Submitted version

Complicating connectivity: Women's negotiations with smartphones in an Indian slum

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The transformational possibilities of smartphones are particularly emphasised in places where there are development needs. Whether framed by international or national development agendas, the link between smart technologies and progress is hard to challenge. Yet we still know little about the actual uses of new technologies by non elite 'invisible users', and their 'changing sense of the wider world and their place within it' formulated through their engagement with new technologies (Jenna Burrell, 2012:4). The frames and theories through which we place people and their uses can blind us to what is happening in particular contexts with particular people. Don Slater (2013) describes the 'holy trinity' of 'new media', 'development' and 'globalization' as irrefutable organising frames for our thinking about the future, and yet he shows how they are in fact just one (albeit dominant) story about the future. He urges us to consider such terms and frameworks as 'part of the fields we study and act within, to render them as topics rather than resources' (2013:2). They represent 'northern cosmologies' and the beliefs around and classifications of these same terms (or elements within them) from the point of view and experience of 'invisible users' often looks different.

Ineke Buskens (2010:19) is similarly concerned with our lack of critical attention to the frameworks we use for constructing knowledge in the field of ICT for development. She suggests that while it is appropriate to focus on recognising and working to increase the agency of the beneficiaries of development, the agency of those who set the agendas is largely ignored: 'Although their [donors, practitioners, researchers, scholars] agency may be less visible, and definitely under less scrutiny, their frames of mind impact directly the way meaning is made of Southern women's experiences, dreams, and perspectives in the context of human development, poverty, and ICTs.' Sirpa Tenhunen's (2008: 517) ethnographic study in a village in West Bengal demonstrates how mobile phone users' agency is of interest but this is not the only kind of agency at play, and of importance to our understanding of the place of mobile phones, in this village. The State and multinational companies 'play central roles in shaping the mobile market's recent expansion into new regions'.

This chapter aims to complicate ideas about the relationship of smartphones to notions of progress and development by describing some of the things that smartphones are to women living in a Delhi slum. Through this description the broader social, cultural and political contingencies of these women's lives are made visible, as are some dominant public discourses that otherwise crassly represent or conceal them. The media regularly report the expansion of new technologies, subscribers, use and growth of related businesses. On the one hand, new media are linked to the notion of India as a modern, global and influential country, on the other to a concern to monitor and restrict new media use by certain groups. The chapter draws upon ethnographic research in the slum spanning over a decade, from early 2004. It situates the penetration and use of smartphones in the slum within the broader context of the marginalized position that slums represent within the materiality of the city, as well as slum-dwellers' marginalised position as citizens of the city as negotiated through everyday life. Here we present accounts of smartphone use by women to

describe how they navigate the dual displacement and violence of gender and marginalisation. They are doubly marginalised, first as slum-dwellers and secondly as women. Examining their uses of smartphones goes some way towards making this marginalisation visible but also shows their agency within cultural and social structures.

Background

Having located both the site of this research, and the people within it as 'marginalized', it is important to state that this is a relative categorisation and is itself part of what is under study. In our approach to the ethnographic research reported on here, our site and the people within it are both central and privileged. That is to say, their experience, practices, world views, meaning making, knowledge and beliefs are the focus of our fieldwork and analysis. Rather than attempting to interpret and understand them through frameworks or theories of marginalization or development, we have attempted to use the research to rethink and challenge those theories. The same applies to ideas of new media and technologies, which we aim to decentre in an effort to achieve what Slater (2013:9) calls 'ethical symmetry'. This means that the starting point for this discussion of smartphones and what they mean for some women in this slum cluster is an open question regarding what smartphones are and what they mean here in Govindpuri, Delhi.

The slums of Govindpuri in Delhi have been the site of a series of ethnographic studies[1] that we have conducted together and separately since 2004. The slums are made up of three 'camps', Nehru, Navjeevan and Bhumhiheen. They were first established in the late 1970's (Basu, 1998:118). The slums of Govindpuri are not a notified slum area, and are therefore, despite their long history, considered to be illegal.[2] Despite this, many of the residents are recognised as citizens of Delhi, and provided with 'ration cards'. These cards serve to validate their identities, allow access to subsidised food and other household items, and, importantly, establish their claims to 'resettlement' when the Govindpuri slums are demolished. The initial settlers of the camps mostly comprised of migrant groups and labourers from different parts of the country, seeking to improve their opportunities in the city. The lack of infrastructural support and access to basic facilities left 'squatting' in unoccupied, barren land as the only available option. Since then multiple generations of some families have grown up in the slums. Even though in the last decades the income levels of the residents have significantly improved, the opportunities available to them to 'move out' of the slums remain limited. Living in the slums allows them a certain 'standard of living', however limited, which they would not be able to maintain if they shifted into legal settlements, because of the costs of property, rents and other expenses. Moreover, the entitlement to a resettled plot of land in a legal settlement in case of demolition is a very compelling motivation for the residents to continue living in the slums; in fact, for most the promise of this entitlement is the only available recourse towards a 'legal, respectable' identity in the city. Alongside the permanent residents of the slums, the camps continue to host a burgeoning, fluid population of migrant labourers arriving in the city to better their opportunities.

In our long-term engagement with Govindpuri, the slums and their technological landscape have undergone significant transformations. We have observed dynamic, constantly evolving technological cultures and practices within the slums. Whilst we focus here on women and

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1   Tacchi and Chandola's ethnographic research in Govindpuri began in 2004, funded by the Department for International Development for eighteen months. Between 2006 and 2009 Chandola undertook further ethnographic work for her doctorate under the supervision of Tacchi. Subsequently Chandola has continued through post doctoral work, both with Tacchi, and on her own.

2   http://delhishelterboard.in/main/?page_id=128, accessed 14th September, 2014.

smartphones, this is not to 'render technical' (Tania Murray Li, 2007) the complexity of the social, cultural and political processes in the space. We complicate this by considering smartphones as 'active agent[s] in evolving gendered relationships that must be understood within their culturally embedded everyday uses and settings' (Jo Tacchi, Kathi Kitner and Kate Crawford, 2012:529).

Growing penetration of mobile phones in India

The combined factors of the New Economic Policy (1991) and the subsequent New Telecoms Policies (1994, 1997 and Broadband Policy, 2004) unleashed unprecedented growth in the telecommunications sector in India (Arvind Singhal and Everett Rogers, 2001). The government considers the sector 'an important tool for socio-economic development for a nation[3]'. Prior to 1991 the sector was controlled by government monopoly. The opening up to competition in service provision, and the de-licensing of the manufacturing of telecoms equipment, has led to widespread uptake of mobile connections and the local production of handsets at competitive prices. By 2004, when we began our research, the impacts of these policies were evident. The number of commercial service providers was increasing, more competitive service plans were available, and mobile handsets were becoming more affordable, at least for middle-class, urban Indians. At that time these services still had limited penetration amongst the lower-middle classes and urban poor, including in the slums in Govindpuri.

Today however, to not have a mobile connection in Govindpuri is regarded as a severe social and economic hindrance. Mobile penetration in India stands at 73%, while mobile-internet penetration is 11%, but shifting quickly with the availability of low cost smartphones (Amiya Adwitiya, 2014). This reflects the availability of increasingly 'affordable smart-phones (Rs3,000–Rs10,000/US$50–US$165) designed for the Indian user from indigenous manufacturers such as Micromax, Karbonn, etc., as well as increasingly low-cost data connectivity options more people are shifting to smartphones and mobile Internet' (Adwitiya, 2014). Most households in Govindpuri have at least one mobile handset and it is common practice for a handset to have more than one connection (multiple SIM cards). Indeed it is difficult to visit Govindpuri and not have a conversation about smartphones. The brand, the model and its capabilities are often discussed at length, and considered a status symbol. Once when Chandola visited after spending a few months in Australia she was asked to 'show' her mobile phone to the group of men, women and children who were inquiring after her trip. When they discovered that she was not using a smartphone, but a very basic mobile phone model, the group was dismayed. They questioned whether she could be "doing well for herself?" Smartphones are increasingly popular amongst the youth finding less favour amongst older people who continue to use standard feature mobile handsets.

Service providers have introduced schemes targeted to the lower-middle classes, urban poor and a growing section of the migrant population. There are options to top-up credit starting from as low as Rs. 5, usually bundled with other incentives such as free text messages to connections on the same service. Most of the residents of Govindpuri have pre-paid connections, which is not a purely economic decision. Security checks (usually involving submission of identification and residential proof) are easier to circumvent in the case of a pre-paid connection. The thriving extra-legal mobile phone markets in Govindpuri allow residents to acquire pre-paid connections without necessarily providing their details. A significant section of the population in Govindpuri, including migrant workers, do not have these documents to produce. The latest handsets circulate at lower cost

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3   http://www.dot.gov.in/about-us/telecom-glance, accessed 14th September, 2014.

through these extra-legal mobile markets along with second-hand phones and Chinese-made imitations of popular brands that cost a quarter of the cost of the original.

For the many people working as daily wage earners, including for example plumbers, construction site workers, masons and maids, the mobile phone has provided a convenient, cost effective and time saving means to connect to employers and employment opportunities. Phones also keep residents in touch with family members living elsewhere, helping with the circulation of news and the provision of assistance when required, within local social networks and remote kinship networks. These kinds of uses can be understood as 'social logistics' (Tenhunen, 2008) that can be observed in a range of places where mobile phone penetration is reaching into lower socioeconomic groups. '[M]obile technology amplifies ongoing processes of cultural change but does so selectively, so that it brings about the homogenization of "social logistics"' (ibid.:515). This 'homogenisation' of social logistics brings about new social constellations but these must be related to culture and cultural change in order to be understood locally, 'The new communication systems are influencing and drawing from local social, cultural, and political processes' (ibid.). Mobile phone use is related to ongoing local processes of transformation, and must be understood in relation to them. Tenhunen's study of a village in West Bengal demonstrates the need to understand this relationship, since 'the appropriation of phones draws from culture and, conversely, contributes to changes in culture and society' (2008:517).

Robin Jeffrey and Assa Dorron (2013) approach mobile phones in India rather differently to Tenhunen. The subtitle of their book, *The Great Indian Phonebook: how cheap mobile phones change business, politics and daily life* prewarns an approach that is looking at mobile phones as transformational technologies that change the social and cultural. Tenhunen's argument is very different, 'Telephony shapes social logistics, at the same time intensifying the ongoing contest of meanings. Instead of homogenizing cultures, mobile technology reinforces these cultural patterns and processes that can be reconciled with emerging social logistics' (2008: 531). For Tenhunen an appropriate research agenda explores how emerging social logistics relate to local meanings. Local existing and enduring meaning structures cannot be ignored by the villagers she studied, and cannot be overlooked when interpreting their lives. These structures 'exist in motion' (2008:517), and are subject to contestation and change, and mobile phones can extend and magnify villagers' relationships and add diversity of connections. But Jeffrey and Dorron give it far more 'disruptive potential', so that amongst its affordances in India is the power to escape existing structures, as long as 'people, of course, must already have the imagination to want to do things differently' (2013:14). Such a statement ignores the weight, social and cultural importance, and the politics of existing structures, as if they can be simply replaced. Our research aligns with Tenhunen's approach to mobiles regarding the importance of locating our understandings in local cultures and politics. Alternatives such as represented by Jeffrey and Dorron miss the crucial place of appropriation and local cultures and meanings, promulgate hyperbole, and credit the technology itself with the power to transform.

The moral landscape for mobile phones

How the penetration of mobile phones are understood in some official reports and media coverage contrasts with an approach that locates such understandings in local cultures and politics. In the 2011 Indian census, information was captured for the first time on a range of new measures including internet access and mobile phone ownership. Mobile phones in India have effectively 'leapfrogged' older communication and information technologies (Tenhunen, 2008; Jeffrey and Dorrin, 2013) that required costly physical infrastructures that are largely considered to be the

responsibility of governments. Mobiles, on the other hand, are proliferating and reaching into previously technologically unconnected areas through a mixture of public and commercial initiative. Rather than a social good, with universal service agendas pressuring governments to act, commercial operators are tapping into new markets with 'affordable' devices and connections. Discussions of universal service provision is replaced with discussions of consumerism. There are moral judgements at play here, and in media reports of the census findings, mobile phone uptake in slums is compared to spending on sanitation. Moushumi Das Gupta in the *Hindustan Times* reports that 'India's first-ever census of household amenities and assets in slums has revealed that slum dwellers are ... spending more on TV sets, computers and mobile phones *rather* than sanitation (2013, our emphasis). Jeffrey and Dorron (2013:6), calling the mobile phone 'the most widely shared item of luxury and indulgence the country had ever seen' also make uncritical reference to the census data and to journalists' fascination with the statistics that show that across the country there are more mobile phones than toilets.

The inclusion in the census of a range of media technologies is used to determine living standards in the slums and contrasted with 'non slums'. In such reportage basic sanitation - conventionally considered as the state's responsibility - is represented as a consumer option that loses out because slum dwellers spend their money on mobile phones. This shows a shifting imagination in which the urban poor are now identified as proactive, engaged consumers with the agency to exercise choice, and in such reportage that choice is questioned with moralistic undertones. This construction of the urban poor permits the state to distance itself from responsibilities towards disenfranchised citizens and their rights, subsidies and entitlements. This instance of juxtaposing the use of mobile phones with sanitation is a particularly exaggerated example of collapsing the discourse of 'cleanliness' and 'consumption' that emphasizes a loss of citizenship rights and the rise of the privileges and responsibilities of consumers (Chandola, 2013).

This moralistic tone is extended to the use of mobile phones by women. The highly demarcated gendered ownership and use of technologies is undergoing significant change in Govindpuri; however it would be a gross misrepresentation to suggest anything close to gendered neutrality in technological use. In our initial years of research here (2004-2005) we were witness to a woman being beaten up publicly for watching television (in effect for indulging in leisure when she should have been attending to her household duties), and in another instance a young girl, who was observed publicly talking on her mobile phone – a rarity at that time – was compelled by social pressures to abandon her higher studies. The parents of the girl were keen for her to pursue her education, but neighbours considered the 'uninhibited' freedoms she exercised by attending college unescorted, and using her mobile phone, as immoral. The parents responded to the threat of social ostracization and potential damage to their daughter's reputation.

In the last decade the overall situation in Govindpuri has changed significantly. The post-liberalised context allowed opportunities formerly unavailable to most residents and has led to improved living standards, most evident in the transformation of many houses from *kaccha* (temporary constructions made from materials such as bamboo and plastic) to *pucca* (permanent brick and mortar constructions). Increased exposure to the 'outside' world, in which access to technologies have played a significant role, has increased the premium on education for boys and girls. The number of women completing secondary school and entering into higher education has increased as well as the number of women seeking regular employment as white-collar workers. The implications of these changes are significant in that women are extended sanctions and permissions that were earlier prohibited, including venturing outside of the neighbourhood for work

and for leisure unescorted, wearing Western clothes such as jeans, and ownership and use of mobile technologies. However, gendered negotiations are not dissolved of their politics of control and subjugation.

For example, Payal was a 17 year old resident of Bhumhiheen camp. She was appointed as a local research assistant for an early study in 2004. An ambitious young woman with 'dreams', she felt that her mother, a local politician, and her two elder brothers were restrictive and controlling. She often voiced these concerns and expressed her helplessness in not being able to take charge of the situation. She expressly articulated this as a form of 'violence'. She was not allowed to venture out on her own, pursue higher education, seek a job and own a mobile. She is now a married woman of 27 with a young son. Her marital home is outside the slums in a legal settlement. She is able to travel with relative freedom, and owns a mobile phone. She is very proud of the fact that she is no longer a slum-dweller, but she still spends a significant amount of time in her maternal home. Her position in the maternal family has significantly changed, especially since the arrival of her elder brother's wife. Within the complex gendered hierarchy of the family as a unit, the daughter-in-law position is generally the least autonomous or favourable. With Babli's arrival Payal could shift the burden of the gendered 'violence' she encountered by exercising control over the former. And thus Babli, even after 6 years of marriage, is not allowed to venture outside the neighbourhood on her own, there is no consideration of her seeking employment, and she is not permitted a mobile phone.

While Payal considered the restrictions placed on her as a form of violence, there is widespread concern across India about physical violence against women, including rape and murder cases. The Indian media captures the excitement about new technologies and its possibilities, but it is also a window into a darker side of life, where gendered oppression and violence lurk. Headlines capture views on the use of mobile phones by young women (or 'girls' as they are more regularly called in such reporting), which is often directly linked to a current public concern with regularly reported violence and rape[4]. One response is in the form of regular calls by high profile politicians and others to restrict young womens' mobile phone use[5]. Such views do invite public outrage and protests[6] and are countered by alternative discourses asserting the rights of women. However, an anxiousness about women using mobiles and having unrestricted access to the internet is palpable in such reportage; either the use of mobiles is celebrated for educational and empowering capacities, or denounced for corrupting influences. The reckoning of women as informed and assured consumers who employ these technologies to assert their identities and explore the opportunities it allows is conspicuous by its absence in these reports, especially when the women in question belong to the category of 'non elite' users.

Complicating connectivity: Rani and Monica

It is clear then that Govindpuri slums are highly gendered spaces where the mobility of women is changing but remains restricted spatially, morally, socially and culturally (Chandola 2010; 2012a; 2012b), within local structures of meanings. Tenhunen (2008:517) shows how for the villagers in

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[4]   http://www.telegraphindia.com/1140715/jsp/frontpage/story_18615353.jsp#.VAQiObtGVv4

[5]   http://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/india/Karnataka-house-panel-blames-mobiles-for-rise-in-rape-and-molestation-cases/articleshow/38228687.cms

[6]   See, http://www.theglobeandmail.com/news/world/protesters-outraged-after-indian-guru-says-gang-rape-victim-not-blameless/article7097073/; http://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/city/varanasi/Rural-women-learn-alphabets-through-mobile-phones/articleshow/11341893.cms; and, http://www.zdnet.com/in/iball-launches-safety-phone-for-women-in-india-7000024421/ (All accessed 1st September, 2014)

her study, 'Such symbolic fields as kinship and rituals represent dominant practices and enduring meaning structures which cannot be ignored ...'. That is to say, phones increased and intensified already existing social networks. Nevertheless, phones add a diversity of connectedness, and are in some cases used to 'maintain defiant and secret contacts… ' (2008:524). Mobile phones 'help women extend their sphere unobtrusively without overtly moving out of the domestic sphere', and 'extend social possibilities beyond what culture dictates as proper' (2008:527). For women in the West Bengal village, this might mean regular contact with the natal village, and challenges to ideas of appropriate distance between marriage family and natal family, which in turn impacts on issues of honour. We can explore ways in which women are able to extend social possibilities, while remaining firmly located within local structures of meanings, through the example of two young women in Govindpuri.

Rani is 26, Monica is 21. They are neighbours in a Muslim dominated area of Navjeevan camp. Their respective households are dominated by women. Rani's household decisions are essentially determined by her. In Monica's case, it is her mother who controls the household and their grocery shop business with an iron-fist. Both Rani and Monica are highly aspirational, constantly 'scheming' to improve their situations. But this is where the similarities end. Rani is illiterate. In the past she has worked regularly as a sex-worker, and still does so occasionally, though this is not common knowledge amongst the members of the community. Monica is a college graduate who has a diploma in fashion design and merchandising. She is the most educated member of her family, and this is proudly announced both by her and other family members to visitors and members of the community. She has been working since 2011, when she completed her diploma course. She fluently converses in English, a capability which is rare amongst the residents of the slum camps.

Both Rani and Monica own smartphones. Rani has a Nokia Asha 501. Monica uses a Micromax Canvas 2. Rani is quick to mention that hers is a 'first-hand, new phone, costing Rs. 5,000' which she bought from a 'proper' shop and which has a one-year warranty. Monica admits to 'loving' her present phone, but adds with a hint of deeply-felt loss, that her 'dream phone' was a Nokia N8, a high-end model which she bought in 2011 for Rs. 24,000, after saving money from her first job. Her younger brother had borrowed her phone to attend a wedding and somehow managed to lose it. Unable to immediately afford a phone of similar specifications she settled for her current second-hand model which cost her Rs. 6000.

Rani and Monica are both expert users of their smartphones and the various functionalities. However the difference in which they can articulate their usage reveals their differing sensibilities. Whilst Monica's articulation of her choice of the model she uses is premised around its technical specifications – 3G enabled, memory, RAM capacity, battery life, the quality of picture the camera allows, pixel size, and so on, Rani's appreciation is more haptic, where the size of the screen, ease of using the touch screen, camera and listening to music are discussed. However, Rani is known for her expertise with electronics, and took Chandola on a tour of her smartphone. She showed how she clicked pictures from her camera, its quality, the set in her gallery, the music collection, and played some songs to establish the quality of the speakers on her phone. Rani claims she needs to spend just half-an-hour, at most, with any smartphone, of any technical specifications and with as complex functionalities as possible for her to 'master' it.

She is proficient at setting up (and resolving issues) with audio and video players. She fixes electrical connections, and often has to be curtailed in her enthusiasm to take apart mobile handsets. It is a common sight for neighbours to come to Rani to learn the functionalities of their newly acquired phones. And with the Chinese-made smartphones cheaply available, Rani has

become quite an expert and much in demand. She exploited these capabilities and her extended social networks to enter the second-hand and extra-legal 'mobile markets', making money by facilitating mobile handset sales. Even though she is illiterate she sends and receives several text messages in a day. Some of them are conversational, but most of them are forwarded poetries and words of affections, which her brother or one of her educated neighbours read to her.

Monica has a post-paid connection, uncommon in the slums. She pays Rs. 99 per month for the connection, which allows her 200 minutes of free local and STD calls and 1000 free text messages. She also has a data package costing Rs. 250 per month to access the internet. Monica categorically identifies the smartphone as having played a significant role in her professional growth, for example by helping her to improve her English (through things such as spell checking and language learning), and allowing her to constantly update her resume on a job site, www.naukri.com. She found her present job through this site. Rani also exploits her smartphone's functionalities to further her prospects, using its dual-sim capacity to maintain contact with her sex work clients. The two connections can be active at the same time, but only one of them is in her name. When she has to negotiate and engage with her clients, she is careful not to use that one.

Rani and Monica's experiences with smartphones are complicated by their social positions. Rani, unlike most women in Govindpuri, enjoys relatively uninhibited spatial, social and cultural mobility. She has been the *de facto* head of the household since she returned at the age of 18 from an abusive marriage. Her father died of alcohol related disease. She has managed to support herself, her young daughter, her mother, brothers and her sisters. When she first returned she tried working as a maid in a nearby middle class neighbourhood but found her treatment to be dehumanising. She found she could retain far more control and earn significantly more money through sex work. She has earned enough money to improve the condition of her family, but also fears the implications for them of the kind of work she does if it becomes known. While she is aware that some do know her line of work, she has made useful connections to local crime figures and wealthy men, and so neither her family or neighbours condemn her openly since her family depend on her earnings, and her neighbours occasionally need to seek her help when they have local issues, 'My family is so hypocritical; of course they know where the money is coming from and had no issue about taking it when they needed but if there is the slightest issue, they call me a [whore], and say I bring shame to the family. Earlier I used to get affected by what they said, but now I retort back and say, who is worse a [whore] or those who eat of her living'. Rani's particular position has allowed her a rarely available economic, social and spatial mobility, and yet it is also highly precarious (Tacchi, forthcoming).

Monica's experience of spatial and social mobilities in the same context are dramatically different from Rani's. Her first job involved an hour commute each way, but she loved her job, and the experience and exposure that it brought. However only five months into it she left,

> Amma [mother] made it impossible. She would call me every half hour to inquire what I was doing, and if I did not answer the phone, she would start calling the land line. It was most embarrassing. If I said I would reach home by seven, and was delayed on account of traffic or some work, she would get hysterical. The limit was when one-day she landed up at my work, because the previous night my boss – a Man – had called about some work. I just could not take it.

Her mother considers this strict control over her daughter's movements as her 'duty'; these days, "young girls need to be protected. There are so many distractions, and we cannot allow her to go ashtray". She fears Monica might marry outside her religion, or get into a 'love marriage'.

Monica finds this control difficult to negotiate, and said that if she did not have the connections her smartphone allowed, she would go mad. She is constantly online accessing social media sites. She has mild flirtations on Facebook and boasts almost 400 friends, not all of them known to her offline. She does not have a boyfriend, and thinks that she will get married to a groom of her parents choice, but she thinks that in the meantime her online relationships are harmless. We were intrigued by these liberties available to Monica, which are surprisingly unrestricted. Monica explained, and not without mischief,

> of course Amma does not know what I am up to on the phone. She thinks I am texting, and gets annoyed at times but that is it. She does not know internet, or Facebook. And not that I am doing something really *wrong,* just a bit of fun on the side.

Conclusion

Rani and Monica are both, in different ways, using their mobiles to defy social controls and extend social possibilities, but they are doing so within a set of meaning structures that while they are changing over time, remain strong enough to require them to act secretively. We can see how the social logistics provided by the phones are important to them, how they increase their economic possibilities, help them manage social and familial relationships, but the actual form and function of these employment opportunities and social relationships are only understood when explored within the particular local situations they live within.

These examples highlight the limitations of available techno-developmental discourses which are inclined towards drawing linear and direct links between access to technologies of connectedness and increased mobilities (social, geographic, economic, political). We can complicate notions of mobility through the examples of Rani and Monica. Marriage for example plays an important role in framing their opportunities. Rani is illiterate, left her marriage after one year with her baby daughter due to abuse, and as such she was socially, culturally and economically highly vulnerable. Her family could not afford to support her and her baby, so she took things into her own hands, and whilst what she chose[7] to do to earn money (sex work) makes her vulnerable on a number of counts, it also allows her to not only support herself but also her extended family. The relationships, drivers and tensions at play in Rani's situation are of course far more complex than we are able to describe here. Meanwhile, Monica is well educated and has worked in office jobs since graduation. While closely observed and monitored by her mother, she finds her smartphone to be a way to circumvent the social restrictions placed upon her. Her mother will be seeking out marriage partners very soon, and when married Monica will once again have to negotiate and manage the expectations and restrictions of her new family and new role. This goes some way to help us understand how technologies of connectedness, though non-hierarchical within their operational capacity, unfold within existing social, cultural and moral landscapes. The practices of, and around,

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[7] it is worth noting that her 'choice' was made in the face of the options available to her and the urgent need for her to support her family. She prefers us to understand her 'choice' to be a sex worker as an assertive act, and a means to maintain control over her life, and indeed her body. However, this does need to be understood within the options available to her, her experience of violence through marriage, and many other factors.

these technologies both embody the hierarchies and particularities of these landscapes, and extend social possibilities, sometimes defiantly and secretly (Tenhunen, 2008).

Our central argument is that the inherent potential (and alternatively, threat) of mobile technologies to re-calibrate the social order needs to be treated with caution. There is a danger of either situating these technologies in an overly deterministic projection of the future, or to highlight the static-ness of social order and its traditions. Between Rani and Monica we can see two very distinctly gendered but also very different experiences of life in the slum, and their particular encounters with mobile phones. The examples discussed in this chapter should complicate broader narratives of new media and its transformational potential. What we gain from complicating this is a range of different perspectives on everyday lives and the varied implications of devices such as smartphones. This complicates what being connected means for these women. The currency of connection plays out within broader structures and gendered negotiations in this marginalized site in a global city. The imaginations, aspirations and agencies of these women that are afforded by new media (Appadurai, 1996) are crucially tied into their social, cultural, political and gendered positions.

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