and its agencies in promoting social justice through providing livelihood spaces for Dhaka's growing urban poor population. In contrast to the contemporary notion of participatory governance, Chapter Six found that Dhaka's urban governance is state centric and occasionally engages NGOs in decision-making processes. However, NGOs are generally required to act in accordance with the directives of the state and no NGO is active in ensuring the urban poor's tenure security over public space and/or slums in Dhaka as the government has formally prohibited NGOs from engaging in any kind of political activity (Lorch, 2017). In Bangladesh, NGOs' role has become depoliticised, in contrast to other countries of the Global South such as India, the Philippines, and South Africa, where NGOs facilitate street vendors in forming organisations and act as policy champions (Milgram, 2014; Recio, 2014; Skinner, 2008a).

Similarly, the poor's participation in local governance processes has been constrained by several social, political, and institutional factors. Due to dysfunctional politics at the local level, where government-supported candidates win elections through vote manipulation and other types of fraud, electoral candidates beholden to the ruling government and its representatives tend to overlook the needs of their constituents. The outcome is that most policies and programs are made in 'closed' and 'invited' spaces in Bangladesh, ignoring poor people's right to participate in managing urban space and accessing space for livelihoods that are essential components in the discussion of the 'right to the city' (RTC) (Lefebvre, 1991; Purcell, 2003). As discussed in Chapter Two, the RTC framework emphasises the right to appropriate space and the right to participation in decision-making for any production of urban space on any scale (Lefebvre, 1991; Purcell, 2003).

Dhaka's dominant mode of production of space is largely controlled by the central government and other government agencies such as RAJUK (Capital Development Authority). RAJUK is the main planning and development agency for the Dhaka Metropolitan area. These agencies have produced a particular form of 'conceived space' (Lefebvre, 1991) following the demands of the elites to deny poor people's right to appropriate space. Conceived space, the bureaucratic and rational production of the space, in Dhaka is a reflection of the interests of state officials, planners, geographers, and architects, who design city space following the interest of the elites. Thus, the production of conceived space using rational planning overpowers 'lived' and 'perceived' spaces (Lefebvre, 1991).

Lefebvre (1991) argues that the state has dominated city space using rational planning and transforming the use value of urban space to exchange value since the 20th century. This transformation of urban space as a commodity has paved the way for elites to deny marginalised groups' right to the city.

The state through its actions and policies, has made it clear that vendors have no right to a place in the city, rendering them 'citizens without a city' (Appadurai, 2001). This implies that although vendors have constitutional rights of association, free speech and the vote to hold their rulers accountable, they have only limited opportunities to exercise this citizenship – which is certainly not spatialised. Interviews with state actors and informal vendors revealed that, in a bid to ensure a 'clean and green' city, state actors evict street vendors without providing them with alternative livelihood spaces. This denial of vendors' right to appropriate space in the city has produced 'gray space' (Yiftachel, 2009a) – a space where vendors are under constant threat of eviction for breaking the planning regulations of the city; however, they are allowed to continue doing business in return for protection money paid to formal actors, operating informally. Vendors have not been able to organise themselves politically and have not received any support to do so, from external actors such as NGOs while the urban poor in other parts of the South have formed organisations and claimed their rights in cooperation with NGOs and INGOs. For example, in India the urban poor have formed a 'political society' (Chatterjee, 2004) to claim their rights through their political patrons. In Bangladesh, political representatives operate through powerful local actors who exploit the urban poor, abusing their connections with the ruling political party. This is how patron-client relations take over a representative democratic system, where the poor have no way of escaping the system, as it operates against them both formally and informally, so the urban poor remain in a constant state of uncertainty and fear further exploitation by state and non-state actors.

In this environment, vendors utilise a range of negotiation strategies to access public space. The second research question critically explores this constant negotiation processes with powerful actors in society adopting theories of the production of space, counter-space, and urban informality from Chapters Two and Three. Chapter Seven found that 'dominating power' (Sharp et al., 2000), in particular 'coercive power' (Marcuse, 2010) and connections with ruling elites, is the most important means of regulating access to public space in Dhaka. This form of informal governance challenges the notion of formal governance in regulating

public space. Chapter Seven further demonstrated that vendors transgress the planned order of the city and create their own space to be able to survive. To avoid eviction and extortion, the urban poor employ negotiation strategies, such as political affiliation, kinship networks, length of tenure, social status, and economic power in accessing public space. Most urban poor have less direct connections with powerful politicians, particularly when they first migrate to the city, so they tend to quietly appropriate space with the help of their kin and social networks.

Street vendors quickly learn about the mandatory security payment system and rules of the street from their kin and social networks and use these methods to appropriate available public space. Bayat (1997b) has described such practices as ‘street politics’. By learning these rules of the street and entering into an informal pact with powerful state and non-state actors, vendors break the planned, legal order of the city to produce a ‘counter-space’ (Lefebvre, 1991) which they use for their livelihood. Counter-spaces are produced by a marginalised group in opposition to the conceived spaces constructed by the state apparatus. As Lefebvre (1991, p. 23) notes, “the rationality of the state, of its techniques, plans and programs, provokes opposition”. As discussed in Chapter Two, the term ‘counter-space’ has been extensively used in recent socio-spatial literature (Branson, 2014; Stillerman, 2006; Véron, 2017), indicating that people either occupy public space or use online platforms to make their claims. As the vendors of Sattola are not sufficiently organised or motivated to confront the state directly and claim their right to appropriate space, they construct counter-spaces through everyday tactics such as appropriating space quietly and with high mobility.

A wide body of gender literature and feminist understandings of gendered space and gendered divisions of labour (Chapter Two) suggests that space has a gendered nature and the use of space for livelihoods might differ based on one’s gender. Against this background, the third research question explores the gendered aspects to the appropriation of urban space for livelihoods in Dhaka in Chapter Eight. Findings suggest that women experience an extra layer of oppression and bear the triple burden of social stigma, religious barriers, and patriarchy in accessing public space in comparison to their male counterparts. In most Muslim-majority countries women’s participation in economic activities is lower than their male counterparts due to Islamic traditions or laws, lower level of schooling, or higher fertility rates (Al-Qudsi, 1998; Bayanpourtehrani & Sylwester, 2013; Mumtaz & Salway, 2005; Ross, 2008).

Although poor men are able to operate businesses using public space, poor women attempting to do the same will experience social stigma and sexual and verbal harassment. Degradation of social status is another factor that constrains women's access to public space for livelihoods, as discussed in Chapter Eight. Women experience harassment if they use public space for livelihoods due to breaking the norm of gendered space and violating the religious norm of *purdah*. These constraints are not only experienced by female vendors in Dhaka, but also limit women's access to public space in many parts of the world (Madan & Nalla, 2016; Parikh, 2017). Though this issue has long been included in policies at both the local (Center for Reproductive Rights, 2004) and international level (Chen, 2008), it also hinders women's movement in other parts of the Global South, such as India (Bose, 1998) and Pakistan (Mumtaz & Salway, 2005).

In light of such social and religious constraints, most female participants chose occupations that limited their visibility and mobility in public space, such as working in garment factories, serving as domestic workers, selling rice cakes, establishing semi-permanent shops beside their houses, or selling vegetables in nearby streets; and these locations can be regarded as part of the parochial realm (Lofland, 1998). Although existing empowerment research might consider women's use of public realm as a first step in breaking the existing patriarchal social order, women's earnings have not empowered them as it has neither increased their agency to make meaningful decisions about lives and livelihoods nor protected them from domestic violence. More importantly, most poor women in slums are illiterate and lack the requisite skills to access employment, as discussed in Chapter Eight. In addition, in many cases poor women still depend on their husbands' earnings and seek their permission to leave the home. In such traditional cultures, it is hard to measure women's empowerment solely by their engagement in income-earning activities. Following Kabeer (2012), I propose that the definition of female empowerment needs to be revised in the context of South Asian cities and that it should address women's 'practical' and 'strategic' gender interests (Molyneux, 1985, 2001) rather than simply prioritising their participation in the market economy.

In comparison to male vendors, female vendors have used their vulnerabilities and helplessness to avoid protection money. Another reason that women in Dhaka have avoided paying protection money is that very few operate businesses using public space, as discussed in Chapter Eight. These findings indicate that it is not enough to address macro-spatial inequality in establishing social and spatial justice; rather, researchers need to address the

longstanding social stigma, religious barriers, and patriarchy. To change the micro and macrostructural practices that constrain women's access to public space, women's participation in the market economy and community services are not enough; rather, women's strategic and practical gender interests need to be addressed to make them more conscious of their rights. In this way, they will be able to contribute more in the construction of counter-spaces.

The tension, conflicts, and co-operation in accessing public space discussed above sit within a social and political context shaping the lives and livelihood practices of the poor in Sattola. The case of the residents of Sattola, therefore, suggests that the denial of poor people's right to the city constructing conceived spaces 'from above' has four outcomes: (i) it reinforces spatial inequality; (ii) it leads the poor to internalise the state actors' extortion and to make an informal agreement with powerful state and non-state actors in exchange for temporary security over public space, which serves to diminish the idea of a collective movement (iii) it allows the poor to construct a counter-space to pursue livelihoods drawing on a range of everyday resistance strategies and breaking the planned order of the city with the tacit support of intermediary groups, and (iv) it reproduces gendered spatial inequality.

9.3 Limitations, contribution to knowledge and directions for future research

Like all research, the study presented in this thesis has specific limitations and strengths. The limitations of this study derive mainly from its exclusion of local *mastans* and linemen who play an important role in securing poor people's access to public space. The thesis might have been improved if I had the opportunity to interview some linemen and *mastans* to get their perspectives about the collection of protection money. I did not include them in my sampling because I thought it might be too risky for my participants' business. Also, participants might not have trusted me if they saw me speaking to a lineman and/or *mastan*. A future study exploring *mastans*' views on the collection of protection money and their perceived role and relationship with the urban poor would provide a valuable further perspective to this study.

A second limitation of the thesis is that I was not able to empirically document whether vendors who come from another slum to sell wares in Sattola have any conflictual

relationship with local vendors and whether they pay any protection money to local leaders as the thesis only focused on Sattola residents' access to public space.

The strengths of this study derive from its critical theoretical insights and methodological orientation to the normative case study. This thesis makes a significant contribution to the emerging scholarship of space, spatial justice, patronage and poverty in megacities of the Global South. Inspired by Lefebvre's theory of space and the right to the city, I have investigated how the dominant mode of production of space 'from above' treats the poor and its effect on their livelihoods. The case presented in this thesis has called attention to the diversity of strategies that street vendors can adopt to produce and reproduce counter-spaces in an absence of their right to the city. In most post-colonial societies, decisions are made favouring elites following a colonial legacy, ignoring poor people's basic rights, particularly their right to appropriate public space. The contemporary neoliberal state produces conceived space following the interests of capital, ignoring marginalised groups' 'right to the city' (Lefebvre, 1991). The end result is the creation of 'urban informality' (Roy, 2005, 2009b) operating in 'gray space' (Yiftachel, 2009a, 2009b) where the poor live and earn livelihoods under constant insecurity. While theorists such as Roy (2005, 2009b) and Yiftachel (2009a, 2009b) focus on the creation of urban informality and gray space produced by the state and capital, Lefebvre (1991) argues the grassroots have agency to oppose this production of space.

The thesis makes a significant contribution to the literature on the production of space and counter-space. The thesis shows how the poor, using meagre resources, defends itself against the state's hegemonic production of space to produce a 'counter-space', transgressing state-constructed conceived space by using a range of strategies such as quiet appropriation of land, using spatial mobility and making informal, mutually beneficial pacts with a range of local state and non-state actors working outside of their formal roles. *Mastans*, linemen, police and local politicians all have a stake in the continued operation of street vending and do their best to ensure that vendors continue to operate, despite pressure from above and the necessity to act on regular campaigns to clear the streets of informal traders. The localised nature of these informal economic relations mean that they are unavoidably socially embedded, working at a spatial and social level where day to day contact is inevitable and therefore subject to the norms of behaviour that regular local contact demands. Despite this mutually beneficial arrangement, a substantial power imbalance still exists. However, street

vendors have very limited power to resist the demands of the state or local representatives of the state acting informally. Presenting this case using a critical lens has enabled me to go beyond the production of the planned and conceived spaces of a city that has preoccupied much of the existing literature as discussed in Chapter Two. Moreover, it has enabled me to provide a concrete account of the grassroots' production of a counter-space outside of the planned order of the city.

The processes of the production and reproduction of counter-spaces presented in this thesis have ramifications beyond the specific case of Dhaka or the South Asian urban context. While this case relies on specific urban experiences of one marginalised group and their production of a counter-space, the process described in this thesis is relevant to other cities where the hegemonic power of the state cannot be challenged through the usual channels of civil society or a free media. Where these conditions prevail, conceived spaces are produced to create homogenous space, often forcefully erasing other narratives and ignoring marginalised groups' right to the city (Lefebvre, 1991). To explore how marginalised groups access public space, how they negotiate in access and what are the negotiation processes that allow them to produce a counter-space provides important clues about how this might be achieved in other cities with a similar socio-political environment. While there might be many other possible routes used by marginalised groups claim their right to the city and produce counter-spaces, this study provides a template for future investigations in other informal urban contexts.

The thesis has expanded criticism of everyday politics by showing how these everyday forms of resistance and resilience can benefit marginalised groups by providing temporary security over their livelihood spaces. While Bayat (2000, p. 551) points out the nature of street politics as a contestation between a "collective populace and the authorities, which are shaped and expressed episodically in the physical and social space of the 'streets' – from alleyways to the more visible street sidewalks, public parks and public sports places", the case presented in this thesis reveals that contestations do not only take place between street vendors and police in their formal roles. Rather intermediary groups can work as a mediator between them. These intermediary groups have an important role in securing poor people's livelihood practices and the way the poor negotiate with different levels of formal and informal modes of power and governance in accessing public space. These intermediary groups provide temporary security and this is important for the survival of a large number of

poor in cities of the Global South. In agreement with Chatterjee's (2004) 'political society' formed by the urban poor in claiming their rights, my research reflects that maintaining connections with local patrons is an effective survival strategy used by the poor in accessing public space and breaking the planned order of the city. If this survival strategy works, it would be hard to remove intermediary groups. Intermediaries can only be removed if the reciprocal relationships break down between vendors and *mastans* and the police as Scott (1985) argues that resistance might emerge if social contract is violated between ordinary peasants and landlords. If the social contract is violated between vendors and intermediary groups, vendors might resist intermediary groups' demand for protection money and collectively make claims to at a higher level of government to ensure their right to appropriate space. However, the emergence of a collective movement also depends on the extent of repression by the state (Bayat, 2000; Scott, 1977). If the state is repressive in nature and street vendors assume that their demands to the government will bring no result and their revolt against intermediaries would make them more vulnerable, there is a high probability that they would prefer to continue using this informal pact in accessing public space rather than demanding their rights to the state as citizens. Future research into the production of space and counter-spaces by the subaltern group needs to carefully explore the role of intermediary groups in the livelihood practices of the urban poor and the consequences of removing those groups.

In addition to identifying the important role that intermediaries play in securing poor people's livelihoods, the thesis also contributes to the literature of the anthropology of patronage/brokerage by pointing out the changing nature of patron-client relationships in urban areas. Existing literature discusses the role of political clientelism where clients receive some benefits from their patrons in exchange of their votes or being loyal to local powerful actors (Auyero, 1999; Devine, 1999; Scott, 1985; Wood, 2000). The findings presented in the thesis show that the traditional idea of 'political clientelism' has been changing and transforming a new type of clientelism in urban areas. The case presented in this thesis shows that clients' (vendors) interests are often served in exchange for protection money. Patrons (intermediary groups) do not depend on clients' vote here, so clients are not able to benefit from intermediary groups in exchange for their votes.

The findings presented in this research contribute to the debate about 'right to the city' and resistance by demonstrating how the production of counter-spaces can work as a barrier to

collective movements in claiming formal rights and reproducing spatial inequality. As the vendors of Sattola internalise extortion and comply with extortionists' demands for survival, they are less likely to resist powerful state and non-state actors. Any kind of collective movement requires "some degree of organisation, communication and networking among actors" (Bayat, 1997b, p. 64). In many cities of the Global South, marginalised groups establish formal or informal institutions with constant communications among actors (Bayat, 1997b; Mackie, Swanson, & Goode, 2017). Bayat (1997a, 1997b, 2000) shows the possibility of forming 'passive networks' among the people who use public space. Later, passive networks can be transformed to collective organisations and marginalised groups can resist the state using this platform. However, the case presented in this thesis suggests that marginalised groups might not always form passive networks to resist the state and its agencies if they are able to use other means to appropriate space 'quietly'. Following Scott (1985), I argue that if informal agreements with non-state actors allow vendors to appropriate space temporarily and they consider this informal strategy to be more effective than a collective movement, the practice of everyday resistance will likely reproduce social and spatial inequality, diminishing the idea of collective bargaining. The battle for the right to the city might never begin.

The thesis contributes to the growing body of literature on gendered space and women's empowerment, seeking to overcome key limitations in the existing literature, such as the argument that empowerment is related to women's engagement in the market economy. Much literature has focused on the 'feminisation of informal labour' (Chant, 2008); yet, poor women in Muslim countries experience a triple burden of social stigma, religious barriers, and patriarchy in accessing public space. As a result, these women feel more comfortable operating informal businesses in the 'parochial realm' (Lofland, 1998) rather than the public realm. Future research into gendered space might use this lens to explore whether this is the case in other Muslim countries. If they have similar findings, this would imply that planners and policymakers should address the social barriers that women experience in accessing public space and improve the quality of the parochial realm so that women can operate businesses there comfortably.

The findings have policy implications for the urban planning and development of the city. The first policy implication is recognising the importance of street vending as an income-generating activity that has the potential to reduce poverty for the growing number of the

urban poor in the Global South. Street vending is an important livelihood option for the growing number of poor people in different parts of the Global South. Street vendors provide goods and services at a cheaper price than the formal shopkeepers, which is crucial for the growing number of the urban poor in the Global South. Their presence on the streets attracts people from different classes, thus their economic practices contributes to diversity.

Researchers also find that their presence lessens crime rates in a neighbourhood. The second implication is that city authorities should allow street vendors to operate businesses rather than treating them criminals and encroachers as they are also citizens and they have a right to city's space.

Finally, methodologically this thesis has constructed a normative case study (see Chapter Four) by examining the lives and livelihood practices of the urban poor with an emancipatory basis. Although this thesis contributes to explanatory theory by providing a deeper understanding of the obstacles that the urban poor experience and the negotiation strategies they adopt to construct counter-spaces, I have also included ideals worth pursuing to create a more inclusive and just city.

9.4 Final thoughts

When I began this research in 2014, I was aiming to recommend to the government of Bangladesh to ensure poor people's security of tenure over use of public space. This is important as the participants in this research experience extortion and eviction due to lack of tenure security over their dwelling and livelihood spaces. Previous researchers (Etzold, 2013; Hackenbroch, 2013b) have also recommended this but nothing has changed except the incorporation of the idea that some space should be allocated for the urban poor for their livelihoods in the Seventh Five Year Plan, which has yet to be implemented. Due to the formation of *Nagar Daridra Bostibashir Unnayan Sangstha* (NDBUS, Urban Slum Dweller Rights Development Agency), the urban poor are conscious of their housing rights and are now raising their voices against slum eviction. Yet, the government continues to use its hegemonic power to overrule the High court's stay order and evict slums with no resettlement programs instead following its own housing policy and building houses for the poor. As Lefebvre's theory of space suggests, the state in Bangladesh has hegemonic power, it follows a rational planning ideology and attempts to produce homogeneous abstract space by overlooking differences.

My thesis has not focused on the housing needs of the poor but I cite the above example to point out the implication of rhetorical policies that are either not properly implemented by the government and its agencies or violated to serve the elites' interests. Policy recommendations therefore do not help grassroots communities unless NGOs are allowed to truly represent the poor or policies are drafted in consultation with the poor. In the spirit of Lefebvre's idea of the right to the city I would recommend that the government makes a genuine challenge to allow poor people's participation in decision-making processes regarding the use of urban space at all levels, from national to local, whether it is a decision about upgrading of slums or relocation of vending sites. As a Bangladeshi citizen, I am well aware that if the government turns these recommendations into policies, there is a high probability that they will never be implemented fully if independent NGOs and donors are not permitted to supervise implementation directly. Lefebvre's right to the city calls for a political project and collective right to urban space, which is harder to pursue in a neoliberal world. As a critical urban scholar, I therefore, call on vendors to demand their right to the city. Following de Souza (2006) I suggest if the state does not grant their right to the city, they should fight to claim their right.

An 'insurgent citizenship' (Holston, 2008) may be the only course of action in the political culture of Bangladesh where political patrons only provide a minimum to citizens and use coercive power to intimidate them and to repress their rightful demands to land and livelihoods.

The vendors of Sattola have settled for temporary security over use of public space making an informal deal with a range of state and non-state actors – a political practice that Devine (1999) called the 'politics of intermediation'. However, I understand why vendors have made this contract. There is a Bengali proverb, '*nai mamar ceye kana mama bhalo*' (something is better than nothing). So, they have settled for this something - a 'permanent temporariness' (Yiftachel, 2009a) rather than losing access to space permanently. Following Scott (1985), Kerkvliet (2009), Katz (2004) and many other critical scholars who develop the idea of 'everyday resistance', I understand the survival needs and structural constraints that working as a barrier for poor people to claim their demands and push them to adopt everyday resistance strategies to get by their everyday lives.

Yet, like Bayat (2000), I believe vendors have agency and they can form their own organisation to claim their right to the city. They just need to ‘decolonise’ their assumptions about their role in the social order. In particular, they need to believe that they could achieve their right to the city by resisting the state and its agencies and be aware of neoliberal mechanisms that want

to contain the grassroots actions in invited spaces where their demands are controlled and appropriated, but insurgent practices seek to push these limits by occupying those and other spaces. These transgressions are necessary ... [to] destabilise hegemonic normality and open up new political terrains for the imagination of a different future. (Miraftab, 2017, p. 281)

Following Holston (2008) and Miraftab (2017), I call on vendors to take a step further and practise an ‘insurgent citizenship’ and ‘insurgent practices’ to take back their city and to build it following their ‘heart’s desires’ (Harvey, 2008).

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Appendices

Appendix A: Interview Schedule for Local Participants

1. General Information

- a. Length of stay in this slum
- b. Migration history and causes
- c. Gender:
- d. Marital Status:
- e. Age:
- f. Educational level:
- g. House rent:

2. Occupation and use of space

- a. How long have you been doing this work/business?
- b. In which neighborhood do you work?
- c. Do you have any other work beside this?/ temporary job?
- d. How do you use your dwelling unit/courtyard? For what purposes?
- e. Could you please describe your daily routine?
- f. How does it change on weekends/holidays?
- g. How do you move within the city?
- h. Where do you go for shopping/grocery shopping?
- i. Is there any restriction on women's movement?
- j. Do you enjoy more freedom here than your village? What kinds?
- k. Any change on income earning activities? If yes, Why?

3. Access issues/negotiation, strategies, interaction and contestation with other groups in terms of spatial usage

- a. Have you faced any problem while working there?
- b. What kinds? How did you solve that?
- c. Who helped you to negotiate with others to solve that problem?
- d. Do you have to pay money to use this space? If yes, to whom and why?
- e. How do you feel about that?

4. Claiming space/public and parochial realms

5. Institutions/norms/social relations

6. Power

Appendix B: Interview Schedule for Key Informants

1. Rules and regulations related to use of space
2. Eviction and institutional rules related to conducting eviction drives
3. Justification for eviction
4. Resettlement program
5. Poor people's right to the city
6. Planning

Appendix C: Ethical Approval Form



THE UNIVERSITY OF QUEENSLAND
Institutional Human Research Ethics Approval

Project Title: Negotiated Spaces: A Study of Urban Poor in the Mega City, Dhaka

Chief Investigator: Ms Lutfun Nahar Lata

Supervisor: Dr Peter Walters, Dr Sonia Roitman, A/Prof Adil Khan

Co-Investigator(s): None

School(s): Social Science

Approval Number: 2015001507

Granting Agency/Degree: IPRS and UQ Centennial Scholarship

Duration: 31st December 2017

Comments/Conditions:

Expedited Review - Low Risk

Note: if this approval is for amendments to an already approved protocol for which a UQ Clinical Trials Protection/Insurance Form was originally submitted, then the researchers must directly notify the UQ Insurance Office of any changes to that Form and Participant Information Sheets & Consent Forms as a result of the amendments, before action.

Name of responsible Committee:

Behavioural & Social Sciences Ethical Review Committee

This project complies with the provisions contained in the *National Statement on Ethical Conduct in Human Research* and complies with the regulations governing experimentation on humans.

Name of Ethics Committee representative:

Associate Professor John McLean

Chairperson

Behavioural & Social Sciences Ethical Review Committee

Signature

Date

28/9/2015

Appendix D: Participant Information Sheet



THE UNIVERSITY
OF QUEENSLAND

Participant Information Sheet (will be translated to Bangla)

Project Title: Negotiated Spaces: A Study of Urban Poor in the Mega City, Dhaka

What is the purpose of the study?

The purpose of this study is to gain in-depth knowledge about the way you and your family and neighbours use public space to earn income. The study also intends to investigate whether you face any problems while using urban spaces in rich people's area. If you face any challenges, what kinds of strategies/tactics you use to continue your business.

Project outcomes:

The study will contribute to policy by investigating the issues that result in unequal access to urban spaces for people in [your location] so that the government can take initiatives to establish their rights to these spaces.

Who is undertaking this study?

The study is being conducted by a (PhD Candidate).

Name	Position	UQ unit	Phone & email
Lutfun Nahar Lata	PhD Candidate	School of Social Science	0424699040 lutfun.lata@uq.edu.au

How will you participate?

I am inviting you to participate in an interview that will take about 60 minutes of your time and the interview will be audio recorded with your permission.

Participation is voluntary at all times

Your participation in the study is voluntary. You can refuse to answer any questions during the interview or stop the interview at any point if you no longer wish to participate. If you agree to participate in the interview, you will be asked to sign a formal Consent Form (attached).

How will your confidentiality be respected?

Anything you say in an interview will remain confidential. All data will be stored on a computer that is password protected. Any details that are made available in reports or any subsequent publication will not in any way identify you.

How will you have access to the results?

A published report will be made available to interview participants on request.

Ethical clearance

This study follows the Guidelines of the ethical review process of The University of Queensland. You are free to discuss your participation in this study with project staff (Lutfun Nahar Lata) or if you would like to speak to an officer of the University not involved in the study, you may contact the Ethics Coordinator on 3365 3924.

Thank you for your time and participation.

Appendix E: Consent Form



THE UNIVERSITY
OF QUEENSLAND

School of Social Science

Written Consent (written consent will be translated to Bangla)

Full title: Negotiated Spaces: A Study of Urban Poor in the Mega City, Dhaka

I agree to participate in this project, and I understand why the research is being done. I agree

- Lata [the researcher] has explained the details of the project to me;
- that I can ask Lata [the researcher] to stop at any time;
- to have my words recorded;
- I can choose not to have my words recorded and for Lata [the researcher] just to take written notes;
- Lata [the researcher] will not publish my name or personal details, or anything else that could identify me;
- Lata [the researcher] will keep all notes and recording in a secure place.

Name of participant:

Signature:

Date:

Name of Interviewer: Lutfun Nahar Lata

Signature:

Date:

Appendix F: List of Participants

Occupation	Number
Fried cow stomach/processed food seller	12
Maid	11
Fruit (seasonal, dried etc.) seller	10
Tea and cigarette seller	9
Rice cake seller	8
Rickshaw-puller	6
Garment worker	5
Puffed rice and chickpea seller	3
Cobbler	3
Cigarette seller	3
Vegetable seller	2
Vegetable seller	2
Spice and green chili seller	2
Boiled egg seller	3
Hawker	2
Plastic utensil seller	2
Carpenter	2
Lentil and spice seller	1
Security guard	1
Tailor	1
Recyclable material seller	1
Basket seller	1
Cloth seller	1
Flower seller	1
Fish seller	1
Fried Prawn seller	1
Lemon juice seller	1
Chicken seller	1
Biryani seller	1
Shopkeeper (grocery shop)	2
Total	99

Appendix G: List of Key Informant Interviews (KIIs)

Role	No. of KII
Mayor, DNCC	1
Town Planner, DNCC	1
Urban Planner, DNCC	1
Magistrate, DNCC	1
Slum Improvement officer, DNCC	1
Professor, urban specialist, CUS	1
Deputy Project Director, City Region Development Project, LGED	1
Consultant, City Region Development Project, LGED	1
Officer-in-Charge, Banani Police Station	1
Second Officer-in-Charge, Banani Police Station	1
Local Police	3
Ward Councillor (Ward 20)	1
PA of Ward Councillor	1
Scientific Officer, BMRC	1
Field Officer, BLAST	1
Field Officer, Marie Stopes	1
Field Officer, BRAC MANOSHI Project	1
Local leader/politically influential person	8
CBO, DSK	5
Political leader	1
Landlords	4
Total	37