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Environmental capital as cultural capital: environmentalism and identity-formation in the Indian middle class

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*The work presented in the thesis is the candidate's own (Deepti Sastry)

Abstract

The environment as a conceptual category is utilised by middle-class Delhites to negotiate and exhibit differences from one another as well as from other class fractions, particularly the poor. This thesis employs Bourdieu's tools of habitus and cultural capital as a point of departure to explore how the environment is embodied by various class fractions. Additionally, in recognising the complex social, economic and cultural environment in contemporary, post-liberalisation India the thesis explores the conscious processes that are employed by fractions of the middle class as subjective experiences of the environment: forms of environmentality (Agarwal, 2005). This is done through a series of case studies. The first case analyses formal environmental education in three Delhi schools. Students showed knowledge and concerns that focused largely on proximate concerns and, in fee-paying schools, narratives of wildlife conservation. These narratives were also reinforced in the curriculum, which emphasised local environmental issues and reaffirmed class boundaries through the language of the environment. The second case study explores how residents of two middle-class neighbourhoods embody the environment as social practice and how their local subjectivities influence how and in what form they engage with the environment. The final case study examines the ways in which the environment is embodied and discursively framed by middle-class members of two wildlife clubs. Members of the two clubs conceptualised the environment quite differently, reflecting different fractions of the middle class: specifically, an upwardly mobile consuming global new middle class and an older, post-Independence (Nehruvian) middle class. Together these case studies suggest that the environment is both embodied, in different forms of social practice, in addition to being consciously negotiated, drawing on their subjective experiences of the environment.

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Chapter 1   Introduction

The middle class in India is a socio-economic group that has inspired countless studies and analyses. This social group is not universally understood conceptually or methodologically. This is primarily because it is composed of multiple interest groups and is not homogeneously constituted. As a result, it cannot be thought of as a social category that has unified sets of values or behaves in pre-determined fashion. The heterogeneity of this social group is recognised in the vast literature that is dedicated to conceptualising it but there has been limited engagement in the studies that attempt to methodologically unpack this heterogeneity and examine the resulting fractions in more analytical detail. This is more of a gap with the literature that attempts to understand the relationship that the middle class in India have with the environment in its various forms, including, more recently, with how concerns about the environment are influenced by the socio-economic and political contexts (Agarwal, 2005). Given the anxieties about class and socio-political space in an ever-changing, dynamic context like India it is also important to recognise how this dynamic translates into relations with the environment and what that means in the context of class and status. Also, it is critical that the relationship that the middle class share with the environment is examined in detail as this social group has the potential for great environmental impact – both negative and positive. This thesis explores ways to methodologically unpack the heterogeneity of the Indian middle class and in doing so looks at the relationships various middle-class fractions have with the environment, starting with an exploration of how narratives of class are reinforced through formal education.

Fundamentally, this thesis examines how the environment is a marker of class and class characteristics in India; the concept of the environment being deployed by various fractions both consciously and unconsciously. The study has three principle

sites of inquiry: the study of class in the context of India, given the current socio-political and cultural context; the study of how the environment is symbolised and valued; and the study of how and to what extent the symbol of the environment is deployed as a vector of class and distinction. In combining these three areas of inquiry this thesis offers a unique and as yet relatively unexplored lens into how the Indian middle class negotiates its relationship with the environment, and how the environment becomes part of a wider process of class and identity-formation, including the formal education system. I start this chapter by laying out why India's complex and heterogeneous middle class attracts the range of scholarly interest that it does. The discussion includes background on how the middle class has been studied and characterised, I then provide an overview of studies that have explored middle-class environmental values in India, highlighting important gaps in the literature that this thesis will then address. I also look at the limited amount of work that has been done on understanding the role of formal education in the production and reproduction of class characteristics and practice in India with a view to trying to fill some of the gaps in the literature particularly when it comes to environmental education.

The Indian middle class is a force to reckon with given its size and growing influence on economic, political, social and cultural life (Shukla, 2010, Brosius, 2010, Fernandes, 2009). Since the beginning of the liberalisation of the Indian economy in the late-1980s/early-1990s, the country has seen an unprecedented shift in its economic capacity and increasing incomes for the middle class and a concurrent widening of their rights to space. The economic growth and increased financial wealth has had significant widespread impacts. Notably, this has helped to spur an increase in the number of individuals considered to be middle class by virtue of their income level. The liberalisation and 'opening up' of the economy has also meant an increase in the influx

of global images and fashions from lifestyles and consumption to social practices and knowledge. With larger disposable incomes and an increased capacity to consume, Indian middle-class lifestyles, along with the fabric of the Indian social landscape, have undergone significant shifts - what I refer to as fractures. These fractures have shifted not only consumption patterns (an area that has generated much scholarship over the past ten years), but have also challenged (and continue to challenge) class identities, for example, and the relationship between class and caste and social practice. The middle class has become even more complex, heterogeneous, and anxious in asserting what they believe to be their legitimate practices and through that their identities. These seismic shifts have had a significant influence on the increased interest in and scholarship on the middle class. Additionally, this group also holds the capacity to influence both national and global events, further fuelling interest. The number of studies of the economic potential and the consumption capacity of the middle class in India is just one example of its perceived potential to affect global economic processes (Deloitte, 2013, McKinsey, 2007).

Current scholarship on the Indian middle class is diverse. This is undoubtedly driven by the fractious nature of the middle class, variegated in its cultural, social, economic, political, and religious characteristics and allegiances (Beteille, 2001b, Jeffreys, 1998, Fernandes, 2001a). This heterogeneity creates conceptual difficulties in the analysis of the middle class as a social group in India (Harriss, 2007). Scholars have more recently begun to recognise that consumption is a shared trait that unites the middle class. Consumption serves as a form of cultural capital that aids in more robustly identifying and conceptually unpacking the middle class. Indeed, consumption has even been employed in the formulation of middle-class identity as a form of social practice (Brosius, 2010, Fernandes, 2001a). As a marker of identity and aspiration, consumption

is seen not only as an indicator of financial wellbeing but also as a symbol for 'having arrived'.

Commentators argue that the practice of consumption offers not only a marker of being able to afford goods but is also seen to afford cultural and symbolic capital to the middle-class consumer (Brosius, 2010, Fernandes, 2001a, Donner, 2011, Van Wessel, 2004). These forms of capital – cultural and symbolic – that the middle class negotiates and values are vectors of middle class identity formation. Consumption has been utilised by multiple fractions of the middle class as a symbol of middle-class-ness and is also examined as a form of social practice that unconsciously binds fractions of the middle class, in the process creating boundaries between fractions. Bourdieu's theory of class and distinction explicates the relationship between social practice and class identity and boundaries. In his book - *Outline of a Theory of Practice* (Bourdieu, 1977a) – Bourdieu lays out the process undertaken by individuals in determining the symbolic value of products that are consumed and how the act of consumption links to class. The products that are consumed (both in the tangible and symbolic sense) offer the consumer forms of capital through which their own status in society and ability to distinguish is established. However, the ability to access these forms of capital for consumption is limited by ones habitus; the unconscious embodiment of class that determines social practice and, as I have mentioned earlier, the ability to value and negotiate various forms of capital. Through an analysis of how these forms of capital are valued and how their value is negotiated (in terms of the products that are consumed), there is scope to and value in providing an analysis of the relationship between class and the environment in India. A large number of the studies on class and consumption have facilitated identification of the middle class beyond economic and occupational indicators but it is only one of many markers of middle class identity.

Donner's edited book *Being Middle-Class in India. A Way of Life* (2011) includes a series of studies that use Bourdieu's theoretical tool of cultural capital (Bourdieu, 1986) to explore a variety of other markers of identity such as femininity and women's roles within the structure of families, for example.

This thesis explores another form of cultural capital that is negotiated and valued by the middle-class: the environment. It is a theoretical approach that is both relatively new in the broader literature and offers uncharted terrain specifically for studies on environmental values.

Understanding the middle class' relationship with the environment

There has been some analysis of how the middle class values the environment (Rangarajan, 1996b). However, much of this work focuses on the decades following India's independence and the 1970s (when early wildlife legislation was drafted). There has been limited work on the contemporary middle class' relationship with the environment and how supporting structures like the formal education system are integrated into socio-political processes that relate the environment to the middle class. The more recent studies on this topic have either looked at small segments of the middle class such as visitors to national parks or members of bird-watching clubs or taken a broader, theoretical approach to examine the Hindu-isation of religious movements and politics and Hindu environmentalism (Mawdsley, 2004, Mawdsley, 2009b, Mawdsley, 2009a, Urfi, 2012). Meanwhile, limited work has been done on the influence of middle-class environmental agendas on domains such as the management of urban spaces (Baviskar, 2004, Truelove, 2011, Ghertner, 2011, Ghertner, 2008). As a result, many questions remain to be answered on how the environment, as a form of social practice, embodied in the habitus of individuals, helps to locate fractions of the middle class. It is worth repeating that little attention has been given to how the environment features as a

form of everyday middle-class social practice, especially on the relationship between daily experiences and immediate concerns and environmental responses; what Agarwal (2005) describes as 'environmentality' and the interplay between habitus and environmentality is particularly relevant for the analysis in this thesis. It is in the everyday social practice where the symbols of the environment are defined and located as a form of cultural capital and in the habitus of individuals. Moreover, while there are studies on specific middle class groups (e.g. bird watching clubs), there is the need for a deeper examination of the way that class and class characteristics influence (and are influenced by) how the environment is conceptualised and symbolised. This thesis will address these questions by examining how the middle class in Delhi, in their everyday relations and practices, conceptualise and value the environment, in addition to why they do so. It also offers an analysis of two additional fractions of the middle class – members of two wildlife clubs – to provide evidence of variegation and an exploration into how the environment serves as a symbol to mark distinctions between these fractions.

Bourdieu's theorising on social class is significantly bound to the role played by education in reproducing class boundaries and characteristics (Bourdieu, 1984). There are few studies on the reproduction of class in India through education. The work of LaDousa (2007, 2014) offers some insight into the role played by language in the education system and in reproducing class structures while Srivastava (1998) explores the Doon school (an all-male prestigious boarding school in India).as a post-colonial enterprise However, there has not been an analysis of environmental education in the Indian context and how the pedagogy and content influence the framing of class characteristics or boundaries or how it may facilitate the reproduction of class. This

thesis also aims to address these questions. In doing so, it offers a unique insight into the role that environmental education plays the process of class reproduction.

To examine these underexplored areas in the relationship between the middle class and the environment, this thesis focuses on three main questions:

1. How is the environment discursively framed within the formal education system and how is class reinforced through the content and practice of education?

2. How and why does the middle class value the environment?

3. How do members from sub-groups in the middle class - unique sites of production (as Bourdieu suggests) - re-negotiate and reframe the value of the environment?

In answering these questions, the thesis provides a fresh understanding of how the identity of fractions of the Indian middle class is constructed and reproduced, through the lens of the environment. Four key approaches were taken to answer these questions. The first of these was adoption of a theoretical approach. This uses Bourdieu's tools of cultural capital and fields in the context of the Indian middle class, testing to what extent the approach (given its historical limitations) has the ability to conceptually engage with the complexity of societal changes in contemporary India. More recent approaches have used Bourdieu's theoretical tools to varying degrees to explore the values and identities of the middle class in India. However, this approach has not yet been applied to exploring the relationship between the Indian middle class and the environment. In using this approach this thesis provides fresh insight on class formation in India as well as on middle class environmental values, demonstrating various forms of habitus that are embodied in different class fractions while also showing how local subjectivities inform particular environmentalities (Agarwal, 2005). The environment, I then argue, becomes a concept through which "[…] seemingly

contradictory resources of "tradition" and "modernity"" are played out (Liechty, 2003: 4). The second approach is methodological. The thesis takes a case study approach that adopts ethnographic tools and takes a grounded theory approach to analysing the data derived from the fieldwork, in order to engage with fractions from within the middle class in India. Again, while heterogeneity has been acknowledged in the literature, few studies have attempted to methodologically tease out this variegation. A case study-based approach provides the opportunity for direct comparison of subgroups within the heterogeneity. The third approach is the engagement with formal schooling on environmental education, which is as yet an under-developed area of scholarship. Finally, the fourth approach is a deliberate focus on everyday environmental practices of the middle class, which remains unexplored in literature on Indian middle-class environmental values, which facilitates reflections on Agarwal's (2005) notion of 'environmentality' and how subjectivities manifest as particular forms of environmental awareness. Together these approaches unpack the heterogeneity of the middle class using the lens of the environment to facilitate an exploration into how class fractions are delineated and what role the environment (as a symbol) plays in facilitating the variegation.

Outline of chapters

The literature review (Chapter 2) sets out the theoretical background and prior relevant work, to provide adequate context for the study. I start by discussing theories of class, suggesting that Marxist approaches, which have traditionally been employed in the Indian social context, are inadequate in unpacking the complex interplay of economic, cultural, religious, and symbolic factors that intersect in contemporary Indian middle-class identity formation, particularly the production of cultural capital. Like more recent scholars (Brosius, 2010, Donner, 2011), I recommend, to some degree, the

use of Bourdieu's theoretical framework of *Distinction* (Bourdieu, 1984). The deployment of Bourdieu's concepts of habitus, cultural capital, and fields of cultural production help to provide insight into the process of Indian middle class identity formation as it relates to the environment but, I argue, offers one perspective, which draws on habitus and embodied practices. There is still active contestation on how identities are linked to the environment as it relates to space and access to resources and many of these contestations are actively discussed by respondents. I argue that this active contestation − forms of environmentality − demonstrates how the constantly-changing social, cultural and political landscape in India fuels anxieties over identity and therefore, ways of utilising markers like the environment to reformulate and assert identities. . I then review the literature on the middle class in India with an emphasis on its heterogeneity, the variety of literature as well as conceptual and methodological difficulties that scholars face in providing nuanced accounts of its values and characteristics. In reviewing more recent literature I focus on the cultural production of the value of consumption: a key marker of middle class identity, paying particular attention to the role played by cultural and religious practices in framing environmental concepts. Finally, I provide an account of the literature on environmental values in India and chart the history of middle-class engagement in environmental issues. This review highlights that while the most recent research on the middle class' relationship with the environmental has provided insight into the *how* of middle-class environmental value formation it has provided little insight into the *why*. As I have said earlier, the second research question asks how the middle class (and its various fractions) values the environment, in order to provide more than a descriptive account of what values are held, to then enable a discussion on how these values are either embedded or actively contested in the process of class and identity formation and negotiation.

Following the literature review, Chapter 3 lays out the methodological approach to data collection and analysis in this thesis. In terms of data collection, an ethnographic, case study based approach was adopted given the proven utility of such methods in elucidating the values of the Indian middle class. However, this study uses these methods working with different groups from within the middle class: residents of two middle-class neighbourhoods from different income groups, members of two wildlife clubs, and students from three schools. In terms of data analysis, a grounded theory approach, employing some ethnographic methods, is taken as a result of exploratory nature of this thesis. The approach ensures that the theory is developed from the ground, i.e. the data to help further understand *why* the middle class value the environment.

The Case Studies

The first case study of the thesis, also the first analytical chapter, asks: How is the environment discursively framed within the formal education system and how is class reinforced through the content and practice of education? This study is presented in C*hapter 4: The reproduction of class characteristics through environmental education in schools*. Here, I worked with three schools (one government and two privately-run, fee-paying schools). Data collection and analysis included student questionnaires, focus group discussions, textual analysis of the students' environmental studies textbooks. This chapter sets out the ways in which economic capital influences students' relationships to the environment, which in turn, affects how children from a particular social class symbolise and relate to the environment. Here, I argue that economic capital facilitates the differentiation in class through opportunities available to students and, therefore is a site of reproduction of class characteristics.

The second case study is laid out in the next two analytical chapters. They both contribute to answering the question: How do members from fractions in the middle class - unique sites of production (as Bourdieu suggests) – define, negotiate and symbolise the environment? This case study examines how individuals in this fraction discursively frames the environment as it manifests in their daily lives and unpack what embodied practices influence the conceptualisation of the environment as it links to identity formation. I discuss how the discursive framing of the environment creates symbolic boundaries particularly between the lower and middle class. Additionally, the potential value of the environment as a form of cultural capital to facilitate distinction (in the Bourdieuian sense) is also recognised by this fraction of the middle class, which is evident in how they choose to associate with the environment as a concept, as a *sanskara*. The recognition of potential value, I state in the chapter, suggests the desire to distinguish one-self from others. The ways in which this sub-group defines and understands the environment is also influenced largely by proximate, quotidian concerns and suggests rules and norms for different sets of people (poor and middle class) for both 'inside' and 'outside' the home and for general civic space. I argue that both this form of environmentality and associated habitus is particular to the subjectivities that these sets of individuals experience. I refer to this class fraction as overtly tactical environmentalists. I also suggest that the concept of the environment is utilised as a tool to mark out difference from other class fractions (particularly the poor) in overt ways, an anxiety, I argue, that derives from a society in constant flux. Those who engage in a wider set of environmental activities utilise and value the environment in ways that are broader, offering other ways in which cultural and economic capital can be accumulated beyond marking out difference from the poor or relating to their local, proximate concerns over space and access to resources. However, the environment is

utilised not only to mark out difference between the middle and lower classes but also within this fraction of the middle class, with representations of the environment (as proximate concerns) being deployed as a form of cultural capital and hence these individuals conceptualise the environment to enable distinction in the Bourdieuan sense. The first part of this case study is presented in Chapter 5: *Overtly tactical environmentalism: the environment and being middle class*. Here the focus is on exploring how the middle class is variegated and consequently environmental values and are not framed consistently across sets of middle-class individuals. I engage with residents from the two middle-class colonies, examining everyday relationships with the environment of two sub-groups within the middle-class. Using this methodological approach the analysis in the chapter actively engages with the heterogeneity within the middle class in India, exploring divergences and commonalities in values. It uncovers how middle-class individuals frame and negotiate various symbols of the environment to distinguish themselves in practice and values from the lower classes (as being embodied difference that cannot be actively learned). In addition, it reveals how middle-class individuals in the constantly-changing landscape engage with direct, proximate concerns over the environment as discussing a form of environmentality that engages with these subjectivities.

The second part of the second case study is presented in Chapter 6: *Shuddh, Swacch, Saaf Dilli: cleaning and greening as markers of middle class-ness*. Here the analysis continues to look at the narratives of residents of middle-class Delhi neighbourhoods in addition to advertisements of popular products that have environmental messages, and the government's clean-and-green campaign. This is done in an attempt to explain understand how the environment, framed by this fraction of the middle class, is reinforced by narratives offered by the public media, and also

institutionalised in political governance processes. I draw on work by Kaviraj (1997), Chakrabarty (1992) and Dickey (2000) to discuss how cultural practices that are framed as rules and norms play out in these residential colonies, framed as embodied practice. I also discuss Ghertner (2008, 2011) and Agarwal's (2005) work helps to better understand how this particular form of environmentality is influenced by local subjectivities, manifesting more explicitly in legal rules, for example. This examination, using both Kaviraj (1997) and others' work and Ghertner (2008, 2011) and Agarwal's (2005) work, helps to provide an explication of how the middle class discursively frames the environment, using the symbols of 'clean' and 'green', drawing on embodied practices that are framed around the rules of the inside and the outside. These rules relate to religious/cultural practices that link to class and caste. In addition, contemporary socio-political processes also inform environmental responses whether they are in the legal domain or in how the environment is conceptualised and defined as a tool to mark out use of space and access to resources.

The final case study of this thesis focuses on answering the question: How do members from sub-groups in the middle class - unique sites of production (as Bourdieu himself suggests) - re-negotiate and reframe the valuing of the environment? This study is presented in *Chapter 7: Wildlife enthusiasts and overtly tactical wildlife enthusiasts: the social practice of wildlife-club membership*. The analysis shifts to how the environment is symbolised and valued by middle-class individuals belonging to wildlife clubs. Through examining the narratives of the environment developed by members of both clubs this chapter presents two additional discursive narratives of the environment that these fractions from within the middle class develop to establish how they are different. The first fraction, which I refer to as overtly tactical wildlife enthusiasts, utilises economic capital in an attempt to accumulate cultural capital as a means to

distinguish itself from other middle class fractions. These individuals discuss the environment using the language of deep-ecology and spiritualism and neo-traditionalism. These individuals share similarities with the environmental values of a global middle class while also drawing on cultural practices like pilgrimages, linking the environment to the act of undertaking a pilgrimage, similar to what Ann Grodzins Gold (2000) describes in her book *Fruitful Journeys: The Ways of Rajasthani Pilgrims*. I argue that the way in which the environment is conceptualised draws actively on global discourses of the environment, also reflecting embedded social, cultural and religious norms that, I suggest, are embodied practices; what Bourdieu refers to as habitus. This class fractions' decision to trade economic capital for cultural capital demonstrates that the environment is valued as a form of cultural capital. Their overt, tactical approaches to distinguish themselves from other class fractions in the process of identity-creation suggests not only a form of environmentality that draws from specific subjectivities but also the embodied practice of environmentalism as pilgrimage. The second fraction in this case study, who I refer to as simply wildlife enthusiasts, frame the environment using the language of wildlife conservation science, taking on an older, pragmatic conservationist approach. In defining the environment through wildlife conservation science, members of this club create both real and symbolic boundaries that inhibit membership. These individuals embody the environment, drawing on a both subaltern and post-colonial wildlife conservation discourses to talk about the environment and implicitly referencing rules of 'belonging' to a particular group of people who they deemed to be environmentalists.

The final chapter concludes the thesis, summarising its key findings. In doing so, it returns to the three research questions that the thesis sets out to answer. This thesis hopes to make a significant original contribution to the literature on Indian middle-class

identity formation, environmentalisms of the middle class in India, and the role of the formal education system and environmental education in reproducing class characteristics. Fundamentally, this thesis argues that the environment, for various class fractions is embodied in different ways, drawing on social and cultural norms that are linked to caste and class in relation to framing person-hood (what I refer to as *sanskaras* or practices that produce embodied personhood, although these *sanskaras* also form part of discourse and can therefore be consciously reflected on and spoken about they also form part of the deep structure of personhood that resembles Bourdieu's habitus). However, the environment is also a concept that is defined by subjectivities and anxieties relating to the constant flux of the social, political and cultural landscape in post-liberalisation India. For some fractions it is evident that they reflect on the potential that the environment has as a cultural symbol to offer distinction and therefore, using symbols of the environment that are available to them based on their habitus, tactically formulate and establish their distinction from within their class fraction as well as other fractions. These two drivers – habitus and environmentality – offer a nuanced explication of the reason *why* the middle class frame and value the environment in ways that this thesis highlights.

Chapter 2   Class and the environment in India: situating the middle class, its values and markers of identity

"The Indian middle class, like the middle class anywhere in the world, is differentiated in terms of occupation, income and education. But the peculiarity in India is its diversity in terms of language, religion and caste. It is by any reckoning the most polymorphous middle class in the world. The problems of the contemporary middle class derive as much from this polymorphy as from its roots in India's colonial experience" (Beteille, 2001a: 5).

India's emerging middle class has grown rapidly in recent decades and its impact on the environment is of increasing concern (Chinchkhehe, 2013, Mahbubani, 2014). While on the one hand the scholarship on the middle class and middle-class values in India is diverse there is limited focus on the environmental values of the middle class more specifically. Mawdsley, who has been exploring this area of academic interest since 2004 has more recently urged scholars to do more research on the environmental values of the middle class, suggesting that the heterogeneously constituted middle class needs to be unpacked further when exploring the relationship between environmental values and the middle class (Mawdsley, 2009b). This is not meant to suggest that environmental values have not been explored but rather that the focus has primarily been on the environmental values of indigenous communities and, to a lesser extent, the environmental values of the Nehruvian, post-independence middle class, which has now grown to include a wider set of groups, referred to as the 'new' or emerging middle class. This chapter examines the current literature on the middle class in India, taking particular interest in the literature on their environmental values. Before undertaking this review, the chapter provides an overview on broader theories of class. I provide an overview of Bourdieu's theory of social class, which is embedded in his theory of

distinction. Specifically, I focus on the role that Bourdieu's theoretical tools of habitus and cultural capital can serve in better understanding class characteristics and identities. In addition, I also draw on Mark Liechty's work (2002) in Nepal that explores the heuristic of class to discuss the contradictory positions of "modernity" and "tradition". In doing so, I look at the cultural and religious norms that are embodied by various class fractions as they encounter rapid changes in their external environments and how these cultural norms manifest using the lens of the environment. In order to look at the manifestation of embodied cultural and religious norms I draw on work by Kaviraj (1997), Chakrabarty (1992), Dickey (2000) and Gold (2000) as they discuss notions of person-hood and identity as it intersects with caste, religion and religious practices. Finally, I follow the discussion with an examination of the literature on environmental values in the Indian context, drawing out, more specifically, middle-class attitudes, environmental values, and behaviours. In doing so, I identify the gaps in the literature, which this thesis will seek to address.

Bourdieu's theory of social class: cultural capital and the classificatory struggle in stratification in society

Bourdieu's influence on the discipline of sociology has been significant. His theories on education, class, and culture have triggered renewed interest in and innovative approaches to the conceptualisation of social stratification and power in society. To Bourdieu, class is the core analytical category to explain individual agency, identity, social relations and conflict in society. Class fractions result, Bourdieu (1984) argues, from middle-class individuals attempting to distinguish themselves from other individuals from within the same class (and also, in some instances, from other classes) in what is a 'classificatory struggle'. This classificatory struggle is on-going and is a key functional component of Bourdieu's understanding of power and mobility between class

fractions. Bourdieu borrowed the concept of status and symbolic value from Weber's theory of stratification (which included class theory) theorising that both the material and the symbolic were instrumental in defining and framing class characteristics and boundaries of class. In addition to drawing together the symbolic and material as determinants of class, Bourdieu also shifted the analysis of class from identifying class boundaries *a priori*, to identifying class through commonalities of social practice. In shifting the gaze, Bourdieu challenged a prevailing approach to class theory that sought to demarcate boundaries between classes, which he stated was a false project that was driven by political agendas and was therefore sociologically problematic (Weininger, 2005). Bourdieu suggested rather that the aim of working with concepts of class was to recognise collectivities and commonalities in social practice as ways of recognising social groups rather than theoretically defining class boundaries *a priori*.

Bourdieu draws on collective social practice as a marker of class location. That is, his examination of an individual's social practices and habitus facilitates the identification of an individual's class location. Individuals located within these classes or boundaries are, Bourdieu posited, in a constant 'classificatory struggle' to establish their identity and distinction. It is the habitus of the individual through their daily practices and struggles that help the researcher locate boundaries of class. The study conducted by Savage (2000) refines the empirical approach to Bourdieu's theory of class analysis by offering what he refers to as an individuated analysis of class formation where class boundaries are identified through relational variables (values or actions that are discussed or identified as different and either superior or inferior to the values or behaviours of others) that individuals devise through social practice. Individuals, Savage argues, are constantly positioning themselves in relation to others "committing practices of symbolic violence against them" (Savage, 2000: 106).

Individuals, he argues, are, therefore, "socially constructed by distinguishing themselves from the 'non-individual'" (Savage, 2000: 107), for example distinguishing between high-culture and popular culture. In this approach class is implicit in how individuals interact and act within the collective rather than a "heroic collective agency" (Savage, 2000: 107) towards which individuals mobilise. In fact, these social distinctions may not even be apparent to individuals themselves since they embody these distinctions and engage in social practices unconsciously. Bourdieu argued that individuals are constrained by hidden structures, which he referred to as habitus, through which they act. Habitus, which I discuss in more detail shortly, can be thought of as an embodied structure through which individuals act but this structure is hidden to the individual and therefore not one that is consciously engaged with social interactions. It is the embedded and subliminal nature of these struggles over distinction that makes it harder for actors to recognise or situate themselves within broader class boundaries in which these struggles take place. In the Indian context, this discussion is particularly important, given cultural, religious and social norms that often guide social practice (Dickey, 2000). In the Indian context class has been a heuristic in much of the literature and studies on social organisation and action. Collective class identity and values have routinely formed the explanatory framework through which social groups are identified and in some cases criticised. For instance, Varma (1998) is critical of the values of the new middle class on the grounds that what he sees as positive, collective middle-class values of the Nehruvian period are being eroded and no longer emulated in the post-liberalisation India. I posit that a repositioning of the analytical lens to examine the individual rather than the collective is key to understanding Indian class boundaries given that class characteristics are in fact implicit in individual social practice. The

repositioning of the lens also allows an exploration of the juxtaposition of modernity and tradition.

Bourdieu has been recognised for a variety of unique contributions, ranging from the unique methodological approaches in his ethnographic work to his departure from the established methodological and philosophical approaches of both his peers and predecessors. Two key points from Bourdieu's work that influence the approach taken in this research are: the rejection of the dualism of objectivism and subjectivism and the drawing together of the material and symbolic. Bourdieu recognised the objectivist rendering of the world, acknowledging the influence of the forces of objective and 'real' structures in society on actors. In doing so, Bourdieu acknowledged the need to uncover these systems of relations (as one would with facts) to determine and explain the actions and behaviours of individuals (Wacquant, 1998). On the other hand, Bourdieu also drew on subjectivist approaches that emphasised that social reality was constructed and consolidated from the actions of individuals in the system and not from the objective social structures in which they acted. In recognising the relationship between objective structures (as explanatory sites for social relations) and the subjectivity (seen in the actions of individuals, which come together as a whole to explain society and social relations), Bourdieu devised the theory of habitus, fields, rules, doxa and capital (Bourdieu, 1984).

The second dualism that Bourdieu challenged in his work was that of the material and the symbolic, which drew inspiration, as I have said earlier, from Weber's idea of the status groups. Weber theorised that economic capital was key in locating an individual in class but two further dimensions – status (honour) and power (mainly defined as political power) influenced life chances overall. Bourdieu brought together the notion of status and economic capital into a broader theory on capital and the

various forms of capital (Bourdieu, 1986) including cultural and symbolic forms, bringing together the materiality inherent in economic capital and the symbolic nature of cultural products that, he suggested, influenced class locations.

Class is a core concept for Bourdieu, used to understand stratification in society and to demonstrate empirically how power and resources (material and symbolic) were unequally distributed between social groups. To Bourdieu, differences between individuals (their lifestyles, actions, and social practices) could be seen as different class fractions. These differences (drawing on Bourdieu's approach to draw together subjective and objective approaches) help draw a link between class location and what Bourdieu referred to as 'habitus', and a link between 'habitus', through how it was embodied by individuals, and various practices and social relations in what Bourdieu referred to as 'fields' of cultural production. The practices in these various 'fields', Bourdieu postulated, helped to establish symbolic boundaries and through it status groups, restricting access for those individuals who did not have the appropriate linguistic capabilities, i.e. habitus, to participate in the fields. The process of establishing symbolic boundaries by attempting to distinguish an individual from another is what Bourdieu called the 'classificatory struggle' and is an instrumental way through which power in society is exercised between class groups. Habitus, fields and capital are core concepts in Bourdieu's theory of social stratification and class. Given the importance of these concepts, I now turn to consider their formulation and appropriateness as a method of analysis in this research project.

Habitus and Fields: the structuring structures of class

Bourdieu's early work (especially *The Logic of Practice*, 1980) engages with *in situ* knowledge, codes and symbols of functioning in societies. Suggesting that cultural practices cannot be adequately captured by only an 'objective' analysis of

anthropologists and sociologists seeking to understand 'culture', Bourdieu introduced the idea of *habitus* that, along with various forms of capital - economic, social, cultural and symbolic - are intrinsic to how an individual belongs to a particular social group (or not). Habitus is the conceptual tool that Bourdieu utilised in explaining the embodied nature of class and social stratification that is tacit and deeply embedded in individuals. Habitus is a complex term that Bourdieu himself conceptualised and deployed in numerous ways. It is central to his theory on class, power and culture and a widely used definition is: "systems of durable, transposable dispositions, structured structures predisposed to function as structuring structures, that is, as principles of the generation and structuring of practices" (Bourdieu, 1977a: 72). The quote highlights the layers and complexity inherent in how Bourdieu conceptualised habitus, i.e. 'structured structures predisposed to function as structuring structures'. The key element that is worth noting in the quote is how Bourdieu recognised the subjectivities of structured structures that predispose an individual to function and practice in a way that in turn structures social engagement and relations but is then framed again as being influenced by these social realities in which they operate. Smith (2001) has offered another way to consider habitus as "[…] a set of resources and dispositions that we carry around with us, in our minds and bodies, which we can apply in diverse social settings" (Smith, 2001: 136). In using the concept of habitus to explain how class characteristics are embodied and deeply embedded and deployed in a subconscious manner in different social practices and settings, it becomes quite clear that not only is habitus an enabling tool, to identify location of class but it is also a key determinant (or inhibiter) in class mobility. However, it is important to recognise that there are implications to the nature of economic, political, and cultural change, which affect identity-making and class fractions in the Indian context. Bourdieu's (1984) theories on class must be located in

1960s and 70s France, where class dynamics and identity-making were situated in a more stable and less dynamic landscape than contemporary India. This point brings me to the idea of class mobility as an extension of class fractions, where Bourdieu has been critiqued by some commentators like Bohman (1999) and Bouveresse (1999). These commentators argue that in conceptualising habitus as subconscious and deeply embedded Bourdieu limits individual agency in his theory of social class and mobility, which, in the Indian context, does not facilitate a nuanced engagement with concepts of modernity, particularly around identity-formation and modernity. Mark Liechty's (2002) book *Suitably Modern: Making Middle-class Culture in a New Consumer Society* explores the relationship between "traditional", deeply embedded norms and a "modernist", consumer society (much like the Indian context) examining how the two contradictory concepts co-exist in Nepali society. Furthermore, in Indian society that is also fractured along caste and religious lines it is important to recognise how these deeply embedded *sanskaras* are embodied in notions of person-hood and identity in relation to the environment and class (Chakrabarty, 1992, Dickey, 2000, Kaviraj, 1997). I will return to these concerns around individual agency, caste, religion and class in India later in this section but first introduce the concept of capital, which is key to understanding how objective structures are linked inextricably to habitus.

Bourdieu (1986) conceptually formulates an economy of symbolic goods and its relation to the economy of material goods. He discusses the production and accumulation of symbolic goods and capital, the conversion of symbolic capital into power and other forms of capital in the pursuit of distinction (Brubaker, 1985). In developing this theory of the relationship between the symbolic and the material, Bourdieu lays out his understanding of how various forms of capital influence power in society and how, in turn, this power is embodied, further produced, and reproduced.

Bourdieu's idea of capital is a key analytical tool in his theory of class. In defining capital Bourdieu writes:

> "Capital is accumulated labor [*sic*] (in its materialized form or its "incorporated," embodied form) which, when appropriated on a private, i.e., exclusive, basis by agents or groups of agents enables them to appropriate social energy in the form of reified or living labor" (Bourdieu, 1986: 241).

Simply put, capital is a language, a form of social relation used in an exchange system or structure (like a society) that could be both material and symbolic in nature (Barker, 2004). The accumulated asset (i.e. capital) serves as currency in establishing and accumulating power and status in society. There are four forms of capital that Bourdieu discusses – economic, cultural, symbolic, and social (Bourdieu, 1986). Economic capital refers to the money and finances that one has at one's disposal while social capital is based on the networks that an individual may belong to; the people that one knows. The unique contribution of Bourdieu's theory of class, which recognises the importance of economic capital in differentiation, is the notion of cultural capital. Cultural capital, unlike economic and social capital takes years to acquire (if at all) and probably poses the strongest barrier to social mobility as it is deeply embedded in the very identity of the individual, both influenced by ones habitus as well as influencing ones habitus in turn. Cultural capital, however, is a negotiated form of value and is accessible to those who possess the habitus to value it appropriately in order to accumulate it. Cultural capital can be evidenced, for example, in how the value of a material good can transcend its simple universal, objective value. Rather than identifying a universal, objective aesthetic on which value is conferred to a product, cultural capital confers subjective value to a product that in turn lends authentic value and consequently establishes a normative understanding of what it means to have

'cultural taste' (Barker, 2004). Through various dimensions of social life, which Bourdieu calls 'fields', cultural capital is created, negotiated, and accumulated by actors in attempts to assert cultural legitimacy, and consequently distinction within the boundaries of their class fractions. Fields are, very broadly, arenas in which individuals engage in the cultural production of value; for example, the field of opera offers to those who have the habitus to recognise its symbolic value as a form of high art a means to demonstrate, negotiate and accumulate capital by engaging in activities (for example attending operatic performances) and therefore reinforcing their habitus as well as offering the potential to distinguish themselves from others within the class fraction as well as other class fractions. If the field is the market place, cultural capital is the currency that one might use to become richer and habitus is the innate ability to know how to communicate in the market to ensure a profitable exchange. Through these three core concepts – habitus, capital and fields - Bourdieu analyses the structure of social reality and its relationship to his theory of class. In Bourdieu's rendering of habitus as a signifier of class as well as the deeply embedded, embodied and subconscious nature of the structure, is, arguably, an implicit recognition of the inability to be reflexive and actively engage in mobility, for example, recognising what forms of cultural capital would aid in movement into a superior class fraction. Even when Bourdieu addresses the issue of reflexivity, he states that this too is a form of cultural capital that is inherently held in ones' habitus and therefore not a universally accessible form of capital. There is a key point to note here is the ability of individuals to recognise that there are characteristics and forms of social practice that are inaccessible, alien, or opaque to them, that other individuals engage in through which these individuals accumulate various forms of capital. An example of this would be recognition of an individual of how individuals from another class fraction may attend the opera but not

understanding why or what could be derived from such a social practice. Bourdieu, in fact identifies this reflexivity when studying what he refers to as the hyper-correctness of the petit-bourgeoisie (Bourdieu, 1984; Bourdieu et al., 1990). He identifies forms of mimicry employed by the petit-bourgeoisie, which he characterises as a reflexive response that is indicative of how the petit bourgeoisie recognise how the bourgeoisie are characteristically different and therefore attempt to 'be like' them.   However, Bourdieu does not build on this revelation. He maintains that even the ability to be reflexive and consequently act on power and subversive forms of domination is a form of cultural capital that is tied to ones' habitus. In limiting his definition of reflexivity to a form of cultural capital, commentators like Adams (2006) argue, Bourdieu's otherwise nuanced theory of class and stratification falls short of being more widely explanatory in its analytical structure, being limited by the historical context from which it derives. By allowing space to explore reflexive action, where there are clear anxieties about identities and how they are constantly being challenged by changing landscapes, there is scope to arrive at a more nuanced understanding of class, identity and the environment in India. I suggest that this is a key critique and also, consequently, development in the application of Bourdieu's theory of class that facilitates the ability to explain and conceptualise what in the Indian context is a dynamic social and political landscape. This key development is important in the context of this thesis as it holds explanatory value that not only draws on deeply-embedded notions of class, caste, religion and identity but also engages with how these identities contend with processes of modernity.

In the Indian context there have been multiple sociological approaches – Marxist and Bourdieuan – that have been employed in conceptualising individual action, values and social structures, as well as anthropological insight into the relationship between identity and caste and religion (Dickey, 2000). The notion of class-consciousness,

which is a concept that Marx draws on particularly when exploring the values of the proletariat (E.P.Thompson's work on the working class in Britain (1963) is also a good example of this notion of class consciousness), has been widely utilised in explaining individual values and identities in India. This can be seen in India, in some instances like the *bhadralok* in Bengali society that individuals proudly subscribe to (Sarkar, 1997). Misra's seminal book titled *The Indian Middle Classes* (1961) charts a history of the middle class in India, drawing clear boundaries between the historical growth of the middle class in the West and that of the Indian middle class. Misra (1961) takes a predominantly Marxist approach in examining what he refers to as social groups during the colonial period, grounding the ideological and social role of these groups in the historical processes of colonial India. The growth of the educated class in 1905 (he refers to this watershed period) is also seen by Misra (1961) as another factor that helped frame the boundaries of the middle class, who he now suggests, actively pursue their interests as a class, actively rejecting the interests of the peasants or lower classes. From this group of the educated middle class Misra identifies the lower and upper middle class, distinguished by their allegiance to either revivalist traditional values (like that exemplified by the Arya Samaj) or to Western values and lifestyles. Again, Misra does not discuss the middle class solely within the framework of the means of production, drawing, for example, on notions of status and identity. Bourdieu's (1984) understanding of class repositions the lens from looking at relations to production, to looking at culture and lifestyle as indicators of one's statues and hierarchy in society as a defining feature of note. The use of culture as a marker of class is very useful in a study of contemporary Indian society. It is the association between markers of environmental awareness and situating oneself in relation to a class, I claim, that makes

environmentalism in urban Delhi more than just an ethical, moral or situational consideration but establishes it as a vector of class distinction

The growth of the middle class in India: heterogeneity, values and measurement

The Indian middle class poses a problem for researchers who see class solely through the lens of labour and capital.[1] The Marxist approach to understanding social interactions and framing class problematises how those in the middle are conceptualised, conflating their interests and power with those in a position to exploit. In India, those in the middle, given shifting economic power, social relations and occupations, are often not owners of capital themselves and yet wield power in the political and social spaces but are still distinct from the elite. This interesting group eludes conceptual and empirical nuance when viewed primarily through the Marxist lens. This also makes the middle class a particularly interesting social group to examine, which is reflected in the diversity and breadth of the literature on the middle class in India.

It is worth noting that the middle class in India is not a contemporary phenomenon and the formulation and characteristics of the middle class along with methods used to identify and examine them have changed and continue to change. These changing approaches are indicative of the changing nature of the middle class and the increasing complexity inherent in their composition, their characteristics, values and proclivities. As early on as Misra's book *The Indian Middle Classes* (1961), the recognition of this variegation was acknowledged in the use of the term 'classes'. Scholars have explored the existence and growth of the middle class from pre-colonial to post-independence with a growing body of literature now on the post-liberalisation

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[1] Of course one can argue that this approach encounters limitations in most contexts.

middle class. As Beteille (2001a) states in the quote at the start of the chapter, the contemporary middle class is as influenced by the liberalisation phenomenon as it is by being historically-bound. It is important, therefore, to chart the history of the growth of the middle class in India, particularly reflecting on the composition and its values. Historical studies of the middle class have largely focussed on the roots and growth of the middle class, drawing out social markers of the pre-independence middle class but there has been limited study of the culture and values of the post-independence middle class with the notable exception being the work of Breckenridge (1995) on modernity and the culture of consumption in India.

On examining the pre-colonial period (eighteenth and nineteenth centuries) Bayly (1983) offers a revisionist account of the social and economic processes in India demonstrating the nature of capitalist development and organisation of society envisioned primarily through the Marxist lens. His study demonstrates the confluence of class, caste and religion in colonial India, with the existence of a middle class that is uniquely Indian in nature. Bayly explores the values of this pre-colonial middle class suggesting, from the meagre references at his disposal, that one can infer they valued austerity and frowned upon conspicuous consumption although whether they practiced modesty is not easily evidenced (Bayly, 1983). This is, arguably, the first attempt to explore the values of the middle class in India. A more recent study by Markovits (2001) delves further back in Indian history, identifying an entrepreneurial, trading class in pre-colonial India who are traditionally drawn from a particular caste, given the predominance of *banias* (the trading caste) involved in trading. Using the interweaving of caste and occupation Markovits (2001) facilitates the recognition of this mercantile group as middle class. These historiographies offer an initial foray into the growth of the colonial and post-colonial middle class, identifying them within economic and

occupational markers. While this offers an interesting historical analysis, fundamentally the reason why the middle class as a social category is so pertinent is because of the power that this class wields; this power does not come from economic strength rather, as I discuss below, the ability of members of this group to be what Joshi (2001) calls 'cultural entrepreneurs' or mobilise as a group for collective action. It is this peculiarity of the middle class that I now turn to discuss, first through a discussion on nationalist identity as a key site of identity formation for the middle class and then from the perspective of consumption as a key marker of identity.

Nationalism and nationalistic identity was the primary the lens through which the scholarship on the middle class explored shifts in societal structures and processes in the 1980s. The political and social conditions of the 1980s, best represented by the upper-caste, lower middle-class student riots of the 1980s and a rise in Hindu nationalism (Corbridge, 2000), stimulated academic interest in the makings of middle-class identity with the focus on religion as a marker of their identity. This was important as it helped relocate the conceptual understanding the middle class from being simply a social group to an analytical category through which social and political processes could be better understood. The middle class as an analytical category was now starting to be examined through the process of identity formation and practice of valuing symbols and actions, which give meaning to the idea of belonging to a particular group (Donner, 2011). This central theme of nationalism preoccupies the early work of Jaffrelot (1996) particularly the rise of Hindu nationalism as a key feature of the post-independence middle class of the 1980s. Mankekar (1999) continues the exploration of nationalism in her book, which examines the Mandal Commission and the destruction of the Babri Masjid, a key moment in the history of the rise of Hindu nationalism. A shift in the conceptual approach taken to examine the middle class took

place through an exploration of nationalism and nationalistic identities in relation to political and social processes, which much of the literature on the period of the 1980s engages with. Studies on society in the 1990s built on the conceptual approach taken to examine the middle class.

The study that characterises the early literature on the middle class of the 1990s is Varma's book: *The Great Indian Middle Class* (1998), which presents a critical view of the values of the post-Nehruvian and post-1990s middle class. An 'old' versus 'new' middle class divide narrative emerged in the literature following it. According to Varma, nationalism serves as a defining feature of the values of the 'old' middle class. Varma argues that the post-independence, Nehruvian middle class was defined by its nationalistic sentiments, the Nehruvain socialist ideal of nation over self while the 'new' middle class is driven primarily by personal motivations of advancing ones own life chances over that of the nation. Varma's critique has sparked significant debate in the literature and has not been without its critics. Hansen (1999) responds to Varma's valorisation of the values of the post-independence, Nehruvian middle class by situating the rhetoric of growth and progress - the cornerstone of Nehruvian ideas of nation-hood - in middle-class identity formation. Hansen suggests that class boundaries, post-independence, were established through the language of progress and nationalism, which was integral to Nehru's vision for India. Anti-colonial sentiments, which were exhibited by the nationalists during the independence movement, were superseded in the post-independence period by narratives of the 'poor,' 'uneducated' and 'ignorant and superstitious' masses impeding the growth of the Indian state unless educated and 'civilised' (Hansen, 1999). This narrative was important as it recognised the political importance of the illiterate masses by imagining India as a 'people-nation' and therefore egalitarian and inclusive yet creating class boundaries through identity markers hat were

defined in the language of progress and being progressive. The narrative, Hansen (1999) argues, sought to maintain the hierarchy of the middle class by excluding the masses from political and cultural processes by virtue of their backwardness and religiosity (Hansen, 1999). This inherently Marxist distinction between the poorer proletariat and the progressive bourgeoisie helped to practically construct class boundaries, by legitimising the roles played by different classes in the nation state. Hansen (1999) argues that belonging to the social world of the middle class itself was determined by the ability to recognise and appreciate the 'authentic spirit' of India, which was exclusionary since only those who had the ability to identify the 'spirit' were middle class. Therefore, in the Nehruvian spirit, all Indians were equal and any individual was allowed entry into the middle classes. However, the barrier to entry was the ability to recognise the 'authentic' spirit of India and Indian-ness, which was, tautologically, based on nation over self and the progress of the nation and all people with the nation. Varma's preoccupation with the values of the new middle class in turn also valorise the old, Nehruvian middle class, which as Hansen suggests is problematic as the narrative of civic consciousness and nation over individual was itself constructed to create and reaffirm boundaries of class. In the literature that traces the growth and characteristics of the middle class and society more widely, in India, it becomes clear that class is a core analytical concept and explanatory and conceptual variable. It is important to recognise this preponderance over class in the literature as it evidences how Indian society is, generally, fractured and driven by the dynamics of class. I now turn to the discussions of the new middle class in India, which is predominantly viewed through its culture of consumption.

Consumption and the 'new' middle class

In the previous section, I discussed how the literature on the middle class in India has seen a conceptual shift from examining the middle class through income, occupational categories and nationalism to a more contemporary understanding. This includes engaging with the middle class as lens into exploring social structures, power and identity in society. In this section I discuss the literature that frames the middle class through the lens of consumption, which commentators argue, is a key signifier of middle class-ness in a post-liberalisation, globalised Indian society. Consumption is a visible sign of change in the public space through which has been explored the discursive narrative of advertising (Mazzarella, 2003, Mankekar, 1999, Brosius, 2010), the sheer growth in levels of consumption that fuels liberalisation processes (Lakha, 1999), and an exploration of public culture as a site for analysing the identities of the middle class (Breckenridge, 1995, Appadurai, 1986). Analyses on advertising and everyday practices of the middle class have helped situate the role of consumption more centrally when drawing out discursive narratives of middle-class identity (Van Wessel, 2004, Donner, 2011).

Through the process of liberalisation it is important to recognise the influx of global consumer culture and its relationship to new middle-class identity. As Chatterjee (2008) states: "a complex set of phenomena generally clubbed under the category of globalisation have created both new opportunities and new obstacles for the Indian ruling classes" (Chatterjee, 2008:53). The complex set of phenomena that Chatterjee (2008) refers to is as being framed under the category of globalisation is examined in more detail by Sinha (2015a) to better understand how the State apparatus, political structures and processes are reframed and restructured and in what way that creates space for civil society and a shift in political power. As part of the neoliberal project, Sinha (2015a) states that the State "[…] streamlines its bureaucracy, undertakes new

public management reforms, and becomes more accountable and transparent. It concentrates on core functions, and opens out increasing space for private (including international) capital and NGOs, in carrying out its production, reproduction and redistribution functions" (Sinha, 2015a:166). This opening of space for civil society shifts power and economic resources in the hands of the middle class in India; the main recipients and benefactors of globalisation processes. The shift in power manifests as quasi-legal and political structures like the Residents' Welfare Association (RWA), what Sinha (2015) refers to (and I paraphrase) as a model form of neoliberal civil society (Sinha, 2015b). Shifting power structures challenge identities and access to resources; an analytical lens that Liechty (2002) takes to examine what he sees as the struggle with what it means to be middle class as individuals negotiate tradition and modernity in Nepal. This struggle is also evident between class fractions in India as a constant push-and-pull to assert and dominate, what Kaviraj (1988) suggests is an internal dynamic to class politics in a post-colonial Indian context, which is particularly relevant in this post-liberalisation period. Castells (1998) states that with globalisation and the liberalisation of the economy, urban behaviours, what he refers to as 'urban culture', provide a lens through which consumption and relationships with particular forms of consumption serve as indicators of what it means to be middle-class, with a common identity and sets of behaviours. Sometimes these behaviours, in globalising cultures have the potential to transcend national borders (the trans-national middle class), with some middle class fractions identifying with a global middle class and drawing actively on what are seen as legitimate, middle-class practices and behaviours.

On the one hand there is the notion of consumption as cultural capital and serving as a lens to explore what it means to be middle class. No doubt there is the basic requirement of economic wherewithal to afford commodities but these commodities

themselves offer meaning, without which, commentators argue, their value to a consumer is limited. Fernandes (2001a) examines the global middle-class consumer that Castells refers to, in the Indian context, offering an interesting narrative of the role played by the state in reframing what it means to be middle class through the shifting sands of the liberalisation process of the 1990s, what Sinha (2015a, 2015b) builds on as he examines the political structures that facilitate a particular power structure that legitimises particular middle class groups and their identities and politics. I discuss this notion of the global consumer versus the Indian middle class in more detail in Chapter 7, as it relates to a particular fraction of the middle class and how they frame their identities. In talking about the post-liberalisation middle class, Fernandes clarifies the composition of this new middle class in India as simply a "discursive production of a new cultural image of the [old] Indian middle class rather than the entry of a new social group to this class" (Fernandes, 2001a: 90), echoing Liechty's (2003) theoretical approach and findings for Nepal. The structural shifts in the economy and the sites of employment, production to service sector for example, have helped reframe what it means to be middle class by interweaving the results of the liberalisation process to the new spaces of consumption and practice for the middle class. Through the process of liberalisation, Fernandes suggests, middle-class identity has been reframed to suit the broader economic agenda of the state in which consumption plays a significant role. Libersalisation processes have opened up the Indian economy to global consumer culture, which is itself a site of analysis. Mazzarella (2003) explores this mix of the global and Indian forms of consumption using an anthropological study of the consumer market and advertising in a post-liberalisation India. The unique nature of the construction of the Indian market, Mazzarella (2003) suggests, helps to both reaffirm the importance of the local advertising industry as well as characterise the Indian

consumer as different from a 'global' consumer, which raises the issues of identities (national and international) and the role played by consumption in framing these identities.

In the late 1980s and early 1990s, the Indian government made significant macro-economic policy changes. These changes mark what is most commonly referred to as the post-liberalisation period. This policy course seismically shifted the economic and social landscape of the country. Along with an increase in wealth (per capita and GDP, albeit very unevenly distributed) came an influx of goods, information on international lifestyles, consumption practices and behaviours. The rise in purchasing power was given and continues to give rise to substantial media attention with business analysts discussing the consumption capabilities of the middle class and potential for growth (Dani, 1997, Lahiri, 2014, Waldman, 2005, Robinson, 2001) while others express concern about the ability of the middle class to draw on positive environmental values to temper the onslaught of economic and industrial development (Dani, 1997). In addition to market and economic analysis of the impact of growth in the middle class, academic interest also increased, starting to recognise the middle class as a social and cultural phenomenon (Beteille, 1996). This interest in the middle class and its proclivities and values has been significantly influenced by the most significant shift in behaviours, which is the ability to consume and the role played by consumption in defining status (Van Wessel, 2004, Brosius, 2010). The relationship between consumption and class is complex. The act of consumption itself offers a glimpse into how commodities are valued and the role that they serve in constructing boundaries between class fractions. Appadurai (1986) discusses this construction of commodities when he talks about the 'social life of things', stating the meaning that commodities have and are constructed to have in the process of circulation and consumption. The

symbolic identity that commodities embody and, more importantly, are imbued with is actively created, Bourdieu (1984) too suggests, in the construction of class boundaries. In the Indian context consumption preoccupies scholars on the middle class and various elements of social and economic life are unpacked to better situate the role of commodities and consumption in discourses of middle-class identity formation.

Bourdieu's (1984) theoretical tool of cultural capital and concurrently the utilisation of cultural capital to determine characteristics of class and identity has been recently deployed in explorations of middle class-ness more recently in India (Brosius, 2010, Donner, 2011). While Marxist and Bourdieuian theories have both been utilised in examining and explaining middle-class formation, identity and values the figurative thorn in the intellectual endeavour has been the role played by caste as an organising principle in Indian society. Caste plays an important role in Indian society and often determines occupations, income and social standing and access to groups. It is inextricably tied to some of the other social markers mentioned earlier – occupation, income and so forth, but needs to be singled out primarily because of it's importance in India (Jeffreys, 1998). This thesis examines caste identity as an integral, embodied practice that is tied in with other forms of social practice. Caste, through the Bourdieuian lens, I would argue, is a core component of ones habitus; the lens through which individuals perceive the world.

Many accounts have morally condemned the values of the middle class based on these studies on the physical and monetary volume of consumption (Kumar, 2004, Dani, 1997, Varma, 1998, Bidwai, 1999, Prasad, 2004, Rangatia, 1998, Wynne, 1998). Vilifying accounts of the crass consumption trends of the middle class are scattered through the literature. For example Kumar states that

"the urban elite have become very callous. They do not want to see the other

India and close their eyes to what exists at their doorstep. They are selfish and blinkered and see nothing but their consumerism. They now understand only that progress means consumerism and the commodification of everything" (Kumar, 2004).

What is interesting is the antagonism associated with consumption, which is widespread in the literature on the 'new middle classes' in India. If one were to examine the consumption patterns of American consumers, for example, moral arguments are very few, focussed on issues relating to per capita ecological footprints, for example, which relate to consumption but on the environmentally degrading nature of consumption. In India, however, there seems to be the remnants of a Gandhian sense of ascetism in the moral elements of the debates outlined by commentators, what would seem like the classificatory struggle resultant from the changed socio-political and cultural landscape, described by Chatterjee (2008) as he critiques what he refers to as the passive revolution. Consumption, as a marker of middle-class identity is an important site of analysis in the literature. The act of consumption is itself imbued with value and the ability to recognise what and how to consume is, fundamentally, influenced by the habitus. The value to a consumer, from the act of consumption (in addition to the material value) is the cultural capital that can be accumulated in the process. Bourdieu's framework of habitus and cultural capital underpins many of the studies on the relationship between middle-class identity and consumption in India. In relation to the middle class in India, the environment is an area of academic interest that has been less explored. While the middle class and society more widely has been examined in light of contemporary processes and events, particularly through the lens of consumption, this interest has not been seen in the quantity and variety of studies that have used the lens of the environment. I now turn to look at where the literature on the environment and

society has been focussed, in turn, identifying the gaps in the areas of analysis.

Environmentalism and environmental values in India:

There is a wealth of literature on the history and historiography of environmental movements in India. On the one hand is a vast set of literature on the environmentalisms, discussed through historiographical accounts of pre-colonial and colonial history (Arnold, 1995, Gadgil, 1995, Gadgil, 1994, Gadgil, 1992, Guha, 1983b, Guha, 1999, Guha, 2000). More recently urban environmentalism, particularly focussing on middle-class values, has drawn the attention of a variety of scholars, as the materiality of living in urban areas becomes an integral facet of individuals' experiences of the environment (Chapman, 1997, Baviskar, 2002, Truelove, 2011). Another set of literature on Indian environmental values is driven again by the urban experience, focussing this time on Indian environmental laws and pollution (Agarwal, 1985, Sharan, 2005, Sharan, 2002, Ghertner, 2011, Ghertner, 2008). Explorations of the relationship between religion and environmental values has also given rise to another set of studies, deconstructing religious texts like the Upanishads or examining the role of pilgrimages in social practice, to discern types of environmental values that are implicit in them (Tomalin, 2004, Narayanan, 2001, Nelson, 1998, Sharma, 1998, Sullivan, 1998, Agarwal, 2000, Gold, 2000). No doubt there is scope to have wider discussions about each of these sets of discussions, but I focus on neo-traditional environmental values, bourgeois environmentalism, urban environmentalisms, and identify formation through religious and social practice, which were key aspects of environmental relationships that respondents focussed on, implicitly and explicitly, during the course of this research.

Neo-traditionalism and the history of environmental movements in pre and post-colonial India

Access to and management of forests has proven to be a rich source of material for scholars. Gadgil et al. (1994) and Guha et al. (2000) provide what have become seminal accounts of pre-colonial and colonial histories and historiographies of forest use and relationships between those in close proximity to forests and the forests from the perspective of the subaltern, giving voice in their revisionist accounts to indigenes. These historiographical accounts offer what Guha refers to as an "alternative and sometimes oppositional framework for more fully understanding both the 'full-stomach' environmentalism of the North as well as the 'empty-belly' environmentalism of the South" (Guha, 2000: xxi). These re-examinations have given rise to a pervasive set of arguments about the ecologically sensitive values underpinning the relationship that those who depend on forests for their survival have with the forests, evidenced by the creation and management of sacred groves, for example (Ghosh, 2005, Jalais, 2005, Gadgil, 1994). This body of literature has given rise to what Sinha et al. (1997) refer to as the 'neo traditionalist' (also referred to as the new-traditionalist) account of environmentalism in India. Gadgil (1994, 1992), Guha (1999, 1992, 1983b) and Shiva (1991), among other commentators, key interlocutors of this approach, purport a harmonious human-nature relationship, based on mutual respect, which is solidified in social practices like the caste system (for example). This form of environmentalism, they suggest, not only structures societal relationships, but also serves a utilitarian purpose of monitoring resource-use. Many indigenous communities, authors state, live in close proximity to their environments, depend largely on local, natural resources and are therefore more vulnerable to changes and degradation. These 'ecosystem people,' by virtue of this close and directly dependant relationship with forests exhibit an ecologically sensitive understanding of the environment, evidenced by many well-known grass-root environmental movements like Chipko in Uttaranchal, the Silent

Valley project in Kerala, and even the Narmada Bachao Andolan in Madhya Pradesh and Gujarat (Shiva, 1991). Shiva states "it is the marginalised communities who retain ecological perceptions of nature at a time when the more privileged groups have lost them" (Shiva, 1991: 54). This revisionist account of history has offered, as I demonstrate in Chapter 7, a narrative of romantic environmental values that still pervasive and appealing but as Sinha et al. (1997) warn, a simplistic account of history that offers a homogeneous, unproblematic version of indigenous Indian culture. There are multiple critiques that offer less harmonious accounts of these pre and post-colonial relationships to problematise the neo-traditional accounts (Nanda, 2003, Sivaramakrishnan, 1999), which I will not dwell on for reasons that the focus of this thesis rests on the middle class. Nonetheless, the neo-traditional narratives are important to note as they present a pervasive set of ideas that have influenced legislation (Rangarajan, 1996b) as well as approaches to conceptualising the symbols of the environment that are bound to and characterise particular groups of people in society (I return to this idea in more detail in Chapter 7).

Bourgeois environmentalism: forests and national parks

I now return to look at the literature on middle-class relationships with the environment. It bears repeating here that the middle class as a category in post-independence India cannot be neatly transposed to the contemporary or 'new' middle class.[2] It is at best difficult to draw lines between those that make up the post-independence and contemporary middle class, particularly since the post-independence middle class was drawn from an English-speaking populace whose occupation was a common marker while the new middle class includes individuals who come from a

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[2] See Fernandes (2000) for one approach to delineate boundaries, which attempts to exclude new entrants (groups moving into this social category) in the analysis.

variety of occupational backgrounds, income groups[3], values of consumption and, as this thesis suggests, sets of environmentalisms. This is largely the result of the effects of liberalisation, enabling greater social mobility and inclusion into the middle-class category by virtue of their income.

The term bourgeois environmentalism, or more simply, the environmentalism of the middle class has a long history in India. Early accounts of middle-class environmentalism are evident primarily in the articulation of wildlife conservation practices. A historiographical account of wildlife conservation provides early demonstrations of middle-class environmentalism (Rangarajan, 1996b, Rangarajan, 1996a, Saberwal, 2003, Rangarajan, 2002). Rangarajan (2001) charts the historical development of wildlife conservation, discussing the role played by the post-independence middle class in supporting early wildlife conservation laws[4] in addition to supporting the delineation of national parks and legislation to create and maintain these boundaries. Rangarajan (1996b) refers to this middle-class interest highlighting four forms of environmental relationships that various groups from within the middle class exhibited, what he calls the constructionist, pragmatist, urban intelligentsia, and the rural activist. State-driven, exclusionary forest-management techniques, such as creating pristine national parks, excluding even those indigenous people traditionally dependant on the spaces, was driven largely by early conservationists in the 1970s, helmed by Prime Minister Indira Gandhi. While there was middle-class acceptance of these methods the view was tempered by field biology approaches and what Rangarajan (1996b) refers to as pragmatic conservationist ethics, which strongly believed in

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[3] Given that the income category for being in the middle class is very wide, ranging from INR2,00,000-10,000,000 (approximately USD4,000-21,000) per annum Shukla (2010)

[4] The first wildlife act was passed in 1972.

wildlife management with the support of local people although wildlife conservation remained the primary concern. The second breed of bourgeois environmentalists – constructive environmentalists – believed in utilising local, indigenous communities and their traditional, combined with modern management techniques to manage national parks. The fundamental difference was the shift from thinking about these spaces as pristine nature to those in which local indigenous Indian knowledge was important for management and protection. The third form of bourgeois environmentalism – exhibited by the urban intelligentsia – is an interesting variant of the environmentalism exhibited by constructive environmentalists. This set of individuals embodied a closer, more immediate relationship with rural groups and were fundamentally critical of development processes where local tribal populations were unable to effectively manage national parks as a result of state-led development, leading to widespread destruction and endangerment of wildlife. This form of environmentalism draws on the neo-traditionalism narrative to legitimise its own narrative and is, interestingly, critical of middle-class environmentalists who envision a pristine image of nature, forests and national parks, which are devoid of human presence, often treating national parks as amusement parks and spaces for recreation. The final form of bourgeois environmentalism is represented by rural activists, who, Rangarajan (1996b) states, are directly involved in the protests and struggles to establish and (re)claim the rights of indigenous people in forests and national parks. What is interesting in these four forms of environmentalism is the varying degree of interest that the middle class have in sympathising with local, indigenous people – from seeing national parks as pristine spaces to seeing them as integrally bound to the local people and their livelihoods. These forms of bourgeois environmentalism continue to be explored by Mawdsley (2009b), for example, in a recent paper but this area of inquiry suffers from limited

academic engagement and this thesis contributes, largely, to this body of literature to examine, to some extent, the relationship between forms of environmentalism and fractions of the middle class.

Non-governmental organisations also embody forms of bourgeois environmentalist values with activists like Narain, for example, critiquing the model of development adopted by the Indian government, suggesting that the solution lies in challenging the economic and development paradigm which espouses the expansion of the market and economy with little or no emphasis on engaging with the detrimental consequences of such growth (Narain, 2002). Narain suggests the importance of freedom of information, speech, the right to protest, and the tools of the judicial system in providing a platform for members of civil society to contend with the bureaucracy.

Despite a near unequivocal acknowledgement of the heterogeneity of the middle class in the literature, this heterogeneity is not adequately represented in the literature on the environment and environmentalisms. There are a few studies that explore smaller fractions of the middle class, for example, those groups that exhibit explicit environmental behaviours like being members of bird-watching clubs (Urfi, 2012), visitors to national parks (Mawdsley, 2009b) or those that actively engage in urban political structures that deliver environmental outcomes (Mawdsley, 2009a). Some assumptions continue to be made; for example bourgeois environmentalism that includes an interest in wildlife and conservation has traditionally been attributed to the upper middle class or so-called 'cosmopolitan elite'. However, Mawdsley and colleagues' work (2009) looking at the new, growing phenomenon of visitors from the lower and middle-middle class to India's national parks – so-called 'frivolous picnickers' – illustrates that environmental behaviours are now being exhibited more widely across the middle class. This is just one study that demonstrates how prevailing

assumptions obscure complexity and therefore the urgent need to deliver more in-depth micro-level research derived from middle-class actors. In order to deliver this nuance from within the middle class it is important to recognise identity formation and its relationship to various symbols to which value is attributed. This interaction between symbolic value and identity is key, I argue, to more sophisticated forms of analysis in identifying stratification within the middle class. The aim is to demonstrate a fundamentally relational approach to distinguishing one-self from the ordinary through markers of identity, particularly through the establishment of cultural, and consequently, symbolic capital. This thesis commits to unpacking the homogeneity that is inherent in the approach taken in established literature by looking at the particular relationships (with the environment) that are held by individuals across the middle class.

Brown environmentalism

While environmentalism of the urban middle class is also a form of bourgeois environmentalism, i.e. middle-class environmentalism, more recently the travails of living in an urban centre has given rise to its own form of environmentalism, that is inextricably linked to brown concerns over poverty, dirt and pollution, which transcends class boundaries. More recent scholarship examines the impact of rapidly growing urban centres on the physical environment within cities, access to resources for urban residents and those having to bear the physical and environmental cost of the pressure on resources (Baviskar, 2002, Sharan, 2005, Fernandes, 2008). Water management and ownership rights over water have gained significant import over the last decade with visible deterioration to water bodies (rivers, ponds, groundwater) and availability of water to a large percentage of urban dwellers (Agarwal, 1985, Saha, 2007). Anxieties over access to resources and the everyday realities of living in polluted spaces have given rise to a particular form of middle-class, urban environmentalism that is evident

in the management of public space. The middle classes have increasingly been seen to dominate the manner in which the urban landscape and images have been designed and the politics which focuses on the notion of urban cleanliness, pollution and greening (Baviskar, 2002, Sharan, 2002, Prasad, 2004). Anxieties over the physical and social environment in Delhi, for example, are often also expressed in anti-poor terms making analogies between physical dirt and the 'dirty' masses (See Chapter 5 and Narain (2002)). Environmental concerns have also been changing with increasing emphasis on what Chapman et al. (1997) refer to as the 'brown agenda.' The 'brown agenda' has also been raised by Narain (2002) on examining the changing nature of environmental concerns – from rural/wilderness, forests and wildlife, to urban pollution and dirt (Narain, 2002). Baviskar (2005) also looks at the nature of environmental concerns shaping the public debates on what constitutes environmentalism. She says

> "(r)ather than contrasting the 'environmentalism of the poor' and the 'environmentalism of the rich' as Guha does, I would argue that the two are in fact interconnected. Environmental movements that rely on metropolitan support build alliances with the rich who have an interest in imagining heroic people and pristine places elsewhere, so that their own patterns of resource use are unaffected." (Baviskar, 2005: 174)

Therefore, urban imagery of greening, cleanliness, dirt, and urban poverty and squalor provide one lens through which to explore the values and concerns of the middle-class urban resident. Apathy and disregard for poverty and a distinct anti-poor bias, linked to individualism and consumerism, is what Sharan (2001) refers to when he characterises the middle class in Delhi, which he examines through court rulings and litigation appeals in Delhi and the relevance of the appeals to the middle class in Delhi. The individualism associated with middle-class values and concerns which now shape the

mind-set of the middle-class consumer is surmised in the following quote: "the middle-class Indian flees from modernity of the mind. Freedom terrifies him because it demands individual responsibility. Collective responsibility offers a security that is difficult to resist" (Robinson, 2001). It is also interesting to see the role played by civil society organisations in expressing urban middle class sentiments in campaigns to change the management and spatial ordering of the city (Veron, 2003, Ghertner, 2008, Ghertner, 2011). The majority of the studies on the contemporary middle class suggest the influence of this social class in the social, political, public, cultural, market, and physical spheres.

Another area of academic interest in the environmentalism of the middle class in India is the advertising space and the nature of environmental information being communicated in the media. Chapman's (1997) study on environmental reporting in the print media provides an interesting response to what are vilifying representations of the middle class. The frequency of 'environmental' reporting in newspapers and the 'environmental' content in advertisements, he suggests, points to a growing social conscience among the middle class, which although not indicative of environmental concern, could help in identifying with the basis of values which may be shared (Chapman, 1997). The evidence is visible in the range of advertisements with environmental content and articles relating to environmental issues in the city both to provide information and help in taking action (Surf, 2005b, Surf, 2005a, Survey, 2005, Reporter, 2005, Horizon, 2005, GoI, 2005, Editorial, 2005, Dani, 1997, Chidambaram, 2005). However, in response to Chapman's more environmentally positive outlook for the Indian middle class, Rangatia (1998) offers an alternative, less positive explanation. Rangatia (1998) argues that this spate of what she refers to as 'green consumerism' in the Indian market seems to be just a new "avatar of India's consumer market [rather

than] an indicator of environmental awareness" (Rangatia, 1998: 30). The article quotes producers of eco-friendly products (for example Nerolac's Allscapes paints) who suggest that the reason why the market is immature has to do with the Indian consumers still not being environmentally conscious. This lack of concern, in Rangatia's article resonates with Varma's (1998) claim that the 'new' middle classes can be identified through their lack of social and environmental awareness. However, the idea that 'green consumerism' is a current trend, which cannot be sustained or is at an early stage, as consumers are still not environmentally conscious is speculative at best in addition to offering only one facet of a more nuanced narrative on not only how environmentalisms manifest but why they are held. There are many examples, more recently, of the rise of interest in various forms of the environment. For example, the introduction of NDTV's Greenathon, the increasing reference to environmental messages in advertising for products, the environmental stories on the news channels, and the rise in the number of high profile environmental cases in the judiciary and political proceedings. All these examples represent forms of middle-class interest in the environment, given the role of the middle class in influencing market, judicial and political processes, evidencing growth and/or more public displays of environmental interest. While Rangatia's claim may very well be representative it is yet a speculative claim, towards which there is limited study and analysis.

An alternate perspective to that taken by Rangatia (1998) is the notion that the market is catering to a cultural demand for environmental knowledge, which from a Bordieuian perspecitve could be seen as a sign of taste for entry into a social group thus indicating the role played by environmental capital in creating and affirming middle-class identities. Of course, this claim too is as yet untested and unexplored in the studies on middle-class environmentalisms. This major gap in the literature is where this thesis

is situated and aims to add value.

Person-hood, identity, space and class

Identity, space, and vectors of class (including caste and religion, for example) are all intricately woven together. These interwoven concepts bring together ideas of modernity and cleanliness, taming and order, ritualism and caste, public and private, and social order and rules. The colonial/imperialist project, for example, sought to tame public spaces into places of order and cleanliness that could be controlled and managed (Chakrabarty, 1992) and manifested in the formation, for example, of *maidans* (open, green spaces), which Kaviraj (1997) discusses in the context of Calcutta. Burgess et al.'s (1988) paper on urban spaces and parks also refers to the relationship between modernity and urban green spaces, which is another narrative that is woven into contemporary debates on the use of public spaces, particularly parks. Dickey's (2000) study of middle-class Madurai and rituals of the home examines the implicit notions of person-hood and identity that manifest in social practice that involve servants, practices both inside and outside the home and the roles that various individuals legitimately play in these spaces, that are embodied and manifest as ritualistic practice (for example, gendered roles that are linked to cleaning the house, lighting the evening lamp of prayer etc.).

Public spaces are imbued with meaning that manifests as rules and norms that often vary for different social, class groups. Sudipta Kaviraj (1997) discusses what he sees as explicit ways that the rules of public spaces in particular are challenged by "everyday […] contest[s] between a bourgeois order of the middle class and those who flout its rules" (Kaviraj, 1997: 84) thereby identifying norms that certain social groups set for public spaces and ways in which these norms are then challenged by other social groups. A historiographical account of public spaces in Calcutta provides a narrative of

the process of normalisation of rules, dissent and contestation and the power structures that frame relationships between social groups (Kaviraj, 1997). It is important to recognise that space and its use in contemporary Delhi, particularly in residential colonies, is under contestation and in constant flux. In highlighting the contestations, Ghertner (2008, 2011) explores how the middle class utilise the legal framework in framing and delineating boundaries of public space and rules around access and entry (using nuisance laws, for example). Similarly, Srivastava (2009) and Mawdsley (2009) and Mawdsley et al. (2011) look at how the *bhagidari* system of governance facilitates specific middle-class narratives that stigmatise the poor and labourers who work as servants in the residential colonies. I build on these studies to explore how the environment as a conceptual category serves to further strengthen the rule-setting for these spaces and also how, in addition, it serves as a form of cultural capital to help differentiate individuals from within class fractions as well.

Rules and norms in public and private spaces are also linked to cultural and religious practices, particularly focussing on the concept of dirt. Chakrabarty (1992), for example, explores how the idea of dirt is inextricably linked the 'outside'. Using the example of household rubbish, Chakrabarty (1992) identifies the boundary between inside and outside the home as a way to mark clean spaces from dirty spaces, with the inside of the house being clean. This is not simply marking out hygienic spaces, Chakrabarty (1992) states, rather it marks out auspicious practices that differentiate the rules of the outside and the inside that, in turn, denote spaces of cleanliness from spaces of dirt. He says the "colonialists and the nationalists were repelled by what they saw as the two predominant aspects of open space in India: dirt and disorder" (Chakrabarty: 1992: 544) and attempted to re-order and control both – physical dirt and people. Notions of cleanliness and auspicious acts, in turn, extend to individuals and social

groups that overlap with identities linked to caste and gender. For example, the uneasy presence of servants from lower classes in the otherwise 'clean' space inside the home was closely managed and regimented by the women in the household (Dickey, 2000). It is these *sanskaras* (traditions) that are embodied by people, framing identities, clarifying rules and norms in relation to how various fractions of society interact with each other, and maintain embedded power structures between fractions. I return to these sanskaras in the following chapters as a key point of discussion. I use the term *sanskara* as practices that produce embodied personhood. Although these traditions also form part of discourse and can therefore be consciously reflected on and spoken about they also form part of the deep structure of personhood that resembles Bourdieu's habitus.

Conclusion

In general, accounts of the middle class in India are scathing in their representation of an increasingly individualistic and kitsch consumer class. With an emphasis on consumer trends, contemporary middle-class values seem to be seen largely as individualistic attempts to maximise personal benefits and gains. While this may very well be the case it is incumbent upon researchers to adequately recognise the roles played by practices like consumption in wider society and what values, then, are associated with these practices. In the Indian context where 'tradition' and 'modernity' are uncomfortably juxtaposed it is becoming increasingly important to recognise the role played by culture and tastes in the formation of the middle class and some attempts have more recently been made to explore the nature of consumption among an important marker of identity, particularly using Bourdieu's theory of cultural capital and taste, which has facilitated more nuanced understandings of normative positions and everyday practices of the middle class. However, while Bourdieu's theoretical approaches offer insight into embodied norms and social practice there is also an active

contestation that class fractions are involved in that manifests as environmentalities. It is by examining both embodied social practice and active contestation I argue that the environment is a vector of class distinction.

Studies on the middle class in India, particularly middle-class environmental values, are relatively unexplored, with more interest being shown in recent scholarship by Mawdsley (2009b, 2009a) and more recently Truelove et al.'s (2011) article on urban environmentalism and the role of political processes in enfranchising the middle class and their interests. While concluding her analysis, Mawdsley (2009b) suggests the need for greater scholarship and analysis in this critical area. It is important to recognise that while the physical and economic volume of the middle class is undeniable the true importance of their influence rests with deeper examination of their aspirations and their values, in which the environment plays a critical role.

This thesis offers an application of Bourdieu's theory of social stratification and class in the Indian context that examines a vector of middle-class identity that is not consumption. In doing so, it contributes to the literature on social class and stratification that focuses on the application of Bourdieu's analytical tools. Additionally, this thesis also offers insight into how and why fractions from within the middle class engage more actively with the symbol of the environment, contributing to the literature on the middle class in India as well as the study of environmental values and environmentalisms of the middle class.

Chapter 3   Methodology: Discussing the environment with middle-class respondents.

This chapter sets out the methods used to collect and analyse data for this thesis. By its very nature this is an exploratory thesis, attempting to shed light on the ways in which urban middle-class Indians relate to the environment, asking the basic research question: how do urban middle-class Indians relate to the environment? Additional questions that help frame the larger question within the context of the current literature are:

1. How is the environment discursively framed within the formal education system and what forms of identity are developed through the content of environmental education?

2. How and why does the middle class (and fractions of the middle class) value the environment?

3. How do members from sub-groups in the middle class - unique sites of production (as Bourdieu suggests) - re-negotiate and reframe the value of the environment?

The aim of this thesis is to unpack cultural and social norms that are woven into narratives of the environment from within a heterogeneous Indian middle class. One cannot simply put together a 'recipe book' of methods for a research project that aims to draw out hidden cultural and social norms (Shurmer-Smith, 2003). It is essential that the researcher gains an intimate understanding of the subject, in this case social life in middle-class Delhi, and then is able to deconstruct the unwritten text of this social life. To try to achieve the project's aims, an ethnographic, grounded theory approach was used to collect and analyse data. This chapter describes the process that went into

designing the framework for data collection as well as the approach used to analyse the data.

The chapter is divided into six sections. The first three sections provide the background to the research and the process of developing a set of research questions as well as the preliminary research process that was adopted prior to developing a framework for the thesis. The next two sections explain the use of an ethnographic, case study-based approach and the practical implementation of the approach including the selection criteria for the case studies. Finally, the last section explains the data analysis methods and the approach taken to thematically structure the data, including the process used to structure and write the thesis.

Why this research topic?

In late 2003 I was involved in an ESCR-funded project managed by Dr. Emma Mawdsley and Dr. Glyn Williams, which aimed to explore middle-class environmental values in India. My contribution was to examine the nature of environmental information available on television and the forms of environmentalism that these channels and programmes were promoting. It became very evident that information on the environment in the public media explored the scientific and natural forms of the environment while civil society movements and NGOs (like the Centre for Science and Environment in Delhi, India) discussed issues like air pollution, the health of cities and farmer suicides as environmental issues. It seemed to me that there was clearly a disconnect as well as un-investigated area for inquiry – the middle class and its environmental values.

My primary interest in environmental issues was wildlife filmmaking and the industry in India, including the kinds of people who were involved in such a niche industry. I spoke to wildlife filmmakers and anchors of popular wildlife programmes on

television and realised very quickly that the primary incentive guiding the voices of these individuals in the industry was to educate what they saw as an uneducated and uninterested, yet hugely important group of people – the middle class. It seemed that every research process pointed towards the nexus between the middle class and the environment in India. This thesis was born from these early encounters.

Preliminary Research: the pilot:

After an initial review of the literature and discussions with wildlife filmmakers, as well as my involvement in the ESRC project, it became clear that there was limited original research on what middle-class Indians understood of the environment or how or why they 'valued' the environment. To explore the potential for a study of the middle class in Delhi, a pilot project was designed and completed during a month long visit in July 2004. Preliminary questionnaires were piloted in Munirka, a middle income, middle-class Delhi colony, where I resided. The participants were provided with background information on the project (i.e. it focussed on people's environmental concerns, whom they thought was responsible for the environment and whom should be made responsible etc.). Ten questionnaires were given to residents visiting their local grocery store in C Block. The questionnaires were discussed with the respondents at the market and they were asked to provide feedback on the clarity of the questions and what issues they considered relevant to their understanding of the project. Following the pilot study, responses to the questions were examined and then re-framed. This visit also included meetings with an environmental organisation called Development Alternatives, which had helped to set up vermicomposting pits in middle-class colonies, to understand the relationship that NGOs have and the role they play in middle-class colonies.

From the information gathered during both the pilot and the earlier ERSC-funded work, a preliminary overview of environmental anxieties of middle-class Delhites was established. I then had discussions with my supervisor to consider the approach that I could take in order to forge a more nuanced understanding of middle-class Delhites' relationship with the environment.

The ethnographic, case study approach:

Following the preliminary overview, the research project was refined, with focus and emphasis given to exploring specific relationships between particular communities within the middle class, and the environment. Case studies are a useful method when the research question is either descriptive or explanatory (Yin, 2012: 5). Three case studies were chosen to provide both depth and nuance in order to understand middle-class relationships with the environment and to answer each research question of this thesis. The first case study explores the potential role for formal education in inculcating environmental values and in reinforcing boundaries and characteristics of class through environmental studies. I worked with three schools – one government and two public schools (fee-paying). The case study has been developed with an examination of the curriculum and discussions with students (see Chapter 4). The second case study examines daily life and lived-relationships with the environment and to explore the extent to which variations could be seen according to varying levels of income. There has been limited ethnographic research that explores this relationship, to explore the heterogeneity that is acknowledged and yet relatively unexplored in the literature (see Chapter 2). To address this question, two residential colonies were selected to be compared – one from a middle-income group and one from a higher-income middle-class group (see Chapters 5 and 6). Vasant Vihar was an upper-income middle-class colony where I both conducted research and lived and Sarita Vihar, a

middle-income middle-class colony, was also involved in the research. I provide more detail on these colonies in later in this chapter. The third case study was designed to examine particular forms of environmental values exhibited by individuals choosing to join environmental clubs (see Chapter 7). This case study further explored the claims of bourgeois environmentalism associated with the middle class, made in existing literature (Rangarajan, 2002, Mawdsley, 2004, Mawdsley, 2009b). I worked with the World Wide Fund for Nature (WWF), a well-known wildlife club with international credentials, and the Indian Wildlife Club (IWC), an online wildlife club.

Case studies can undoubtedly suffer inadequacies such as being too context specific, being non-generalisable and being especially prone to researcher biases (see Flybgerg 2006 for a thorough review). Nevertheless, the case study approach remained the most appropriate method to answer the research questions in this thesis. When exploring identity formation, values and behaviours it is absolutely essential that the analysis is situated in the context (here for example middle-class Delhi colonies). This lends the most authenticity in understanding social processes since theory in this instance is inextricably linked to context (Bourdieu, 1977a). The salience of the context in such research cannot be overstated. Certainly researcher bias is a concern in case studies as it is in most research methods. I recognise research bias is problematic here and I was cognisant of this throughout the data collection and analysis. I discuss biases, subjectivities and reflexivity in detail in the following sections. For this thesis, the pre-requisite knowledge and immersed interest of the researcher is key in understanding norms and behaviours that would otherwise be hidden to an outside observer, as I discuss in more detail in the next section. Finally, there was no intention to use the findings of the project to claim a universal theory on attitudes towards the environment either in India or more specifically, urban India. The intention is to demonstrate how the

environment serves a purpose in very situated contexts (wildlife clubs, residential spaces, schools etc.) towards identity formation. The case study of Delhi, although potentially providing preliminary insight into attitudes towards the environment in urban India, has to be treated with a certain degree of caution because of the diversity both within the country and even within Delhi, which this study cannot and does not capture adequately. It provides an important initial examination of the nature of environmental concerns within an urban Indian context.

Any methodological framework designed to explore the complex nature of value formation of any kind (including the environment) needs to facilitate a deeper lens into normative positions and narratives of daily life that help link the relationship between action and intention. It is essential that the researcher has good access to communities and is able to observe daily life and events as they unfold. An ethnographic approach would suit explorations of life in residential colonies as well as activities of the wildlife clubs. However, the focus on environmental education in the formal schooling system was to unpack the framing of the environment in the material made available to students while also discussing the pedagogy adopted in the process of delivery of information. This focus did not necessitate an immersed approach and consequently limited contact was maintained with students in schools, focussing rather, on textual analysis and approaches taken by schools in offering environmental education.

Designing and implementing the methodological framework: tools and structure of the methodology:

This research is a study of middle-class relationships with the environment. The main data collection period ran from February to August 2005, with a repeat visit in early 2006 to communicate with key informants and gatekeepers that I worked with. Following the initial data collection, visits were made on average every two years (in

2008, 2010, 2012 and 2013) for two weeks every visit. I lived in South Delhi, visiting the colonies in which I worked, sometimes meeting residents I interacted with when I visited the colonies, while walking around. I also maintained contact with ten members of both wildlife clubs I worked with, receiving emails from them on occasion.[5] Initial data from the schools was collected in 2005 and an additional school was included in the data set in 2012 from which an additional 50 questionnaires were collected and visits to the school were also made. The textbooks used for the analysis in the research were the latest textbooks available to students, from 2009. Following the primary data collection, time was spent in London transcribing interviews, analysing questionnaires and focus group discussions and coding and analysing the data.

Since 2005 there have been limited publications on the relationships between the environment, the middle class and middle-class characteristics. Some publications – Fernandes (2009), Mawdsley (2009b), Brosius (2010), and Trulove (2011) – have advanced the debate. However, even these, as I discuss in Chapter 2, provide only limited insight into these relationships. The middle-class groups that this thesis engages with are, as yet, unexplored and therefore the primary data is still salient. The time taken to analyse and write the thesis, if anything, has provided time for more reflection. This process of reflection and consequent theorising has been strengthened by the findings in new publications (such as Mawdsley (2009b)) that support the need for greater analytical clarity on the heterogeneity within the middle class.

Biases, subjectivities and reflexivity:

Ethnographic research requires an acknowledgement of the subjectivities and biases of the researcher, which has the potential to colour both the data collection

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[5] The information I received between 2006 and 2013 helped reaffirm the themes developed from the initial theoretical sampling process, helping saturate the theoretical samples themselves.

process and the analysis (Angrosino, 2003). In an attempt to be honest and reflexive through the entire research process I established, early on, my perceptions of what constitutes environmental values. I discuss them here, to ensure transparency. I also attempted to maintain emotional distance from the material, particularly when conducting interviews, to ensure that I was creating space for respondents to tell me their experiences rather than justifying their choices or actions to me, which would have suggested, perhaps, that I was judging them. There are two paradoxical positions that need some explanation here. The first is the importance of researcher reflexivity as a mitigating factor to bias in a research design that requires close contact with respondents. The second is the importance of the proximity to and close contact with respondents, to draw out norms that underpin daily experiences. This tightrope of researcher reflexivity while maintaining close contact is addressed through honest disclosure of known biases and at the same time ensuring this acknowledgement is translated into practical action during data collection and then in the analysis.

My personal experiences - schooling and my views on the environment, nature and wildlife - have critically influenced the manner in which I approach animals, the environment and nature. I am aware that my subjectivities will influence my research. I am very engaged in various forms of environmental action (recycling and cycling, for example) and have a keen interest in issues ranging from animal rights to water conservation. I am personally very sympathetic to what is commonly referred to as 'green' environmental values. I frequent forests and national parks and am disappointed with the extent to which people ignore and are uninvolved with environmental issues, particularly in India where the frustration of living in dirt and pollution is exacerbated by the polluting actions of individuals in public places. Researchers enter the social world with certain paradigms or a worldview of the nature of the social world. These

assumptions are made about the nature of reality, the relationship between the researcher and the subject, the role of values in the research and the research process (Baxter, 1997). All these issues are inherent in my biased understanding of the social world that I intend to research. However, I am aware of some of the assumptions, which will provide me with the ability to be proactive in challenging and framing data and analysis while being cognisant of those assumptions. In addition, I believe that this passion and interest in the environment and environmental concerns positively influence my engagement with the thesis material, helping communicate my interest in the issue to those involved – respondents, key informants and gatekeepers – to facilitate commitment from them (Ellis, 2003).

Immersion and close proximity to respondents is essential for this research. When norms, daily practices and cultures are the focus of interest there is value-added in immersion as it is only through observations and personal relationships that hidden codes reveal themselves (Chambers, 2003). Given the nature of this research I made the decision to engage on a more personal and intimate level with respondents by living in one of the residential colonies (Vasant Vihar) involved in the research for the nine months of initial fieldwork, while observing particular events of other groups, which I will discuss in more detail in the next section.

Factors influencing ease of fieldwork

In order to establish the viability of taking an ethnographic approach to this study in Delhi I considered how plausible it would be to conduct interviews, run focus groups and even conduct participant observation. I have a long-standing history with and personal interest in Delhi. My family lives in Delhi while I went to university in Delhi and know the city and its idiosyncrasies intimately. I also speak the language, particularly the 'Punjabi' version of Hindi, which is unique to Delhi. While the cultural

hurdles were easier to overcome there were some barriers, particularly relating to security as a single female researcher travelling around a relatively unsafe city. This barrier was largely addressed by ensuring that interviews were conducted in public places and adequate communication was established prior to meeting respondents in person.

Although most literature on research methods refers to the difficulties that one encounters as a foreigner when collecting data in India, I found that as an Indian I was also viewed with suspicion on a number of occasions. People refused to open their doors to me and refused to speak with me despite the documentation and identification that I carried. There was one particular occasion when a potential respondent from Vasant Vihar looked at the questionnaire that I had been circulating and refused to fill it out. He seemed to allude to another encounter where similar socio-economic data was being collected (relating to incomes and so forth) and he assumed that it would be misused. He was very suspicious and suffice to say, I did not interview him or ask him to fill out a questionnaire. In order to facilitate access to respondents I worked directly with gatekeepers. In the residential communities I worked with the presidents of the Residents' Welfare Associations (RWAs) who then provided me with a security guard, recognisable to members of the community and therefore legitimising my request.[6] However, most people were less suspicious of my presence and willing to speak with me without any inhibitions. This meant that respondents were willing to offer unguarded glimpses into their thoughts and values. For example, many people I spoke with in the residential colonies (one of my case study groups) were willing to offer

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[6] Residents' Welfare Associations are voluntary management bodies that are responsible for the management and maintenance of residential colonies in Dehli. They are made up of elected members from the colonies, with a traditional governance structure of President, Treasurer etc.

'gossip' about other residents, evidencing what they considered to be legitimate and illegitimate ways of thinking and behaving. This would have been difficult to glean if respondents felt as if they needed to respond in a formal manner. In some instances a few interviewees did assume that I was not very well informed (being young and female) and tended to talk down to me. It did not, however, stop them from speaking with me. Many conversations were held over tea and snacks, creating an informal space in which to have a 'chat' rather than a formal interview, thereby creating more natural settings to facilitate deeper inquiry. I was introduced to extended families and even invited to meals, which helped establish greater trust and, as a consequence, greater access to the seemingly mundane and boring daily life, implicit in which are deep-seated values and ways of thinking; core pillars of analysis for this thesis.

Selecting schools

I decided to work with two public schools and a government-run school once again to provide a range of perspectives from a variety of income backgrounds within the middle class.[7] The Delhi Police Public School and Daisy Dales Senior Secondary school, both public schools with well-established eco-clubs was chosen alongside Kendriya Vidyalaya, a government-run school. Environmental education, as a subject was offered for all age groups, with varying degrees of practical application from class 4 to 12. On discussing with the teachers and principals of the respective schools it was jointly decided to interact with students from classes 7 and 8, to receive, as a teacher from Delhi Police Public School put it, 'more mature responses' while also ensuring that classes 9 to 12 were not burdened with the responsibility of taking time off to speak to me. Additionally, National Council of Education Research and Training (NCERT)

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[7] Public schools in India are paid schools. There is a long history of public schools in India particularly since some of the most famous public schools were set up by the British, pre-independence.

textbooks were used up to class 8 and were standard across all schools. I gathered 50 questionnaires from each of the schools and held two focus groups each at the Delhi Police Public School and Kendriya Vidyalaya only.

Delhi Police Public School

The Delhi Police Public School was established in 1989 to provide quality education at affordable rates to senior employees of the Delhi Police. The School, based in South Delhi, in Safdurjung Enclave was affiliated to the Central Board of Secondary Education (CBSE). The curriculum up to Class VIII was based on the recommendations NCERT (2003) and the Directorate of Education, Delhi Administration. This school was identified as middle to upper income with pupils from relatively well-off backgrounds. The school was easy to contact, and also supportive of the work being proposed, offering class time for my interactions with students.

Kendriya Vidyalaya School

The Kendriya Vidyalaya schools are government run and there were approximately 847 of these schools in Delhi at the time of the initial research (GoI, 2004/5). After numerous hours spent outside the Principal's office of a few branches, one branch agreed to interactions with students. Also, the Principal requested that the branch of the school and the names of all participants be withheld from the final report. This school was also based in South Delhi although in a less affluent area than the Delhi Police Public School and was also affiliated to the CBSE board of education.

Daisy Dales Senior secondary school

Daisy Dales Senior Secondary school was a privately run school also in South Delhi. I was introduced to this school through a friend of the family whose children studied there and a meeting was arranged with the principal to allow me to meet students and gather information. The authorities were willing to allow data collection

but requested that names of students were kept confidential. In addition, no focus group discussions were held with students but 50 questionnaires were collected and conversations were held with students in the corridors.

Selecting middle-class colonies

The middle class in India constitutes a large and heterogeneous group examined, from among other criteria, through the lens of geographical location (and within the city of Delhi), educational qualifications, financial position and associations with clubs and organisations. I faced the task of trying to identify appropriate criteria to address the research questions while being representative of the heterogeneity within the middle class. To facilitate the research, I selected income categories as an initial lens for identification (see Chapter 4 for further discussion). The first stage in the selection process then was to map the city of Delhi and identify the social and economic distribution of people within pockets and zones of the city (see Appendices 1, 2 and 3 for maps of Sarita Vihar and Vasant Vihar). I selected the area of the city with the largest urban population, the most middle-class residents and also higher than average property prices (GoI, 2004/5).[8] The criteria used to make initial eliminations were, therefore, primarily financial in nature. From the various zones listed by the Delhi Government (North-West, South, West, North-East, South-West, East, North, Central and New Delhi) three criteria were used to select one zone from which two colonies would then be selected (GovtDelhi, 2004). The colonies chosen for the project were both located in South Delhi and based on three criteria: property prices, population and the percentage of the population living in urban settlements (Delhi is also made up of a

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[8] Most urban areas in India have a 'rural' and 'urban' population because of the manner in which the cities were planned. Many villages thrive alongside the urban pockets, often providing household workers and manual labour in the city. My interest is in the urban population, living 'urban' lives.

number of villages). Property prices in South Delhi were relatively higher than prices in West, East or North Delhi. The most expensive properties were located in Central Delhi owing to the predominance of government offices and large, colonial bungalows.[9] Therefore, as a mid- property ladder zone, using economic criteria, South Delhi was the first choice. Of all the Delhi zones, South Delhi has the second largest population, about 16% of the entire Delhi population (GovtDelhi, 2003). South Delhi ranked as sixth of the nine zones in terms of population density. In South Delhi, about 92% of its residents live in urban settlements (GovtDelhi, 2004).[10] From within South Delhi two colonies were subsequently chosen to represent two sub-groups from within the middle class – the middle and upper income middle-class groups.[11] The criteria used to identify

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[9] Central Delhi, comprised mainly of government buildings and few residential colonies is also less densely populated. With large, sprawling bungalows (for example Lutyen buildings) this area houses mainly government employees (reasonably high up in the ministries) and the elite. Most families owning property in this zone have inherited their houses. They are also often members of elite, members-only clubs in Delhi making entry into their social circle very limited.

[10] For further analysis on definitions of urban and rural, look at the Economic Survey of Delhi 2003-2004, published by the Government of Delhi.

[11] Case study research participants are selected very deliberately to answer particular questions. In this instance by maintaining a level playing field in objective environmental structures in the residential colonies it would enable adequate knowledge of some environmental issues from which to tease out perceptions. By narrowing the focus to groups of people with exposure to environmental issues, the project focussed on some middle-class residential colonies involved in visible forms of environmental 'management' within their colonies. The reason why I chose to use an environmental project in order to identify my colonies was to ensure that there was one common element between the two groups of people. Their access to information was similar and I would be able to examine the influence of other factors like media and 'situational' factors in order to engage in a discussion of values (see Chapter 4). These visible forms of 'management' took the form of vermicomposting pits and rainwater harvesting

two colonies were income, property prices, and the occupation of residents of the colonies. The first colony chosen for the first case study was Sarita Vihar, D Block. The decision was arrived at after initial discussions with the NGO – Toxics Link – who ran a vermicomposting pit in what they referred to as a middle class, middle-income colony. Sarita Vihar was largely comprised of young professionals working in IT and some retirees. The second colony chosen was Vasant Vihar B Block. This colony was also identified using an NGO – the Centre for Science and Environment (CSE), which had provided information to the colony's RWA on rainwater harvesting. It was chosen as an upper middle-class case study, once again from South Delhi. I rented a flat in Vasant Vihar colony to conduct more in-depth observations. Both colonies had established vermicomposting pits and were therefore deemed appropriate for further discussions on environmental issues, given that they had some degree of knowledge.

Sarita Vihar

Sarita Vihar was a middle-income residential colony, developed by the Delhi Development Authority (DDA) in the late 1980s and comprised of blocks A to K. The colony itself borders the state of Uttar Pradesh and Haryana, with many prominent companies and BPOs now established in the area, which, over the past five years, has increased the cost of homes. During the initial data collection this colony housed middle-class individuals with a mixture of retirees and IT professionals. In total Sarita Vihar Block D had 230 houses of which 50 contributed questionnaire responses while a further 15 individuals were involved in semi-structured interviews (see Appendix 4 for the list of respondents). Many of the residents were middle level managers in companies and also worked in BPOs (call centres) as well as IT companies. Most were

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information and structures. This 'exposure' to environmental ideas and information would be the main criteria in identifying the middle-class residential colonies for the project.

single child family homes and the average age was thirty, in contrast to the average age of the residents of Vasant Vihar. This colony was included in the research through the interaction with a Non-Governmental Organisation (NGO) - Toxics Link, who had been running a funded waste management project in D Block of this colony for a year (ToxicsLink, 2004). The colony was chosen because of its exposure to environmental information through the education and information received from the NGO. There were no security guards, intercom systems or deterrents to approaching individual flats and speaking to residents.[12] The age of respondents in the colony ranged from 25 to 70 and only one resident refused to speak to me. The ease with which the interviews were scheduled and the manner in which I was treated while collecting questionnaires was significantly different from the manner in which I was treated while the data was collected during the research period.

Vasant Vihar

The colony of Vasant Vihar is an affluent colony of Delhi, known for expensive real estate and large, gated homes. Houses are large, with very few high-rise apartments. The colony was a forerunner of the *bhagidari* system of self-governance.[13] In fact the colony was cited on the official web site of the Government of Delhi as a flag bearer for the *bhagidari* system (GovtDelhi, 2003). There were six blocks in Vasant Vihar (A to F) and 200 houses in B block, where this research was conducted, from which 50 houses provided responses to questionnaires while a further 15 houses were involved in interviews (see Appendix 4 for the list of respondents). Most properties in B block were

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[12] In 2013 the colony was also voted the greenest colony in Delhi, having developed an additional 50 parks with three play areas (TOI, 2013).

[13] The *bhagidari* system of participatory governance is unique to Delhi, a joint endeavour between local businesses, RWAs and the government to solve problems facing the city.

stand-alone houses, larger homes owned by one family. I also lived in B block for the duration of the initial fieldwork (for nine months) and lived in Munirka (within walking distance of Vasant Vihar B block) during the repeat visits to Delhi in 2008, 2010, 2012 and 2013.

This colony comprised of retired government officials, business people, foreign embassies and housing for foreign nationals working in Delhi. Houses were heavily guarded with 24-hour security services. Speaking to the owner or resident of a house was an achievement as the security guards very rarely allow access or entry to the house. A large number of houses were bungalows and the remaining large flats in fortified complexes. of which a sizeable number were equipped with intercom facilities so owners did not need to physically interact with salespeople or unknown researchers soliciting at their houses, for example. On average, of the 50-60 houses that I approached, 60% of the residents were above the age of 70. A former president of the RWA of Vasant Vihar, Mr Gautam Vohra, told me that most residents were elderly people whose families lived outside India.[14] B Block also had a vermicomposting pit to deal with domestic waste and was also attempting to set up rainwater harvesting structures in the houses.[15] I chose B Block because of ease of access. The president of the RWA, Mr A.P.Jain, facilitated access to data on the residents of the colony and a security guard to enable access past the gates of people's houses. Physical evidence of the interest in rainwater harvesting and waste management was visible in the hoardings and physical structures that were in place throughout the entire stretch of B Block and the remaining blocks in the whole colony as well. This colony, many might argue, is comprised, in some part, of the upper class. However, the people in this colony, I

[14] Conversation with Mr Vohra, ex-President of the RWA of Vasant Vihar on 10th of May 2005.

[15] Conversation with Mr A.P.Jain, RWA president for B Block Vasant Vihar on – 8th of May 2005.

would argue, are upper-income middle class rather than elite, primarily because the elite in Delhi have access to clubs like the India Habitat Centre and the India International Centre, of which the residents in this colony were not members.[16]

Selecting wildlife groups

To decide on environmental and wildlife clubs I met with a variety of wildlife and environmental organisations during a preliminary visit (July - August 2004). Public participation (public membership-based organisations) was a prerequisite as it allowed me access to a group of people who were not employed by these organisations but people who were interested in issues and chose to associate themselves with these organisations. While there was no way of gauging the income (or other such markers) of members of these groups prior to contact, the intention was to explore the extent to which the views of these individuals were aligned to the views of the residents of Vasant Vihar and Sarita Vihar and determine the relationship, therefore, between class and the environment. There is not a large number of generalist wildlife or environmental organisations in Delhi. Some adventure clubs and bird-watching societies operate but there is limited choice.[17]

After visiting organisations like Deeksha, Development Alternatives and the Centre for Science and Environment, I decided to focus on one organisation that was well known in national and international circles, the WWF and one that was primarily India-based the IWC to explore notions of post-materialism that were alluded to in some of the existing literature on the environment as well as early conversations with respondents during the pilot study. The WWF, a well-known organisation in the wildlife and environment field had a large membership base, functioning primarily

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[16] Conversation with Mr Vohra, ex-President of the RWA of Vasant Vihar on 10th of May 2005.

[17] Interview with Bikram Grewal in June 2005.

through membership support for its funding and campaigns and was (and continues to be) one of the better-known wildlife organisations with international appeal. The IWC on the other hand was an internet-based organisation that was set up as a site to discuss environment and wildlife issues. It functioned through a monthly chat session and newsletter and members communicated through blogs and articles on the web site. I found it through other online searches for wildlife clubs in Delhi.

World Wide Fund for Nature:

The WWF was an international organisation that primarily ran wildlife related campaigns but has more recently branched out into campaigns dealing with sustainable urban living and energy issues. While there were offices scattered across the country the Delhi office served as the headquarters. It was founded in 1969 as a Charitable Public Trust, with the express objective of ensuring the conservation of the country's wildlife and wild habitats. It was then known as the World Wildlife Fund – India and has since changed its name to the World Wide Fund for Nature – India. The WWF India office is a national office that is entitled to raise funds on its own and function autonomously, independent of the main office in Gland, Switzerland. The WWF is not the oldest wildlife club in the country (the oldest being the Bombay Natural History Society in Bombay and the Delhi Bird Watching club in Delhi). However, they have a large membership base with a variety of activities run for different age groups. As a spokesperson for wildlife issues in the media the WWF was (and still is) a unique and important environmental/wildlife club in the country. I communicated with Ms Lima Rosalind (progamme staff at the Delhi office) who provided me with the names and contact details of 50 individuals who were sent questionnaires and a further 15 who were involved in interviews (see Appendix 4 for the list of respondents).

Indian Wildlife Club

The IWC was set up by Dr Susan Sharma to educate people and to provide a virtual platform to discuss wildlife issues. The club rarely meets face-to-face (although that approach has changed over the past few years). However, online themed discussions were held every month where members could participate. The membership was free and open to people from around the world. However, the majority of the members were based in India, with a large number in Delhi. The club dealt primarily with wildlife (birds and animals) with a limited focus on any other form of environmental information. Dr Susan Sharma randomly sampled 50 individuals who were sent questionnaires and provided names of a further 15 whom I contacted for interviews (see Appendix 4 for the list of respondents).

Ethics of conducting fieldwork

Data was collected after permission was expressly sought and information about the project was provided, via a written proposal to the group or organisation from whom permission was being sought (Howe, 1999). The purpose of providing a written proposal was to inform organisations that I was conducting research through the university and also to obtain feedback from these groups regarding my methods and theoretical assumptions (see Appendix 5 for an example of a request letter). By requesting feedback I intended to put organisations in a position whereby they would be more likely to cooperate. This also gave me the option of allowing my research to both inform and assist the respective organisations through a short project report, which I was asked to write, and which I sometimes offered to provide after the data had been analysed.

Interviewees had the option to use Hindi for both the interviews and questionnaires. I translated the interviews from Hindi to English, interpreting and contextualising the use of words. All interviews were recorded with the express consent

of the interviewees.[18] Focus groups in the schools were conducted with the express permission of both the principal and the teacher and questionnaires were filled out and collected in the teacher's presence.

Names were recorded during the interviews, with the express permission of the respondent, including acknowledgement of the use of their names in the final document also. The RWA of Sarita Vihar requested that I maintain anonymity for all interviewees. However, house numbers have been used when referring to the respondents from this colony. Basic details of the project were also provided to respondents in order to reassure them that their views would inform only this thesis and outcomes thereof, and would not jeopardise their position as members of groups or colonies. Furthermore, gatekeepers (founders of the clubs or presidents of the RWAs) were also assured that if they were interested they would receive feedback in the form of a report or consolidated data for their own records and use, although no names would be provided. Only a rough consolidation of ideas and comments, I confirmed, would be relayed back to the presidents of the RWAs. The founder of the IWC assisted me in setting up interviews with club members. She asked that I provide feedback on the information received from interviews; I made that available in early 2006. All interviews were recorded with the permission of interviewees and, my identity and intentions as well as interest in their thoughts on the subject area, were made very clear.

Utilising qualitative data collection tools

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[18] Two respondents were uneasy with the use of a recording device – a senior parliament house librarian and a resident of one of the middle-class colonies and notes were made during their interviews. The first respondent was unable to permit its use because of the government office complex in which the interview was conducted. The second respondent admitted to being uncomfortable.

The case-study approach was chosen to facilitate a comparison of various groups from similar backgrounds but with differing levels of access to a variety of information and motivations - members of wildlife clubs, schools with students from different backgrounds and residents of colonies. The research questions were intended to explore the nature and types of attitudes towards the environment in particular closed groups, as an exploratory study into environmentalism and their motivations in urban India. Embodied practice is difficult to uncover using standard interview questions so in order to gain more access to social practice I lived with in one of the colonies, spending significant time with members of the other colony, even going on trips with one wildlife club and participating in online discussions of the other. Nonetheless, by piecing together what were becoming clear as rules and norms, and explicit contestations and rule-making I was able to arrive at a methodological approach that facilitated insight and at the same time a clear sense of local subjectivities. Choosing the right methodology was very important, especially given the variety of actors identified for the project. To ensure the robustness and validity of data and analysis I triangulated by using multiple tools to draw out information (Silverman, 2011). With the use of multiple methodological tools, particularly for different sets of actors, the analysis and ability to cohere became complex but the scope for validity improved.

Semi-structured interviews

Semi-structured interviews were chosen as a primary source of information for this research. This choice was made over the conversational interview and the standardised interview to facilitate exploration while maintaining overall structure (Silverman, 2011). The baseline for analysis, which was built into the interview questions, was developed from reviews of the literature and perceived gaps, particularly on the everyday environmentalism of the middle class. Key areas of interest in the

literature were poverty, apathy (responsibility for environmental issues) and bourgeois environmentalism and the initial set of interview questions was developed from these key areas of interest. A total of twelve questions were framed after a preliminary pilot study of five interviews during which the questions, responses and themes were reviewed. At the end of each interview key themes (dirt, leisure, poverty, trees, children, pollution, asthma etc.) were identified and tagged to groups (residential colonies and wildlife groups). The interview questions were reframed as the interviews progressed, through a constant process of iteration (see Appendix 6 for the basic set of questions)

Probe questions – questions building on responses from respondents - were an integral aspect of the structure of the interview, adopted to delve deeper into hidden codes and meanings in statements that were made. I provide here an illustrative example of the questions that set the scene along with a few examples of the probe questions, to demonstrate how the interviews were developed. The first question that all respondents were asked was: 'what is the environment?' This question is left as a broad, open question to prevent researcher bias (for example I might have asked why nature or wildlife is important but this would have restricted respondent responses to wildlife and nature giving little room for an exploration of the ways in which the environment is inextricably woven into their daily lives). A respondent talked about the local park in response to the above question. My follow up question focused on why the park was important and what it offered this respondent. An entire section in Chapter 4 was developed after this theme of parks was discussed by a variety of respondents. Similarly, when discussing various environmental projects that they would like to see in their space, respondents talked about tree planting and garbage collection. This led me down the path of garbage and how individuals associated with garbage and good behaviour, for example.

Another key issue that required some elucidation was the use of language to discuss the environment, which itself became a point of inquiry. The words used to describe or discuss the environment (both in Hindi as well as English) helped unravel the context in which the environment itself was being discussed. Early in the research the environment was established as a 'concept-indicator' around which inferences were to be made (Glaser, 1978). This was the first organising concept around which categories were then developed. In order to explore the normative representations of the environment a conscious effort was made to allow respondents to set the agenda and use their own terms. The interviews in English used the word 'environment' while the interviews in Hindi used the word *vatavaran*. *Vatavaran* is used to refer to the larger environment in general, working similarly to the use of the word environment for the English interviews. *Paryavaran* is also used to refer to the environment (particularly in school textbooks) but the term is specific to the natural environment, similar in fact to the word *prakriti*, which is used to refer to nature. The use of the word *vatavaran* was deliberate to maintain consistency in the usage of the word in both English and Hindi. *Vatavaran* is a Sanskrit word, with religious, cultural and political significance. However, the use of the word *vatavaran* in Delhi is very common. The Hindi used in Delhi, unlike that of Mumbai, Kolkata, or Chennai is largely based on a Sanskritised version of Hindi (with *Punjabi* influences). The dialect of Hindi used in most parts of the city is considered *shuddh* (or clean) Hindi. Hence, the choice of a Sanskrit word to replace the term environment was appropriate. Similarly, the word pollution was also replaced by a Sanskrit word – *pradushan*. It can be argued that the use of the Sanskrit versions of the words bias the responses received from the participants because of the cultural, religious and political connotations of the terms. However, these terms are commonly used in the city – from shopkeepers, to government officials, to street

vendors. I would like to suggest that the colloquial use of the terms is very important in this case. The quotidian nature of the terms has the effect of normalising and de-contextualising the terms from their embedded histories and social implications, decoupling the historical connotations from the manner in which they are used. Although the religious and elitist connotations are inherent in an epistemological understanding of the words, their widespread use suggests a certain disassociation from the religious, cultural and political connotations, which was the primary reason for utilising these specific words. I used the terms 'environment,' 'wildlife,' and 'nature' in different contexts, prompted by respondents (if they used the words wildlife or nature I would then use the word as well). During the preliminary interviews of the main data collection period, the responses received from interviewees made it clear that certain groups were making clear-cut distinctions between forests, wildlife, nature and the environment and I continued to explore these distinctions through the terms that were used in interviews.

The interviews were structured to last between 45-60 minutes. All interviews were initiated with friendly conversation to ensure a degree of informality. To facilitate honest discussion I introduced myself as a young student from a university in the UK (i.e. research for an international rather than an Indian audience) with no corporate or political affiliations. As a young female researcher, I believe, a number of respondents were in a position to relax and relate to me informally with fewer inhibitions. Also I chose to introduce myself as a relatively amateur researcher to prevent interviewees from feeling intimidated or even prevent them from speaking to me at all. However, all respondents were given a brief introduction to the research to ensure the rigour and seriousness of the research and the importance of their contributions. The use of the tape recorder was marginally problematic because of the spate of undercover exposés in

the news during my stay in Delhi. However, of all the interviews conducted only two people refused the use of the tape recorder. Most other respondents were intrigued by my project and were very welcoming and helpful in providing me with space in which to conduct the interviews and also tea, coffee and water. There was one respondent who was very upset with my request and refused to speak to me. She assumed that I was selling a product and wasting her time.

Participant observation

Deeply held values, rules, norms and ethics are particularly hard to recognise by their very normative nature. This thesis deals particularly with these forms of deeply held values and requires, as a consequence, a sophisticated tool to explore them. Participant observation is useful in "[a]ny setting in which people have complex interactions with each other, with objects, or with their physical environment" (Guest, 2013: 76). However, the ability to deploy such a tool requires access and trust from respondents. I decided to live in one of the residential colonies in addition to participating in events held by wildlife clubs to gain access and immerse myself in the activities of daily life. In the section on factors influencing ease of fieldwork I discuss the efforts made to establish ease and rapport, helping with the process of participant observation. Overall, this approach was both well suited given the needs of the research questions and appropriate given my theoretical sensitivities and personal knowledge and experience of the city.

Questionnaires

For this research, questionnaires provided breadth to the otherwise detailed information derived from interviews. Questionnaires were used primarily to collect data in an efficient manner, for triangulating and substantiating the analysis drawn from interviews as well as gathering basic demographic data (age, sex and so forth). This

method was used only to expand on and provide triangulation with the other tools identified – interviews, participant observation and primary literature. Questionnaires were used among all groups identified for the research – residential colonies, schools and wildlife clubs (see Appendix 6, 7 and 8 for questionnaire templates). Fifty questionnaires were collected from each group, totalling 350 questionnaires.   On average each questionnaire contained seventeen to twenty questions (depending on the audience). The number of questions varied based on the purpose for which the specific questionnaire was designed. In certain cases like the residential colonies, data about geographical location, for example, was omitted. Similarly, wildlife club questionnaires had more questions on particular concerns about wildlife and broader sets of values. The members of groups were sampled in a random fashion to ensure validity in exactly the same way that candidates were chosen from residential colonies. Very little personal information on my own background was provided, although the questionnaire itself contained issues relating to anonymity, confidentiality and a rough description of my project.

Primary textual data

Primary data was also collected (where available) to substantiate the information otherwise being received through direct responses from respondents. These sources of primary data were leaflets, circulars, newsletters distributed among residents of colonies, magazines of wildlife clubs, group emails and online discussions of wildlife clubs, video clips of advertisements, bulletin boards in schools and school textbooks. I was provided with access to all the forms of data mentioned above which was then used to tailor both questions for interviews and for future analysis. This form of data was analysed through content analysis, where codes were developed, which were then used to develop wider narratives alongside data from interviews and questionnaires.

The research design was structured to access roughly the same number of respondents for interviews in each actor category (middle-class colonies and wildlife clubs) to ensure adequate representation from both groups. For the residential colonies I contacted the president of the RWAs, the gatekeepers for the colonies. I also liaised with a staff member at the WWF and the founder of the IWC. The colony RWAs provided lists of names of the residents within the blocks of the colonies. In Sarita Vihar there were 150 houses and once again 20 houses were chosen for interviews and 50 for questionnaires. I chose a larger number of potential participants because of the likelihood that there would be certain individuals who would be unwilling to participate. There were also a few houses whose details had not been updated and were vacant. There were overlaps between names chosen for interviews and questionnaires. When the overlap occurred, the next name on the list was chosen for the questionnaire. It was important to gather data from as many people as possible and the overlap would have reduced the number of participants in the project and would have also affected responses. Therefore, the interviews conducted and questionnaires gathered, varied between the colonies. However, a minimum of fifteen interviews was conducted in each colony. From a total of 200 names in Vasant Vihar (each house was registered under one name) I chose every tenth name to gather 20 individuals and contacted these people for interviews. I followed the same procedure to gather 50 names for questionnaires. Similarly, members of the WWF and the IWC were chosen through random sampling from the list that was provided to me.

Analysing the data

Data analysis was done in two phases. The initial data analysis phase was an iterative process consistent with a grounded theory style of research. The second

analytical phase followed the overall data collection process; this is where all the data was synthesised to arrive at a broader theory on middle-class relationships with the environment. I will discuss the two phases separately. The data analysis, done consistently through the phases of data collection and more rigorously before writing up, allowed both the identification of middle-class environmental narratives and linked particular narratives to different groups (i.e. situating the narratives within the individual case studies).

Analysis through data collection: the iterative process

The iterative analytical phase helped in identifying research themes and indicators but it also helped to refine the interview process and delve deeper into the lives of respondents. During this phase, a key revelation was made about the respondents as they discussed the environment, which was that respondents established a personal relationship with the environment and would often judge unfavourably those who took a position different from their own. In addition, the initial theory that I had engaged with, as a potential framework through which to explore middle-class environmental concerns, was post-materialism. This, on initial review of the data, was inappropriate as the data itself was entrenched in values and identities, which Inglehart's theory of post-materialism was ill equipped to engage with. On reviewing the personal relationship that was constructed around narratives of the environment it became clear that this approach was common among respondents across groups (e.g. both from the colonies and wildlife groups). It became clear that this was linked to how individuals saw their position within groups and even more widely in society. In fact respondents framed their narratives of the environment in ways that demonstrated the legitimacy of their environmental choices (or lack thereof) and also creating spaces of exclusion by defining rules and norms that centred on different class fractions. It

became clear that respondents were valuing the environment by its ability to provide distinction from others and as a means of demonstrating their own (more) legitimate values while also responding more explicitly to local contexts and subjectivities. Respondents discussed material and esoteric benefits stemming from the environment, for example communing with a spiritual aspect of nature, but these were also framed to demonstrate difference, with respondents narrating their life choices and lives more generally, rather than talking about the environment in some instances. These differences that respondents discussed and laid out demonstrated how the environment was framed and utilised in drawing out difference and distinction. In addition respondents identified personally with the relationships that they were describing, establishing boundaries between class fractions, leading me to Bourdieu's theory of distinction and social class, which, at its core discusses the ontological position of all individuals, which is the need to be different and distinct. Respondents communicated how they were different, utilising narratives of the environment, using oppositional variables that indicated hierarchies of actions and values, i.e. 'this is good and that is bad'. This oppositional structuration was instrumental in how people represented the environment. I discussed this approach that was taken by respondents through emails with my supervisor who provided additional advice on developing further interview questions as well as areas of inquiry to substantiate the emerging analysis. In order to examine this phenomenon further, I introduced questions that were aimed at open-ness. For example, I asked individuals to 'define the environment' or to tell me about the various environmental initiatives in the colony and those that they would like to see introduced. During the early stages of the interview I did not ask for opinions about particular environmental behaviours or values, to allow respondents the space to develop their narrative without making them feel they had to justify their responses and

establish difference from others. This approach was taken so that the onus of framing the story would rest with the respondent rather than with me. This was deliberate so as to test the hypothesis that respondents were identifying closely with their formulations of the environment as well as actively negating other formulations. I continued this process of testing analytical categories as they emerged from the analysis of the data by asking further probing questions to delve deeper into various issues. Along with the analysis of interview data, I observed daily life in the colonies, participated in a trip organised by the WWF and drew on other materials to deepen the analysis. For example, during the pilot phase respondents talked about two advertisements to discuss the environment, which were clearly reflective of embedded ways of thinking, which I then introduced into the interview questions.

Post data-collection analysis: coding and categorising the data

Having completing the fieldwork phase of the project, I had collected a large amount of data and some preliminary analysis. Finding a coherent analytical structure with theoretical relevance was a challenge. I mentioned earlier that identity formation repeatedly presented itself in how respondents talked about the environment, to provide distinction from others and as a means of demonstrating their own (more) legitimate values. With this in mind I wanted to explore this relationship between environment and identity, necessitating the introduction of 'process' into the analysis (Strauss, 2008, chapter 11). The question I was asking at this stage was: 'what process do respondents adopt to draw the relationship between identities and the environment?' Strauss suggests there are many ways to conceptualise process: "A researcher might think of process in terms of phases, stages, levels, degrees, progress towards a goal, or sequences of action" (Strauss, 2008: 261). In making sense of the process of identity formation through the environment I envisaged process to mean contestations since the

representations of the environment were offered as oppositional structures. Given this approach I started from the raw data to make sense of concepts and indicators to develop this broader category of the process of identity formation.

The initial stage of coding, which is "running the data open" (Glaser, 1978: 56), was done to draw an initial set of repeated words from which to establish thematic direction and theoretical structure. Field notes, transcripts, questionnaire responses and primary textual material were coded using this approach of allowing themes to develop. As Strauss and Corbin (2008) caution, more than one story can be derived from the data. It was essential that this process be utilised to derive many avenues for analysis to prevent bias. Through this process I distilled over 50 different indicators, for example, trees, Yamuna, asthma, animals, parks, crime, markets, yoga, garbage, ecosystem and water. This organisation of the data served a dual purpose: to identify the process of linking the environment to identity and to identify how particular indicators were tied to specific groups of actors (or not). This involved the creation of a spreadsheet for each group of actors (both residential colonies, for example) with a list of all respondents and the reference to particular codes. These two spreadsheets were then compared to see whether any obvious divergences were evident from this initial examination. This approach provided two findings: the convergence between the two residential colonies (minimal difference in discursive framings of the environment), and the difference between the residential colonies and the wildlife clubs and between both wildlife clubs as well.

While these indicators offered organising structure they were, at this stage, simply words, devoid of context. I needed to draw them into ways of thinking (the process) about the environment rather than simply terms relating to the environment. It does bear mentioning that early on, as I started the open coding process, I found that

some themes were arising from the data but that mostly these indicators were de-contextualised and somehow less substantive in content than the stories that the transcripts and field notes themselves seemed to be. To ensure that this colour was not lost, I decided to embark on another round of analysis to work with the codes and establish a broader set of concepts that focussed on the relation between the environment and identity. This process of coding around individual concepts (in this case relational variables) is what Strauss (1987) refers to as the process of axial coding. These themes served as meta-narratives around which the data was then arranged to establish consistency of thought and enable contributions to theoretical frameworks (like class and space, for example). Using the contestations in the narratives from which indicators were drawn, I identified some early concepts. Examples of the concepts that I arrived at were poverty, leisure, wildlife science, exclusivity, education and spirituality. There were 15 concepts that were extrapolated from the indicators as an initial set of concepts from which to develop theory. This was done for all the data, across the groups. The aim was to relate the codes to context, contingencies, causes etc. (Glaser, 1978). Finally, from these sets of concepts, relationships were drawn to actor groups, situating concepts within the case studies while still maintaining space to draw comparisons between cases. This final process of selective coding helped to draw out a core variable for discussion – the rallying concept from which other codes drew meaning and made contributions – that of class and the environment.

Developing the theory: using Bourdieu's analytical lens as a point of departure

After open coding the data and drawing out concepts through axial coding, the core of what would become my meta-analysis became clear. The data reflected a process of identity formation within the groups, established by individuals that helped support the development of organising categories (the concept – for example, poverty,

leisure, wildlife science, space etc.) for the indicators (for example, Yamuna, asthma etc). Once the concepts (organising categories) were identified links were drawn to the case studies to further contextualise and enable comparisons. The relationship between identity formation and the environment was derived from the data and became the foundation in which concepts were situated and from which a theoretical framework was identified. Respondents presented identity formation in numerous ways. Theories of class provided a source of inspiration to better understand the relationships in my data. In the Indian context, recent studies theorise the relationship between consumption (specifically) and class identity, for example Brosius (2010), Fernandes (2001a), Liechty (2003) (see Chapter 2 for further discussion). This seemed an appropriate template with which to explore the relationship between the environment and identity. Bourdieu's theory of class was introduced into the analysis to link the relationship between identity and the environment that emerged from this data with earlier empirical work on the Indian middle class as well as with broader theories of class and identity that engage the concepts of status and distinction.

Writing up the thesis

In writing up this thesis I have attempted to remain true to the stories offered by the respondents while maintaining reflexivity through the data collection and analysis process. There is no doubt that there was some seeping of my perspectives and values into the data itself. I hope, however, given my background and close relationship to the city and its inhabitants as a past resident, that these ways of thinking have helped produce a piece of research that is more embedded in the lives and values of the respondents and that norms and ways of thinking have been explored with more valuable insights as a result. While this case study approach does not lend itself to extrapolating and generalising, the ethnographic approach that has been adopted in this

thesis allows a unique lens into the relationships, meanings and values that the urban middle class in Delhi share with the concept of the environment. Fundamentally, I argue, that the environment is a form of cultural capital that various fractions of the middle class struggle to value and accumulate in order to frame their own identities. From wildlife groups to residents in colonies there is recognition of the value of the concept of the environment in offering difference and distinction. This recognition is deployed in the various sub-groups, to different effect.

Chapter 4 Environmental education and class: reproducing class through schooling

> "To prepare children to assume their roles as responsible citizens of tomorrow attempts have been made to sensitise them to the issues concerning gender, religion, environment, health and hygiene, water scarcity and energy conservation" (National Council of Education, Research and Training, 2007)

This chapter lays out the first case study of this thesis exploring how the environment is discursively framed within the education system and how that relates to class and identity. In this exploration of the education system, I aim to address the following questions: How is the environment discursively framed within the education system, and how is class and identity reinforced through the content and practice of education? This chapter draws on data collected during my research in three Delhi schools – one government and two private schools. I explored education-environment narratives through focus group discussions and student questionnaires and through textual analysis of textbooks. The first section discusses the importance of education in theories of class reproduction. In the next section, which is descriptive, I provide a background to the schools I worked with, laying out the approaches taken to deliver environmental education. Finally, I provide a comparative analysis of the schools, demonstrating how class characteristics are written into the schooling system. Finally, I examine environmental textbooks unpacking the narratives of the environment and the overall focus adopted in the content.

The government and education policy in India

Since the early 1950s, the Indian government has been keenly interested in education and education policy as a way of instilling 'Indian values' and creating citizens with moral and ethical values to serve the nation (Sarabhai, 2000, Arif, 2005).

Interestingly, Benei's (2000) study on teaching nationalism in schools in Maharashtra examines how the schooling system and the pedagogy reinforce particular nationalistic narratives that are not only normalised in the education system but are then embodied by students as normative practice. The education system has offered a conduit for the imbuing of 'appropriate' values and the creation of 'appropriate' citizens that embody specific sets of values. Within the education system the environment is singled out for particular mention not only in the Constitution, which offers insight into what 'Indian values' are, but in an early education policy document called the Kothari Commission report (1966), and in national education policies and plans that followed it.[19] The earliest reference to environmental education in the formal education structure is in the Kothari Commission report, which was commissioned by the Government of India and considered a seminal education policy document (Sarabhai, 1998). In the Kothari commission document, environmental education was explained as a scientific endeavour, engaging with biology, and the study of the physical sciences through which, importantly, children could situate themselves in their surroundings and contexts (Kothari, 1966). Additionally, the environment was also highlighted in the 1986 National Policy on Education (NPE) in paragraph 8.15:

> "There is a paramount need to create a consciousness of the Environment. It must permeate all ages and all sections of society beginning with the child. Environmental consciousness should inform teaching in schools and colleges. This aspect will be integrated in the entire educational process" (GoI, 1986: 27-28).

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[19] Part IVA of the constitution states that the fundamental duties of the citizen are "to protect and improve the natural environment including forests, lakes, rivers and wild life, and to have compassion for living creatures" (GOI, 2014).

Both documents demonstrate two key approaches that have influenced the delivery of environmental education through schools: the centrality of the environment in education, and the importance of context in teaching on the environment to ensure relevance to students in their lives. It is important to recognise here that the education system, and environmental education, is imbued with the purpose that its core focus is in the creation of citizens with appropriate values and morals that will serve the nation (this is also a point that Benei (2000) makes about the embodiment of nationalism as part of the project of formal education). The process of creating citizens with appropriate values is itself a class-based endeavour, as Bourdieu (1977b) would argue. Bourdieu (1977b) envisaged the education system as a structure that further perpetuated and cemented symbolic violence, or the imposition of the values of the dominant class in society (this approach is also taken by Marxists, for example, Althusser (1971) and Gintis (1976). This study examines the methods and content of the education system more broadly and more specifically the environmental education structures that reproduce or sustain symbolic violence through dominant class ideologies. In this regard, this chapter explores how the environment is taught. In addition, it also examines how the pedagogical approaches predispose students towards understandings of the environment that are associated with the narratives of particular class fractions thereby facilitating the reproduction of class. The social reproduction of class, which is a central component of Bourdieuian class analysis, is a particularly useful approach in undertaking this exploration.

Since the 1960s, Indian education policy has emphasised that environmental studies should be multidisciplinary (e.g. biology and the physical sciences) and that students need to personally and experientially relate to the environment (Kothari, 1966, GoI, 1986). The practical application of environmental studies was realised through the

creation of eco clubs. The eco club approach was taken forward and formally institutionalised with a partnership between the Ministry of Environment and Forests and the Ministry of Human Resource Development through the National Environmental Education Programme in Schools (NEEPS). Through the NEEPS, NGOs, schools and the education departments at State-level came together to support environmental education at school level, within the structures of eco clubs. The approach predominantly involved NGOs training schools on facilitating environmental education, to ensure the approach taken was locale and context specific. In Delhi, the Centre for Environment Education is one of the primary NGOs that has been involved in providing education to schools in on how to develop and formulate eco-clubs as well as offering teacher training on environmental education (Sarabhai, 1998, Sarabhai, 2000). The contextualisation of environmental education has also, more recently, included, for example, the collaboration between Residents' Welfare Associations and schools to plant trees and 'green' local areas. These efforts have surfaced in Sarvodaya enclave and Gulmohar Park (South Delhi localities in the catchment area of the Delhi Police Public School, which I worked with and where some students of the Delhi Police Public School – one public school I worked with - resided) where tree surveys were undertaken to map out all species of trees and create a sense of ownership among students and teachers in schools to protect trees against illegal felling (Lalchandani, 2013).[20]

Social reproduction, education and class

Bourdieu (1977b) was particularly drawn to the relationship between differentiation in society, and educational structures that, he believed, were seemingly

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[20] On a side note, illegal felling is largely done by poorer people who need wood for their cooking and warmth and this endeavor was aimed at instilling ownership of trees by local middle-class residents to be vigilant towards poorer people cutting down or defacing trees.

meritocratic in nature, grounded in an individual's ability to excel based on their own talents but fundamentally cloaking a deeply unequal society. In this society, Bourdieu (1977b) posited, education structures helped maintain difference and inequality. Cultural capital and habitus, Bourdieu (1977b) argued, were largely transmitted through the schooling system, maintaining and reproducing difference in society. It bears noting that Bourdieu (1984) developed his theoretical framework drawing together class and social reproduction by empirically examining the role played by education structures in France in the 1960s and 70s to reproduce capital and maintain differentiation between social groups in French society, which is both historically and geographically contextual. However, the approach taken by Bourdieu that examines formal education and its role in embodying social practice is useful as a point of departure as it relates to the Indian context. There is, no doubt, scope to apply his framework to the Indian context, particularly given the stratified nature of Indian society and the interest that the government has historically taken in the content and pedagogy. Bourdieu's work provides a critical "interface between the sociology of education and the sociology of culture" (Robbins, 2005: 24). Many scholars have utilised Bourdieu's theoretical framework to explore linkages between educational accomplishment and class, also discussing, as DiMaggio (1982) does, the influence of elite cultural activities outside of the school curriculum in stratification and unequal educational achievements (Savage, 2000, Parr, 1997, DiMaggio, 1982). The formal education structures offer unique insight into cultural symbols and values; how they are formulated and how, across various schools that cater to students from different income backgrounds, the pedagogy varies, offering ways of engaging with the environment and symbols of the environment that students are encouraged to position themselves in relation to.

In the Indian context, Taylor (1991) posits that the government has engaged overtly in education systems as a vehicle through which morally upright citizens are created, imbued with the appropriate values. The Indian state has and continues to exercise strong influence in the development, management and oversight of institutions of education as well as the curriculum itself (W.H.Taylor, 1991). This is not a novel enterprise for governments or public institutions that have often been involved in utilising these formal structures to maintain order and or transmit values. The approach taken by formal institutions has been the focus of analysis of many commentators, thereby also generating a range of studies from Marx (see (Anyon, 2011)) to Foucault (1977) who theorised the role of schools in 'disciplining' to Bourdieu (1977a) who saw education systems as structures through which differentiation was reinforced and reproduced.

Given the significant emphasis placed on the role of education in effecting social change in India (Sarabhai, 1998), it is surprising that there is as yet only a limited number of studies that explore how the relationship between education (the structures, content, and delivery) and cultural value and capital (Talib, 1992, Valeskar, 1990, Nambissan, 2013). The most recent edited book by Nambissan and Rao (2013) begins to address what is otherwise a significant lacuna in studies on the sociological role of education in India. Contributing to what is an emerging set of studies on education, this study offers an analysis of environmental education and its relationship to class and characteristics of class. This chapter aims to better understand what environmental values and symbols are being communicated through formal education. It looks at how school activities and textbook content establish certain forms of knowledge and ways of thinking about the environment to formulate an understanding of how narratives of class are woven into environmental education.

The schools and approaches to education in the chosen schools

Initially two schools were chosen to explore environmental values between the middle and lower classes in South Delhi. The first school was Kendriya Vidyalaya School, a government-run school; the second school was the Delhi Police Public School, a privately run school. These schools were initially included in the research in 2005/06 and additional data was collected in 2010 from the Daisy Dales Senior Secondary School, also a privately run school. All of these schools followed the national curriculum and also used the same set textbook for environmental education.

Only students from grades seven and eight (aged 13 and 14) were involved in the research, on recommendations made by principals, to minimise disruption of classes. To get an overall understanding of students' environmental knowledge and awareness, I had students in all three schools fill out questionnaires (in total 50 were completed in each school, all from grades seven and eight). In addition, focus groups were also held in the Kendriya Vidyalaya School and the Delhi Police Public School, with a total of 12 students from each school participating. The focus groups involved ranking environmental issues (i.e. water, climate change, garbage and dirt, and endangered species) and a discussion on students' reasons behind their rankings. The four issues were chosen to reflect a combination of proximate, daily environmental concerns that were key areas of concern that respondents from residential colonies were engaged with (those who I refer to as overtly tactical environmentalists in Chapters 5 and 6), and environmental issues that extended beyond proximate, everyday concerns of living in a polluted, heavily-populated city (endangered species and climate change) (the individuals who offered these symbols of the environment I refer to as overtly tactical wildlife enthusiasts and wildlife enthusiasts). The aim was to understand how students from different class fractions engaged with and related to the environment,

particularly focussing on local, immediate concerns to explore subjectivities and environmentalities. In terms of textbook analysis, I examined two textbooks (*Our Environment* (NCERT, 2007) for grade seven and *Resources and Development* (NCERT, 2008) for grade eight) and two project books (*Project Book in Environmental Education for Class VII* (NCERT, 2009a) and *Project Book in Environmental Education for Class VII* (NCERT, 2009b)) that supported the textbooks, providing practical projects for students to choose from as part of their course requirements. The edition used by the Kendriya Vidyalaya School and the Delhi Police Public School was based on the national curriculum framework for 2000 while the edition used by Daisy Dales Senior Secondary School was based on the 2005 framework.[21] The two editions were almost identical; the only substantial changes to the 2005 version were more up-to-date examples.

In the following section I provide a descriptive overview of the aims of each of the schools, including the nature of the eco clubs in each of the schools. I also provide an overview of the responses of the students during the focus groups as well as in the questionnaires. Following this descriptive section is a comparative analysis of the schools and the forms and types of difference that are embedded in the structures of these schools.

Kendriya Vidyalaya School

The *Kendriya Vidyalaya School* that I worked with is part of a group of schools: the Kendriya Vidyalaya family of schools. These schools were set up in 1965 as an autonomous body affiliated to the Ministry of Human Resource Development.[22] The

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[21] The national curriculum framework sets the framework and focus for the development of the textbooks.

[22] In 2014, there were 1092 Kendriya Vidyalaya schools in operation across India teaching nearly 1,150,000 students.

mission statement of the Kendriya Vidyalaya family is "to develop the spirit of national integration and create a sense of "Indianness" among children" (KVSangathan, 2014). The school caters to students from grade 1 to 12. The school administration requested that I not disclose which branch of the group of Kendriya Vidyalaya schools I worked with. This group of schools is government-subsidised and charges low fees. During the initial research in 2005/06, fees for grades one to eight were at INR3480 (average per capita income in 2005/6 was INR 25,696) per annum, for grades nine and ten at INR5880 per annum, and for 11 and 12 ranged from INR6,000-8,000 depending on the choice of electives (GoI, 2006).[23] The purpose of involving this school in the research was to explore how students from lower income families, unable to pay the higher school fees at privately run schools, were offered environmental education and came to understand the environment. Most government schools offer free education and while Kendriya Vidyalaya schools are government-run they do charge fees (subsidised). This school was chosen over a non-fee-paying school as it was a school with a good reputation and the aim was to identify how environmental education was offered between schools for the middle class and schools for the lower classes and not the poor. This distinction was made so as to see differences not only in economic capital but also, possibly, cultural capital and ways in which pedagogies and practices in schools reinforce embodied practice that relates to the environment.

Most students lived in flats surrounding the school, developed by the Delhi Development Authority (a branch of the Delhi government that is responsible for the provision of affordable housing in the city), in congested areas of South Delhi. The majority of the students' fathers were day-wage workers in the city, mostly working for

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[23] The fee structure doubled in 2013, to INR7,200 for grades one to eight, INR 9,600 for grades nine and ten, and INR10,800-12,000 for grades 11 and 12.

government bodies but not as salaried civil servants. All of the students stated that their mothers were housewives. The school had an established eco-club, which was primarily involved in tree planting in the school areas, a core concern that they repeatedly brought up when discussing environmental issues. Although none of the students in my sample were members of any environmental clubs, some had participated in school-related tree-planting events. The questionnaires that were filled in by students provided both demographic and socio-economic data as well as some indications of student's engagement with and knowledge of the environment by asking questions of the kinds of environmental issues they thought were important, who they thought was responsible for environmental degradation and how problems might be solved. All students stated that they were taught about the environment in school. The majority of respondents focused their comments on the environment to water shortages, water pollution and waste. The majority of students also noted that their parents had taught them about recycling and that water conservation was done in their homes. About half the respondents considered air and water pollution to be key issues that the government should be responsible for addressing. A similar number suggested that a consequence of population growth was a greater strain on resources and environmental degradation.

At the Kendriya Vidyalaya School the majority of communication on the noticeboards was provided in Hindi. While teaching was supposed to be conducted in English, teachers that I spoke with said that Hindi was largely used in teaching and students themselves spoke primarily in Hindi both inside classrooms and in communal areas in the school. All of my questionnaires were filled out in Hindi and the questionnaire offered both English and Hindi translations of questions (see Appendix 7). The textbooks used for all grades were a mixture of Hindi and English (conversations with teachers). The school had a small playground (the smallest of all

three schools that were involved). The corridors had a few notice boards with students'
work displayed and limited information on matters outside the school curriculum and
teaching (for example, general knowledge about history and geography). Little
information was made available on noticeboards, on extra-curricular activities although
there were some activities made available to students – the eco-club, elocution club,
debating club, poetry recitation and rakhi-making (wrist bands made by young girls for
their brothers as part of a North-Indian festival).

Twelve students from grades seven and eight from this school were involved in
the focus groups. The students were given the task to rank, in order of importance, four
environmental issues - water, climate change, waste and garbage, and endangered
species. Of the 12, 10 students ranked waste and garbage at the top of their list with
endangered species given the least weight (ranked bottom). Two students ranked water
at the top of their list. Waste and garbage issues was considered the most important
environmental concern, followed by water issues; endangered species ranked as the
least important. The discussions during the focus groups were limited largely to daily
concerns that the students faced as well as what they needed to learn for their exams
(i.e. from their textbooks). Even so, the discussions that followed the ranking process
proved insightful. Students discussed the justifications for their rankings. These tended
to focus on proximal and local issues, a particular form of environmentality that derives
from anxieties about access to resources and space. For instance, students noted the
health concerns they faced as a result of the waste and garbage in their neighbourhoods
(e.g. dengue and diarrhoea). Students who thought that water was a more important
issue than waste and garbage pointed to the city's regular water shortages (particularly
since these questions were asked during the summer months in Delhi, where water
availability is a pressing concern). Climate change was an interesting area of discussion.

Several students suggested that this was the most pressing environmental concern that they faced given increasing heat in Delhi, during the summer months; with this, the other students readily agreed. This issue was also, unexpectedly, linked to proximal concerns. None of the students talked about global warming as an international issue. Instead climate change was linked to the weather in Delhi during the summer months. I asked whether students were unconcerned about tigers and other endangered animals. There were tepid responses during the discussion. Many students talked about zoos and animals they had seen. However, none of the students had visited national parks or watched any environmental or wildlife programmes (including National Geographic or the Discovery Channel, which are available as part of the standard cable package). Some students talked about the importance of the tiger as the national animal, but the issue gained little traction. The students slowly brought the discussion back to water and waste issues. When discussing the environmental textbooks that they used, students talked about the chapters they were studying and what they were learning, quoting passages from the textbooks.[24] A few students referred to sections on waste and health in their textbooks and related it to the context in which they and their families lived. Many also talked about tree-planting episodes that had been organised by the school as part of the eco club activities. What was clear in these discussions and through the questionnaires was the specific focus on the environment as primarily a quality of life concern. Additionally, practical approaches that were introduced into environmental education in the school were focussed on tree planting and waste composting. The practical focus taken by the schools influences the ways in which students come to think of the environment in relation to social practice that is embodied and, as a consequence,

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[24] Most students learn by rote in a large number of Indian schools. This is both common knowledge and familiar to me as I have studied under the Indian school education system as have my extended family.

delineates class boundaries along the lines of social practice linked to the environment. I now provide an overview of the two other schools in order to facilitate comparative analysis in the following sections.

Delhi Police Public School

The Delhi Police Public School is a privately-run school catering for students from grades 1 to 12 with a total of roughly 1900 students. The school was chosen as part of the initial research design to discuss the environment with students from middle class backgrounds. The school attracts students from a relatively affluent middle-class part of South Delhi (Safdarjung). I chose it for the reason that the school's students are generally representative of middle-class households. The school was set up by the Police Foundation for Education but is open to the public. The schools aim is to develop "the child into a sensitive environment conscious and intelligent adult, capable of seeking and acquiring skills that will help in achieving academic and professional success within the context of moral and ethical values" (DPPS, 2010). Students were provided with opportunities to participate in myriad co-curricular and extra-curricular activities, sports, cultural functions, environmental and social work programmes and various intra-school and inter-school competitions. Interestingly, I enquired after the fee-structure for the school and was told that this information was not made widely available and could only be released on purchasing a prospectus. The reticence to make available the fee structure suggested that entry to the school itself was restricted and vetted, prior to any examination process. This barrier is itself a demonstration of how the schooling system explicitly reinforces class and restricts social mobility.

The data from the questionnaires shows that half the students' fathers worked as government employees and a similar proportion are small business owners, while most of their mothers are housewives. Most students were members of wildlife and nature

clubs, had travelled to national parks and also watched environmental channels (e.g. National Geographic, the Discovery channel and Animal Planet). Most students mentioned the impact of poor people on the environment largely focused on waste and garbage as primary concerns with endangered species following it. All students referred to vermicomposting pits and rainwater harvesting as ways to deal with issues but also mentioned the role of the government in solving environmental problems.

The school occupied sizeable grounds, having a basketball court and green spaces in which students were encouraged to play. The school was laid out with notice boards for various activities, classes, and extra-curricular clubs, all of which were made available in English. Schooling was also conducted only in English and textbooks used were English versions. Teachers and the principal indicated that it was mandatory for students to communicate in English both in and outside classrooms. However, Hindi was often used in the playground area and in informal spaces within the school. The focus on language, particularly the ability to communicate in English is discussed in a recent book by LaDousa (2014), focussing on how the use of language in schools is idiomatic of nationalism and identity. Being able to communicate in English is, arguably, important because of the emphasis placed on this skill for the Delhi Police Public School, and therefore, is a key element in delivering the mission of the school, which is to create students who are "capable of seeking and acquiring skills that will help in achieving academic and professional success" (DPPS, 2010). The emphasis is distinctly different from that of the government school, which catered to lower-class students and was also similar to that of the other public school that I worked with. English is a clear and explicit marker of class and the ability to speak it demonstrates a form of cultural capital and habitus, which is obvious and identifiable. This is an important recognition and I return to it in the following section where I offer a

comparative analysis of the schools. The Delhi Police Public School also had a science club, and music and dance rooms. The school also had an eco-club, which students were required to actively participate in. Once again, the club was primarily involved in tree planting, however, the school also organised trips to national parks and forests. Students in the eco club were also involved in tree-planting drives in adjoining colonies.

At the Delhi Police Public School, 12 students from grades seven and eight participated in two focus groups (six students in each focus group). Of the 12 students 10 students ranked water issues making it the most important, with endangered species ranked second. The third most important was waste and garbage, with climate change as the least important. It became clear through the discussions that the ranking of issues was closely linked to the personal experiences of the students, which included both school experiences and those from within the home. For example, the most important issue to most students was water, which students justified by talking about how their parents needed to pay for tankers to provide water because of shortages and rationing of water in their colonies. This was an issue that had evidently been discussed by students in their homes. The data collection was undertaken largely through the summer months in Delhi when a large percentage of the population faced water shortages, and news items – both in the print and television media – focus on the issue as well. This point was talked about by many of the students in the follow up focus group, when they were asked what sorts of water issues were significant. A few students raised the problem of water shortages in some parts of Delhi while noting that some very affluent colonies were watering their gardens, which they were critical of. Other students talked about the growing demand for water and that often water needed to be brought in from outside Delhi. Some students even referred to a high-profile case concerning the use of

groundwater, which had been newsworthy in the preceding year.[25] I had expected waste and garbage to follow water concerns but students insisted that endangered species were significantly more important. I had expected this was primarily because waste and garbage were raised as important by residents of colonies and I had expected similar responses from students. To explain the emphasis on protecting endangered species, they all discussed trips that they had made to national parks in addition to programmes they had watched on the conservation of species. Some mentioned that they were members of wildlife clubs (bird-watching clubs were mentioned in addition to the World Wide Fund for Nature). This interesting emphasis on conservation of wildlife not only evidences the influence of experiences and subjectivities but it also suggests that the pedagogy adopted by the school, which is different from that of the government school, clearly has an influence on how students conceptualise the environment, giving them the initial experiences to recognise forms of cultural capital that use the language of the environment. Building on the justification for their rankings and why they thought endangered species were more important than waste and garbage the participants discussed vermicomposting pits as a solution while noting that the endangering of species was irreversible. This ranking was also used to discuss a more important issue, which was a relationship between poverty and waste and garbage. Students talked about the impact of poor people on levels of waste and garbage also suggesting education for poor people as a solution to increasing quantities waste. Interrogating this a bit further, they were asked whether they considered their own consumption levels as a contributing factor in the levels of garbage only to be

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[25] The Centre for Science and Environment discovered high levels of pesticides in bottled water and bottled juices and drinks in 2003. The case escalated eventually resulting in the formation of a Joint Parliamentary Commission to find a solution.

unanimously told that they knew how to deal with waste and garbage and that poverty was very clearly linked to dirt and garbage by virtue of the spaces in which poor people lived. This clear relationship that is being drawn between poverty and dirt and garbage is discussed by Kaviraj (1997), Chakrabarty (1992) and Dickey (2000) in their studies on the ways in which class and the environment intersect as social, embodied practices manifesting often as a political act to draw out boundaries between the classes by setting rules and norms for the use of and access to space. In fact, the residents of the South Delhi colonies in the thesis's second case study on middle-class markers made clear links between poverty and dirt (see Chapter 6). Additionally, it was clear that students did not find their own consumption patterns culpable in this narrative of waste and garbage. This idea of consumption, which I discuss later in this chapter, goes relatively unchallenged even in the textbooks, reinforcing the middle-class relationship with consumption as a form of identity. When discussing the ranking, particularly the ranking between climate change, and waste and garbage, students talked about the importance of global warming, given the rising temperatures in Delhi through the summer months. Rising temperatures in Delhi, they said, were the consequence of climate change and therefore, a valid concern. However they had already apportioned blame for garbage and waste and, consequently, they placed little emphasis on the issue. The focus groups facilitated a more in-depth discussion between students on environmental problems facing Delhi - solutions and responsibilities - as well as their vision of an ideal city. Students focussed on waste recycling, the lack of green spaces, hygiene concerns, serious population increases and migration into Delhi and the presence of feral animals in the city. Majority of the students believed that animals should be moved out of the city, industry relocated to the outskirts (mainly Gurgaon as

a suggestion for where they could be relocated to), and population arriving mainly from rural areas needed to be tackled through relocation, curbing the influx, and/or education.

Many students believed that education and experiential learning like nature outings (camping, for example) were significant tools in educating on the environment, engendering 'green' values and an appreciation for the environment and animals. When discussing Delhi's environment and the residents of Delhi all students unanimously agreed that people in Delhi did not care about environmental issues and that a step change was needed, possibly along the lines of Singapore (an example that was given by a large number of the students). This step change was likely to happen if the government were to bring in more rules, punish 'wrong-doers' and if the government itself focussed on national rather than global issues. Students did not feel that taking care of the environment required any form of financial commitment or responsibility, simply a shift in values and ethics. In the second of the focus group sessions the discussion turned to very specific summer-related issues that Delhi faced, for example, water shortages, the lack of clean and potable water.

Daisy Dales Senior Secondary School

Daisy Dales Senior Secondary School (hereafter, Daisy Dales) is a privately run school in South Delhi. The school has close to 1000 students from pre-primary to grade 12. This school was added to the research design in 2010 to triangulate the other school data and to check the continuing relevance of the themes that emerged out of that earlier phase. Data collection was done by questionnaires distributed to students from grades seven and eight and a review of the school's documents (e.g. mission statement), I was not able to conduct focus groups since the Principal withheld permission. Like Delhi Police Public School, when I enquired after the fee-structure for the school and was told that this information was not made widely available and could only be released on

purchasing a prospectus. This fee-paying school demonstrated the same reticence and entry, again, to the school was restricted and vetted, prior to any examination process. This barrier is itself a demonstration of how the schooling system reinforces class and restricts social mobility.

In contrast to the notion of Indian-ness made by the Kendriya Vidyalaya School (the government-run school), Daisy Dales' website claimed that students from their school would "stand tall in today's era of globalisation" (DaisyDales, 2012). The mission of the school is

> "[t]o create empowered *global citizens* (my emphasis), who think creatively and laterally; citizens, who think beyond the regular; and citizens, who are self motivated and self directed. To create a safe and supportive environment that involves each student in a wide range of learning experiences. To create a new benchmark in the field of value-based education that blends modern outlook with a rich value system" (DaisyDales, 2012)

The school also had an established eco-club, which was broader in its focus than that of the Kendriya Vidyalaya School and was explicitly introduced to prospective students and parents on the website and in the brochures of the school. There were greater similarities with the Delhi Police Public School (the other public school that I worked with), particularly regarding the activities offered by the eco clubs.

Students from this school came from more well-off backgrounds (than those from the Kendriya Vidyalaya School) and from similar income brackets to those from the Delhi Police Public School (the other public school involved in the research), living largely in middle-class colonies around the school (which is in the East of Kailash in Delhi). All the students who filled out the questionnaires stated that their fathers were businessmen (of varying trades such as product showroom owners and exporters and

manufacturers). Their mothers were mostly housewives though some students said their mothers worked in the family businesses. While income details were not made available, the fee structure for the school was significantly higher than that of the Kendriya Vidyalaya School and the nature of activities and excursions offered to students required significant disposable income. All the questionnaires were filled out in English, which was a similar outcome to that from the Delhi Police Public School. Close to 25 students stated they were members of wildlife clubs (some talked about adventure and activity clubs when asked for more detail in the subsequent question in the questionnaire). Twenty-five students referred to climate change as being the most important environmental problem, from their estimation, but many referred to water shortages and even visible signs of poverty and poor people. Like at the Kendriya Vidyalaya School the majority of students mentioned that their parents taught them about recycling and that water conservation was done in their homes in addition to vermicomposting (only 15 students referred to this). Half the students (around 25 questionnaires) talked about air and water pollution as key issues that need to be tackled by the government and that population growth meant greater strain on resources and environmental degradation, as a consequence. From the responses it is important to note the consistency in highlighting climate change and the relationship between poverty and environmental degradation over other environmental concerns, suggesting that the students in this school shared common perspectives on how the environment was conceptualised with the Delhi Police Public School.

Information on the website and public areas in school was made available primarily in English. I spoke with teachers and the principal who made it very clear that students were required to communicate only in English though many students in the school when I visited spoke in Hindi in the playground and corridors. This is an

interesting point, particularly when reflecting on Srivastava's (1998) book *Constructing Post-Colonial India. National character and the Doon School.* Srivastava (1998) examines the Doon School as an important site of "construction of the 'modern' Indian citizen" (Srivastava, 1998: 3). On examining the Doon School as a post-colonial institution, Srivastava (1998) observes what he sees as mimicry of colonial practices, including, very obviously the use of English as a medium of communication. LaDousa (2007, 2014) also provides a more recent examination of the role played by English as an embodied and explicit marker of class. The point here is the role that institutions of schooling play in embodying practices that all relate to a variety of social and cultural norms (for example, Benei (2000) and Srivastava (1998) discuss nationalism and the 'post-colonial citizen', respectively).

From discussions with the teachers and information on the website the academic focus was evidently important but activity-based methods were integral to the teaching process. For example, the variety of extra-curricular activities ranged from holding expeditions and adventure camps, theatre, music and dance, to eco clubs, literary clubs and science clubs. As part of the adventure club, for example, twice a year the school arranged trips to local villages, for students to learn about issues that villagers faced and also offer solutions to these problems (DaisyDales, 2014). In addition trips were made to hill-stations for students to learn to be independent (conversation with teacher in 2010). Importantly, the school also had an eco club, which focussed on "[c]reating awareness and sensitivity about the environment and environmental challenges … [k]nowledge and understanding about environment and environmental challenges" (DaisyDales, 2014). The eco club largely ensured that students took initiative to keep the school and its surroundings clean and to participate in tree-plantations. Trips were also organised as part of the eco club activities, to wildlife sanctuaries, forests and parks

to study forests (DaisyDales, 2014). As I said earlier, no focus groups were held with this school, in keeping with the Principal's request to minimise time spent with the students.

Comparative analysis of schools

The schools had different activities for their eco clubs, which was how they offered the practical elements of the environmental education curriculum. The key difference in the types of activities offered were primarily driven by economic considerations, i.e. excursions, which included trips outside Delhi, were only offered by the two public schools and not the government school. While no statements were made by teachers or students about the economic considerations, it was only the public schools that chose what was clearly a more expensive option for the practical components of the environmental education curriculum. In addition to the differing activities between the eco clubs, the schools also envisioned the inculcation of different values in students from their schools (mission statements); and used different languages in teaching, all of which were explicit markers of difference. These factors are influential in framing student perspectives and values helping, I propose, to delineate and reinforce boundaries of class, particularly between the lower class and other fractions of the middle class, which I will now elaborate. In addition to the schools and their set-up, the content of environmental education is also an important site of analysis to explore how class fractions are represented and what forms of the environment are regularly featured, to begin to situate how formal environmental education reproduces and reinforces class boundaries.

Language

Language, Wortham (2003) argues, is a key site through which difference is either challenged or reproduced. He says that "[a] society's beliefs about language— as

a symbol of nationalism, a marker of difference, or a tool of assimilation—are often reproduced and challenged through educational institutions" (Wortham, 2003: 2). In the Indian context, LaDousa (2007) situates his entire study of identities of the state versus the nation in India in an analysis of the use of language and language ideologies. Scholars have noted, for example, the use of language as marker of distinction in arguments for the creation of new states within the federal system (Brass, 1990, Das Gupta, 1970), as well as in the gate-keeping role of the recognition of "official languages" in the Eighth Schedule of the Constitution of India (Gupta, 1995). In the Indian context, language offers a clear marker of difference, demonstrating which state and/or region an individual may belong to. English has had a significant role to play in delineating class. In fact, English served as a language to mark early difference between the colonial middle class and the masses. Varma (1998) and Markovits (2001) discuss the rise of the English-speaking class in India; first as a class of *babus* (administrators) and then as the ruling class in India. In contemporary India, English has come to play a ubiquitous role in marking out class and class fractions, an explicit form of cultural capital that is utilised to demonstrate not only difference but often hierarchy of class position. For example, the background of the individual can be determined not only by whether they speak English but whether the English is American or British, which can mark the difference between an individual from the middle class who may be from a newly-rich business community or an older middle class, evidencing not just cultural capital but the a longer relationship with the use of English – a habitus. In contemporary India, English also serves a wider purpose: to integrate into a global economy.

Language offers the first explicit difference between the schools and helps to locate the classes that they cater to. At the Kendriya Vidyalaya School, Hindi was the

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medium of education. By contrast at both the Delhi Police Public School and Daisy Dales, English was largely used in classrooms even though Hindi was occasionally used in informal spaces. While speaking in English was a mandatory requirement students were found conversing in Hindi in recreational spaces (playground etc.), which suggests that the ability to speak in English was a form of cultural capital that was desired and yet not wholly embraced by students from within this class fraction, given that they preferred to speak in Hindi when not being observed by teachers. Many students also stated that they spoke mainly in Hindi at home but were required to communicate in English in school (field notes, 2005). The choice of language and the emphasis placed on it in the schooling system is neither coincidental nor is it a decision that has been taken without specific intention. The choice of language is linked to educational experience that the school offers, which is in turn influenced by the type of student that the school claims to deliver; the mission statement of the schools best represents this. The Kendriya Vidyalaya School focused on local and national themes; its mission statement notes that the aim of the school is "to develop the spirit of national integration and create a sense of "Indianness" among children" (KVSangathan, 2014). Both of the privately run schools take a more international approach. The mission statement of the Delhi Police Public School, notes that it aims to prepare students to engage in a 'new world order'. The mission statement at Daisy Dales states that it aspires to create empowered global citizens. In emphasising language as a form of cultural capital the public schools reproduce difference between class fractions by providing the appropriate emphasis and space in which to acquire the adequate English-speaking skills. The government school, in contrast, devalues the importance of English, rather focussing on Hindi, to maintain, as Bourdieu et al. (1992) theorised, domination of the

other class fractions over these lower class students, and continuing the symbolic violence through the use of language.

Teaching about the environment

All three schools had eco clubs that students from grades seven and eight participated in. All the schools that I worked with had their students primarily focus on tree planting while the two privately run schools supplemented environmental activities like tree planting with visits to national parks and villages. This difference is important for two reasons. The first is the economic capital that facilitates particular forms of experiential learning – like visits to national parks – that families from the Kendriya Vidyalaya School did not have, which the other schools did. The second is the choice made by schools to take students to national parks as part of their experiential learning for environmental education. The choice of a national park as an environmental excursion suggests the recognition of the value of these experiences in the overall education of the children, which, interestingly, the government school did not organise or include as part of the environmental education pedagogy. It is important to recognise that economics, in this instance, creates difference but the choice of activities, seen from the trips taken to national parks, reproduces what are seemingly aspirational environmentalist values. This was also evident in how students from the schools discussed their environmental concerns. For students from both the Delhi Police Public School and Daisy Dales, environmental activities organised by the eco club included trips to national parks, enabling the recognition of symbols of the environment, which include species conservation and forests, in addition to more mundane concerns of water and sanitation. For students from the Kendriya Vidyalaya School proximate concerns were of primary importance and other symbols of the environment were not made available as part of the education pedagogy, which then limited their ability to

recognise other forms of the environment that students from the two other schools identified.

<u>Defining the environment and ranking concerns</u>

When defining the environment students from all three schools favoured naturalistic, scientific definitions of the environment with interests focussed on issues such as global warming and species extinction (questionnaire responses). Textbook knowledge along with practical 'eco' sessions like tree planting and rainwater harvesting workshops featured prominently in the questionnaire responses and also in the focus group discussions. An example of this form of interest is a young student from Daisy Dales who said:

> "I am aware of both Indian and global issues. Indian issues include extinction of various species […]. Global issues include depletion of the ozone layer, melting of glaciers etc." (Female, age 16, Daisy Dales).

Similarly a student from the Delhi Police Public School school defined the environment as "plants, trees, greenery, and nature, animals, insects, reptiles etc." (Male, age 14, Delhi Police Public School school). It is not particularly surprising or unusual that a first response to defining the environment invokes the air, water, plants and the ecosystem given that much of the environmental education and teaching of biology in schools focuses on these very ideas. Most students involved in the research (except for students from Kendriya Vidyalaya, the government-run school) also watched 'environmental' television channels (National Geographic, Discovery Channel and Animal Planet). Directly quoting from textbooks and practical sessions, including tree planting and rainwater harvesting, these students talked about the ecosystem, human influences on the environment and ways of dealing with certain environmental problems.

Despite students using the same textbooks across schools, there was a marked difference between students' concerns between schools. For instance, Delhi Police Public School students showed interest in issues like endangered species while students from the Kendriya Vidyalaya School focussed solely on the personal concerns they and their families faced in their daily lives in the city. The most pressing concern for students from the Delhi Police Public School was water shortages while for students from the Kendriya Vidyalaya School it was waste and garbage – both proximate concerns. Delhi Police Public School students contextualised the water issue as an economic concern – having to pay for water tankers, which was how the concern with water shortages was framed. However, for students from the Kendriya Vidyalaya School waste and garbage was a personal issue that was framed in the language of personal health and wellbeing, as they regularly encountered garbage and waste; facilitating, therefore, the bringing together of local subjective experiences, the social and the political towards the development of a form of environmentality. Important to note in this difference is the manner in which the environment is a core component of the quality of life for students. Students from the Delhi Police Public School emphasised endangered species over other proximate concerns (like garbage and waste), which students from the Kendriya Vidyalaya School did emphasise. The difference between the emphasis placed on issues of either a proximate environmental concern or one of wildlife and endangered species (not proximate for these students) is key in understanding how environmental education in both sets of schools (public and government) support the process of embedding particular symbols of the environment in the habitus of the students, thereby also facilitating the reproduction of class characteristics and social practice. I now turn to look at how environmental education is offered in the textbooks, further unpacking how environmental education in theory also

privilege particular ways of thinking about the environment, subtly reinforcing class boundaries.

Content analysis of the environment textbooks and practical guides

School textbooks are institutionalised and formalised tools that can be used as a lens through which the narratives on the environment can be made more explicit, particularly since the textbooks are standard across all schools. All three schools followed the same curriculum and used the same textbooks (conversation with teachers) but the socio-economic background of students and extra curricular activities varied across these three schools. In terms of textbook analysis, I examined two textbooks (*Our Environment* (NCERT, 2007) for grade seven and *Resources and Development* (NCERT, 2008) for grade eight) and two project books that supported the textbooks, providing practical projects for students to choose from as part of their course requirements. The edition used by the Kendriya Vidyalaya School and the Delhi Police Public School was based on the national curriculum framework for 2000 while the edition used by Daisy Dales Senior Secondary School was based on the 2005 framework. The two editions were almost identical; the only substantial changes to the 2005 version were more up-to-date examples. The National Curriculum Framework "recommends that children's life at school must be linked to their life outside the school" (NCERT, 2006: Foreword). To reinforce this pedagogy, in addition to participating in eco clubs, textbooks provide theory in the main body of the chapters along with exercises to engage students to better understand the theory, its practical implementation and implications. In addition to the exercises in theory textbooks, all environmental education books are supported with 'Project books' that are meant to supplement the experiential learning offered through the exercises (in addition to eco club activities). Two textbooks and two project books were utilised in the analysis of

this chapter. While environmental education is recognised as a crosscutting theme and features in other subject areas, there are core environmental education textbooks that students have to study and pass exams for. Given that the interactions were with students of grades seven and eight, the textbooks that have been examined in this section are those prescribed for the specific grades.

The first two textbooks I examined offer the core material for study of environmental education for grades seven and eight (conversation with teachers). The versions analysed were new editions but, as I have discussed earlier, the core content remains largely unchanged, with mainly examples being updated). In addition to the core material two further resources – called project books - offer students and teachers support for practical application of the material as long-advised by policymakers (Kothari, 1966: xii).

The class seven textbook was called *Our Environment* (NCERT, 2007). The preface to the project book clarifies its purpose, which is to "to bring about an attitudinal change in the students towards environmental concerns and nurture them to become a concerned and responsible citizen" (NCERT, 2009a: 8). The first six of the book's ten chapters cover natural geological features and processes such as glacier formations and the movement of tectonic plates; the book's last four chapters considers different climates around the world and how humans interaction with the environment. The practical guides in the textbook's project book offer ways of thinking about the environment and how to relate to it, providing unique insight into how students are expected to conceptualise the relationship between different groups of people and the environment, environmental problems and their causes, what the environment itself means, and how to solve environmental issues. The project book for class seven covers three main areas of interest: brown concerns (urban environmental concerns of dirt and

pollution), leisure activities, and a focus on natural disasters. Brown environmental concerns cover water, electricity, and waste in the market. The leisure activity projects include: pottery, sericulture, bird watching, preservation of historical structures, and keeping pets. Natural disasters projects cover cyclones and the drastic environmental changes they can cause. I return to these activities in more detail in the next section.

The grade eight textbook, called *Resources and Development* (NCERT, 2008) introduced the concept of sustainable development, highlighting the reduction in consumption, recycling and reusing as the means to conserve resources. The textbook contained six chapters, which discussed the concept of resources and their value to humans. The resources included in the textbook were land, wildlife, mineral and power, agriculture, industries and humans. Again, the project book titled *Project Book in Environmental Education for Class VIII* (NCERT, 2009b) that accompanied the textbook, which focussed largely on waste and waste disposal, even titling one project in the book *Death Trap* (NCERT, 2009b: 10) asking students to examine the relationship between disposal of domestic wastes and accidents. This was a social science textbook in which the environment was a key theme (still considered a core environmental studies textbook) but the material did not enable further discussion on the underlying causes of poverty, particularly providing a more contemporary lens or discussion. In the following sections I discuss two thematic strands that the textbooks and project books ascertain. The first strand explores the importance of consumption that is woven into the utilitarian purpose of the environment followed by a discussion on urban environmental concerns that are communicated in the textbooks and finally, I discuss the emphasis on daily urban concerns that are drawn out specifically in the textbooks.

Consumption and the utilitarian value of the environment

> "If the tenets of Nehruvian development could be captured by symbols of dams
> and mass-based factories, the markers of Rajiv Gandhi's shifted to the
> possibility of commodities that would tap into the tastes and consumption
> practices of the urban middle classes" (Fernandes, 2001b: 154).

The Geography textbook for grade eight, *Resources and Development* (NCERT, 2008)
is a demonstration of two sets of values that Fernandes (2001) refers to in the above
quote. The textbook, while discussing various aspects of the environment (forests, water
etc.), focuses on the utility of resources and begins to discuss sustainable development
and poverty.[26] A clear indication of this approach is the reference to resources as "the
free gifts of nature" (NCERT, 2008: 2). This illustrates how resources are
conceptualised in this book.[27] The textbook has an entire section devoted to better
understand the idea of 'harnessing resources' (NCERT, 2008). One of the textbook's
activities asks students to identify resources from a list that includes medicinal plants,
iron ore, coal deposits, a good singing voice and a clean environment (among others
that are also a mixture of things that are valued versus things that have commercial,
saleable value) (NCERT, 2008: 2). Students are then asked to distinguish between
resources that have explicit utilitarian value and those that one might value but not have
tangible (economic) benefits from (for example, a good singing voice). There is no
answer key provided for the questions in the activities. However, the adjoining text
defines resources (natural, human made and human). It is clear that the notion of value

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[26] Leela Fernades refers to urban middle-class values. However, this set of values is also referred to as
'new middle-class' values by others like Varma (1998).

[27] Resources are further divided into three categories – natural (resources drawn from nature and used
without much modification, human made (natural resources that are of use only when altered), and human
(skills and education of humans).

is synonymous with commercial or monetary value. Other items on the list, such as 'clean environment' or 'good singing voice,' are implicitly given less value. The environment, therefore, is presented from two perspectives – that of the resources that it provides for human consumption, as well as having no fundamental value beyond one that one may find valuable (good singing voice and a clean environment) but not derive tangible (economic) benefits from. This notion of value, which is understood as value for humans (primarily through consumption), forms a meta-narrative that is not only a point of reference for the curriculum and schools but conversations with residents in the middle-class colonies as well as wildlife clubs. A story in the textbook on 'conserving resources' provides further insight into what is 'valued'. The story depicts as a future where the world is facing a paucity of resources: all the "water on earth had dried up and all the trees cut down. There was no shade and nothing to eat or drink. […] the children and their friends made packets and *shopping bags* (my emphasis) out of old newspapers, discarded clothes and baskets from bamboo sticks" (NCERT, 2008: 5). Apart from the concerns over trees and water what is striking about the story is the emphasis on creating shopping bags out of older materials. While resources have been identified as scarce, fundamental issues of consumption are not raised or discussed, and current consumption is not challenged but reinforced. Additionally, there is no connection made between consumption that students encounter and are encouraged to participate in in their daily lives and the depletion of natural resources. This story is how the term sustainable development is introduced to students. In fact the utilitarian theme continues in another case study where a teacher extolls the virtues of beautiful silk scarves and jute bags to demonstrate the beauty of natural vegetation and wildlife (the title of the section itself). Another story in the textbook refers to a mother turning off lights and gadgets left on by her son, remarking on an increasing rift between

demand and supply of energy as a consequence of the advent of science and technology on lifestyles. The environment, in this textbook is solely symbolised as a product, a valuable resource that one can derive explicit, tangible use from. The other symbols of the environment – wildlife conservation, nature, aesthetics, for example – are absent in this textbook, which clearly suggests that students across all schools are presented with one formulation of the environment; this formulation is also more widely recognised and reinforced through consumption practices as a marker of the middle class, drawing very clearly on the prevailing theme of modernity that most middle-class individuals are familiar with. The fraction of the middle class for whom this formulation of the environment is accessible (part of their habitus) is also largely focused on and emphasises the importance of consumption as a form of social practice that is representative of being middle class.

The grade seven project book that supports the textbook called *Our Environment* (NCERT, 2007) suggests a project called *Waste in the Market. Where does it go?* (NCERT, 2009a: 34) in which students are asked to go to a local market and list wastes being discarded from the market, identify wastes that are hazardous and those that can be recycled. The project book explains how poor people in urban areas often depend on these wastes as a source of livelihood but that many of these wastes are hazardous and limited efforts are made by local government to make this occupation safer. The narrative accepts the role that 'rag pickers' have in the waste management system in the city given that this is their source of livelihood. However, the objective of this exercise is two-fold: to "[…] identify different kinds of waste generated in a market.... [and] to understand through observation the impact of waste on the environment" (NCERT, 2009a: 34). While the narrative weaves in the relationship between poverty and waste, the expected learning outcomes from the project bias the students towards quantification

and categorisation of wastes and potential for recycling, both of which – the wastes and recycling efforts - no doubt affect the quality of life of those who live close to these markets. In addition, the focus on recycling, while a traditional preoccupation of the literature on environmentally-friendly behaviour, is written as an Indian concern given the reference to the local economy of rag pickers that are involved in the recycling process. Students are asked to focus on what wastes are recycled and possibly work with local market traders to support them in recycling materials. The intended outcome of the project, interestingly, overlaps with the model of participatory governance – the *bhagidari* system – in which middle-class colony residents, market traders and local government come together to find solutions to problems in the city. While the textbooks are used beyond Delhi, the suggestion of partnerships with local traders offers to students a particular narrative of environmental problems in the city and ways of engaging with them that reinforce the cleaning and greening account discussed in Chapter 6 (Shuddh, Swacch, Saaf Dilli: cleaning and greening as markers of middle class-ness). In a project titled *Elixir of life – Water* (NCERT, 2009b: 2) students are introduced to the various ways in which water bodies become polluted. Degradation of water sources is problematic because, according to the text the "[t]reatment of polluted water for human use requires large expenditure. Health problems, together with the cost of treating water, affect our economy" (NCERT, 2009b: 2). The commodification of environmental resources continues in this project with the students asked to visit a water treatment plant to discern the cost of treating water.

The practice of consumption remains largely unopposed in the textbooks on the environment and environmental education. The reinforcement of consumption as a normative act in these textbooks supports Fernandes' (2009, 2001a) assertion that middle-class identity, which is recreated and based on consumption, is largely a state-

led endeavor (given that the State oversees the content and overall pedagogy of education). For example, an activity with students' pets is featured in the grade seven project book titled *Project Book in Environmental Education* (NCERT, 2009b). The activity suggests exploring the resources required for the upkeep of pets and a review of the various pets their neighbours might have. Similarly other projects focus on paper and electricity consumption. These two issues are tackled as problems that require reducing waste at source – using paper in notebooks more judiciously, and turning of lights or using energy-efficient appliances. There is little challenge offered to the status quo of consumption of products or choosing to purchase fewer items or shift patterns of consumption from purchasing electronic appliances like video games to being more physically active. What is widely recognised as a key marker of middle-class lifestyles remains unchallenged in these textbooks, where the practice of consumption remains unopposed. Costs, the economy, and the value of environmental resources for human consumption are the common themes running through both the textbooks and the practical projects that students are recommended to engage in. This, interestingly, was also partly alluded to in the statements made by students from the Delhi Police Public School suggesting that waste and garbage in cities was largely the result of poverty and poor people rather than the lifestyles of the middle class. The legitimation of consumption as a practice – a marker of middle-class identity – is strongly tied to how the environment is symbolised in the textbooks, offering to students a narrative that supports a particular definition of the environment in relation to a specific class fraction from the middle class that associates primarily with consumption as an identifying marker. Through this focus on consumption, clearly, identities are reinforced and social practice legitimised.

Daily urban concerns

Water, dirt, and garbage all come together in both sets of textbooks (*Our Environment* (NCERT, 2007) and *Resources and Development* (NCERT, 2008)) and the related project books. Attempts are made in the textbooks to reflect on broader issues of poverty for students to recognise how urban environmental concerns have an impact on poor people. On the one hand, this recognition of poverty in environmental textbooks is important since it offers a perspective on the environment that goes beyond pristine images of nature and forms of overtly tactical wildlife environmentalism (or enthusiasm) that some fractions of the middle class utilise in reference to their leisure activities. However, the textbooks provided limited content exploring the various facets of poverty not to mention the relationship between urban spaces, middle-class residents and those living in poverty. For example, an exercise on water conservation had a series of pictures that implied that the lower classes who work as servants in middle-class households – depicted by those who clean clothes – are responsible for water wastage as they wash clothes with taps left on. In the same exercise, pictures of servants washing clothes accompanied text discussing the importance of water conservation. The juxtaposition of the images with the text implicitly suggests that uneducated [and/or poor/lower class] people are the cause of water wastage. In addition to the narrative of poverty and dirt the textbooks also place considerable emphasis on issues relevant to urban residents (e.g. garbage, waste, water shortages etc.). The grade eight project book had an activity titled *Where should the waste go?* (NCERT, 2009b: 12) that took a completely different approach from the grade seven project book's waste-oriented activity (*Waste in the Market. Where does it go?* (NCERT, 2009a: 34)), which primarily discussed the process of waste disposal and degradation as well as the physical discomfort of being around rotting waste. The aim of this grade eight exercise was for

students to identify suitable approaches for household waste disposal. In addition to this project there are two further activities that focus on waste disposal, for students of grade eight. One was titled *Death Trap* (NCERT, 2009b: 10); students are meant to examine how individuals discard wastes like banana peels onto the streets and how these wastes then cause accidents. They were even asked to go to hospitals to measure the number of accidents resulting from these practices. There was an emphasis, particularly in the project books for both grades, on the problems facing the middle class in the urban environment (all students were required to undertake at least one activity from those listed in the project book for each year). The projects and textbooks predominantly address urban issues that are proximate in nature, in keeping with providing context to students' education on the environment. However, in addition to providing context, there are narratives on the relationship between poverty and dirt and garbage that reinforce and reproduce class characteristics, particularly marking out difference between the middle and lower classes. The focus adopted in the textbooks in marking out this difference is also the same focus taken by a fraction of the middle class that I discuss in Chapters 5 and 6, who I refer to as overtly tactical environmentalists – residents of middle-class colonies – who are mainly concerned with environmental issues that relate to their daily lives .

The characteristics of middle class-ness and the environment

The textbooks discuss the importance of protecting endangered species infrequently while there are also a few chapters on climate change and global warming. However, the predominant focus is on daily, urban, environmental concerns – especially garbage and waste. This favours a synonymy between the environment and the urban environment, particularly matters of liveability. The project books also offer activities that are largely universally accessible across all class groups, sensitive to economic

constraints that some students may face, therefore, helping to practically reinforce the urban dirt and garbage narrative that the textbooks discuss.

The eco club phenomenon is widespread and used as standard pedagogy for environmental education. However, the eco-clubs also offer varied narratives of the environment that reproduce class characteristics by widening the discursive framing of the environment to include bourgeois environmental concerns, as was evident in student perceptions at the Delhi Police Public School. The differences in ranking of environmental concerns, with students from the Delhi Police Public School ranking endangered species higher than that of waste and garbage and students from the Kendriya Vidyalaya School giving endangered species the lowest ranking, it becomes quite clear that experiences beyond what is offered in the textbooks have a role to play in differentiating class characteristics; eco clubs certainly have a role to play. Ultimately economic capital (which determines whether eco club activities are affordable for a student or not) is essential in the ability to access an appreciation of the value of particular symbols of the environment, as a form cultural capital. This in turn supports the reproduction of class characteristics, given how the environment is conceptualised and class characteristics reinforced. More generally, I have also discussed the different outcomes that the three schools envisage for their students – from creating 'global citizens' (the Delhi Police Public School and Daisy Dales) to instilling 'Indianness' among children (the Kendriya Vidyalaya School). The school structures and values are embedded in reinforcing and reproducing difference on multiple levels. However, environmental education offers a lens into this process of reproduction.

Conclusion

Education in India is a route for the state to create responsible, morally upright citizens. Environmental education, particularly, is singularly drawn out in the seminal

education policy document - the Kothari commission report - evidencing the important role that the environment plays in delivering morally upright and responsible citizens. The environment is an important component of the content of education and is considered both a crosscutting theme as well as a subject in its own right, requiring practical pedagogical approaches to most effectively deliver the material to students. This chapter provided a lens into the narrative offered by the Indian education system through discussions with students from lower and middle-class backgrounds on the environment and their associations with the environment. In addition I examined textbooks to elucidate how the environment is symbolised in the books, associated activities and practical projects, as part of a wider educational system in which, I argue, class characteristics are reinforced and reproduced. Students from the lower class school (the Kendriya Vidyalaya School) were largely concerned with daily, proximate issues that they encountered – waste, garbage and water shortages, while students from both the middle-class schools (Delhi Police Public School and Daisy Dales) while concerned about water shortages also favoured an interest in the conservation of endangered species – recognising representations of the environment that were more than simply proximate in nature. In the textbooks two key thematic areas are developed. The first is the narrative of the environment as a site for consumption that is valued for its resource-use and is also framed to reinforce middle-class values that are tied significantly to consumption as a social practice. The second thematic area is the narrative of the environment as a daily, urban concern that most students from across various classes will recognise but those from the lower classes will more closely relate to. Subtle narratives are also developed on the causes of many of these problems that are framed around class and responsibilities of classes towards the environment particularly vilifying the lower classes. The question, which the chapter aimed to address was:

'How is the environment discursively framed within the formal education system and how is class reinforced through the content and practice of education?'. I propose that the content of environmental education offers a context-specific narrative of the environment that represents the environment in its everyday, proximal form. However, through practical activities that middle-income middle-class schools offer to their students (in addition to other differences like language) other experiences are made available to students, which facilitate their ability to recognise another symbol of the environment that is linked to wildlife conservation and forests. However, these additional values are the privilege of middle-income middle-class schools and middle-class children, as a consequence of the economic capital required to access these activities. Environmental education in schools, I propose, provides another space through which class boundaries are reinforced and reproduced.

Chapter 5   Overtly tactical environmentalism: the environment and being middle class

> "[T]he transformation of economic capital into social capital presupposes a specific labor, i.e., an apparently gratuitous expenditure of time, attention, care, concern, which, as is seen in the endeavor to personalize a gift, has the effect of transfiguring the purely monetary import of the exchange and, by the same token, the very meaning of the exchange. From a narrowly economic standpoint, this effort is bound to be seen as pure wastage, but in the terms of the logic of social exchanges, it is a solid investment, the profits of which will appear, in the long run, in monetary or other form" (Bourdieu, 1986: 25).

This chapter focuses on New Delhi residents' colonies to look at everyday middle-class urban Indians' relationships with the environment. These colonies were chosen as sites that were representative of middle income (Sarita Vihar, New Delhi) and upper income (Vasant Vihar, New Delhi) middle-class individuals. I selected these colonies on the basis of income markers. That said, there is great heterogeneity within the middle class, and I engage with these two groups of the middle class to unpack this heterogeneity rather than to suggest that these two groups are representative of the middle class as a whole. The aim was to explore differences, if any, between these two middle-class subgroups or what I refer to as fractions.

It emerged through data collection and analysis that the majority of middle-class concerns and interests in the environment were similar in each sub-group (middle and upper-income colonies). These concerns were primarily of proximate issues, engaging with everyday realities of living in a crowded city like Delhi, enabling the creation of a particular form of "environmental subject" that draws on the experiences of scarcity of resources and space to respond to environmental issues (Agarwal, 2005:162). However,

these concerns were framed as differences in how various groups of people engage with the environment (by their own definition) and these differences delineated the lower classes from the middle class. Fundamentally, the environment as an embodied practice (habitus) was discursively framed to primarily mark difference between the lower classes and the middle class, largely referring to differences in economic capital. The environment was deployed as a form of cultural capital in as much as it referred to class and notions of dirt and cleanliness as being embodied. This was evident in how the respondents from this sub group (the two fractions) engaged with the concept of the environment and in how respondents utilised the environment to mark out difference and distinction within their own groups. I argue that this is a key form of social practice that Bourdieu discusses in reference to the 'classificatory struggle', which is core to his theory on social class and distinction. This struggle, in the Indian context, is clearly one that draws on caste and class as identified by Dickey (2000) in her article on the permeability of homes, which I elaborate in the following sections. It is an embodied practice (a habitus), from which respondents unconsciously derive ways of relating to the environment and yet the anxiety of space and physical dirt is clearly woven into these discussions, helping respondents to further mark out difference between class fractions based on more than simply embodied practice but also drawing on local subjectivities and the politics of space.

I refer to these middle-class individuals as overtly tactical environmentalists; individuals that, by nature of their habitus, engage with the environment on mainly proximate issues. Yet they tactically choose to recognise and emulate various forms of what they consider to be appropriate environmental actions and behaviours that also tactically facilitate the marking of difference between not only lower classes but also smaller class fractions from within the middle class. These overtly tactical

environmentalist straddle two interesting positions of caring about direct, proximate concerns and yet recognising that there is value in caring about the environment, beyond these daily concerns (for example, the morality of engaging in positive environmental actions or behaviours), including drawing on the practice of pilgrimages. For these overtly tactical environmentalists the environment is primarily a concern of daily, everyday life but also holds value (cultural capital) that they recognise and frame rules around that their habitus implicitly relates to. In this chapter I explore the various forms of environmental concerns that respondents exhibited, the nature of their interests that make them a form of distinction and how embodied social practice along with a particular environmentality helps to identify them as a particular class fraction.

In this chapter I begin by using Bourdieu's concepts – specifically habitus, fields, rules and cultural capital – to examine respondents' embodied relationship with the environment. Bourdieu's (1984) theory of social class and distinction is largely concerned with the middle class and the classificatory struggle inherent within the middle class and its various fractions. The concept of fields, for example, was deployed as a tool to explore arenas of struggle for distinction, within the middle class. However, this tool also holds potential for analysis on differences between the middle class and lower classes. Deeply embedded social norms are not only difficult to elucidate but singular focus on these embodied practices limits the ability to explore other anxieties that challenge identity-formation in the Indian context. Therefore, along with an exploration of habitus, I look at ways in which overtly tactical posturing using the language of the environment helps to understand how social and political change (as outlined by Chatterjee (2008) and Kaviraj (1988)) creates 'environmental subjects' (Agarwal, 2005). Overtly tactical environmentalists recognise the implicit value that the environment (as a conceptual category) holds as a form of cultural capital, framing

norms to delineate difference. On the one hand these individuals frame the environment to differentiate them from the lower classes, an anxiety that is embedded in how they engage with the environment. In addition, their motivations also include undertaking journeys to encounter the environment, which is a form of pilgrimage or *yatra* that Gold (1990) discusses in her book, what I argue is an embodied practice that derives from religious and cultural norms in which class is a key organising principle. I discuss the notion of *yatra* or pilgrimage in more detail in Chapter 6. What is interesting, though, is that, the nature of their environmentalism (a mixture of embodied practice and environmentality) demonstrates the need to form a sense of distinction, given how they choose to recognise the environment as a form of capital that enables them to distinguish themselves from other individuals. Through this process, actors (overtly tactical environmentalists) allocate value to particular forms of social practice that they regard as environmental (e.g. households segregating waste for composting) thereby distinguishing themselves from others within the same group, demonstrating classificatory struggle. This chapter aims to answer the following two questions: firstly, how exactly do these overtly tactical environmentalists construct narratives of the environment; and secondly, how are these narratives utilised to mark out difference from both the lower classes as well as from within the group itself? I first examine Bourdieu's structural framework (and the tools) from which the analysis has been initially constructed. I then discuss the three rules within the field of the environment through which these tactical environmentalists frame, create and negotiate their identities, in relation to the lower classes and within their own group.

Habitus, fields, rules and cultural capital: utilising Bourdieu's analytical framework to begin to 'value' the environment

I start by using Bourdieu's analytical framework to locate the relationship that individuals have with the environment, through their everyday associations with the environment. In Chapter 2, I discussed the shift in conceptual thinking on class in the Indian context that has happened largely as a consequence of shifting social economic and political realities in India (Chatterjee, 2008). Bourdieu's approach provides a point of departure from which to analytically engage with deeply embedded social norms that manifest as rules in the field of the environment. It is the methodological approach that this research takes to identify where Bourdieu's theoretical framework holds explanatory value and how classificatory struggle in the contemporary Indian context manifests as anxieties, which drive overtly tactical ways to mark out difference from other class fractions. This approach draws inspiration from Mark Liechty's (2003) work in Nepal, as he analytically engages with the contradictory positions of 'tradition' and 'modernity' as they play out in the Nepali social context.. In this chapter, I suggest that the various narratives of the environment that are constructed by individuals are done so to mark out difference between the lower and the middle class in overt ways that particularly focus on economic capital and the ability to afford cleanliness and sanitation, which the poor and lower classes do not possess, helping to weave a narrative of class and the environment that engages with issues like dirt and cleanliness, often using formal, legal means (Ghertner, 2008, Ghertner, 2011) or by framing the use of space to facilitate boundary-making (Chakrabarty, 1992, Dickey, 2000). What is interesting in how this fraction of the middle class engaged with the concept of the environment and environmental values is the inherent knowledge that they possessed that it was a concept that they should be cognisant of and interested in. This awareness came through in the level of engagement that they had with environmental issues in their discussions as well as the way in which their renditions of the environment were

utilised to frame their identities, particularly in relation to other members of their respective colonies. This cognisance is important since it is evidence of reflexivity and an act of agency in terms of social mobility. This is something that I will return to given that some commentators (Bouveresse, 1999) argue that individual agency is an issue that Bourdieu's theory of social class does not provide analytical space for. This classificatory struggle between individuals is a core structural component in Bourdieu's theorising on class. This struggle is founded on individuals marking difference from one another; from the articulation of this struggle class boundaries can be drawn, given that it is not only differences that emerge but common interests and values as well.

In addition to economic capital, which he borrows conceptually from Marx, Bourdieu (1986) introduces three further types of capital – symbolic, cultural and social. Cultural capital is, arguably, most widely used in studies on class, consumption and status and is also a key form of capital that this study utilises in its analysis. However, Bourdieu does not clearly define cultural capital and is ambivalent about the actual nature of cultural capital both as a tool for social reproduction as well as in its relation to economic capital. In this ambivalence there is scope for interpretation; in fact, this provides one of the strengths of Bourdieu's theoretical approach, particularly since culture itself is a highly contested concept. This openness offers space for respondents to frame their own behaviours, patterns, assumptions, values and beliefs, which is, very broadly the foundation of culture. However, with regard to the concept of capital more broadly, Bourdieu defines capital as any entity whose storing and accumulation accentuates advantage in both the more ontological sense of distinction and identity but also in furthering ones life chances (Bourdieu, 1984). The ability to negotiate the value of and accumulate capital in any arena (that Bourdieu refers to as a field) is governed by habitus, a core concept that Bourdieu deploys in his theory on class and distinction.

Habitus, or the 'structuring structures' is embodied and subliminal, a lens through which the individual perceives and engages with the world, which is unconscious and deeply embedded. Habitus, Bourdieu theorises, facilitates the ability to recognise and engage in particular fields, for example art or music, and the capital that the individual possesses is the currency that the individual uses in the field to further accumulate capital and/or maintain distinction. Through ones habitus, an individual has the capacity to not only recognise the symbolic value of objects, but is then also able to participate in the process of negotiation that confers value to these culturally-produced objects. Through this process of negotiation individuals legitimise their own positions, and consequently their cultural capital, by establishing greater symbolic value to their positions over others in the field. Taking the example of high art: while any individual may be able to physically observe or even possess a piece of art– a painting or sculpture perhaps − unless they are embodied with the ability to understand its symbolic value (the difference perhaps between impressionist art and cubist art, for example) the art form itself offers no form of value or cultural capital that can be attributed by others who negotiate cultural value in the field, to them. This means that economic capital alone does not offer an individual social status or the ability to be different and distinct. The embodied ability (habitus) to distinguish between cultural products is a key factor in class distinctions. It is important to recognise that economic capital cannot be simply translated into cultural capital since an individual cannot purchase the ability to appreciate art, for example. Therefore, cultural capital and habitus offers the greatest obstacle, Bourdieu theorises, to class mobility. In addition, the process of accumulating capital in various fields further reinforces habitus, which is then reproduced, as Bourdieu (1977b) theorises, through children, inter-generationally. It is the embodied traits and abilities through which difference between classes is maintained. Social

mobility is, in Bourdieu's theoretical world-view highly restricted especially since ones habitus governs ones position in class, and habitus is not governed by rational action. However, Bourdieu's world-view is constrained by the historical conditions of 1960s and 1970s France and French society, which is different from rapidly changing Indian society where class boundaries are being significantly challenged with dramatic changes in democratic governance, economic structures and access to a variety of ways in which identity is being redefined. It is in this period of flux that the environment becomes a tool, a form of capital that is both subconsciously deployed, as an embodied practice, and also explicitly and tactically deployed demonstrating a form of environmentality.

Turning now to the role of the environment and what it offers in a discussion on class and distinction. Some key questions are: what advantage might middle-class respondents see in the way in which they conceptualise the environment? What advantage does their association with it offer them? Why not simply offer up indifference? I suggest that the advantage that particular ways of conceptualising the environment offers middle-class respondents is the ability to be different from another individual from within their social group, different from the lower classes and the poor by defining spaces for use by various classes, as well as attempt to exhibit characteristics of individuals from different class fractions as a tool to differentiate themselves. As Bourdieu theorises, boundaries of the middle class and its fractions are dynamic and individuals are in constant battle to establish their identity by legitimising their values over those of others both in their class fraction and between fractions. Therefore, individuals in the middle class are constantly framing, reframing and negotiating, within particular fields, the legitimacy of their capital. In the next section I expand on the concept of field, as laid out by Bourdieu, to determine the characteristics

of a field and how the environment is a field of cultural production in which various

forms of the environment and environmental issues are culturally produced and valued.

The environment as a form of cultural capital: situating the concept of the environment within the framework of fields and rules

Three key structures in Bourdieu's framework, developed in *Distinction* and

Outline of the Theory of Practice, will be used as the analytical tools for this chapter.

They are habitus, field and rules. In the previous section I laid out the definition of

habitus and its role in Bourdieu's theory on class and the reproduction of class. I now

turn to the concept of field, particularly as it relates to the environment. The concept of

field is not clearly established by Bourdieu. There are, however, useful definitions of

the field that help support empirical analysis. Wacquant, for example, understands

Bourdieu's conception of a field as the venue where agents contest the distribution of

capital: "it is a *battlefield* [my emphasis] wherein the bases of identity and hierarchy are

endlessly disputed" (Wacquant, 2008: 268). This suggests that the three key aspects to a

field are: a system of hierarchy, disputation, and a process of identity formation, which

is often making identity through negating other identities. In order to establish hierarchy

one representation of an object or subject is always legitimised over another, to give it

value and therefore, by association, value to the actor wielding it. Inherent in the

process of establishing hierarchy is "oppositions express[ing] themselves in terms of

reciprocal excommunication […]" (Bourdieu, 1993: 117). This idea of reciprocal

excommunication is better explained by Wacquant while referring to aesthetic taste as

the object of distinction saying that "aesthetic sense exhibited by different groups, and

the lifestyles associated with them, define themselves in opposition to one another: taste

is first and foremost the distaste of the tastes of others" (Wacquant, 1998: 223). The

field is therefore a discursive arena in which actors frame ideas/concepts with the

intention to establish legitimacy of any one formulation over the other. Examples of fields are art, music, education, and for the purposes of this research, I argue, the environment, in which the value of the various notions of the environment, as a form of cultural capital, is disputed and negotiated.

As I have mentioned in the earlier section on habitus, the ability to recognise and access particular fields is dependent on an individual's habitus. Therefore, access to a field is limited by the ability to recognise the field in the first instance, and secondly, through the capital that one has with which to negotiate value in the field. Bourdieu claims that as individuals enter a field, they (consciously or otherwise) are more aware of the language of the 'game' and/or have greater capacity to manipulate this language through their established capital appropriation. The language of the field and prescribed ways of operating in the field is the 'rule' of the field. For example, individuals who have been involved in wildlife or eco-clubs through family associations or have been brought up to be involved in some way with environmental organisations or environmental activities are likely to understand the structure of social interaction in these clubs, including speaking the same idiom (for example spirituality or conservation science).

In order for the environment to be considered a field for analysis it is important to establish the qualities of a field that make it a battlefield in which capital is used as a currency to establish legitimacy and distinction. There are three key conditions that are implicit in the description of a field, which has been discussed earlier in this section that I return to here, with empirical focus. The first condition is that there is capital that one can accumulate by engaging with the field, i.e. the environment. If there were no capital (economic, social or cultural) that could be accumulated while engaging with a particular issue/concept it serves no purpose as a space in which battles may be had. The

second condition is that of opposition. Through the opposition, battle occurs and this is important. Finally, these oppositions must offer some form of distinction to the actors.

The first condition of the field is the potential for capital accumulation by those participating in it. The value of participating in the field of the environment was evident from the nature of interest that was evident during discussions with respondents, which was more than cursory and tokenistic. The environment proved to be a point of much interest, eliciting strong opinions from respondents. The environment, as a concept, offered symbolic space for individuals who, by virtue of having the appropriate habitus, were able to engage in battles to establish and negotiate value of particular symbols to legitimise their own social practice and attitudes. Fundamentally, I argue that the conceptualisation of the environment as a form of cultural capital within the field of the environment is to 'distinguish' one self from the other (lower classes or other individuals from within the middle class) within the boundaries of the field of the environment. The second condition for a field is that individuals negotiate value of capital through oppositional concepts (for example, I recycle and that is good as opposed to my neighbour does not recycle and that is not right). This process was also evident in how respondents consistently and unanimously juxtaposed their opinions against those, which they conceived to be erroneous in values or behaviours or practice. The third condition of a field is that there is distinction that can be determined through the process of opposition and negotiation. This too, was evident in how respondents held their actions/values/behaviours as authentic and legitimate thereby conferring value to their perspective in opposition to the behaviours or actions of others in the group, suggesting a distaste of the taste of others over ones own taste. This process of the constant battle for legitimacy of ones own capital is what Bourdieu believed was the classificatory struggle that was embedded in the process of class formation, as a

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dynamic process to establish individual distinction (Wacquant, 2008). This, fundamentally, relational, i.e. one individual relating in opposition to another, aspect of how the environment is discussed demonstrates the focus on the individual within class, which when observed as holding similar values or approaches to other individuals can be extrapolated into class fractions.

In addition to field, Bourdieu introduces rules as a further concept within the theory of distinction. Rules are what Bourdieu recognises as the hidden codes, norms and ways of being in each field, the vernacular of the field. In the case of the environment, I argue (and evidence in the analysis that follows this section) that these rules are in the process of negotiation, that are evidenced in how the environment is framed and discussed during interviews, through textual analysis and participant observation.

Overtly tactical environmentalism: identifying the rules of the field

The data for this chapter was collected from two middle-class residential colonies in South Delhi – Sarita Vihar (Block D) and Vasant Vihar (Block B) over nine months between 2005 and 2006 (for more on the survey areas see Chapter 3, Appendices 1, 2 and 3 for maps of the areas, and Appendix 4 for the list of respondents). In addition, trips were made every two years to South Delhi where I lived, on average, for two weeks every visit. During visits to the colonies notes were taken on new developments and informal conversations were had with key respondents.[28] The

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[28] In Delhi the idea of a colony is simply a boundary that demarcates one set of residences over another. For example Vasant Vihar as a locality is comprised of multiple colonies. I lived in and engaged with residents of Vasant Vihar B block colony (upper-income middle class colony). I also engaged with residents of Sarita Vihar D block (middle-income middle class colony)

initial information was collected through interviews, questionnaires, participant observation and primary data (newsletters, public service messages etc.).

Sarita Vihar was developed by the Delhi Development Authority (DDA) in the late 1980s and currently houses blocks A to K. The colony itself borders the state of Uttar Pradesh and Haryana, with many prominent companies including several business process outsourcing (BPO) offices now situated around the area; this in turn has helped to drive up the cost of homes in the area. Interestingly, in 2013 the colony was also voted the greenest colony in Delhi with its many parks and play areas (ToI, 2013). During the initial data collection, this colony housed middle-class individuals with a mixture of retirees and IT professionals. D block has a kitchen garden and was one of the first few colonies to pledge going zero waste in 2004. In total Sarita Vihar Block D has 230 houses of which 50 contributed questionnaire responses while a further 15 individuals were involved in semi-structured interviews. The houses were arranged closely together over three storeys. D block also has a recreational park with swings and a children's playground as well as a vermicomposting pit.

Vasant Vihar, in contrast, has more expensive real estate and is organised with more space per house, including very few buildings with flats. The colony itself was established in 1950 when 15 people laid the foundations of the Government Servants Housing Building society, which then became the Vasant Vihar colony.[29] Most properties in B block were stand-alone houses, larger homes owned by one family, indicating higher incomes and wealth. Unlike Sarita Vihar where non-residents had easy access to residents' doors, in Vasant Vihar each home had a gate with a security guard and buzzer, which restricted entry to the main door of the house itself. Unlike Sarita Vihar, where I went alone to knock on doors and speak with people, in Vasant Vihar I

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[29] Private conversation with RWA member.

had to be accompanied by a security guard who was known to colony members, in order to get pass the servants. There are six blocks in Vasant Vihar – A to F. Block B has a total of 200 houses of which 50 houses provided responses to questionnaires while a further 15 houses were involved in interviews. I also lived in the B block for the duration of the initial fieldwork and lived in Munirka (within walking distance of the B block) during the repeat visits to Delhi in 2008, 2010, 2012 and 2013. Vasant Vihar was home to many celebrities and a few embassies and ambassadors.[30] The Residents' Welfare Association (RWA) of Vasant Vihar colony was one of the first RWAs to join the *bhagidari* system of governance in Delhi. The colony also had a vermicomposting pit.[31] There were a few key informants in this colony who were instrumental in providing more in-depth insight on the colony. I will discuss these key informants in more detail shortly.

The two colonies I worked with fall very broadly into the middle and upper-income middle-class groups (see Chapter 3 for a broader discussion on property price differentials etc.). I found that residents in both colonies relied on finding various elements of distinction (in the Bourdieuian sense) in their attitudes towards the environment while creating discursive narratives to distinguish themselves from the lower classes. Despite the difference in property prices (used as a proxy for economic capital or wealth) being particularly high in Vasant Vihar, the environmental concerns raised by residents of this colony were similar to the concerns expressed by those from Sarita Vihar.

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[30] I myself lived next door to a well-known film actor from Bollywood when residing in B block Vasant Vihar.

[31] The *bhagidari* system of governance is unique to Delhi and is a participatory governance structure that includes local traders, RWAs and the local government to deliver solutions to problems in the city (problems themselves are varied in nature – from crime to pollution).

The research design was developed to examine perspectives on everyday relationships with environment offered by urban middle-class Indians, to unearth the shifting nature of relationships between various sections of the middle class. By choosing middle and higher income middle-class colonies the aim was to articulate observed difference in environmental concerns concurrent with varying levels of economic capital. What was interesting was that majority of concerns (all except one particular issue that focussed on parks and greenery) were the same across both colonies. The focus rested with proximate concerns of garbage and water shortages. However, there was recognition of the symbolic value of the environment to respondents, as a form of cultural capital that had the potential to mark differences between the lower classes as well as from other individuals in the colony. The rules of the field were therefore presented as appropriate ways of being environmentally aware or conscious that were disputed and negotiated by individuals in the colony. In the following sections I discuss how these groups of middle-class individuals in Delhi articulate markers of 'middle class-ness' through the rule-setting in the field of the environment. In examining these rules I explore how the environment is articulated as a form of cultural capital, to delineate boundaries between the lower classes and the middle class and within the class fraction as well. Through my fieldwork and analysis, I identified three key rules within the field of the environment through which residents of these colonies negotiated difference and attempted to distinguish themselves from others in the same colony (and by extension, class fraction) and the lower classes. The rules were framed as forms of environmental concerns or ways of being environmentally aware, designed to legitimise one representation of the environment over another. I lay out the three rules of the field of the environment below. The responses from both colonies, including the questionnaires were coded, in order to draw

out themes, organised around responses. These themes were identified for each colony separately and then brought together to identify difference, if any, between colonies. The interesting revelation was the minimal difference that was evident through this comparative analysis, which I discuss in the following section. The one notable difference between the relationships of the environment and the valuation of the environment came from the importance of parks and green spaces for the upper-middle-class colony over the middle-income colony. This difference is embedded largely in social practice and the difference in economic capital, which varies between the two colonies, which I discuss in more detail in the final rule.

Rule 1: Morality and education

The first rule in the field of the environment was structured around the ideas of formal education and innate morality as relating to how one might either have or access environmental values. Respondents discussed the ways in which concerns over the environment could not be learned through education rather that these values were innate. In this distinction between learnt and innate was an implicit reference to a habitus, a deeply embedded characteristic that could not be accessed, derived or purchased through formal education. This distinction was interesting since the word education was used consistently through the interviews and informal discussions, as a solution, a panacea, to environmental problems. In fact the lack of education was offered as a fundamental reason for many environmental problems. This response was standard across all the respondents from the residential colonies. On interrogating this proposed panacea a little further it became clear that education was not being referred to in a formal, taught sense. Two separate issues were being raised. The first was the recognition that environmental awareness was a 'good' quality to possess and act on, i.e. an embodied practice. This was discussed as an innate characteristic that individuals

insisted one needed to possess to be 'correct' and morally upright, which could not be taught. Woven into this notion of it being good were notions of nationalism, for example. The second issue that was being discussed was how environmental awareness required some form of economic capital, that was then an explicit marker between the lower classes and the middle class, and I expand on this shortly.

The first issue that was raised was the innate nature of environmental values. A respondent from Sarita Vihar who made a distinction between education and literacy, and education and citizenship stated this:

> "R – There is no awareness. That is the real problem. We get given so much information. We have surf ads, ads for soap and it is too much. If you have an *illiterate* [my emphasis] person watching these ads, what will they understand? These ads are just to sell the product. There is no environmental message in these ads at all"
>
> D – What about the lifebuoy ad?
>
> R – Have you seen anyone cleaning the streets as a result of that ad? People know how to clean their own homes but no one wants to clean the streets. It is not about education at all. It is about your roots and your morals. You need to feel for your country and feel like you belong to your country (House 95, aged 45, Female, Sarita Vihar).

This female RWA member from Sarita Vihar was one of my key respondents, spending significant time with me on my visits, choosing to walk around the colony and introduce me to other residents. She was a housewife, with two young children and volunteered her time to be an RWA member. At the very start of the interview this respondent had expressed dissatisfaction with members of the colony after they had opposed many of the endeavours to improve garbage disposal (a vermicomposting pit) in the colony. The

rest of the interview was conducted with the respondent using the same tone of displeasure. She was vocal about her voluntary contributions as well as the troubles she had faced with other colony members in the implementation of projects like the vermicomposting pit. She made particular reference to illiterate people in her statement, talking about how if one did not have the innate qualities to recognise the importance of the environment in public messages (advertisements or otherwise) then these forms of education are meaningless. By making the links between information, morals and behaviours, she disempowers even other members of her colony and class-fraction by suggesting that 'people like her' are nationalistic, working for the greater environmental good. This ethos is evident in the above quote when she refers to the inability of information on the environment to effect changes when an "illiterate person [watches] these ads", which she distinguished from education (she talks about this later on in the interview). According to her while formal education is accessible to all (education is mandated by the government as a right for all citizens) the issue is not education but the capability to embody the very principles that allow this environmental information to be used for appropriate action. Granted the quality of education will vary between schools but she denies even those with education from good quality schools the value that she confers on herself.

What she refers to as having the appropriate framework, i.e. morals and 'roots', to translate the information into a positive environmental message, is habitus, or the innate, embedded characteristics that enable an individual to recognise the importance of taking care of the environment: in this case to clean the streets or recognise the value of a vermicomposting pit. By making reference to an embodied principle, this respondent suggests that the innate qualities that she possesses, i.e. to recognise the value of acting in an environmentally-positive manner, is not accessible to everyone. In

doing so she distinguishes herself from other fellow colony members, who she identifies by their inability to recognise the importance of acting in an environmentally positive manner. The second point this respondent raised was that of belonging to your country, the idea of citizenship. This respondent defined nationalism as feeling for ones country and acting in the interest of the greater good. In using the language of nationalism and citizenship this respondent confers greater symbolic value to her actions of voluntary service to the community on environmental issues, bringing in a greater and more valuable purpose to her deeply-held values. This respondent also discusses the difference between action and inaction in the above quote, which I discuss in more detail in the second rule. This respondent chose to disempower even those individuals who reassessed their environmental choices based on media and public service messages, i.e. information received from the media and thereafter acted upon. Instead she seemed to believe that environmental concerns are derived from a place of morals and values, rather than something one can adopt through media messages and education; innate rather than learned.

While on the one hand this respondent situates education in a space that is beyond that which can be taught and purchased, she does still locate the environment in its physical form, focussing on narrowly defined issues in proximate areas, which demonstrates where contemporary, imminent anxieties about space and dirt, which affect daily life, influence environmental subjectivities in the manner in which Agarwal (2005) describes the concept of environmentality. What is also worth noting is this respondent's voluntary position as a member of the RWA of her block. She represented herself as a member of the RWA, clearly demonstrating to me her willingness to devote free time to the colony and the composting pit that she was instrumental in developing. Her association with this environmental and community-focussed project, she suggested

gave her position legitimacy over other 'illiterate' residential colony members. She formulates a narrative that imbues her selfless environmentally-friendly action with symbolic value, that she suggests other colony members don't have. In doing so she draws out difference, demonstrating classificatory struggle within this fraction of the middle-class, recognising that environmental values and/or acts hold value in the form of cultural capital. However, her frame of reference is limited to proximate issues the struggle for distinction remains entrenched in daily environmental concerns, what are seemingly a particular form of environmentality.

Much of Bourdieu's research focuses on the relationship between education and class, as I have described in Chapter 4. His interest stemmed from unequal educational achievements among students despite being offered the same curriculum but different learning opportunities and quality of education. Bourdieu locates the educational outcomes of individuals dialectically in the social and historical contexts in which individuals are situated, the analysis from which he develops into the theory of *Distinction* and the role of cultural and symbolic capital in influencing these unequal outcomes. While the role of education was singled out by respondents in this research, it was seemed to be used as a proxy for an embodied habitus; a structure that contained deeply-held values and characteristics. Education was used as a proxy for morals, clearly suggesting that only those with the right morals would be interested in sorting out garbage in the colony rather than expecting the issue to be managed elsewhere. Clearly, this type of education cannot be purchased; a rule in the field that helps distinguish those with legitimate environmental credentials. Furthermore, the notion of legitimate education, defined as an interest in environmental issues through action, is clearly being singled out as a way to demonstrate difference between individuals who

are truly literate, i.e. environmentally aware. This point is further illustrated by another respondent from Sarita Vihar who said:

"The problem really is garbage. Especially among the illiterate class. They throw garbage everywhere. Even in *posh areas* [my emphasis] there is still garbage. Children need to be taught values. We, as educated people know the value of time and money so we will teach our children. No education causes these sorts of problems" (House 90, aged 40, Female, Sarita Vihar).

The respondent, like the RWA member earlier, sees illiteracy as the phenomenon that transcends the boundaries of class. When questioned further about what she meant by illiteracy she spoke of the lack of civic awareness and said "there are two types of people – those who will do things and those who won't" (Female, aged 40, Sarita Vihar), referring to the same innate quality in individuals that goes beyond formal education – a reference to habitus - which supports their ability to be environmentally aware, particularly to garbage in the colony. To this female respondent literacy is not synonymous with formal education. She alludes to a deeper sense of awareness and sensitivity to the environment (she uses cleanliness as synonymous with the environment in her interview) as something that moves beyond the ability to afford and get a formal education. This implication resonates with Bourdieu's idea of status and class that is beyond economic wealth; in fact a form of cultural capital that affords the holder of such capital to rise above what the respondent alludes to as 'taught'. What is also noteworthy in this respondent's statement is that 'educated' people teach environmental awareness to their children, which is a key point that Bourdieu (1984) also raises in his framing of habitus, as a structuring structure that is taught in the home. Clearly, both the above respondents are referring to a habitus in which environmental concern is embedded. In addition to stating that education is about an embodied

awareness of the environment, what is interesting about this particular form of embodiment in the Indian context is the relationship that it has to caste and religious and cultural practices. Dickey (2000), for example examines how notions of class in relation to space cause anxieties that manifest as rules for particular spaces. While it is a marker of class to have servants inside middle class homes it is also a problematic mingling, culturally, between what is clean (the house) and unclean (servants who are always from lower castes). These notions of cleanliness and dirt are embodied and manifest as rules that structure access to space (in this instance the space of the home and outside the home). These implicit rules – what I refer to as habitus – are expressed by respondents as they discuss cleanliness and dirt and how the space of the colony (outside the homes) must be managed, including who should have access to and take responsibility for these spaces.

The second issue that I referred to at the start of this section was the importance of economic capital and how it was implicit in how individuals discussed education, morality and environmental values. The emphasis on economic capital was not explicitly made rather it was implicit in how individuals talked about environmental values. This link helped to draw out distinction between the lower classes and the middle class by virtue of their access to economic capital.

When I talked to respondents about who or which group of people were responsible for environmental degradation, they started to discuss poverty and class, framed within a narrative of the environment (I discuss this issue further in Chapter 6). In discussing the relationship between poverty, class and environmental values, respondents framed their discussions by linking geographical location and people, for example, suggesting that people from Delhi were not perpetrators of environmental degradation; I suggest, reflecting what Chakrabarty (1992) and Kaviraj (1997) discuss

about space and the politics of space and Agarwal (2005) discusses on the relationship between formal structures in society like the State and the making of environmentally responsive, political subjects. In this framing it was clear that certain respondents saw themselves as proper Delhiites thus choosing to blame those they referred to as non-Delhiites (often framed as those from Bihar – used as a proxy for migrant labourers who come to Delhi in search of work) for environmental degradation, delineating space using the concept of the environment. The discussion on non-Delhiites included references to individuals from specific regions in India, for example, Bihar. Bihar is of particular significance as it is a state, whose residents are essentialised as being uneducated and are also portrayed in the print media as poor, wage labourers who come to Delhi to make a basic living. This is a common reference particularly in Delhi and often the term *Bihari* is used as an adjective to denote illiteracy and a synonym for poor people. There is minimal reflection that Biharis (people from Bihar) can also be middle class. The predominant understanding is that of Biharis as migrant labourers. I do not unpack this strand in detail as it became clear in the conversations with respondents that Bihari was being used interchangeably to discuss poverty and dirt rather than suggesting that only Biharis were responsible for environmental pollution. There is clearly a deeper meaning that underpins why Biharis are vilified as opposed to people from other states but that is beyond the scope of the meaning-making that I explore in this thesis. Given how the term Bihari is used, I continue to use is as a proxy for the poor, in the manner that respondents used it. The following quote made by a 46 year old male respondent from Sarita Vihar demonstrates how some respondents perceive individuals from specific parts of the country but more importantly link these perceptions to education and economic capital:

"R - Couple of years ago there was diesel bus pollution. But it has been improved and has come to CNG. People used to walk on the roads with kerchiefs on their noses and that has now stopped. As far as cleanliness is concerned there is still a problem in this city. There is a lot of migration. People are coming from Bihar and they do not understand what cleanliness is. *Main problem is that they don't understand anything* (my emphasis). There is dirt everywhere"

"D – Do you think people in Delhi are concerned about the environment?

R – Only educated people seem to be concerned about the environment

D –What do you mean by education? Do you think it is related to income?

R – Better education has to do with values but it also has to do with people who have had the money to live both inside and outside India. If they have gone outside India they have seen what it is like outside" (House 73, aged 46, Male, Sarita Vihar).

This male respondent makes two interesting points. Firstly he refers to the importance of education in supporting environmentally positive values. He does, however, state explicitly that these values are not directly linked to income. Paradoxically, though, he talks about the need to have been outside India to understand how people should live, which clearly requires a degree of disposable income and economic capital. I queried this further as this respondent had clearly journeyed outside India and was keen to talk about his travels and implicit in his statement is the idea that economic capital is essential in understanding positive environmental concerns. When I discussed the relationship that this individual was making between travelling outside India and positive environmental values he talked about Singapore as a model nation where the city is clean and residents have a sense of civic responsibility. The respondent was

valuing his lifestyle choice by suggesting that it was through travel (in addition to having the innate capabilities to be environmentally aware, which he refers to when he talks about the migration of people) that an individual has the chance to note the difference in cleanliness. However, the ability to travel is restricted by economic capital, which this respondent says, is how one might learn to value cleanliness (in this instance). Of course he does not suggest that this is the only way but he refers to habitus, i.e. the ability to 'understand' environmental issues, and the way that he believes one can actively demonstrate their class credentials by having travelled and seen how places like Singapore are different and clean. By using economic capital as an implicit barrier this respondent precludes the lower classes from being able to learn about cleanliness, thereby creating symbolic boundaries that draw on both cultural and economic capital as being both embodied but also accessible via economic channels.

While this male respondent talks about economic barriers to entry into this class he also suggests additional barriers that are cultural and embodied, which suggests classificatory struggle within this class fraction. He states that while people may have income (and the ability and desire to travel outside India) one needs to have the ability to reflect on the lifestyles of people outside India and not simply experience it (like he is able to, for example). This respondent clearly does not see money as a 'classificatory factor' in an environmentally aware group. Rather, his 'classificatory struggle' takes place around the ability to emulate foreign lifestyles (the idea of emulating lifestyles is also discussed in more detail by Brosius (2010)).

Education to most respondents provided the framework for the discussion on environmental values and actions and the ability to be environmentally aware and engaged. While education and knowledge were offered as a means to inculcate good environmental values and behaviours it became quite clear through further discussions

that respondents were not referring to education that could be acquired through simply purchasing it, i.e. going to a 'good' school. They were often seen to refer to education as an innate awareness of and concern towards not only the environment but the nation as a whole, referring to a habitus; an embodied characteristic that one cannot accumulate through formal education. Distancing income from education it becomes clear that cultural capital is derived from owning and demonstrating this form of morally-infused education. A respondent from Sarita Vihar refers to the above ideas while situating his discussion geographically.

> "D – How should we be educated?
>
> R – It is very difficult to be educated in unorganised sector. But in places like Vasant Vihar and Sarita Vihar there are educated people. *We are willing to learn and be educated* (my emphasis). College people can be roped in to run campaigns and so forth. Videos can be shown. Media can be used, like the polio campaign. You see *Amitabh Bacchan* and you want to make an effort" (House 110, aged 45, Male, Sarita Vihar).

The idea that there are members from within the middle class itself who are clearly unconcerned with the environment further complicates the distinction made between perpetrators and the environmentally aware. Mrs Agarwal, from the upper-income middle-class colony (Vasant Vihar) was also a key respondent in addition to being my landlord. Mr and Mrs Agarwal were both retired. Mrs Agarwal was a housewife and a well-known resident in the colony. I accompanied her on her evening walks every day, meeting other residents through her relationship with them. Mrs Agarwal was formally interviewed as well and said in response to my question about the role of advertisements in educating the public:

"R - I would like to know what impact that has on my servants. Water consciousness is all well and good. We are aware of the shortage of water. But what about that class of people who don't have to worry about their 2 meals and watch TV. Does it have an impact on them? If it has an impact on them it is a big deal" (Mrs Agarwal, aged 55, Female, Vasant Vihar).

Mrs Agarwal suggests that this knowledge of water shortage is completely understood by people like her, i.e. in her class fraction. However, her concern is whether advertisements like the Surf Excel advertisement are able to have an impact on people, who like her have 2 meals and a TV, but clearly don't have the correct habitus to know about and act on water shortage issues. What this comment evidences is how Mrs Agarwal claims access to water resources, in the process vilifying poor people as perpetrators of wastage of water.

Morality and education are closely entwined in discussions on environmental values. However, environmental concerns in these discussions are limited to proximate concerns of dirt and cleanliness. It is clear that respondents recognise the value of being environmentally engaged in demonstrating difference from other members of their class fraction but these discussions are about quality of life and daily, quotidian concerns. However, through the language of affordability and economic capital distinctions are made between the lower classes and the middle class. Nonetheless, the reflexivity that is woven into the valuing of the environment for its ability to demonstrate difference is akin to what Bourdieu sees as part of the classificatory struggle while, I argue, that the active contestations derive from subjectivities that link to daily life-conditions of space and resources.

Rule 2: Demonstrating versus apathy: making a distinction between overt action versus inaction

All respondents from both colonies discussed acting on environmental concerns as an important, explicit demonstration of their commitment to the environment. Respondents represented this form of activism through a sliding scale of value rather than simply extremes of action versus inaction. Examples of this sliding scale of action range from having money but displaying a complete lack of interest; evidenced by action, to joining NGOs, which, interestingly, is also contested by some respondents as a fashionable act rather than an act that is environmentally-sensitive. Through these various contestations and nuance in the quality of action this rule within the field establishes cultural capital through valuing the symbol of environmental action. Respondents typically viewed these ideas in oppositional terms: that is, 'I believe and do this, which is right; 'they do that and that is not so good'. One perspective was typically considered more legitimate and authentic by virtue of being subjectively defined as correct. For example, respondents made clear distinctions between themselves and others (sometimes generally, sometimes specifically in relation to neighbours etc.) in terms of environmental behaviours and values.

Mrs Agarawal, the key information from Vasant Vihar, was largely baffled by my choice of profession and interest (in the environment) and chose to treat me as if I were her daughter, offering advice and even suggesting who to speak with in the colony to get a good grasp of the functioning and politics of the colony itself. I had tea regularly with her and spent mornings talking to her and her servants. Her husband, Mr Agarwal, was a retired business-man and spent his mornings making sure water tankers were being arranged for their personal use. His wife spent mornings managing servants and the afternoons either at the Kalyan Kendra (local club) or watching television at home. Rather than taking evening walks, Mrs Agarwal would stand at her gate in the evenings and talk to those who were taking their evening exercise. When discussing

people's motivations towards the environment she talked about the people that she knew saying:

> "R - There is lots of money in this colony. At the *Kalyan Kendra* [Vasant Vihar local club] in the ladies club sometimes we talk about these issues but it goes in one ear and out the other. People should take responsibility for their own back yards. I personally will tell the people who are paid to collect rubbish to make sure they don't throw it anywhere in the back lanes" (Mrs Agarwal, aged 55, Female, Vasant Vihar).

There are multiple points noting in this statement made by Mrs Agarwal. The first is that of cleanliness and space. In this instance the space in the colony is being claimed as space that must be kept clean. The second point is that of who takes responsibility for keeping the space clean and who then acts of keep the space clean. Mrs Agarwal herself chose to instruct the collection of garbage rather than acting herself to place the garbage away from the backyards of the houses. More importantly she considered this form of action more legitimate than that of the other women in the ladies' club. What is noteworthy here is the rule that she implicitly uses in the handling of dirt and garbage. By relegating responsibility to servants to clean garbage she maintains, in fact reinforces, boundaries and relationships between person-hood and identity through the act of cleaning much like that discussed by Dickey (2000) in her study on households in Madurai. However, Mrs Agarwal builds on this idea by stating that her action of instruction clearly distinguishes her from the other women in the colony. In doing so she maintains her identity by removing her association from dirt and garbage and still differentiates herself from others who would otherwise be seen to be in her class fraction by conferring superiority through explicit action. This explicit action, I suggest, is part of the classificatory struggle in which Mrs Agarwal confers value to

her action thereby partaking in the game to negotiate value of environmental action as a form of cultural capital. She also clearly stated that her actions were not because she had material wealth. Rather, she alluded to an inherent concern over the environment that she had, which she regarded as superior to that of her fellow colony-members. However, Mrs Agarwal referred to people who are paid to collect rubbish, clearly distancing herself and other members in the colony from the act of cleaning garbage (I discuss this notion of cleaning in more detail in Chapter 6). Concern for the environment becomes a symbol of distinction for her, a means to differentiate herself from others in the colony. The battle for legitimacy here is action over inaction, as one extreme. Interestingly, Kaviraj (1997) also refers to this distinction between the 'inside' and the 'outside' by unravelling the different sets of values that govern the use of these spaces and how that in turn sets rules and norms in particular spaces. Residents of both colonies described how particular spaces – both outside and inside their homes – should be used, including who should have legitimate access to these spaces, expressing disappointment over the current use of outside space by poor people and linking that to the general state of the environment. Generally, all respondents in the residential colonies had something to say on the topic of waste, dirt and garbage. Their concerns were not so surprising. Urban residents' thinking about the environment inevitably include dirt, pollution and garbage (Chapman, 1997). These particular concerns were evident and widely discussed. However, respondents often had different perspectives on garbage. On deeper examination it became clear that garbage was being used, firstly, as a symbol through which respondents distinguished themselves from other members of their class fraction through how waste and garbage was dealt with – in particular, there were those willing to attend to garbage and act on the matter themselves versus those who outsourced the matter and shifted responsibility; again making a distinction

between action and inaction. Secondly, rules around the use of and access to space were also being articulated as well as contested. One such example of a contestation is evident in an article in the Vasant Vihar RWA newsletter - the Vasant Vihar Welfare Association (VVWA) newsletter. In this magazine Mr Goel, also a resident, contributed an article that discussed the process of establishing the vermicomposting pits in the colony. In the article Mr Goel wrote:

> "Like other *enlightened* [my emphasis] colonies we decided that we would treat our own waste. We began to face opposition to the project from specific residents of the colony. They feared that the vermi-culture project adjacent to their homes would create a stink and chaos. An amazing bit of ignorance was revealed. […] The irony was not lost on the VVWA: here was a colony of educated people […] even a semi-literate could make out that the "stink, chaos, dirt" allegations were unjustified" (Goel, 2004: 4).

The rather vitriolic reaction to opposition from residents is evident from the use of the word 'ignorance' and 'semi-literate'. Ignorance, in this instance, clearly being used to describe what the writer believes is an illegitimate response to dealing with garbage and dirt in the colony as opposed to an enlightened response, which would have been taking care of the garbage on-site rather than out-sourcing the problem. In this specific case, Mr Goel and those RWA members that wanted the vermicomposting project were pitted against the not-in-my-backyard (NIMBY) mindset (while not utilising this term the ideology was implicit in their engagement with dirt and garbage) of the anti-composting residents. The 'NIMBYism' approach to dealing with environmental concerns was juxtaposed against engagement with what respondents universally acknowledged as an environmental issue. Mr Goel's challenges the legitimacy of those against the vermi-culture project and emphasises taking responsibility at home rather than expecting

solutions from elsewhere, challenging the rules and norms of the 'inside' versus the 'outside' and who is, in turn, responsible for both spaces. Goel continues by remarking "who said that the educated are less prone to irrational behaviour. In fact they are often the enemies of progress. Indeed, in Vasant Vihar, the enemies are within" (Goel, 2004: 4). This opposition, contestation and means of differentiation creates a schism within this middle-class colony where Mr Goel considers himself 'enlightened' and also a minority in his colony (or his class fraction). Through this positioning Mr Goel makes a distinction between himself and his values (as seen by how he deals with garbage) and those who are 'ignorant'. This positioning by Mr Goel helps to reinforce distinctions between various members of what are otherwise seen as inhabiting the same or similar class fractions. On the other hand it also provides insight into the use of specific spaces and norms that he believes should be followed by people in these spaces. What is clear here is that economic capital is not being discussed nor was it implicit in this rendition of waste management in the colony; Mr Goel comments on the values, which he believes are representative of a specific set of people, which does not directly overlap with economic backgrounds. Mr Goel refers to an embodiment of these values - a habitus - the ability to take personal interest and act on ones 'enlightened' values. The social practice that is middle-class here is taking responsibility for garbage and dirt as opposed to divesting responsibility. The focus on garbage continued in Sarita Vihar with a female respondent, a 45-year old RWA member in Sarita Vihar, saying:

> "Everything needs money. People are ready to spend money at Haldirams and Nathu sweets. They spend thousands on these things but have no feeling of belonging to their welfare associations. If you take a philosophical angle to it – the place that you are living in now is your place and you need to take care of it.

However, people still don't have those feelings" (Female, aged 45, RWA member, Sarita Vihar).

The female RWA member refers to the value of 'belonging' through a shared sense of space and joint responsibility as a point of confluence between middle class-ness and the environment (in this case everyday environmentalism as a form of environmentality).[32] These two respondents –one from Sarita Vihar and one from Vasant Vihar - both referred to the notion of taking responsibility and adhering to what they see as normative rules relating to the space just outside the house rather than adopting a NIMBY approach as a rule, a way of ascribing to the social structure and values of the colony and, by extension, the middle-class-ness of the colony.

A point of distinction begins to emerge from between both sets of colonies, the narrative of which is made available in an article in the VVWA magazine (September 2003 Vol. 2(3)) written by Major General Awasty (a resident of Vasant Vihar):

"[t]o a varying degree, all residential colonies in Delhi face similar civic problems: Littered streets, back lanes piled with rubbish, shortage of water, encroachments, security hazards, cattle nuisance, stray dog menace and so on. […] Colonies like Defence Colony, Green Park and Vasant Kunj have block associations within the colony who manage and deal with day to day problems."

Major General Awasty makes an important point here – the difference in response to daily concerns of garbage and dirt. All middle-class colonies, the writer argues, are faced with the same quotidian concerns, and yet what sets them apart is the response

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[32] Interestingly, this approach is also taken in postmaterialist approaches to thinking about the environment. Postmaterialists suggest a positive correlation between positive environmental values and increased financial welfare. While there is clear reference to economic security in her statement the focus of her argument is that of belonging and kinship as values that underpin this form of everyday environmentalism.

that they have to these concerns. Vasatn Kunj, Green Park and Defence colony are all upper middle-class colonies in Delhi, which Major General Awasty refers to in his article. In addition to commending his own colony - Vasant Vihar, Major Awasty cites what he sees as other similar colonies that choose to engage with 'day to day' problems of the environment and contrasts them with other colonies that suffer from the same problems of rubbish and water shortage but do not act on them. The article cites the importance of local volunteers in dealing with many of these problems. The point that Major Awasty makes is that action separates a 'good' colony from a 'bad' colony. In his definition of 'good' colonies he includes other upper-income middle-class colonies, clarifying and bringing legitimacy to Vasant Vihar, by association. Indeed, volunteerism and other public acts demonstrating environmental awareness were considered important by a number of respondents.

While respondents value acting for an environmental cause (and publicly demonstrating) many respondents, like Mrs Agarwal, also make a distinction between simply acknowledging environmental problems and acting on environmental concerns. Mrs Agarwal suggested that her actions, which include reprimanding fellow residents for not getting their servants to collect rubbish, demonstrated a sense of environmental awareness and community. Similarly, Shivani, a 17 year-old female college student who rented a flat in Vasant Vihar, illustrated this sense of creating differentiation through action: "when I go shopping I actually take one plastic bag and put all things in it. I don't think many people do that." Shivani focused on the role of acting in a positive manner towards the environment. In the sliding scale of action and inaction, acting on these issues in a positive, engaged manner, for example, dealing with it through volunteers, demonstrates how members in these higher-income middle-class colonies are different from the middle-income middle-class colonies (like Sarita Vihar). This

difference demonstrates, by virtue of the actions taken by colony members, a form of cultural capital, a way to actively demonstrate difference. It also highlights rules in public spaces and the use of public space, outside of the home, to demonstrate ones values in tangible overt ways, a point that Dickey (2000) highlights when exploring the space of the house and outside the house and social and cultural norms that are tied to these spaces. In the article above, Major General Awasty shows that he is reflecting on how colonies like his are different, therefore, not a form of habitus (by nature of the conscious reflexivity) but a way to denote difference between other groups (or class fractions) through the language of the environment. In this instance it is important to ask why it is that the environment is being used as a symbol through which difference can be established. The environment, in this instance, is still about proximate concerns - dirt and garbage – therefore still primarily about the quality of life. However, utilising the common language, i.e. proximate environmental concerns, Major General Awasty (for example) creates a narrative of difference, thereby distinguishing his class fraction from others; an attempt to accumulate cultural capital.

While the discussion above starts to demonstrate how acting on these daily concerns of dirt and garbage confers distinction to upper-income middle-class colonies, there is another subtle narrative that is woven into this discussion. While Shivani (the a 17 year-old female college student who rented a flat in Vasant Vihar) seems to value action by taking a plastic bag to the market she raises an important point that other members only in this colony (upper-income) raise. This issue is raised when she says:

> "There used to be this organisation, the One Earth organisation... A friend of mine in college used to be a part of this organisation. It was a London-based group… At that time in India there were very few of these types of organisations. The Lady Shri Ram [college of the University of Delhi] crowd is part of the up-market

crowd joining NGOs just for the heck of it. The whole idea of joining an NGO was to be a part of it rather than having any awareness of really how the things work” (Shivani, aged 17, Female, Vasant Vihar).

Shivani's comment brings nuance to this narrative where acting in an environmental manner is valued but not all forms of action hold equal value. She considered her action of carrying a plastic bag as more legitimate than those of her friends and acquaintances who joined NGOs. Despite the active engagement required to join a club or NGO, Shivani downplayed the value of this form of action because she felt that often people that did so had no *real* awareness of the issue. She felt the motivation behind the act of joining such a club was to be part of a fashionable, exclusive crowd rather than a concern for the environment; an overt action that she deemed inauthentic. She frames distinction through the lens of the environment presenting the values of others individuals that do choose to act as less legitimate because of their motivations thereby valuing her simple, more personal action of carrying plastic bags, over joining an NGO, which she acknowledges as a form of action. This is interesting because the act of doing something about the environment is clearly valued. However, what could be considered legitimate action, i.e. joining an NGO, is not. In this rejection is implicit a recognition of how other class fractions have both the economic and cultural capital (including, habitus) to join and participate in NGOs. By rejecting these actions, Shivani not only values her action as more legitimate but also, I propose, recognises that she may not have the capital (either economic or cultural) to engage in such forms of environmental action and therefore accumulate cultural capital in doing so but is still demonstrating a form of reflexivity that recognises where the limits might be and what she herself is doing that is valuable. Through rejection there is evidence of reflection and by rejecting there is also individual agency while recognising that certain spaces are

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not accessible. In the classificatory struggle the symbolic violence here is evident in the rejection of one type of action over another, where the actions themselves are only relevant to particular class fractions that have the cultural and economic capital (like those who are members of environmental clubs, for example) and the habitus to belong to that class fraction. Another respondent from Vasant Vihar also discussed the subtle distinction between forms of action (joining an NGO or not taking plastic bags, for example). He also challenged the idea that certain forms of activism, like being members of NGOs, were truly environmental in nature. He indicated that they were simply a fashion-statement saying "over the past two years because of the media and some NGOs it is fashionable to know about the environment. It looks good to wear a T-shirt that says save the tiger" (Anand, age 46, Male, Vasant Vihar). While scathing of people who did join NGOs to enhance their environmental credentials respondents from both colonies juxtaposed their actions (or lack thereof) against those who joined, using the notion of action versus inaction (the classificatory struggle) to legitimise their own positions. Mr and Mrs Mehta, residents of Vasant Vihar were non-resident Indians (NRIs) who lived in a large, gated property. They were both recently retired and did not participate in any of the daily walks taken by other residents. They were, however, active in the Vasant Vihar club activities. They agreed with Shivani's assertion that many individuals' adoption of environmental issues were akin to a fashion statement. They said:

"D – Do you think it is fashionable to be environmentally conscious?

Mrs Mehta– Of course. Talking about it is the easiest thing to do.

D – The number of people talking about it has also been increasing

Mrs Mehta– It is a question of being part of a club as well.

Mr Mehta– The 'join the club' style. [laughs]" (Mr and Mrs Mehta, aged 50 and

46, Male and Female, Vasant Vihar).

Both Mr and Mrs Mehta were sceptical of environmental behaviours or activism. They considered overt displays of environmental concern as an obvious and crass means to gain cultural capital by joining the social groups or clubs. Neither Mr nor Mrs Mehta chose to participate in anything they considered to be environmentally conscious. They did not watch any environmental channels, take trips to National Parks, recycle, or believe that public service messages and advertisements played an important role the development of environmental values or concerns. They each had their own car. This extreme rejection of environmentalism of any form (action, passivity, even interest in environmental channels) was an interesting departure from the interest that other respondents were showing. This couple chose not to participate in any of the dialogues or themes in the environment-field rather delegitimising those who did take part. This approach suggested that opting out of the field of the environment was itself a conscious choice that certain individuals made as a means to gain capital by simply rejecting, as I have stated earlier, forms of environmentalism that are inaccessible to them. Additionally, it was very clear that this couple could afford to live a secluded life, free from the trials of colony-living that the others seem to be confronted with. The seclusion limited their exposure to many of the issues that influenced the development of a particular form of environmentality, which this couple did not exhibit. This distinction demonstrates a relationship between local subjectivities at the level of the individual that shows a different type of environmentality that arrives from a different subjectivity. This attitude was also taken by a female respondent from Vasant Vihar, who talked about media coverage of the environment:

"R – The environment has always been important but only now are people talking about it a lot more. It has become a talk point especially within the media. I don't read anything about the environment. Sometimes I read about Jamuna cleaning and so forth and I will read about it but six months to a year later we see that nothing has been done about it. We are always so busy that even in newspapers we read about other stuff and not environmental news. It is not at the bottom but not at the top either. I know that the environment is important and if something were being done I would pay attention. But since nothing is being done I don't pay attention." (Sheila, aged 40, Female, Vasant Vihar).

Sheila clearly recognised the importance of the environment, feeling the need to justify both her inattention and inaction by suggesting that action is legitimate but since there was never any change she had no choice but to be apathetic. This respondent felt the need to justify her inaction clearly indicating that action was, consequently, more desirable than inaction.

Broadly speaking, action is clearly valued over inaction. However, there were varying degrees of action that were presented by respondents, which respondents battled over. The very notion of any form of environmental action that was obvious and beyond that of personal interest was commonly deemed 'fashionable'. By rejecting forms of action that are inaccessible because they require either economic or cultural capital that individuals do not possess, there is reflection and agency, which in turn demonstrates the difference in social practice around acting on environmental issues that is influenced by ones' habitus and ability to engage in the field of the environment in a manner that enables the accumulation of cultural capital to the advantage of the individual. The classificatory struggle occurs around the notion of action or inaction, with the intention to legitimise ones own position – be it action or inaction. What is evident, however, is

the reflexivity that is evident in how respondents reject forms of action that may be inaccessible to them – either economically or symbolically.

Rule 3: Parks and recreation: space, environmental values and greenery

The third rule around which the environment was framed was space and parks. Interestingly, this was the rule through which respondents exhibited significant difference between colonies. This rule is guided primarily by the monetary cost of space. Space in the city of Delhi is expensive, particularly around South Delhi. It comes as no surprise then that access to space becomes a means to demonstrate ones class, in a physical sense because the economic cost of space implies that it is a luxury. However, the choices over what to do with space that is at a premium cost is how the difference between colonies manifested. For example, daily, social rituals of the colonies that included parks were also different. Morning and evening walks were rituals in Vasant Vihar, the upper-income middle-class colony. Both men and women took these walks, choosing to discuss colony matters and general issues in the local park. In Sarita Vihar while there was a small park there were minimal social interactions in public spaces. Some interactions took place at the children's playground where parents might gather in the evenings. The role played by the park was to enable social interaction but this daily ritual was valued by residents of Vasant Vihar as a space outside the home where they did not have to encounter poverty and signs of poverty. Having a garden, access to a park, and the ability to walk while rarely encountering visible signs of poverty are largely the privilege of gated communities; in fact the experience of respondents mainly from Vasant Vihar, helping identify the role of spaces by the actions that are undertaken in them. Numerous residents focussed on the battle to keep encroachments out of these colonies and a clear sense of who belonged in 'their' spaces, linking the role of spaces

to class (I also discuss the political geography of these spaces in more detail in the Chapter 6).

Economic capital is essential in negotiating this rule. Without the economic wherewithal to purchase space, one cannot have a garden in Delhi. The narrative of the environment, therefore, for residents of Vasant Vihar, was woven around the important ability to recognise the role of gardens and to demonstrate that. The VVWA publishes a monthly magazine for its residents. An article in the VVWA magazine (Vol. 2(4), December 2003) states: "[…] the Vasant Vihar colony got the reputation of being the best and "poshest" colony in Delhi".[33] The VVWA quarterly magazine contains both articles written by members of the Vasant Vihar residential community as well as more general pieces written by members of the Residents Welfare Association itself. An article titled 'Private Gardens of Vasant Vihar' discusses how Vasant Vihar was a colony well known for its manicured lawns and self-contained bungalows. This reality, the article claims, has now fallen into the chaos of high-rise apartments and an unsustainable number of cars. What is also interesting in the title of the article is the use of the word private. The author implies that there is intrinsic value in keeping these private spaces relegated to manicured gardens, explicitly stating the appropriate role for these private spaces and attaching intrinsic value to this use as well. The main aim of this article is to highlight the remnants of the glorious gardens that were a prominent feature of the Vasant Vihar landscape and are now being kept alive by a few select residents. The article congratulates residents on winning garden awards as well as finding ways to keep their gardens alive despite the challenges of diminishing sunlight as a result of the growing number of high rises. She also dwells on the major concern that these 'exotic spaces' face with the growing demand for properties in the area (see

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[33] Posh here refers to upper middle class, in the context in which it has been written.

VVWA, Vol. 2(2), June 2003). The author of the article sees the colony as an exclusive space of gardens and single storey houses; an environment that is exclusively enjoyed 'privately' by residents of the colony. The author also clearly sees the residents of this colony as worthy of the article, with their prize-winning gardens, clearly sensitive to her understanding of the environment. The credentials that Vasant Vihar has, which make it the 'poshest' colony in Delhi, interestingly, is gardens. Gardens are valued as a desirable choice for a colony to gain 'posh' or exclusive status, where even the private spaces of people's homes are under scrutiny in determining class and status. Given the economic capital that many other similar residential colonies have, Vasant Vihar, evidenced by the pride displayed in the magazine, promotes itself as superior by nature of the pride that they take in their gardens. The subtext running through this piece is the importance of these gardens in expressing an inherent sensitivity to the environment that the author legitimates in her article with her approval. The attention paid to these private gardens is clearly, according to the author, an indicator of the positive characteristics of a class fraction. A respondent and her husband, from Vasant Vihar, also talked about their experience living in the colony, remarking about the physical space, saying:

> "Mrs R: If you go to old Delhi like Chandni Chowk you can't even stand there. Here in South Delhi it is still better.
>
> Mr R: That smell every day when you see cattle, when you go for a walk. We could approve more parks and improve them. (Mr and Mrs Mehta, aged 50 and 46, Male and Female, Vasant Vihar).

Both these respondents think this would improve their walk-experience. However, this rule has a strong focus on economic capital, given the cost of space. Nonetheless, the choice of gardens and green spaces above any other use is clearly lauded by the author

(and constantly talked about by other respondents, particularly from Vasant Vihar). Sarita Vihar, the middle-income colony, while also having parks and social life structured around parks, does not have an overt emphasis on the status of parks, which Vasant Vihar does. I found this interesting and in keeping with the attempt to distinguish between class fractions. Of all the other rules established by middle-class residents this rule includes a strong economic focus, based on the cost of land to apportion to parks. Differentiation, therefore, is contingent on the quality of parks used as an indicator of exclusiveness of a colony and, by extension, its residents.

Conclusion

This chapter has explored how middle-class residents of the two colonies frame, reframe and challenge ways of thinking about the environment and what it means to be legitimately environmentally aware. I have shown how respondents infuse environmental concern with innate morality that is linked to embodied social, cultural and religious practices that draw on caste in relation to the body and space. Respondents clearly state that that environmental concern cannot be learnt rather that it is embodied, i.e. an element in the structure of habitus. In suggesting this characteristic there is recognition of the importance of the environment as a symbol of difference but their concerns are mainly focussed on everyday concerns of garbage and water shortages, which informs a direct subjective experience and, in turn, environmentality. What is interesting is that the environment is recognised as a form of cultural capital with the potential to mark distinction from the poor and, often, from other members in the class fraction as well. Yet, the environmentality frames direct relationships with the environment in a tangible, observable manner. It is clear that this class fraction engage with these issues in both an embodied fashion as well as consciously. This fraction of the middle class distinguish themselves from other fractions that recognise and have the

particular habitus to trade in the cultural capital that the environment offers them, for example members of wildlife clubs (Chapter 7). However, there are some differences between both sets of respondents from the two colonies discussed in this chapter, particularly from the ability to afford space for parks and recreational activities in the city. The higher-income middle-class colony seemed to negotiate higher value for parks and gardens, which they believed demonstrated the middle-class-ness of a colony and its residents. This narrative was not evident in how the middle-income middle-class colony discussed parks, suggesting that lack of economic capital to have these spaces inhibits the recognition of the symbolic value of these spaces. Respondents also asserted the legitimacy of what they believe to be positive environmental behaviours and actions, while at the same time identifying and classifying negative and 'superficial' environmental behaviours and actions. By juxtaposing their own behaviours and actions against those of neighbours or even public, visible movements and actions, respondents gave 'value' to their behaviours or actions and distinguished themselves from others by acting within their colonies as well as beyond. By asserting the importance of activism with regard to the environment, over passivity, it becomes clear that action versus inaction is being negotiated in the field of the environment for these overtly tactical environmentalists that deploy their cultural and economic capital to differentiate themselves from the poor and their own class fractions as well. However, certain forms of action that were inaccessible (joining NGOs, for example) – either because of the economic or the cultural capital required to participate in them – were also rejected by respondents (particularly from the higher-income colony) in the process of legitimising their own narratives. In recognising the inaccessibility of these spaces of action, respondents again demonstrated reflexivity and distinction in how they utilised the environment as a symbol for middle class-ness.

Chapter 6 Shuddh, Swacch, Saaf Dilli: cleaning and greening as markers of middle class-ness

> "It is evident that there has been in the last decade or so a concerted attempt to *clean up* Indian cities, to rid streets and public lands of squatters and encroachers, and to reclaim public spaces for the use of proper citizens" (Chatterjee, 2006: 114)

In this chapter, I discuss the ideas of cleaning and greening (also referred to as clean and green) and how these terms serve not only as symbols of the environment through which boundaries of class are delineated but how the use of space – both legally and normatively – reinforces boundary-making with regard to space and access to space. More specifically, these symbols help to delineate boundaries between the middle and the lower class. Cleaning and greening emerged as especially prominent themes over the course of the study. What was puzzling was why these two ideas were of such importance and so frequently raised by respondents from the residential colonies of Sarita Vihar and Vasant Vihar. The deployment of these two terms – clean and green – by residents of the two colonies demonstrated not only anxieties over poverty and poor people in ways that bring together the environment, urban concerns of liveability and quality of life, characteristics of class, and class identity but also what Agarwal (2005)refers to as a form of "environmentality"; an understanding of the environment as "a conceptual category that organizes some of their thinking and a domain in conscious relation to which they perform some of their actions" (Agarwal, 2005: 162) . While Agarwal (2005) states that Foucault and Bourdieu do reflect on the importance of social action and identity-formation, their theoretical approaches are relatively

> "inattentive to the variable ways in which self-formation takes place and how it may be shaped by involvement in different forms of practice. Under changing

social conditions and institutions, identity categories as guides to a person's interests make sense only to the extent that they prevent, facilitate, or compel practice (Agarwal, 2005: 166).

In using Bourdieu (1977a) to better understand the environmentality of the terms cleaning and greening I do engage with the analysis of common social practice and routines thereby drawing links between identity categories (in this instance class) and social conditions. Using the analytical tool of cultural capital I evidence how the environment is symbolically deployed to distinguish individuals from the colonies from poor people, and also exhibit a shared allegiance with other class fractions from within the middle class. People identify themselves, through social practice, as belonging to class fractions or social groups in the process defining 'what is' and 'what is not' their identity, a conceptual approach that Dickey (2000) and Chakrabarty (1992), too, adopt in their work that explores the relationship between gender, class, the home and the 'outside' which I also draw on to better understand motivations of the middle class and their relationships to the terms clean and green.

Members of the residential colonies primarily used the terms clean and green as phrases to represent the environment. These phrases need to be understood in the context of the social, political and cultural nuances of life in Delhi (Ghertner, 2011, Ghertner, 2008) and also the self-interest that Agarwal (2005) refers to as the short-term interest born out of compulsion. In the articulation of the phrases distinction and the need to distinguish one-self from others is an important component, a process that also facilitates the recognition of class fractions and the cultural and economic capital held by these fractions from within the middle class, particularly focussing on how the environment is utilised in accumulating cultural capital to establish difference. This distinction then suggests that being middle class, for members of residential colonies, is

defined in part through the relationship between cleanliness and greening, the legitimacy to access physical spaces in the city (what Ghertner (2008 and 2011) discusses on a review of the recent use of nuisance laws by RWAs in Delhi). The rendering of these terms, as subjective representations of how individuals value the environment as a form of cultural capital, in addition to the study of objective structures like the governance of the city and management of space (also discussed by Baviskar (2002), Fernandes (2009), and Truelove (2011)) provides an opportunity to engage in Bourdieuan analysis of class that transcends the duality of objective/subjective approaches. In order to provide an analysis of the subjective representations I conducted semi-structured interviews with residents of two middle-class colonies in Delhi – Sarita Vihar and Vasant Vihar as well as questionnaires from both colonies as well. Additionally, I spent time living in Vasant Vihar (and visiting Sarita Vihar every week over the primary research period in 2005) participating in daily life (see Chapter 3 for more detail). In order to offer analysis of objective structures this chapter examines governance structures like the *bhagidari* system, representations of the clean and green message in public spaces, and advertisements of products with environmental messages. I utilise discourse analysis to unpack the messages in advertisements in order to better represent how this fraction of the middle class engages with the two terms, which, I have said earlier were discussed by all respondents from the residential colonies.

In the city of Delhi, the words cleaning and greening are frequently encountered, particularly through public service messages across the city. These encounters are familiar to me, given my long-term association with the city (I have been visiting Delhi every year since the age of eight and lived in the city for three years while at university, before spending time conducting fieldwork). Much has been written about the idea of cleaning, through the lens of political geography (for example, see the quote at the start

of this chapter) (Fernandes, 2008, Baviskar, 2002, Baviskar, 2004, Truelove, 2011). However, the ideas of clean and green symbolise much more to residents of Delhi, as I demonstrate in the following sections. Delhi is a city that is visibly concerned with greenery and cleaning. The words clean and green, in various combinations, get routinely used in discussions on the environment (in the public space) and these ideas get woven with what it means to be environmentally aware and conscious. There are obvious references made to cleaning of garbage and dirt from colonies and planting more trees to 'green' the city. These two ideas, in the context of Delhi, are etched in the popular imagination, i.e. people are very familiar with these words and their meanings in particular contexts. It is often in mundane forms of social practice that the these norms and deeply held values manifest and it is absolutely essential that there is a lived very personal relationship with the object of inquiry (respondents and the governance structures, for example) in order to engage with and unpack these intricately woven narratives (Coffey, 1999). In addition many commentators have argued that the multiple meanings are utilised to demonstrate middle-class agendas in the physical and political space of the city (Chatterjee, 2006, Fernandes, 2009, Truelove, 2011, Mawdsley, 2009a). This notion of 'cleaning up' the city for use by appropriate citizens is not new nor for that matter un-researched in the Indian context. This negotiation plays out in the political geography of the city of Delhi through, in particular, how the notions of cleaning and greening are employed in practice, for example, slums being 'cleaned' out of middle-class areas and drawing links between poverty and environmental pollution. However, while discussing cleanliness, greenery, the clean-and-green campaign, various advertisements and media messages with respondents the clean and green concepts were used unsparingly, with the intent to establish exclusivity and difference between social groups through action and ability to act as well in addition to

defining the terms in using the language of values and morals (drawing in the notion of embodied practice). While discussing the clean and green project in Delhi, participants in the research referred to wealth, materialism, religion, poverty, urbanity and they even brought up of images that were representative of what Brosius refers to as the 'enclaved gaze'; a term used to explain the creation of enclaves in Delhi that insulate the resident from the dirt and poverty that is widespread elsewhere in the city (among other benefits that the residents accrue that are symbolic in nature) (Brosius, 2010: 65). Given these multiple arenas of inquiry and the nexus with urban spaces, governance and political processes, it is evident that discussions on the ideas of clean and green cannot be extricated or separated from the battle-'field' of class as it relates to person-hood and identity formation, and how these two particular words get utilised is essential in understanding how individuals frame difference and establish markers of identity (Bourdieu, 1984).

I start with an examination of the contemporary studies on the relationship between the space of the city and class. I then analytically engage with the objective structures such as the *bhagidari* system of governance, to draw out the manner in which class characteristics and boundaries are implicit in the deployment of the clean and green concepts. The following section discusses subjective responses to how respondents frame cleaning and greening as environmental messages, but more importantly as a way to draw boundaries around the middle class and the lower, poorer classes.

Urban India and the remaking of cities

There is significant scholarly interest in the political geography of urban India and which groups are represented in creating, imagining and developing these spaces. While this interest is evident in the studies of the political geography of cities like

Mumbai (Taguchi, 2012),Chennai (Arabindoo, 2005), and Kolkata (Chakrabarty, 1992) the city of Delhi is an interesting case study given its governance structures as well as the historical significance of the physical and aesthetic ordering of the city itself. Delhi's governance structure is itself an interesting case study. The *bhagidari* system of governance, of which much has been written, is a governance structure that is unique to Delhi. The *bhagidari* system is a Government of Delhi initiative bringing together local traders and Residents' Welfare Associations (RWAs), an initiative in inclusive governance, bringing together citizens and government to deliver better services. Mawdsley (2009a) and Srivastava (2009) for example, argue that the *bhagidari* system of participatory governance necessitates a certain economic capital that precludes participation from a wide range of residents of the city, particularly ignoring the voices of the poor. Brosius' book *India's Middle Class* (Brosius, 2010) offers vignettes into Delhi's spatial development with particular emphasis on how developers market real estate in the city, offering comparisons with cities like Singapore and Hong Kong as exemplars of spatial order and cosmopolitanism, culturally producing symbols of middle class-ness. This preponderance over creating a global city is also discussed by Truelove et al. (2011) in an analysis of what constitutes (il)legal access to water and unpacking who has privileged access to governance systems that reinforce these notions of (il)legality. Mawdsley (2004) Fernandes (2008) and Baviskar (2004), Srivastava (2009) among others – examine urban spaces, particularly that of Delhi, as sites of discrimination where the poor are 'forgotten', written out of economic development, access to public services, and visual landscapes, and sometimes even criminalised (see also Ghertner 2008, 2011). Baviskar (2004) in her poignant article *Tale of Two Cities* refers precisely to this notion of two cities – one for the urban poor and one for the middle class, where the middle-class aesthetic of a green and clean city and residential

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space means that the urban poor are bull-dozed, literally, out of their homes in informal settlements and slums. Clearly, urban spaces in India are fertile ground, lenses through which values, class, economics, power, religious and cultural norms, and social practice can be better understood. More importantly they are spaces through which covert contestations can be made more explicit. This chapter attempts to address how the notions of clean and green are framed in these structures to facilitate the creation of boundaries between those who belong within a particular group and those who do not belong (i.e. boundaries of class).

The two colonies I worked with – Sarita Vihar and Vasant Vihar – were both chosen on the basis of being middle class. Vasant Vihar was an upper-income colony while Sarita Vihar a middle-income colony. Both colonies had vermicomposting pits and parks but the layout of the colonies varied as did the geographical location (see Appendix 1, 2 and 3 for maps of the colonies). As mentioned in Chapter 5, Vasant Vihar was largely a gated community while Sarita Vihar more easily accessible to non-residents. Public, social life in Vasant Vihar included events at the Kalyan Kendra (local club) and evening and morning walks while in Sarita Vihar public, social life was limited with parents meeting at the local, children's playground on occasion. Questionnaires, interviews, colony newsletters, and participant observation were the main sources of material for analysis. Sarita Vihar (Block D) was located in close proximity to a busy local market with many poor people living around the colony in 2005 but significant transformations have taken place since with more offices built around the area, property prices rising and the movement of poor people from the area. Vasant Vihar was more secluded than Sarita Vihar. A local market catered to the needs of a few blocks, with some well-known restaurants and a few grocery stores. The most visible form of poverty in the area was the vendors in Indira market, a local non-

permanent vegetable and fruit market, which operated under tarpaulin structures. Access to the colony was strongly regulated and security guards were instructed to pay attention to all household help coming in and out of the colony.

Clean and Green: Shuddh, swacch, saaf

In addition to the multiple ways in which the words clean and green are used their synonyms in Hindi add additional nuance, given imbued meaning, which the English words do not offer. In Hindi there are many words, which mean 'clean'. However, during the course of the research respondents used three particular words to denote the idea of clean, when talking about the environment. The words most commonly used were *shuddh, swacch,* and *saaf.* These words do mean clean in their simplest sense. However, *shuddh* also means clean of intent, innocent, and pure (purity in a religious sense as well as pure of character). *Swacch* also means pure and clean. *Saaf* means clean but is also used interchangeably with pure and innocent. When relating identity and person-hood, these words are of particular import as they make implicit reference to caste and class. Dickey's (2000) research demonstrates the relationship between terms like cleanliness and particular individuals (in her article the focus was servants) and how that relationship influences the rules bound to specific spaces. These words are also considered by Alley (2002) in a study of the 'real' versus the 'religious' river Ganges. Alley (2002) understands the terms (*shuddh,* for example) as offering ways for individuals to relate to religious practice and ideas without, in this case, making an explicit link to the physical river itself (particularly given that the river is itself significantly polluted). I will return to the use of these words, more particularly their use in specific contexts, later in this chapter. The context in which these words are used is revealing, demonstrating the convergence of class and the environment.

Clean Delhi, Green Delhi: the popular message, appeal, and focus

The aesthetics of the city of Delhi are embedded in the public imagination; it is known for its architectural beauty and green spaces. Delhi is a city known for its greenery, with an abundance of parks and open spaces, even an entire protected green space commonly referred to as the ridge in the university area of Delhi that enjoys protected status.[34] With its historical monuments and parks, residents of the city are familiar with politics that draw on visual images and physical space (Agarwal, 2010). Embedded in these images is a deeper relationship between parks, urban green spaces and open spaces, which Burgess et al. (1988) suggest are often seen as signs of a modern city. These open, green spaces are particularly valued in Delhi, with residents of the city sharing a personal, historical relationship with spaces like the Delhi ridge for example. The message of clean, green and public space therefore, has a strong visual, social and cultural component woven into its practical manifestation. There are public media messages developed by the government that promote these ideas (particularly the clean-delhi-green-delhi campaign), advertisements of products build on this visual aesthetic, and governance and education structures build on the importance of the aesthetics of the city. Of all the messages on aesthetics of the city, the green-and-clean message is, arguably, the most pervasive. From the Delhi government's billboards of 'Clean Delhi Green Delhi' to chapters dedicated to clean-and-green in school textbooks (which I explored in Chapter 4) these two words strongly influence notions of environmentality in the public space of Delhi. Entwined with the visual aesthetics of the clean and green messages are notions of class, class action, responsibility, responsiveness, caste and religious and cultural practice. The following sections discuss,

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[34] The forest cover of Delhi has increased by 3.61 sq km to 179.81 sq km (in 2013) from 176.2 sq km in 2011 according to the State of Forests report 2013.

through popular advertisements and media messages (which were used as elicitation tools to discuss the environment with respondents), how the visual images intersect with class markers and reinforce notions of class characteristics.

The bhagidari system: clean, green and the politics of governance

This section discusses how the *bhagidari* (translated as partnership) system has facilitated the mapping of middle-class anxieties onto the spatial and political ordering of the city of Delhi, with particular focus on the ideas of cleaning and greening. The *bhagidari* system is a formalised, multi-stakeholder, participatory governance structure that brings together local business traders, the Delhi government and the RWAs. The RWAs are voluntary, democratically-elected groups of individuals that are set up by residential colonies to deal with the management and overall maintenance of the colony itself. Residential colonies themselves are groups of residences that are often self-contained, sometimes even gated communities that serve as mini communities in the city of Delhi. The RWAs are comprised of residents from within the colonies and in order to participate in the *bhagidari* governance processes need to be officially registered with the Delhi government. Registered RWAs are entitled to participate in meetings of the *bhagidari* as well as meetings that include other RWAs from across the city. The government characterises the *bhagidari* system as "a meaningful partnership between Govt. agencies and citizens, basically covering the provision of civic services" (GNCTD, 2003). This system of collaborative and participatory governance aims to deliver greater decision-making capabilities (including financial resources) to citizens through collaboration between registered RWAs, market and industrial associations, and bureaucrats across the municipal, state and central government departments. The issues that the system engages with range from managing payments for water services to dealing with garbage and dirt in the city. Much has been written about the success of

this system, including the structures that this form of governance creates and how citizens have been empowered and mobilised into political engagement (Mehra, 2013, Koreth, 2013). However, commentators like Mawdsley (2009), Sinha (2015b) and Srivastava (2009) question the basis on which participation has been built into the structures, asking the question: which social and economic groups have access to decision making processes? While the *bhagidari* system of governance is characterised as a partnership between citizens and other actors, the citizens that are included in this form of participatory governance are required to come from authorised residential colonies, offering space only to registered middle-class colonies in the decision-making processes. In order to be authorised the RWA has to provide bank details and other similar, formal forms of identification, which is inaccessible to the colonies of poor people or slums. The middle-class bias is implicit in the structure and Srivastava (2009) provides an interesting account of how middle-class concerns become *bhagidari* concerns and how this particular system of governance provides space for middle-class anxieties over spatial ordering and aesthetics to be given political and economic voice, leading to the formation of a particular notion of the environment and environmentality (the government of Delhi allocates funds to the *bhagidari* system). The study by Srivastava (2009) draws out how the concerns of RWAs, raised at *bhagidari* meetings, are primarily focussed on security of the colonies and its residents by, for example, drawing up lists of maids, hawkers and plumbers to authorise entry for those with legitimate reason to enter the colony. Similarly, Mawdsley's study of the *bhagidari* system (2009a) also suggests that middle-class agendas, which include environmental messages and positive environmental outcomes, (the *bhagidari* system's clean-and-green-delhi campaign is one such structure) evidence how the middle class envisage the space of the city, including the location of poor people. It is important to recognise how

this form of participatory governance structure facilitates the practical implementation of middle-class notions of the ordering of urban space and its governance. Key to this ordering of space is how and where poor people are located and managed. The clean-delhi-green-delhi campaign, a core environmental campaign of the *bhagidari* system provides one such lens into the relationship between class and the environment, through which middle class anxieties have scope to be expressed with the ordering of and access to space of particular importance. In the following sections I expand on both the anxieties and how they relate to particular habitus that embodies notions of caste and religious and cultural practice.

The clean and green message is a popular message in the public spaces of Delhi, popularised by the clean-delhi-green-delhi campaign that was launched as part of the *bhagidari* system in 2003 by the then Chief Minister of Delhi (Sheila Dixit). The campaign was launched with the express aim to improve waste collection and segregation from residential colonies in Delhi. This focus on waste has since been broadened to include general cleaning of garbage in the city. Sheila Dixit, Delhi chief minister, has noted that
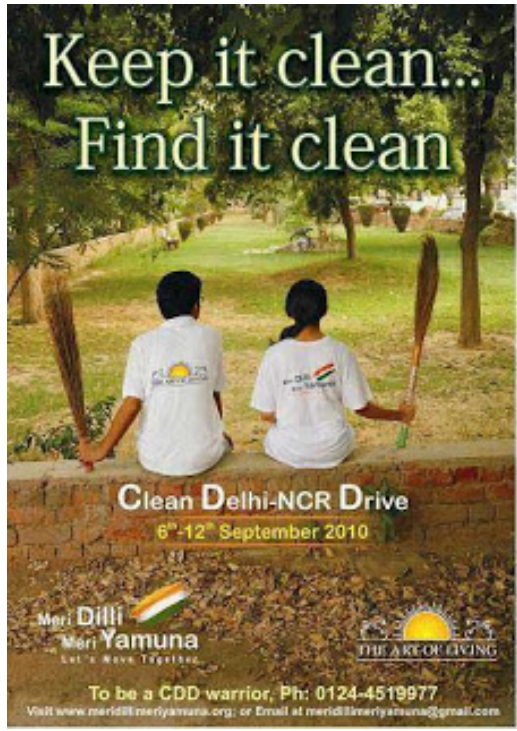
Figure 1: Clean Delhi campaign poster for National Capital Region during the Commonwealth games

among the *bhagidari* system's goals were the establishment of a "'clean, green, hassle-free quality of life' in Delhi,… [and the transformation of] Delhi into a 'world-class capital city'" (GNCTD, 2004: xiii). 'Clean', 'green' and 'world-class capital' city are entwined in the agenda of the *bhagidari* system. Cleaning in this sense (as a goal of the

bhagidari) involves cleaning the colonies of crime and illegal access; with this relationship between cleaning, criminality and poverty discussed by Truelove et al. (2011), Baviskar (2002), Fernandes (2008), Srivastava (2009), Mawdsley (2009a) and Ghertner (2008, 2011). In addition to how poor people are defined in this narrative of cleaning the city there are also further indicators of middle-class characteristics, which for example, can be seen in Figure 1. In this poster two middle-class young adults sit with brooms in their hands with the intention to clean the park. The T-Shirts worn by the protagonists indicate their middle class-ness and the message that is implicit in this poster is the idea that it is the middle class that is responsible for the cleaning but only these overt acts of cleaning that are in the public eye, which I referred to in Chapter 5 when discussing overt action versus inaction. The poster in Figure 1 is developed for the Commonwealth Games (2010) as a cleaning drive for the National Capital Region (NCR) of Delhi. The importance of acting on environmental issues is also, as I have described in Chapter 5, a rule in the field of the environment. The environment, in this context, is envisioned as a form of social practice of the middle class. This social, overt practice is being actively framed as a middle-class value and evidences how the battle for public space plays out using the language of the environment – clean and green. However, the environment as a form of cultural capital is being actively negotiated and deployed through this overt action in order to facilitate distinction and create boundaries, both from the poor but also from other members of their class fraction. Marketing materials on billboards and hoardings frequently reiterate class characteristics through social acts like that of cleaning or greening (planting trees). This message is one that respondents from both residential colonies also raised during the interviews. For example, when talking about campaigns that had environmental messages a respondent from Sarita Vihar discussed the clean-delhi-green-delhi

campaign talking about the increase in the number of trees in the city. The respondent also discussed how the cleaning campaign was important for his neighbourhood as it helped to maintain "order in the area and keep dogs and *redi's* [mobile food carts] out of the colony" (House 72, Male, aged 34). Mrs Agarwal, a key respondent from Vasant Vihar also talked about the campaign, referring to it as the *shuddh-dilli* [clean delhi] campaign. Over a cup of tea she talked about the milkmen and *dhobis* [clothes washer-men/women] who would set up their stalls in and around the colony and how the area would often get dirty. She insisted in Hindi that "*dilli mein jo gandagi hai, usko shuddh karke logon ko theek taraha say rehna chahiye* [all the dirt in Delhi must be cleaned and people must live properly and appropriately within this system]" (Mrs Agarwal, Female, aged 55, Vasant Vihar). Her use of the word *shuddh* is interesting as it refers not only to clean spaces but also cleaning spaces of 'dirty' people; in this instance she refers to the milkmen and other such labourers. The President of the RWA of Vasant Vihar also talked about the *bhagidari* system, referring to the clean-delhi-green-delhi campaign. Mr Vohra discussed how people needed to take matters into their own hands and do something in the city. He was upset about the encroachment of make-shift markets into the colony areas and insisted that he was actively engaging with the *bhagidari* network to 'clean' the colony of these encroachments. These clear indications of middle-class actions that relate to access to public space in the city is not only actively discussed by middle-class
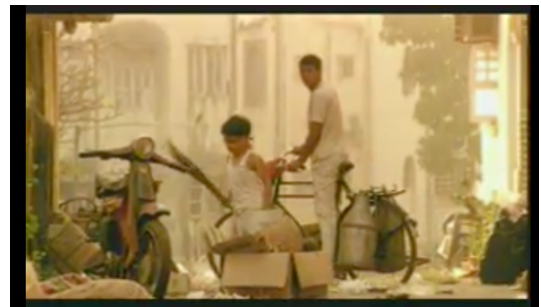

Figure 2: Lifebuoy Soap television advertisement: children clean colony as a milkman looks on

Figure 3: Lifebuoy Soap advertisement: children complete cleaning the colony and go to school with 'no fear'

respondents but also drives political campaigns like the *bhagidari* system and legal action along the lines of that reviewed by Ghertner (2008, 2011).

The criminalisation of poor people and narratives of cleaning find comfortable overlaps within the *bhagidari* system's messaging. In addition, as Figure 1 suggests the middle class is also a group of people who act in order to clean the city. The political structure of the *bhagidari* system that provides space for the middle class to act on their concerns and anxieties also helps reinforce the identity of the middle class as individuals who act and clean the city. By creating a narrative that suggests poor people are dirty that need to be cleaned, the *bhagidari* system evidences middle-class representations of the lower class, using the language of the environment to construct distinctions between the classes that reinforce the identity of the middle class as one that acts to maintain clean spaces; clean of poverty and dirt.

Advertisements and the media: popular and public appeal of cleaning and greening

The previous section examined how the *bhagidari* system, as an objective governance structure, is as a lens through which middle-class anxieties of the environment and space can be explored in relation to both embodied social and cultural norms and political and legal structures. Additionally, through discussions with respondents these anxieties are also evident in how the environment is conceptualised and then mapped onto the spatial and political ordering of the city of Delhi. I now turn to look at two popular advertisements that reinforce the middle-class narrative that Srivastava (2009) discusses in his article on the *bhagidari* system of governance, that reproduces the narrative of the poor as dirty and the middle class as environmentally aware. These two advertisements were built into the methodology of this research as elicitation tools, based on their recognition as products that are advertised on their environmental credentials, by respondents during the initial pilot study. The first

advertisement is for *Lifebuoy*, a popular brand of soap in India, whose advertisement capitalised on and reinforced 'cleaning', situating the cleaning within the physical space of a colony (Figures 2 and 3). The second advertisement is for a washing powder called *Surf excel*, which used a popular Bollywood actress to sell a product that would help reduce water consumption (Figure 4). I first discuss how these advertisements tap into a particular relationship between the environment and class. I then discuss how looking at other forms of media – hoardings, public acts of cleaning, and more recently, the NDTV Greenathon – can help to understand this relationship between the idea of cleaning and middle-class identity.

The Little Gandhi Advertisement for a popular soap called Lifebuoy - A boy, aged between six and eight, gets out of bed with a voiceover saying 'Sometimes just one person…. can change the world*' (Kabhi kabhi ek insaan ... duniya ko badal sakta hai*). The boy starts cleaning his middle-class colony, in the process chasing away a stray dog. The boy inspires other colony children to help him. Proud mothers look on from their balconies, as the children collect garbage from across the colony.[35] Lower-class people, who deliver milk and vegetables to the colony, look on passively as the children clean (see Figure 2) The advertisement then shifts its focus to the soap as the as the children then bathe and head off to school with 'no fear' written at the bottom of the screen (see Figure 3). Interestingly, the advertisement, while selling soap, conveys a visual image of 'clean' that transcends the physical, overt act of cleaning. There are multiple messages in this video. The first is the distinction that is made between those 'who do' and those 'who watch'. It is residents of the colony, who take responsibility for cleaning while those who serve the residential colony (the cyclist in Figure 2) stand by as the act of cleaning is performed by others. Class characteristics are being defined

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[35] The advertisement can be seen at: http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=huztSICuXjA

and reinforced through this simple message of the act of cleaning the colony as social practice. The message delivered to consumers is one that middle-class consumers are familiar with: cleaning the city and those 'who do' are markers of being middle class. The second message is that of 'having no fear'. In the advertisement, children take responsibility for the cleaning in the colony implying that they have no fear in taking on the challenge of cleaning the colony in contrast to the adults. The message is an interesting one given the respondents' focus on education as the solution to environmental problems. Respondents from both colonies strongly asserted their belief that future generations were far more likely to deal with environmental problems more generally as they were taught about the environment and had a direct association with it within the schooling curriculum although, as I have discussed in Chapter 4, the formal education system itself serves as an initial channel through which class characteristics and embodied practice is communicated and inculcated into norms and social practice.

Figure 4: Surf Excel detergent television advertisement: people carrying water to save two buckets of water per load of laundry

The second advertisement that was discussed in the interviews (as an elicitation tool) with respondents is that of a brand of detergent called Surf Excel.[36] The advertisement starts with the refrain: *Do bucket paani ab rozana hai bachana* (we must save 2 buckets of water a day). The video shows people carrying two buckets of water to empty into a large trough (see Figure 4). A popular Bollywood actress talks to the camera and says that if you have Surf Excel you can save two buckets of water a day; she continues by explaining how much water can be saved across the country if everyone were to save

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[36] The advertisement can be seen at: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=SrliGcpcHYw

two buckets a day. Once again, it is middle-class people who act to save water. Well-dressed men and women come together bringing two buckets of water each (see Figure 4). This advertisement addresses a problem that people in Delhi face acutely over the summer months. The problem of water shortages cuts across class boundaries. However, the middle class have the economic capacity to buffer themselves from water shortages. In addition, the poorer classes face this concern more consistently and not just through the summer months, directly affecting subjective experiences of the environment. The advertisement concludes with the famous Bollywood actress recommending the use of Surf Excel so everyone can save two buckets of water per load of washing. In this advertisement it is important to make the distinction between public and private acts of cleaning, which is integral in understanding how this advertisement is relatable to residents of the middle-class colonies. For residents of middle-class colonies the idea of cleaning, as one aspect of the discursive framing of the environment, is a public act. It is done as a public gesture in the advertisement, with people bringing buckets of water that they have saved as a result of using the washing powder. However, the act of washing clothes is neither done directly by middle-class people nor is it done in the public space. It is done by servants, privately in homes and therefore the value of such environmental acts (such as using Surf Excel) cannot be associated with the individual in the overt public space. As a result of this ambiguity of action and association, the action of utilising the detergent holds no symbolic value and cultural capital for the middle-class doer. The clear distinction that is being made by creating boundaries between inside and outside the home is what Dickey (2000) discusses when examining these boundaries in households in Madurai. Her ethnography draws on the role of religion in defining the use of and access to space and the heuristics implicit in the management of these spaces. Respondents commented on the faux

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environmental message in this advertisement. In fact, all respondents from both colonies denied that this product had any environmental credentials, rather suggesting that there was no more to this advertisement than the use of a famous person to sell a product. However, the soap advertisement evoked different responses, from respondents in both colonies. The ability of respondents to accumulate cultural capital through associating with overt acts (those in public spaces) demonstrates, in spaces outside of the home, ones environmental credentials and therefore how an individual is different. The environmental credentials offer the enactor of environmental acts, a form of cultural capital. In addition, cultural norms around the use of the space inside and outside the home also need to be foregrounded in order to recognise how embodied practice is being discussed through this advertisement and what is seen as legitimate and illegitimate concern over the environment based on who is acting and in which space. In this advertisement the act is being done by servants inside homes; a space that is essentially one where access is granted for a particular purpose, i.e. to labour, and it is clear that middle-class respondents are unwilling to imbue this act with anything more than that which is normative to them. Therefore, home-owners do not ascribe any further value to this act by servants.

The physical act of cleaning, in public spaces, is common among the middle class in India, most recently (in 2014) seen in the emergence of a renegade group of middle-class urban activists called the *Ugly Indian*. The Ugly Indian group takes responsibility for actively cleaning urban neighbourhoods and localities. This group is made up of middle-class people from the respective city (this initiative has now spread to Bangalore and Baroda) who come together to clean, sanitise and beautify urban spaces. In Delhi this form of action for environmental causes has a longer history with drives to clean the river Yamuna, which runs through the city, and the recent

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Commonwealth games cleaning campaigns in Delhi, which involves middle-class people who take responsibility for cleaning and aesthetically beautifying urban areas. The public nature of information and acts on the environment was clearly evident during the Commonwealth games in 2010 where a mass cleaning drive called *Meri Dilli Meri Yamuna* (My Delhi, My Yamuna – the name of the river that runs through Delhi) was organised. On display during the drive was an exhibition showcasing the streets of Delhi before and after, with pledge boards with signatures of school children and citizens calling for a clean and green Delhi (Outlook, 2010). These acts of cleaning extend, seamlessly to the cleaning of 75 slum areas in the city, where cleanliness, once again, references those who are dirty and therefore need to be cleaned. The important meaning in these advertisements and public messaging is the value of acting overtly in public spaces, in the public interest, to clean the environment of all that is dirty. This process of cleaning, which is also core to the *bhagidari* agenda to clean signs of poverty, creates a narrative that weaves together poor people, the middle-class, public acts of cleaning outside the home, and concern over the environment. By cleaning the city of its poverty and dirt the middle class, politically through the *bhagidari* system, and symbolically through the messages in advertisements, creates a narrative of cleaning in the public space that confers value on the public act of cleaning. This symbolic value – cultural capital – helps to distinguish, symbolically, between the lower class and the middle class.

In public spaces, particularly around the residential colonies where I worked and lived, numerous messages referencing cleaning and greening dotted the landscape. In addition, along the roads the 'clean and green' message was embossed on every enclosure for saplings planted at dividers and a few boards showed real time levels of pollution in the air. Outside Vasant Vihar, B Block, was a complex hoarding

demonstrating how to construct a rainwater harvesting system for a house. Multiple locations had boards with messages like 'say no to plastic' and 'keep Delhi clean and green'. It is not difficult to see how the proliferation of environmental messages in the public space reach across to the wider public in the form of concerns or environmental actions. These messages undoubtedly had an effect on residents. All the subjects interviewed provided comments of the nature 'we need to stop using plastic bags', for example, but added to the comment with a narrative of poverty, causes of environmental degradation and/or solutions, which included poor people as perpetrators in various forms, a response to contexts and social needs that Agarwal (2005) refers to as a form of 'environmentality'. The next section focuses on these narratives.

Unpacking class: what it means to be clean and green

The earlier sections have discussed how the concepts clean and green are employed to mark out differences between the lower classes and the middle class, particularly through public acts that demonstrate an individual's environmental credentials. Through these public acts individuals have the ability to demonstrate their difference and accumulate cultural capital. Through advertisements, the issues that the *bhagidari* system engages with, and public media messages what it means to be middle class starts to emerge, in which the language of clean and green plays a significant role. In addition to what is clearly a widespread usage, these terms have also been deployed by middle-class respondents from the two colonies to differentiate themselves from the lower classes. In the following section I examine this claim in more detail, drawing on respondents' narratives to unpack the terms clean and green, within the field of the environment, to explore the contexts in which they are being used and how they serve to reinforce middle-class social practice and, through that, identity. There are two themes though which notions of clean and green play out in middle-class identity formation,

which I discuss below. The first narrative conflates poverty, dirt and the physical environment to suggest that particular spaces must be cleaned of signs of poverty as they are dirty, as a consequence differentiating between the lower and middle classes. The second theme, while utilising a different narrative, differentiates individuals based on their economic capital and therefore drawing together poverty and dirt, again making distinctions between the lower and the middle classes.

Cleaning, greening, poverty and dirt: middle-class boundary creation.

The concept of cleaning in India takes many forms and is used in multiple ways, woven into social norms and practice.. Alley (2002), for example explores the notion of religious cleanliness in a study of the ways in which a physically dirty river like the Ganges can exist simultaneously with it being a symbol for religious purity. Dickey (2000) also explores how religious practice is implicit in the delineation and use of space, particularly in making the distinction between inside and outside the home. Cleaning is also sometimes associated with sanitation, hygiene and cleanliness. Sometimes, the idea of cleanliness is also used to distinguish between individuals from different castes (Luthi, 2003). Regarding the field of the environment, there are two primary narratives through which cleaning becomes a rule for the middle class in Delhi: (i) the narrative of poverty and physical dirt, and (ii) the narrative of poverty and positive environmental values. Both these narratives showcase a particular form of middle-class identity that helps formulate boundaries between the middle and lower classes through the language of cleanliness and the environment.

The first of these two narratives demonstrates a relationship between poverty as dirt (versus cleanliness) and space. In a city as busy as Delhi, with a population of 25

million, access to space and resources is a visible problem.[37] In addition to limited living space resources and amenities like water and electricity are also restricted. It is of no surprise then that the politics of space plays out through class structures. As I said at the start of the chapter, the terms cleaning and greening were discussed primarily by the majority of colony members. On the one hand concerns of dirt and living conditions, which were referenced in the use of the terms cleaning and greening, highlight the proximate and immediate, even superficial concerns held by this class fraction. In constructing a narrative using the terms clean and green, these proximate concerns also evidence forms of social practice that help facilitate identification of class and class fractions, in this case, differentiating the lower and middle classes. The environment, through the language of cleaning and greening, becomes a marker of middle class-ness in a very tangible way. This relationship is best illustrated by a quote from an interview with Mrs Agarwal from Vasant Vihar who said:

> "with population and most of the people living in *jhuggis* [slums] there is so much dirt. When they go to the toilets they just sit outside. What could be dirtier than this? *Jagah ko shuddh karane ke liye in logon ko nikaal dena chahiye* [in order to make the area clean these people living in slums must be removed]. Poverty is a problem. They don't have clean water to drink. When they go out to defecate there is stagnant water and there will be a dirty environment obviously. Have you seen *Indira* Market for example? I can't even go through there in my car. There is so much dirt there I can't tell you. There are cows, bulls, cow dung, it is such a dirty smell and there are so many diseases there as a

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[37] Latest figures released on the 11th of July 2014 by the United Nations. UN 2014. World Urbanization Prospects: The 2014 Revision. United Nations, Department of Economic and Social Affairs, Population Division.

result. And the garbage, everything is lying outside and there is no provision to have it collected" (Mrs Agarwal, aged: 55, Female, Vasant Vihar).

Mrs Agarwal says that 'poverty is a problem', which results in poor people having to 'go out to defecate' making the environment itself dirty. She also talked about the diseases that result from the poor hygiene. In addition, she uses the word *shuddh*, which means pure or innocent, but in this context suggesting that the space should be purified by the removal of the people who live in the slums. She also talks about Indira market, a market on the boundaries of the Vasant Vihar where fruit and vegetables are sold by vendors with stalls and carts. I too used this market when I was residing in Vasant Vihar during the research period. It is poorly organised and never cleaned; rats and mosquitoes were common. Mrs Agarwal used the market too (although ultimately her household help was responsible for making the trips to the market to do the shopping) and frowned upon the dirt in the market. Mrs Agarwal's primary focus was poor people causing environmental problems by creating dirt and unsanitary conditions, evidenced by the conditions in which they lived and must, therefore, be cleaned from the space around the colony. The relationship between dirt and poverty was also discussed by a female respondent from Sarita Vihar (House 100) who talked about the role of education in promoting positive environmentalism remarking that: "with poor people whose children have no education the children have no guidance and hence grow up as rule breakers, *aur phir gandagi mein rehte hain* [and therefore live in dirt]" (House 100, aged 42, Female, Sarita Vihar). To this respondent, the outcome of poor people living in dirty conditions is the same as that stated by Mrs Agarwal but the cause of this outcome is a lack of education. She then described the role the media had in providing this education suggesting that while "the poorer class … never get the chance to look at … hoardings, they do watch television" (House 100, aged 42, Female, Sarita Vihar). As I have

discussed earlier, majority of environmental messaging, was largely available in the public space and this, again was referenced by this respondent from Sarita Vihar.

While talking about poor people many respondents also conflated the poor with migrants from outside Delhi and sometimes even conflating poor people with feral animals in the city. Mrs Mehta, a resident of Vasant Vihar discussed this issue, very upset about the lack of changes that were being made despite repeated complaints from her and her husband. She said

> "look at cows. Why are they not doing anything about cows? Look at encroachments. Even here go down the road and there are *chai* [tea] shops and cars on the pavements. Go a little further into the market, there are encroachments. Everybody is spilling out and everything is dirty. Laws are passed and encroachments should be removed but nothing happens. It gets worse. More and more encroachments take place. We need to clean these places and bring some order into the colony" (Mrs Mehta. Aged 46, Female, Vasant Vihar).

Rather than an isolated concern, many respondents, particularly in Vasant Vihar (upper middle-class colony), complained about encroachments of slums and roadside shops run by poor people into the residential areas of the colonies. There was also a visible difference between the colonies in how the notion of poverty and dirt was discussed. Those from Vasant Vihar largely talked about examples like Indira market and the lack of cleanliness in local shops. By contrast, respondents from Sarita Vihar tended to discuss the issue in more in general terms. For example, a resident from house 172 in Sarita Vihar discussed his concerns over poverty saying that "*jin logon ke paas na paise na bangla ho vo to jagaha saaf kaise rakh sakte hain* [those people who have no money or homes how can they keep the place clean]" (House 172, aged 70, Male, Sarita Vihar).

He uses the word *saaf* to refer to physical cleanliness in the poorer areas. The physical space of, and around Vasant Vihar, is less congested than Sarita Vihar. Residents of Sarita Vihar seemed more resilient to the dirt and squalor around their colony, a seemingly normal feature of their lives and therefore were less likely to reference it as a daily experience while those from Vasant Vihar talked about specific inconveniences that they faced in their daily lives. While both sets of respondents talked about the issue and made similar connections between poverty and cleanliness, it became evident that the notion of cleaning the area of signs of poverty was more immediate and problematic to those from the higher-income middle-class colony. Respondents from this colony wanted to create clear boundaries and physical distance between their lives and the lives of poorer people. While residents of both colonies still talked about the issue those from Vasant Viha - the higher-income colony - were more likely to be personally perturbed with the visibility of poor people around the colony. Those from the middle-income middle-class colony, however, seemed to be more resilient to daily encounters with dirt and poverty but still saw the issue of poverty as inherently dirty. While proximity to poverty seemingly inures individuals to the daily encounters there is also a concerted effort being made by individuals from the higher income middle-class colony to distinguish themselves more actively from the poorer classes. This, while evident in discussions with residents of Sarita Vihar (middle-income colony), was not emphasised as vigorously and consistently as it was by residents of Vasant Vihar (higher income colony) In Chapter 5, I discussed how the superficiality of concerns and level of engagement with the environment suggested that the environment, as a form of cultural capital, was not a valued social practice or discourse or a part of the habitus of this fraction of the middle class. However, residents from the higher income colony – Vasant Vihar – more vigorously delineated class boundaries to distance themselves

actively and significantly from the lower classes while also significantly marking difference between individuals within their own residential colony as well as other middle class colonies. Residents from Sarita Vihar were less inclined to do this. The active delineation by residents of Vasant Vihar, I stated in Chapter 5, suggested a form of tactical environmentalism that demonstrated a form of environmentality, habitus and cultural capital. The same form of active delineation is also evident in the manner in which residents of Vasant Vihar more vehemently opposed signs of dirt and poverty in their daily experiences. Residents of Sarita Vihar, who also more regularly encountered dirt and poverty in their daily lives, seemed more accepting of dirt and poverty (yet conflating the two) suggesting less of a drive towards distinction in their narratives. This difference suggests that the reflexivity is tied to the ability to recognise other forms of cultural capital, which is also linked to income and wealth. I recognise this emphasis on cleaning the space of poor people and signs of poverty as another form of distinction that I discussed in detail in Chapter 5.

The quote from Mrs Mehta (above) not only addresses the issue of feral animals but also raises the problem of access to space and those who are entitled to using specific spaces. Mrs Mehta brings up the legality of the matter of encroachments and illegal constructions but what is interesting is that the shops and markets, which she suggests are illegal are used by members of this residential colony. What Mrs Mehta expresses in the above quote is the problem that she has with the visual aesthetics of these 'illegal encroachments' and what seems to be a growing concern over entitlement to public space in the city. Numerous other residents in the same colony also suggested that poorer individuals were themselves responsible for environmental degradation as a consequence of their visibly 'dirty' living conditions. This sentiment has also been

expressed in international newspapers, particularly during the Commonwealth games.[38]

This conflation of the act of cleaning with ideas of who and what belong in specific spaces allows one to see the beginnings of a much broader definition of the 'environment', in which specific kinds of aesthetics are desirable to the urban middle-class resident. Delhi, a city overflowing with people, is clearly a space where access to resources and space is a key point of contention and one that generates significant public debate. A resident of Sarita Vihar who was asked what changes he saw in the environment said, "as far as cleanliness is concerned there is still a problem in this city. There is a lot of migration. People are coming from Bihar and they do not understand what cleanliness is. Main problem is that they don't understand anything. There is dirt everywhere" (House 73, aged 46, Male, Sarita Vihar). Another resident from the same colony also brought up the same concern saying that "Delhi is one of the largest and most polluted cities. Many people who come from UP and other states are not educated people and the waste that they generate is huge (House 215, aged 35, Male, Sarita Vihar). This resident began to draw out yet another form of class distinction, this time using a well-known analogy between people from particular states (Uttar Pradesh and Bihar, in particular) and levels of education. Again, dirt and cleanliness were both brought up this time in relation to migrants into the city, who were traditionally poor labourers rather than educated workers. This is not to suggest lower literacy rates rather that the appropriate values are not held or manifested by residents from these states.

The idea of greening was very widely discussed by all respondents from the residential colonies. However, in addition to parks, which I discussed in Chapter 5, the notion of greening also gets woven into narratives on dirt and poverty. For example, a

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[38] See http://www.guardian.co.uk/sport/blog/2010/may/25/commonwealth-games-delhi,

http://edition.cnn.com/2009/WORLD/asiapcf/01/14/india.slums/index.html for examples.

married couple from Vasant Vihar talked about the importance of getting away from the dirt of the city for greener spaces. However, what they referred to as dirt was poverty and cattle around the colony.

> "R (Mr)– that smell every day when you see cattle, when you go for a walk. We could approve more parks and improve them. *Thodi swacchata to badhana hoga* [some cleanliness must be improved]. Cattle running wild causes a problem. Health hazards. All sorts of diseases – encephalitis and other so if you don't have some kind of – you are polluting it in more ways than one so cattle is a big problem.
>
> R (Mrs) - We like to get away from all of this. Somewhere with space and greenery" (Mr and Mrs Mehta, aged 50 and 46, male and female, Vasant Vihar).

Another respondent from the same colony also talked about the idea of escaping to some greenery to get away from the dirt and she says "naturally you want to get away from the city. We go there just for the atmosphere and for a change – to get away from the dirt and *jhuggis* [slums]. Of course you see villagers out there but in the city it is different" (Mrs Chandra, aged 58, Female, Vasant Vihar). Mrs Chandra offered a distinction between greenery and dirt, juxtaposing the poverty and slums in cities against what is clearly a more positive environmental image of greenery. In both colonies regular tree-planting drives were held to improve green-cover in the residential areas. These drives were supported by the forestry service and saplings were provided freely to RWAs.[39] The term greening was not used as widely as cleaning, in the interviews and discussions. However, tree plantations, as I discussed in Chapter 4, form an integral part of middle-class responses to environmental problems in the city of Delhi. Often tree planting and greenery (usually stated as 'increasing green cover') were

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[39] Conversation with RWA members of Sarita Vihar and Vasant Vihar

used synonymously but still held significance for respondents, for example of the 100 questionnaires collected from both colonies, over 90% talked about increasing green cover in colonies and the city of Delhi.

This section has examined the relationship that middle-class respondents from residential colonies drew between poverty and dirt. The proximate concerns are discussed in tandem with concerns over poverty and physical dirt. The discursive framing of the environment through using the terms clean and green are primarily, I argue, anxieties that are superficial in nature and constructed, primarily, to make distinctions between the middle class and the lower class. While this concern is echoed in respondents' visual and aesthetic representation of the city and their colonies (particularly for residents of Vasant Vihar), I have demonstrated that through narratives on the environment (dirt being discussed as an environmental issue) class boundaries are drawn, both metaphorically as well as in the physical ordering of the city.

Cleaning, materialism and postmaterialism: anxieties in a changing political and economic context

"R - As consumerism rises and the standard of living rises, you also clean up. People who are very poor who have only 2 meals but if they don't have to worry about their 2 meals, they will not suddenly change their attitudes. That will only happen over years. It is a whole lifestyle change. It is a very slow process." (Mrs Mehta, aged 46, Female, Vasant Vihar).

While reviewing the data I encountered inconsistencies in how respondents made connections between wealth and concerns about the environment. On the one hand, as I have discussed earlier, respondents drew clear relationships between poverty and dirt suggesting that poor people themselves were dirty and the spaces in which they lived were dirty too. This narrative, I argued, created specific visual aesthetics of the city of

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Delhi in which the middle class removed poor people out of what they deemed to be middle-class areas through discursively framing the environment around notions of dirt and poverty. In fact, this narrative is also discussed by Srivastava (2009) in his article on how the *bhagidari* system is set up to enable middle-class preponderances to shape the city, by for example criminalising poor people and Ghertner (2008, 2011) in the role played by the legal discourse in further criminalising poor people. I investigated this link between wealth and dirt in more detail by asking respondents: 'do you think poor people cause environmental degradation or problems?' This was intended to provide some perspective on how respondents associated particular groups of people with positive or legitimate environmental values. This question, on initial reflection, seems like it might lead respondents to draw a relationship between poverty, dirt and environmental degradation. However, during the pilot phase all respondents brought up this issue without prompting, and it also seemed like this was a relationship that people had strong feelings about. Given the feedback during the pilot I decided to introduce this question and was surprised by the responses particularly when respondents were emphatically opposed to drawing a relationship between poverty and environmental degradation. However, the majority of respondents from the residential colonies did suggest the physical conditions in which poor people lived was evidence of their contribution to environmental degradation and was also an indicator of their attitude towards the environment. Some went even further, Mrs Mehta noted the link between poverty and environmental degradation but drew more specifically on a postmaterialist relationship between wealth and environmental values. Inglehart (1987) posits postmaterial values as those that individuals begin to hold when reaching a point of long term financial security in their lives. Environmental values, Inglehart (1987) states, are part of a wider set of postmaterial values. When Mrs Mehta was asked whether people

who become financially stable would think more about the environment she said "absolutely. I am sure of it." This proposed relationship between increased financial wellbeing and more favourable environmental values was also expressed by a resident of Sarita Vihar. For example, a 34-year old male respondent stated: "being poor doesn't allow you to be environmentally aware. Money has a big part to play in environmental awareness" (House 72, aged 34, Male, Sarita Vihar). I asked respondents how money helps in building this positive attitude or behaviours towards the environment. In response, those who made this connection between wealth and environmental attitudes/values talked about needing to fulfil basic needs (clearly echoing Maslow's theory of human motivation (1943)) but also wove in descriptions of the physical conditions in which many poorer people live. For example, a resident from Vasant Vihar talked about the "*gandagi mein jo log rehte hain, usko dekho. Jagah ko na saaf na shuddh rakhte hein* [just look at the dirt in which these people live. The area is not kept clean or hygienic]" (Nand Kolyar, aged 66, Male, Vasant Vihar). The argument here is somewhat circular. He is not alone in drawing a tautological loop between people being poor and hence unable to exhibit environment values in how they live and yet how they live is used as evidence to demonstrate their lack of positive environmental values, drawing on cultural and religious norms that frame space in relation to caste and class (Dickey, 2000). This interesting relationship that was being communicated, helped construct a narrative through which the values (environmental, in this case) of poor people were essentialised, to create boundaries between the poor and middle class. The essentialisation is done by highlighting access to economic capital; the barrier, in this instance, being created between the lower and middle classes.

While many talked about this positive correlation between wealth and environmental concern, a minority of respondents denied that poverty was linked to

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environmental degradation or the lack of positive environmental values. For example, Mrs Aradhana Misra from Vasant Vihar, a teacher at a local school and resident of Vasant Vihar, was scathing about the supposed positive correlation between wealth and positive environmental values when she was discussing the other residents in the colony. In her response to the question 'do you think poor people cause environmental degradation or problems?' she was very forceful in saying "money does not make a difference at all. Who in this colony doesn't have money? You see people spending money on new cars and clothes and then they throw things out of their cars onto the streets" (Mrs Aradhana Misra, aged 34, Female, Vasant Vihar). While Mrs Misra talked about the other people in her colony her response followed on from a discussion on garbage in the colony and the not-in-my-backyard attitude that some people took towards garbage disposal. She talked about her recycling habits and even her support of the vermicomposting pit in the colony. I would argue that while it may seem like Mrs Misra de-linked wealth and positive environmental values the response she offered was framed to demonstrate how she, as an individual, was different from others within the colony, which, I have argued in Chapter 5, is a way for individuals to distinguish themselves from others and establish forms of distinction.

Conclusion

The terms clean and green are evocative for the middle class in Delhi. Participatory governance processes – the *bhagidari* system – not only privilege the middle class in urban planning and governance issues but also help in emphasising the clean and green message in the city in practical ways, an environmentality that manifests in the physical space of the city. This preponderance over cleaning and greening is also evident in advertisements that resonated with respondents during the interviews, reinforcing correlations between class and narratives of dirt. While

discussing cleanliness and dirt in the city respondents from residential colonies primarily talked about poverty and linked poverty to dirty places and, by extension, dirty people. The terms clean and green are fundamentally linked to proximate concerns that frame immediate, short-term needs that include liveability, and are in some sense superficial in nature helping to draw boundaries between the middle and lower classes through referring to differing social practices – environmentality - as well as by creating narratives that conflate dirt and poverty. For residents of Vasant Vihar (higher income colony), particularly, the anxieties around dirt and poverty was emphasised creating more firm boundaries between classes, which was raised but not emphasised by residents of Sarita Vihar (middle income colony) suggesting the emphasis on reflexivity and distinction possibly linked to income and wealth. Residents of the colonies constructed narratives around poverty and dirt, particularly drawing on economic difference as underpinning why the difference persisted. By contrast, we will see in Chapter 7 that members of wildlife clubs do not construct the same sort of poverty and dirt narratives. These distinctions were made to demonstrate difference and distinction using the language of the environment, primarily through the lens of economic capital. It is economic capital that differentiates these two colonies and the lower classes and while that distinction is made, further delineation is made through social practice, for example, acting in an environmentally-positive manner to suggest a form of innate concern for the environment that is specific to the identity of the middle class and not that of the lower classes. The action, however, is a gesture that is public in nature, again demonstrating that in order for the environment to have value as a form of cultural capital for residents of these two colonies (class fractions that share many similarities) it has to be validated by others through overt, explicit public acts. This also suggests that the environment is embodied as religious and cultural practice by this class fraction in

particular. The environment – through the use of the terms clean and green – is utilised to demarcate boundaries between the lower and middle class primarily through differences in economic capital. However, in further demonstrating difference, superficial and explicit forms of environmental action are offered as middle-class social practice, referencing a form of cultural capital that once again is tactical in nature, mimicking what is understood to be appropriate middle-class behaviour of other class fractions, for example, the social practice of those who join NGOs.

Chapter 7 Wildlife enthusiasts and overtly tactical wildlife enthusiasts: the social practice of wildlife-club membership

This thesis examines the relationship between the environment and the middle class.[40] Much of the literature discusses this relationship in terms of the values that the middle class places on the environment. I continue to use the notion of middle-class environmental values in the most literal sense, i.e. what kinds of values the middle class confer on the environment (romantic, utilitarian etc.). I argue in this thesis that the environment is a symbol that is culturally negotiated to serve as a form of cultural capital. This in turn serves the ability to differentiate one individual from another from which fractions of the middle class can be recognised and identified. The environment offers multiple explicit benefits, for example health, sanitation and the provision of resources. However, the symbolic representation and production of the environment offers, to those who have the habitus (embodiment of taste) the ability to distinguish themselves and exert symbolic power over others who do not possess the same habitus. How individuals discursively framed the environment serves to negotiate and establish legitimacy and symbolic value of capital (economic, cultural, symbolic) towards delineating class boundaries (Savage, 2000). In this chapter I discuss, more specifically, the ways in which members of two wildlife clubs frame their identity through engaging with and framing the symbolic representations of the environment and valuing the environment. Depending on the particular values individuals confer to the environment and their relationships with the idea, I group the respondents as either wildlife enthusiasts or overtly tactical wildlife enthusiasts.

I use the word class not as a collective identity that individuals associate with

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[40] For methodological clarity and consistency the middle class is defined as individuals whose income is between INR200,000-10,000,000 (approximately USD4,000-21,000) per annum (Shukla, 2010).

but as a form of collective social practice that binds individuals into groupings or fractions by which they can be identified. I agree with Savage (2000) who draws on Bourdieu's assertion that class fractions and boundaries are implicit, manifesting through norms, actions, and social practice. I use the term class as an implicit organising principle that can be framed through how individuals establish relational markers of identity: the boundaries of 'us' and 'them'. For example, in Chapters 5 I discussed three rules of the field of the environment using which middle-class identity was framed. Respondents discussed the concept of the environment through relational variables, i.e. juxtaposing and relating their norms and social practice to that of other individuals and sometimes groups, suggesting some practices as superior to others (activism over passivity, for example). In Chapter 5, I examined how the discursive framing of the overtly tactical environmentalist, was constructed to create boundaries primarily between the lower and middle classes while also recognising potential cultural capital in the symbolism of the environment and yet not having the habitus to embody this recognition in their social practice. In Chapter 6, I discussed the symbols of cleaning and greening in more detail, as they feature as a marker for overtly tactical environmentalists respondents to distinguish themselves from the lower classes. Both chapters discussed how overtly tactical middle-class environmentalists distinguished themselves from the lower classes in addition to enacting what they characterised as more legitimate forms of environmental social practice while still maintaining an understanding of the environment that reflected their needs, the contexts that they encountered and heuristics of space. This need to distinguish, I argued, demonstrated a form of reflexivity through which an identification of class fractions was possible but also demonstrated, by the types of environmental concerns that they expressed. In Chapter 4, I explored how formal environmental education offers a particular narrative

of the environment that serves to reinforce middle-class identity through social practice, primarily reinforcing the narratives used by overtly tactical environmentalists. In this chapter, I look at individuals in the middle class that are particularly interested in a specific form of environmental action – in this case membership to wildlife clubs.

This chapter provides an overview of the data that was collected over a period of nine months in 2005/6 (see Chapter 3), examining the discursive narrative used by members of wildlife groups to talk about the environment. In this chapter attention is paid to providing context to the discussions with both sets of wildlife enthusiasts by situating their discussions on the environment and their engagement with the particular clubs in the narrative offered by the clubs themselves. The first section discusses the two wildlife clubs and their mission, purpose and activities, exploring the types of environmental messages running through the sub-text of the material, including the website content and primary material. I then discuss the comments in the context of the analysis of the messages presented by the two clubs. I use the analytical tool of narrative analysis to engage with primary data in webpages, newsletters, discussion forums and interactions through participant observation and semi-structured interviews (Silverman, 2011). The final section employs Bourdieu's structure of fields (1977a) to provide a way of thinking about the environment in these very specific spaces. The chapter examines the discursive narratives of this particular group of the middle class that I refer to as the wildlife enthusiasts and overtly tactical wildlife enthusiasts. Working with individuals from two wildlife clubs – the World Wide Fund for Nature (WWF) and the Indian Wildlife Club (IWC) – I conducted semi-structured interviews, gathered questionnaires, participated in trips organised by the wildlife club and reviewed newsletters, website data and online chats. There were marked differences between members of each club. Members of the WWF, who I refer to as overtly tactical

wildlife enthusiasts, were largely Non Resident Indians (NRIs) with romantic notions of the environment. By contrast, members of the IWC, who I refer to as wildlife enthusiasts, were largely career wildlife filmmakers providing scientific representations of the environment, drawing inspiration from the language of wildlife conservation science much like the pragmatic conservationists that Rangarajan (1996b) refers to in his study of the history of wildlife conservation laws. Through an analysis of the narratives of the environment constructed by the clubs' materials and by those of the club members, I was able to discern how the environment as a form of embodied practice drew from messages of globalisation or from a post-colonial discourse of wildlife conservation science. I start by laying out the current narrative on the environmental values of the middle class, drawing out the gaps and in the literature. Following this section I establish the methods I used to elucidate ways of thinking and norms that both sets of enthusiasts engage in. In the section following I provide detailed analysis of the ways in which respondents relate to the environment and establish their identities in relation to the environment.

The environment and the middle class in India: traditional relationships

Studies of environmental values in general and in the Indian context have a long history. In India, the study of the environment has largely focussed on the political geography of wildlife conservation (Rangarajan, 2001) rather than environmental values. However, underpinning the political geography are values that inform and guide relationships with the environment and consequently affect actual outcomes. Two key thematic areas through which Indian environmental values have been drawn out are wildlife conservation (and its historiography in particular), and subaltern studies (a postcolonial rendering of power, society and history from the perspective of the disempowered). I will discuss each separately. It would be difficult to list all the

contributors to the literature on wildlife conservation in India. However, some key figures like Rangarajan (1994, 1996, 2000) have provided historiographical accounts of Indian wildlife conservation, charting events, for example, that have led to the development of key wildlife conservation legislation. Rangarajan's body of work has also explored key interest groups and their influence on the wildlife conservation landscape from pre independence to the 1990s. Saberwal and (2003) and Kothari (1996) also offer similar revisionist accounts of historical events of wildlife conservation, taking a political geography approach to map out the ways in which politics, land, wildlife and culture are woven into the management of wildlife and national parks, including how various alternative approaches such as joint forestry management methods, might offer more sustainable ways to deliver effective management of these spaces. Similarly, there is also a vast and sophisticated subaltern studies literature that has provided insight into human-environment relationships, re-envisioning social and cultural practice and political structures to construct a narrative of positive ecological values that underpin these practices and structures (Gadgil, 1994, Gadgil, 1995, Guha, 1999, Baviskar, 2005, Grove, 1995, Ramakrishnan, 1998). The environmental values laid out in these sets of literature suggest a particular relationship between humans and the environment (animals included), which largely (and problematically) romanticises the subaltern. These studies posit a harmonious relationship between humans and the environment where political, cultural and social (caste included) structures facilitate and promote the realisation of these romantic values, in practice. In addition to the romantic values that underpin and drive political movements in forests there is also, in the literature, a narrative of the middle class in post-independence India and their significant interest in wildlife conservation. In fact, Rangarajan (2001) argues, that many of the early wildlife laws were championed by the middle class. This association

of the middle class with what were seen as positive values towards wildlife and conservation is often used as a benchmark against which the contemporary middle class is judged (Varma, 1998).[41]

It must be noted that the composition of the post-independence middle class and the contemporary middle class is quite different. Although the value sets of the post-independence middle class are often juxtaposed with the values of the contemporary middle class, they are not contiguous categories. I simply raise this point here as a theoretical concern but the approach that I take to explore class fractions draws out the differences between an older and a more contemporary set of middle-class individuals. More recent literature discusses aspects of contemporary middle-class values of the environment. For example, Mawdsley (2009) talks about bourgeois environmentalism when discussing middle-class eco-tourists, and Urfi (2012) examines a particular form of exclusionary environmental value (i.e. constructed so it is not accessible to all) exhibited by members of bird-watching clubs. However, there is still dearth of studies that offer a wider examination that includes a variety of middle-class fractions. This is changing as it becomes more evident that the middle class has huge potential to affect the environment both positively and negatively. Nevertheless, despite the interest in the public media (Farrell, 2007, D'Monte, 2002) and economic and marketing analysis (Bank, 2010, Wilson, 2008), this gap in the literature and broader analysis still persists.

Given the current ways of thinking about Indian middle-class values in general this thesis is interested in how exactly the middle class define and engage with the symbol of the environment as a form of cultural capital that is embodied by class

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[41] Varma (1998) asserts that the values of the contemporary middle class are inferior in relation to the older, Nehruvian (1950s and 60s) middle class, which was much more willing to see itself as part of a wider nation-state and not in an individualistic, selfish manner.

fractions as a habitus in different ways, drawing on different social and cultural narratives. I ask the question: to what extent does the environment serve as a form of cultural capital and how does the middle class frame, discuss, utilise and claim various aspects of the environment? This is a particularly interesting area of inquiry as currently, there is no clarity on what exactly the environment means to the middle class (whether they refer to the urban environment, environmental pollution, animals, forests etc.), whether there are ways to discuss the concept as a principle with universal appeal or indeed how different groups within the middle class associate with the environment (in all of its forms). I agree with the assertion made by Mawdsley et al. that the "'urban middle classes', which are invoked in a number of studies, tend to remain rather anonymous and homogeneous" (Mawdsley, 2009b: 49). In addition there is also limited ethnographic research supporting any claims that are made in both the academic literature and mass media. While this dearth may be the consequence of the difficulty in conducting such research or difficulties in defining the middle class, there is still no clarity on how the environment is actually conceptualised by the middle class (or various groups in the middle class) and therefore this thesis serves as a stepping stone to opening up what is currently a barren landscape, bereft of debate. In Chapter 2, I discussed the dearth in the current literature on urban middle-class environmental values suggesting that the environment has been drawn under a broader banner of new middle-class values, with limited attempts to provide conceptual clarity on the relationship that the middle class have with the environment. For the purpose of this thesis, it is important to bring conceptual clarity to the relationships that the middle class have with the environment in order to better understand how and why associations with particular symbols are made over others, i.e. how is the environment utilised to frame middle-class identity and why.

Descriptive overview: What is the 'environment' for urban middle-class wildlife club members?

This section lays out respondents' narratives of the environment. This chapter utilises data collected through semi structured interviews, questionnaires and primary literature from website content for the IWC (including data from online discussions), and brochures, reading material and website content for the WWF. To minimise interviewer bias in leading respondents' answers the question that was posed to interviewees was very broad: "what does the word environment mean to you?" (see Appendix 7). From the pilot interviews conducted prior to the nine months of research, it was very clear that the question helped situate the environment in a very personal relationship that respondents had with their particular environments. For example, respondents talked about environmental vacations that they had taken or environmental initiatives that they had been involved in, in some instances reflecting on the process of taking the journey to meet nature or wildlife as one would a pilgrimage (Gold, 2000). The individuation of identity in understanding class (Savage, 2000) implies that what are sometimes seen as mundane or boring stories, actually offer valuable insight into norms, values, and relational concepts, which are useful in helping to frame class boundaries. The interview questions, therefore, were very open and overall gave respondents the scope to reflect on aspects of their lives that they considered environmental in nature, including what problems they thought were relevant, who they believed to be responsible for the state of affairs and where the solutions are presented.

WWF-India: "40 years […] working tirelessly towards nature conservation"

This section provides an account of the history of the WWF and Panda, the quarterly (free) newsletter written and disseminated by the WWF. The aim is to chart WWF's history of interest and engagement in and with the environment within which to

situate the discussions with members of the club. WWF members were drawn from a wide set of individuals - naturalists, wildlife filmmakers and photographers, students of agriculture and families interested in environmental issues.

The WWF in India was set up in the 1960s in response to growing international concern over the plight of the tiger. This wildlife club is, arguably (along with the Bombay Natural History Society (BNHS)), emblematic of the genesis of the modern formal wildlife movement in India. Largely facilitated by Prime Minister Indira Gandhi, the society was a major catalyst for government environmental action in the 1960s.[42] The move from the 'gun to the camera' and a shift in middle-class interests from shooting wildlife to watching wildlife happened in the 1970s, best seen in the drawing up of the Wildlife (Protection) Act of 1972. What is interesting in the history of wildlife protection and wildlife clubs in India is the prominent role that the then middle class played in facilitating the processes and outcomes.[43] After 40 years of wildlife conservation,

> "WWF-India is not only the country's largest voluntary body in the field of conservation, it has also grown into a network with a countrywide presence. It has taken on diverse activities in the field of nature protection – ranging from education and capacity-building, to field projects in biodiversity, enviro-legal action, policy studies and advocacy, and even areas such as religion and conservation" (WWF, 2006).

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[42] Incidentally Mrs. Gandhi was a keen bird watching enthusiast; a member and at one point President of the Delhi Bird Watchers' Society (Rangarajan, 2001).

[43] The middle class itself, it composition and alleged values are a point of contention in the literature. Varma (1998) in fact identifies the middle class based on their values of social good and civic awareness. Using this definition the middle class were largely responsible for supporting the enactment of many of the game laws as well as supporting wildlife conservation.

Since its inception the WWF has been instrumental in driving the prominent environmental watershed moments (from Project Tiger to establishing wildlife sanctuaries). While a wildlife conservation focus has been strongly maintained by the WWF, many of the projects and campaigns have more recently been diversified to bring more urban issues to the attention of members. However, this is a more recent area of interest, which I will discuss shortly. The mission statement of WWF-India is broad, ranging from influencing environmental policy-making to educating the wider public towards sustainable living (WWF, 2014). WWF has many information resources that are made available to interested parties either through their website or in person. Panda, the WWF quarterly magazine, is an interesting source of information, given its longevity as well as accessibility for members. I have used this magazine to chart a history of interest in and approaches towards the environment over time, demonstrating how environmental interests have shifted from 2004 to 2014. This magazine is specific to India, with many stories drawing on the Indian context. The magazine is written and edited by the WWF staff in Delhi.[44] Panda, the WWF quarterly magazine frequently, as is to be expected, focuses on wildlife, conservation, biodiversity as well as championing well known wildlife enthusiasts as a means to promote various issues (for example, celebrating 'Billy" Arjan Singh in the March 2005 issue on tiger conservation and the plight of the species). From 2004 to 2009 the focus of the Panda newsletter has been conservation efforts in India, with emphasis on the plight of the tiger. This is not particularly surprising. However, what does change in the environmental narrative is a focus on youth and education, from 2010, which starts to feature as the focus of articles in the newsletter. There is also, for the first time in the newsletter, a section on developing a low-carbon Indian economy. In 2011, a dramatic shift is seen, shifting

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[44] Interview with Lima Rosalind, WWF staff member

from national and local discussing international environmental issues. In fact, the focus of the newsletter is 'Earth Hour'. The tiger is still the common theme running through all the material. In 2012 there is, yet again, a shift in the focus to the nexus between education, youth and international issues. The structure of the magazine is also different now, as the youth section starts with a personal interest message (poem from a student on the environment) and then a focus on the international upcoming environmental days (Earth Day etc.) followed by WWF merchandise (a way to actively consume and publically demonstrate allegiance to the 'value' of the environment). In 2013, an entire issue is dedicated to children and educating children on the environment. Donating to the WWF gives the individual objects that showcase the donation – stickers, water bottles etc. However, in addition to these visible markers there are physical trips that the WWF organises for its members and supporters to offer them a "unique nature experience" (WWF, 2014). Membership to the club meant members could participate in guided (paid trips) eco-trips organised by the WWF and receive free copies of Panda (the newsletter).

To explore the interface between this experience and its consumption by wildlife enthusiasts, I interviewed WWF members and participated in one of their eco-trip nature experiences. The income of all those who were interviewed placed them firmly in the middle class. However, all respondents involved with the WWF earned in the higher end of the economic bracket of the middle class (closer to INR1,000,000). This distinction is significant given the established economic capital that this group already clearly had. The WWF-organised eco-trip that I participated in was to an eco-centre just outside Delhi called Botanix. The trip itself cost INR10,000, which included transportation, lunch and time spent at the centre. Botanix is a resort/park that has been developed as an adventure centre and eco-tourist centre, consisting of around 40 acres

of smaller parks/gardens each of which is thematically landscaped. For example, there are rose gardens, spice gardens and a butterfly park. The resort offers corporate retreats as well as nature walks and short treks around the area; a means to escape from the chaos and dirt of the city to what is clearly a well manufactured space of leisure and recreation with none of the discomfort involved in travelling to a national park, for example. Despite it being a manufactured space, Botanix offers the visitor the 'nature' experience. Botanix was created with guidance from WWF India and day trips are made on occasion for members. The park and its gardens provide the physical space for a 'nature' experience while the manager and staff offer their time for discussions on the theme and format of the park itself. The two key elements offered as an experience of the environment are: a space away from the urban realities of dirt and poverty; a means to experience clean and 'pristine' nature, and a space for leisure, to unwind and rejuvenate oneself. These sentiments are echoed in the description of the resort, on their website:

> "The Green Paradise resulted out of an abiding passion to Nurture Nature and showcase its myriad hues; offering everyone to Experience First-hand the synergistic relationship between Nature and Man. Botanix offers tired 'Souls' –a place to Recharge, Refresh & Rejuvenate; Body …Soul….Mind" (Botanix, 2011).

This manufactured experience – a commodification of nature on the one hand and a form of environmental pilgrimage on the other – was offered to visitors from the WWF as a place to rejuvenate and recharge. This conflated two ideas – that of nature and a place of leisure where one might recharge and where one can go on pilgrimage to encounter nature. This image of nature promised (to those who could afford it) an opportunity to escape from city life as well as benefits like rejuvenation and the ability to explore ones soul. Given that it is not far from Delhi itself it serves as a retreat that

offers a natural experience for those who clearly do not want to venture too far to experience it, facilitating a less onerous pilgrimage experience. While the experience of synergy between nature and man is clearly offered apart from the actual experience of being in the space there was no further reference to or activities that explored this relationship. This very tame and managed space was being offered as an encounter with nature in which leisure and rejuvenation were offered as the outcomes of this encounter. The value of nature at Botanix is in its ability to rejuvenate and reconnect with the soul, a relationship that I will return to in the following section. The relationship between the WWF and Botanix in particular and the choice of Botanix as a trip suited to members of the WWF evidences a version of nature that is framed as being an experience for the soul and one through which spirituality is accessed, similar, once again, to the notion of a pilgrimage. This is also then conflated with leisure and rejuvenation. In addition the Panda magazine's focus on the tiger, well-known wildlife champions and, more recently, global issues offers to members a connection with global environmental debates. The global image of the environment that is being consumed includes a spiritual component in addition to offering access to a wider, global conversation on the environment (for example, climate change debates, Earth Hour etc.). I now discuss how respondents themselves talked about the environment particularly what they considered appropriate, valid and legitimate.

Space away from the reality of the urban city: leisure, the environment and pilgrimage

Why join a wildlife club? More importantly, why join *this* wildlife club? There is seemingly an allure, a 'value' that the WWF offers to its members and prospective members. In the earlier section, I presented a brief history of the WWF, highlighting two key messages offered by the WWF: a focus on global environmental debates like

climate change in addition to offering a space to commune with a commodified form of nature that included messages of spirituality, rejuvenation and the space to go on pilgrimage (Gold, 2000). All WWF members who provided interviews and questionnaires, the term environment was used as an antonym to the city or urbanism in which was embedded notion of what the rural offered, which was distinctly different to that of urban spaces. A conversation I had with a small (one child) family who had come on this trip to Botanix discussed these ideas in more detail:

"D: Why are you here, on this trip?

Aarti (Wife) – It is a conscious effort. Kids are more into concrete jungles and have moved away from nature. For us it was less of TV. My daughter is on her first excursion with us. If you make an activity interesting she will be happy to interact. She is with Mother's international, class 4. Now they will start some overnight trips. They are taken to hill stations. *Just moving out of the city, you break free from tensions. You get peace and quiet. Something beyond the home or school environment* (my emphasis). We have been with WWF for 10 years. It started in Bombay. We used to go on treks and nature walks before our daughter was born. With the Himalayan adventure trail.

Sandeep (Husband) – You only have limited free time. People choose what they want to do. *You can sit in front of the TV or go for a walk or meet friends. We chose these sorts of things. We are also into yoga and things like that* (my emphasis).

D – You talk about yoga and a different life style. What does that entail?

Sandeep (Husband) – When you relate to nature you are getting into the true roots of your being. What you are and how you are created and how you will end up. That is the core truth. That is it. Ultimately *one is looking for inner peace and*

quiet and nature is one way in which you can access that (my emphasis)" (Aarti

and Sandeep, aged 28 and 32, WWF members).

The above quote draws out two particular relationships; the first and most clear is the distinction made between the city and the environment. The city and life in the city is described as the antithesis to what individuals were engaged in through this trip – a place to connect with the 'true roots of your being'. There is value being conferred on leisure and spaces of leisure like that offered by Botanix, that also create pilgrimage-like experiences, which emulate aspects of religious practice using the environment as part of its narrative. Just as importantly, this value is being made within a paradigm where other leisure activities like shopping also compete for time and resources. The environment, from this quote, is a place of leisure where one can connect with the 'true roots of their being'. There are many forms of leisure that the middle class can engage in, provided that they have the economic capital to access them. However, choosing to spend the money on activities that are defined as environmental in nature means that individuals who have the ability and the economic means to recognise the environment as offering cultural capital spend money on accessing these spaces to do so. This is an interesting case where economic capital seems to be traded to accumulate cultural capital, which suggests the tactical nature of these interests in the environment. A form of cultural capital is accessible to these individuals as the boundaries of exclusivity are drawn through economic capital. It is not simply money that enables distinction; one needs to recognise this inherent purpose of the environment as a space for leisure over other forms of leisure. This is the second For example, Sandeep says 'we chose these sorts of things. We are also into yoga and things like that', which is suggestive of a choice that is made to engage in introspective activities as a form of leisure. There is an implicit distinction that Sandeep makes between those who choose things like yoga and

trips to Botanix and membership to the WWF that others do now – simply by suggesting that there is a choice. Mawdsley's finding that middle-class tourists visit national parks because visiting these spaces makes them feel good and gives them the opportunity to enjoy nature (Mawdsley, 2009b) is similar here to the sense of purpose described and displayed by these WWF respondents. This suggests that particular groups from within the middle class choose to distinguish themselves from other individuals by making a choice to utilise their leisure time in associating with the environment. In doing so, they demonstrate the ability to recognise the symbolic value of the environment, exhibiting an embodiment of religious and cultural practice associated with pilgrimages. These WWF respondents draw on a different form of embodied practice to that of overtly tactical environmentalists, who largely draw on proximate environmental concerns and cultural and religious norms to determine the rules around space and access to resources. I use the term tactical wildlife enthusiasts to explain how these individuals actively and tactically choose to expend economic capital on wildlife-related activities as they recognise that there is potential value in associating with issues of this type. However, they are unable to gain access to clubs like the IWC (which I discuss in the next section) because they do not have the appropriate habitus to engage in the field and actively negotiate the value of the cultural products that the other class faction does. They are, therefore, tactical wildlife enthusiasts with the habitus to negotiate the value of their cultural capital within the space of the WWF but not that of the IWC.

There is a clear idea that the environment for the family discussed earlier is synonymous with the natural environment. As I was reflecting on this relationship between the non-urban and nature as opposed to the 'concrete jungle', it became evident that this coherence between the two was not new. In fact Guha's thesis (1995) suggests

that there are three ways to explore people's relationships with the environment. The first is the type of relationship developed by those who live off the land, what he refers to as 'ecosystem people' and has what is largely recognised as a romanticised rendering of the values of these people, i.e. harmonious with nature. The second is those who he calls ecological refugees (which I will not discuss further as having little relevance in this discussion of the middle class), and his third category is that of the 'omnivores' (Guha et al. 1995). Guha et al.'s category of the omnivores, as those who benefit most from environmental initiatives that offer recreational opportunities (the eco-tourist), seemed to speak to the sentiments echoed by the respondents on this particular trip to Botanix. These reactions range from benign responses like referring to the ecosystem and balance to talking about peace and serenity. This form of environmentalism is echoed in Aarti and Sandeep's conversation above, albeit with enhanced intensity. They draw on romantic notions that these trips (that membership to the WWF offers) will facilitate a connection back to nature, where nature is represented by the idea of the romanticised, rural idyll. Jawahar, also talks about the natural/urban divide suggesting that people, i.e. himself, go to national parks to connect with what he sees as the antinomy to the city.

> "I go out on the weekends to National Parks but not over the past year. Been busy. It is nature. People go there to connect with nature. Love for nature. They want to see natural eco systems. We live in a place that is artificial, not natural, completely man-made. So we go to natural places. There is freshness and cleanliness" (Jawahar, aged 25, Male, WWF member).

There were other respondents like Chhaya (also an NRI) who remarked:

> "People throwing things from their buses - cleanliness and hygiene - no understanding that trees and plants are important. But in the deep, deep rural

sectors people understand it. There is more awareness, they connect with nature more than we do. We see it as taking an exotic holiday but we can do that in our own homes by taking care of our environment by bringing nature home and caring about the environment." (Chhaya Sanjeev, aged 45, WWF member).

In fact this romanticism of the rural was echoed in a statement made by another WWF member who said "I am a villager" (Promila, aged 63, Female, WWF member). This essentialism is reminiscent of the neo-traditional approaches popularised by Guha and Gadgil (Gadgil, 1994, Gadgil, 1992), which assumes a synergistic relationship between those who live and are directly dependant on the forests and the rural landscape for their livelihoods (the eco-system people). This neo-traditionalism carried over into the voices of this particular group of middle-class individuals, which again was quite unique to this set of individuals, particularly given that the other wildlife club (the IWC) members did not share the same sentiments. Coming back to Chhaya's comment above, she brings up another distinguishing factor that she suggests separates her from the other tactical wildlife enthusiasts, building on that that already offered by Aarti and Sandeep. She suggests that one should tap into this ethic of respecting the environment all the time rather than occasionally through visits to 'nature', clearly referring to a more deeply-held set of values – a habitus – that means that the trips to national parks are not the only expression of environmentalism. She suggests that people make these trips to nature but see it as an exotic holiday rather than a responsibility towards the environment (i.e. a form of pilgrimage), which should be upheld even when back in the city, i.e. it should not be a transient relationship with the environment. These subtle distinguishing features offered by respondents as hierarchical relationships with the environment enable a recognition of the ways in which the environment becomes a discursive space in which those who clearly have the economic capital start to

distinguish themselves from others who they see as not having the appropriate understanding, i.e. habitus, to recognise how to value the environment and act in environmentally-appropriate ways. When Chhaya refers to the 'rural sectors' and the greater awareness and connection that they share with the environment she uses the word 'exotic'. The reference to the exotic orientalises both the 'rural' as well as the associated values. Nonetheless, Chhaya suggests that the ability to embody this exoticism is by 'bringing nature home'. I asked her what she meant by that and she said that her plants, her meditation and voluntary work are how she maintains this connection with the environment. I build on this perceived relationship between the environment and meditation, as a form of spirituality, in the next section.

Spiritual environmentalism

In the Indian context, work by Kelly Alley (2002) engages with the relationship between religion and the environment using an ethnographic approach to identify what creates disconnect between religious purity and environmental purity. Alley (2002) discusses what seems like an obvious disconnect between the physical polluted reality of the river Ganges while it is being revered as the most pure and clean in Hindu practice. She discovers that individuals are willing to disconnect the physical from the symbolic thereby accepting the polluted nature of the river while still recognising its religious purity (Alley, 2002). I discuss Alley's study because it explores ways in which religion interacts with daily life in India. Edward Luce, in his book *In Spite of the Gods: the Strange Rise of Modern India*(2006), also adopts an interesting perspective as he explores the organic manner in which religion in India is woven into every-day, regular life. He discusses how the ritualism of religious practice allows religious practice to transcend the purely religious into more generic cultural, everyday traditions. In addition to these more contemporary approaches there is also a rich tradition in

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environmental studies in the Indian context that looks more specifically at both spiritual as well as religious relationships with, and values towards the environment, nature and forests. This literature, which is referred to as neo-traditionalist literature offers an essentialised relationship between 'ecosystem' people (in the meaning given by Gadgil et al. (1995)) and the environment. This relationship is built on the dependence on forests and its importance in the cultural and economic life of the people who depend on it. Interestingly, members of this wildlife club also discussed how the environment was as a site of spiritual experiences in addition to referring to neo-traditionalist accounts of people living in rural areas and their relationship with the forests and nature. The unique aspect of the narrative was how the environment was as a site of spiritual experiences, which did not resonate with the ways in which the environment had been previously discussed in the literature, particularly from the spiritualism perspective. What was evident in the manner in which respondents from this wildlife club discussed the environment was a spiritual experience reminiscent of the deep-ecology ethic popularised by individuals like Arne Naess and Henry David Thoreau and in the Indian context, explored by Gold (2000). Members of the WWF referred to both the inherent spiritual quality of nature as well as the spiritual experiences that they had when in contact with the environment and nature. By constructing a narrative of spirituality in relation to the environment, WWF members privilege their association with the environment and their ways of being as a form of cultural capital. Arguably members to this club have the economic wherewithal and disposable income to engage in activities of this nature, suggesting the particular economic requirement of this engagement. However, the decision to spend disposable income on this form of activity over any other is what imbues this representation of the environment with value, with the ability to distinguish. Members of this club could have chosen to spend this money on

purchasing consumer products or in other leisure activities. Their choice to engage in environmental activities towards a spiritual purpose distinguishes them, by their own efforts, from other class fractions. Individuals in this class fraction demonstrate difference in the form of the need to distinguish themselves from others in their class fraction. While they see value in the environment as a symbol of distinction, they still need to trade economic capital in order to accumulate this cultural capital. Ultimately, although there is recognition of the environment as offering value and they are willing to trade economic capital to accumulate it, it is not a part of their habitus. They make efforts to accumulate this form of cultural capital in order to establish their legitimacy in this class fraction but can only do so through their economic capital.

In this study, the spiritual dimension of the environment that is discussed by respondents is less about acting in a religious fashion and more about possessing and demonstrating values by associating with a group. The demonstration of these values becomes an indicator that helps to mark out difference. Members of the WWF, over all the other groups of respondents in this study, drew significantly on this spiritual element that they even connected to other parts of their lives. For example, some respondents insisted that they were driven by spiritual/religious values to join wildlife clubs as well as engage in other activities, like yoga for example. The WWF itself does not make reference to spirituality or even deep-green concerns in the information that they make available. However, the message that the organisation communicates about its own values is that of Indian wildlife protection utilising global environmental messages (Earth Day or climate change, for example) to appeal to, what I suggest, is a more globally-aware and connected audience (NRIs, for example). In direct opposition to this perspective, when I discussed the relationship between religion, spirituality and the environment with residents of colonies, while some individuals were willing to discuss

religious concepts like *ahimsa* (non-violence), they made it very clear that they (and they extended this out as a general rule) were not motivated by religious sentiments, rather by more proximate, daily concerns. Mrs Agarwal was emphatic about it, in fact. She insisted that there is "no connection. But if you plant trees it is good to combat pollution. In fact our next generation don't believe in any of these religious things at all (Mrs Agarwal, Female, aged 55, Vasant Vihar). She clearly promotes the role of particular acts like planting trees, over any religious intent. Mrs Mehta, in her interview, seemed to support Mrs Agarwal's comments saying that

> "people will separate religion from the environment. *Ahimsa* [non-violence] is being tolerant towards other fellow beings. But to tell them you are actually being bad to other human beings because you are polluting the environment is too abstract. I don't think that religion has a role to play in thinking about the environment.
>
> D – What about the Ganga being both the most sacred river as well as the most polluted?
>
> Mrs Mehta – You can tell people not to throw things in the Ganga. All the ashes and the dead bodies. How do you tell people not to do something that is so deep rooted? They will not think about the Ganga or its tributaries" (Mrs Mehta, aged 46, Female, Vasant Vihar).

Aarti, however, a member of the WWF stated very clearly during the interview that she held very spiritual associations with the environment. Departing from the comments made by Mrs Agarwal and Mrs Mehta, Aarti reclaimed a spiritual dimension to this relationship as being key to her value-base stating that the spiritual values of her family were what influenced the decision to join the WWF. She noted that she was from a spiritual family and that:

"Everything merges or immerses into our being spiritual. Hence caring for the environment is natural. How to connect to that, how to contribute to that. In whatever small way you can do that. Hence we are members of the WWF" (aged 28, Female, WWF member).

By describing the environment as a spiritual experience, individuals like Aarti and Sandeep create exclusive spaces of distinction that are only accessible to individuals who have the ability to recognise and appreciate its spirituality. This innate ability to recognise this value of the environment is contained in the habitus that the individual embodies. However, Aarti and Sandeep state that they joined the WWF because they want to connect to this value or purpose, which suggests that there is a demonstrative component to this approach. These individuals could have made trips to national parks or elsewhere if they wanted to connect to this spiritual value of the environment. However, they choose to pay money and join the activities of the WWF, which suggests that they tactically trade their economic capital to gain a form of cultural capital by connecting with other people who, they believe share the same values by virtue of participating in WWF activities. It is the act of joining the group and participating in the activities which suggests that the explicit demonstration of allegiance assists in the process of legitimising narratives of the environment that in turn helps valuing forms of the environment as cultural capital.

Nevertheless, not all of the WWF members that I interviewed shared these sentiments that include spirituality in relation to the environment. However, interestingly their background tended to be different. For instance, Nishant, another a WWF member was also an amateur filmmaker. Nishant talked about his regular trips to National Parks and how he was seeing changes in the parks. He said in his interview that he felt

"a bit selfish […] but more people are now visiting these parks. There are places that are unexplored and should be developed. The tourist is no longer a moron. There are people who are very educated on species count etc., they can identify birds etc. tourists are well educated. People are genuinely there for it. Inherent charm of these places. There used to be a time when there was just one *chowkidar* [caretaker] who would cook for you and now you have coke and Fanta and chips. I am only talking 5-6 years back. So many wild plants you can actually pick up wild strawberries etc." (Nishant, aged 28, Male, WWF member).

On the one hand Nishant suggests that people visit these spaces because they are genuinely interested in the animals and birds yet yearns for a time when fewer people were interested in this, where one could pick wild strawberries. The 'inherent charm of these places' is key to understanding his nostalgia. Nishant also talks about a particular kind of visitor to the national park, who is savvy and well versed in the art of species' counting etc., which he sees as a new development, different from earlier. I asked Nishant what he meant by 'moronic' tourists and he described these tourists as "those who travel to have fun and just enjoy themselves without realising the basic value of these places" (Nishant, aged 28, Male, WWF member). To Nishant what makes an intelligent tourist is one who understands the science of wildlife rather than one who travels there for fun or leisure. In this narrative, Nishant characterises intelligent tourists – those who visit forests and national parks – as those who recognise the technical complexities of wildlife and species management, which given his background as an amateur wildlife film maker is recognisable. In making this distinction between the moronic and intelligent tourist Nishant creates symbolic boundaries between those who conform to his standards and those who do not, by defining the language that one must

know to belong, i.e. that of wildlife science. This language is what members of the IWC, which I discuss in the next section, utilised, which differentiated them from members of the WWF.

To summarise, members of the WWF clearly have economic capital, evidenced by the disposable income that they choose to spend on WWF events like the trip to Botanix. However, most respondents made a choice to spend this money on activities that they defined as spiritual, which they also referred to as important within a wider lifestyle and a core component of their values more generally, situating the environment as a spiritual encounter, within their habitus. The 'environment as leisure' definition also helps establish the difference that these individuals communicate by choosing to engage in what they consider to be environmental activities and allegiances, that is offered by the WWF. Finally, the message that is offered by the WWF, as a global wildlife club with Indian roots is clearly recognised and of value to most members of this club, who are mostly NRIs who have spent time outside India for extended periods and recognise characteristics that include environmental values, of a global middle class. Most importantly, members chose to expend economic capital in pursuit of leisure activities and spiritual encounters in the manner in which they did to accumulate a form of cultural capital. The environment is clearly embodied and the choices that they make where they spend money to be recognised as having these values towards the environment suggests a tactically act; a manifestation of an anxiety to frame identities that allow differentiation and at the same time association with a global middle class.

The Indian Wildlife Club (IWC) as a community of practice: a space to connect, communicate, build relations

The IWC was India's sole online wildlife club at the time of the research. It had a completely open membership scheme with no planned in-person visits or meetings.

This club functioned only as an online meeting space (the club's format has changed since I conducted my research) in which members could participate in discussions on wildlife and conservation issues. I will discuss these conversations in more detail shortly. The club had no membership fee and individuals only needed to sign up with an email address to become IWC members. They could then access information on the site. The founder – Mrs Susan Sharma – who is also a wildlife filmmaker lives in Gurgaon, just outside of Delhi.[45] Mrs Sharma sent regular emails to all those who had signed up to alert them to online discussions. I interviewed 15 IWC members and received another 50 questionnaires from across the membership base. The following analysis sets out the kind of information that the IWC makes available and the kind of information that is disseminated in addition to the language used to disseminate the information. In addition I look at the narratives developed by wildlife enthusiasts signed up to the IWC, their backgrounds and what the environment represents to them in particular.

The aim of the IWC is to "do something to protect the last vestiges of wilderness areas left in India" (members' email dated 27 May, 2011). I conducted interviews with 15 members of the IWC and noted significant differences between the backgrounds of people who chose to be members of this organisation over the WWF. All contact was made by email and then phone to determine interview times. Members of the IWC were largely wildlife filmmakers and/or avid birdwatchers. IWC members' primary concerns regarding the environment were wildlife conservation-based. They used technical language on ecosystems and carrying capacity to explain their understanding of what they believed to be an environmental crisis. IWC member's views of the environment

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[45] Gurgaon is the capital of the state of Haryana but is considered part of the National Capital Region (NCR).

contrasted markedly from WWF members' romantic and spiritual views, despite both clubs engaging with 'environmental' issues. It quickly became apparent that the intentions of individuals who joined each of these organisations was different, and that they valued the environment differently. Members of the IWC saw value in engaging with this group but fundamentally for two reasons: knowledge (sharing and learning) and for meeting people who had what they called a 'serious' interest in the environment. Uniquely, both of these reasons have implications for individuals' work and earning capacity.

The wildlife enthusiast: a life immersed in the environment

In the Indian context there is a long history and tradition of wildlife conservation and a relationship between conservation and middle-class interests. Mahesh Rangarajan (1996b) provides an overview of middle-class sensibilities and attitudes towards the environment from the 1970s to late 1990s. He discusses a strong interest from the middle class in wildlife issues, so much so that "the legacy of the game laws was to be very significant for the early Indian middle-class wildlife enthusiasts" (Rangarajan, 1996b: 2392). I suggest that correlations can be drawn between Rangarajan's (1996b) categorisation of urban middle-class values during this period and the responses from members of the wildlife groups. Respondents from both the WWF and the IWC situated their definitions of the environment in wildlife conservation and supporting rural, indigenous communities. However, members of the IWC were very specific about what they thought the environment was. Nishant Pagare from the IWC says

"It was birds but I was fascinated by any kind of wildlife. I started with birds. Salim Ali left a curiosity for birds. […] How much better can it get? Watching Gangetic dolphins, to be in the wild, on your feet. A life that I like I got to live. […] There are many informal clubs – groups of people my age who are into

wildlife. They have similar ideas like conservation. They differ in their focus of action but are also interested in social issues" (Nishant Pagare, Male, aged 25, IWC member).

The social issue and action are key points in this quote. Nishant Pagare talks about a group or type of young people who have similar ideas to his, who are interested in immersing themselves rather than only being in a club and, more importantly, interested in wildlife, which is evidenced through their actions. Many other respondents from the IWC echoed similar sentiments, quoting eminent birdwatchers (Salim Ali, for example) and other well-known conservationists. Rangarajan (1996b) refers to these types of environmentalists as 'pragmatic conservationists', those with backgrounds in conservation science and/or wildlife conservation who are willing to take on a more practical approach to engaging with issues like livelihoods of rural communities who lived in close proximity to or in protected areas. There is nonetheless a romanticised attitude towards wildlife and the environment where eminent conservationists like Salim Ali are held as paragons of those with environmental ethics/values. However, by holding individuals like Salim Ali in high regard importance is given to wildlife conservation science, which is a distinguishing feature of the members in this group; a language that no other class fractions involved in this thesis overall spoke.

The language used by people in this group, both in conversations with me as well as in the online chats is quite specific. Individuals felt the need to establish their credentials by demonstrating scientific knowledge of and commitment to wildlife and conservation issues to demonstrate their legitimacy in the group. While anyone can join this group (membership is open) the language used within this group excludes individuals by virtue of the very technical and scientific approach taken by the members in their discussions. This language helps to maintain boundaries, a way to exclude those

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without adequate and appropriate capital in the form of education or experience specifically in wildlife conservation and the natural sciences. On the other hand this language is also used to demonstrate a particular kind of value, a value of embodied interest in the environment, a value that takes a pragmatic approach to engaging with the environment unlike the more romantic (neo-traditional) yet global approach adopted by the WWF. The close, arguably personal relationships that members of the IWC have with the environment are demonstrated by the following quote from Nishant. He said:

> "It is part of my job on these issues. Top is management of parks, government parks, I understand the indigenous community argument but protected area needs to be managed better. Water scarcity is still not a huge problem but I was working on electricity shortages in villages" (Nishant Pagare, Male, aged 25, IWC member).

Nishant glossed over many issues in this quote. He talked about how he himself has worked in villages and is aware of the 'indigenous community argument'. Nishant used language to try to legitimise his place in the club, which suggests nothing can substitute for action and embodied experience. This was especially evident when he commented that "books don't help. You can't recognise a bird from a book" (Nishant Pagare, Male, aged 25, IWC member). In saying that books cannot substitute for the embodied experience, Nishant touches on the idea of habitus, a structuring structure that influences the social practice that includes, that in this case included working directly in villages. I asked Nishant to describe a person who might be interested in the environment and he said:

> "There is something about these people who are interested in the environment. There is something about them. My father used to take me outside and it came to me. There should be more informal group interactions with those who know

about the issues and are willing to share. I like Discovery [channel] but I have a grudge against them. I have seen African savannahs but I want to see something of India. Believe me it is like 6 hours from here – near Agra where the wildlife is fantastic – things just happen" (Nishant Pagare, Male, aged 25, IWC member).

He noted that there is something unexplainable about the quality/nature of people who are interested in the environment. He offered, as an example, his experience with his father who helped him develop an interest in the environment. This suggests that the ability to recognise the value of the environment as the splendour of wildlife is a trait that needs to be nurtured. This notion of reproduction is what Bourdieu suggests is a core function of habitus. Nishant seemed to consider this form of reproduction a meaningful way to introduce what he considers to be environmental sensibilities. In addition, the tone used in Nishant's quote normalises his relationship with the environment. It is telling that he indicated that the club is a meeting of like-minded people who come together on an informal basis but not for leisure activity but as an everyday practice. Bikram Grewal, a well-know bird-watcher and a member of the IWC also took a similar position to that described by Nishant. He said:

"In the early 90s the environment was a very personal thing – not really a subject. People don't talk about pollution or tiger crises or Diwali crackers. Only early to mid 90s it became public – teaching children about environment. It was also the time when mobility came into the middle class. The Maruti, people's salaries went up. There isn't any other mammal-watching group. Bird watching is more popular but the WWF is different – it is a global club. There is no other nature club in Delhi – we have walks every Saturday and Sunday and people come along but there is a crying need in Delhi for a successful nature club. I am

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not sure about school clubs etc. but today if you want to go to a National Park it

is very hard to get bookings" (Bikram Grewal, Male, aged 45, IWC member).

Bikram saw the growing popularity of the environment in the growth of tourism to national parks. To Bikram, the value of the environment, again, is not taught through formal education, it is innate: a habitus. Only from the mid-1990s, he said, had there been a rise in the numbers of middle class, who, he suggested did not possess the 'values' that were inherent in the pre-liberalisation (1990s) middle class. This recognition is reminiscent of the criticisms levelled against new middle-class values by commentators like Varma (1998). The focus on bird watching is also reminiscent of the early, Indian environmental interests developed and nurtured by bird watchers like Salim Ali and the Bombay Natural History Society. Nonetheless Bikram was also very critical of what he sees as less rooted forms of environmental concern, where he referred to the WWF. Bikram recognised the WWF as a wildlife club but considered its concerns more global in reach, which he seemed to suggest was not appropriate. In order to embody environmental values legitimately one cannot be taught it or buy their way into it (what Bikram referred to when he says social mobility). One needs to have been born into having the ability to recognise that the environment was not 'an issue', i.e. a deeply embodied structuring structure. To Bikram the day-to-day issues are what people (read middle class) are most in tune with, despite the interest in mega-fauna like the tiger. He said:

> "I have been in the midst of the environment battle for as long as I can
> remember. We have never had the press remotely interested. If you knew the
> editor it might be a page 6 issue. The newspapers have now supported the tiger
> issue so much more. It is something people want to read about now. People's
> personal interest have risen largely from water – it affects everybody and that is

where the environmental interest has come from" (Bikram Grewal, Male, aged 45, IWC member).

Bikram framed boundaries around the notion of the environment by claiming that most people are interested in the tiger but the interest itself springs from a concern about water shortages that affects people directly and profoundly. However, he also talked about the kind of environmentalist who has been interested before there was a real impact on his or her own lives. For people like him, who have been involved in the environmental movement for as long as he can remember, the environment is much closer to home, to water and birds. He alluded to a particular form of cultural capital that cannot be purchased through formal education. The pragmatism in Bikram's approach took a relativist approach by claiming one form of environmental association is much more 'real' and personal. This ties in well with the idea of the environment being embodied; a habitus that IWC members refer to constantly in their interviews.

An interesting distinction between the IWC and the WWF can be found looking at their websites. I analysed the websites to better understand the way in which information was made available to members, particularly since the IWC is an online club. On first look the IWC website and online discussion material was presented in unique fashion, which was surprisingly different from the WWF's material. The IWC's website was relative simple compared with that of the WWF. With few images, the content was clearly presented and accessible to the reader (see Figure 5); this contrasted sharply with the WWF's page where images and

Figure 5: IWC website front page: details of club and mission statement

projects vie for the reader's attention (see Figure 6). The main categories of interest on the IWC page were:

Figure 6: WWF website front page: details of club and mission statement

1. Library of past chat discussions and archives of the online magazine, e-zine;

2. Resources, which includes blogs by members, tips for taking action in your home (composting etc.), a list of other wildlife NGOs, and a separate blog on zoos;

3. Nature travel and tips on where and how to get to destinations such as bird sanctuaries and places that are unknown to most travellers;

4. A product store that stocks all things related to animals and birds.

The overarching theme across all the sections on the IWC website was a way to realise, in practice, a life that is completely immersed in animals, birds and nature that is Indian (there is no reference to any global issues on this site). The topics of the online chats for the IWC were all India-focussed; discussions on tigers, human-elephant conflict, and wildlife filmmaking in India. The discussions were aimed at helping those who are already engaged in wildlife filmmaking (talking about how to raise money for films, for example) and what issues one may face (as well as solutions) in current conservation issues in India (human-elephant conflict, for example). It is very clear that the IWC is set up to attract members who are looking for ways to establish contact with people who have more than a cursory or what they saw as fashionable interest in the environment even those people who are career wildlife enthusiasts and develop economic capital through their relationship with the environment. By cursory interest I mean dipping in and out by either providing donations to causes or attending social events for recreation

unlike adopting a life-style that is immersed in everything environmental.

Communities of practice: space for knowledge, sharing and learning

The IWC has developed as a community of practice (IWC, 2006). The online discussions are the main sources of interaction, with each conversation chaired by an expert in the field. The science and conservation focus in the discussions is overwhelming, with discussions ranging from sea turtle conservation to the tiger census (see Figure 7). The conversations are often seemingly impassioned while maintaining a strong scientific tone, with questions on recommendations for forms of environmental education that be most suited to particular issues, to the relationship between different

actors in the conservation of sea turtles (see Figure 8). There is no space in these discussions for inaction and simple passing interest. During a conversation with Sudhir, another IWC member, I asked him to describe an environmentalist who he considered to be an environmentalist. He responded:

> "one who cares deeply about the environment. You need to do more than pay money or put in court cases. You need to live like an environmentalist. If someone calls me for a court case on the environment I need to emulate these values. It is not a one-off issue" (Sudhir Mishra, aged 36, Male, IWC member).

Figure 7: IWC Chat Archive list: list of online chats in 2003 and 2004

This was a common response from IWC members. Action and embodiment are core to this relationship between the environment and humans. The IWC has developed to

Figure 8: IWC website Chat room discussion on sea turtle migration

create space for a community of people who practice, who embody the environment in their everyday lives as it relates to a wider set of practices that cursory engagement in the form of pilgrimages or events.

The value of associating with wildlife clubs: establishing boundaries and rules

> "Thus ... the social order is progressively inscribed in people's minds. Social divisions become principles of division, organizing [*sic*] the image of the social world. Objective limits become a sense of limits, a practical anticipation of objective limits acquired by experience of objective limits, a 'sense of one's place' which leads one to exclude oneself from the goods, persons, places and so forth from which one is excluded" (Bourdieu, 1984: 471).

Wildlife clubs are spaces of exclusion, with each wildlife club offering a space in which

fractions of the middle class develop, legitimise and accumulate forms of cultural and/or economic capital. Entry to clubs is regulated either through economic and/or cultural capital, with clear codes and language facilitating boundary-creation between fractions. I have argued that engagement with the WWF, one of the wildlife clubs that I worked with, is controlled through financial contribution (payments towards events etc.). The IWC, however, the second wildlife club that I worked with, is an online free-access club where anyone is welcome to join. The focus of both clubs is significantly different and none of the respondents I interviewed were members of both clubs, which I was initially puzzled by. The relevant question that I then asked is: what specifically do individuals value in their association with these two separate clubs and is there a particular language to engagement as well as capital established in these spaces? People join wildlife clubs for many reasons – education and information, to belong to a group to interact with like-minded people, and an inherent sense of the 'value' that membership to these clubs offer, among a range of other reasons. I suggest that the value of belonging to these clubs varies across the two groups of people, which also offers a lens into a particular form of middle-class identity for those who join these clubs.

The WWF is a widely and very well known environmental NGO in India. Membership is accessed through donations in return for which individuals received

> "a WWF Supporter Kit, continuous updates about our [WWF] work, various other
>
> benefits like invitations to local events and activities organized by WWF-India,
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> 10% discount on all WWF-India merchandise and access to the WWF-India
>
> library" (WWF, 2014).

I have talked about one particular event that was organised by WWF India to a nature park called Botanix. The first observation that I made was the nature and kind of people who were at this event. There were a few families with little children, university-level

environmental science students and a large number of NRIs. A very small number of wildlife enthusiasts (amateur wildlife filmmakers) were also in attendance. The event included a picnic, a walk around the gardens and time for participants to enjoy space and greenery. This was an event in which people's environmental credentials were already established, given the nature of the membership. Given the level playing-field that respondents found themselves facing, it became quite clear that the role and authenticity of rules were beginning to be redefined and contested. For example, it was not simply enough to be participating in the event any more. Some other respondents challenged the authenticity of action by drawing on esoteric relationships with the environment; those who went beyond activism to talk about an innate connectedness to the environment and everything in it. For example, Sandeep, who was a participant at a WWF trip to Botanix gave me his perspective on the kind of people who he believes to be environmentally sensitive and aware:

> "R - There are two types of people who will support these issues. You have displaced people who are part of and affected by the movement. The other bunch is materially well off. They will be affected long term but they don't care right now. They think nothing will happen in their lifetime. You need to tell them how it will affect them shortly.
>
> D – What about the category in between? People who are concerned but not affected
>
> R – This is a small minority. They do it for the love of nature and the love of humankind. I don't know what kind of people these are. Middle class? They are introverts maybe. Who like to think. They question things. Who am I? Where will I go? Why am I here? The moment you ask this question you become part of nature. Then you ask, what is nature giving to me and what am I giving back?"

This exchange with Sandeep draws on the idea of groups of people who hold different values. Sandeep questioned the very idea that it is the middle class that is environmentally aware. Instead he suggested that it is a minority (possibly within the middle class) that are *truly* environmentally conscious or rather that have the appropriate habitus to distinguish themselves in the field of the environment, which is a form of cultural capital. It is this minority that shares a bond, which is the ability to introspect, to ask existential questions, which are grounded in the idea of ones place in nature and the environment as a whole. It is these people, Sandeep suggested, who are innately and legitimately environmentally aware. In many ways Sandeep rejects the claims made by Mrs Agarwal (from the residents colony), for example, that ones status within the middle-class group is elevated if they choose to act rather than remain passive. Sandeep challenges the legitimacy of the cultural capital of action-over-passivity by addressing deeper, abstracted concepts of what it means to be truly environmentally aware and conscious. Similarly, another member of the WWF said:

"I have done a lot of voluntary work so I know. […] For example, I went to a school for underprivileged children and I thought ok we must do something so I brought seeds and saplings to beautify the area and I did so. I went back after summer vacation and thinking now the kids will see the flowers but there was nothing – no flowering because the gardener did not have water to water the plants. I have also done this in a not so slum area where we gave the children pots so some did grow there. You can't really blame them. Because of lack of awareness they do keep things dirty. They don't care about planting trees because they don't know any better" (Chhaya Sanjeev, aged 42, female WWF member).

Adopting a paternalistic approach, Chhaya refered to her voluntary work and the nature of her voluntary work to demonstrate this innate quality of 'giving' that she relates to the environment. This same respondent continued to talk about her environmental credentials saying that

> "When we came to India (the children go to the American school by the way) we met someone who was responsible for recycling. We had just come from Singapore. Singapore is obsessed with clean. Our kids asked where the recycling bin was and asked around. I wanted to start a recycling plant but the guy from the American embassy said that there is too much red tape. A local Delhi person would know what to do but you won't so don't bother" (Chhaya Sanjeev, aged 42, female WWF member).

The interview with this respondent was solely focussed on self-less action. She also brought me into her confidence to discuss meditation techniques that she was working with as well as the daily yoga and spiritual activities she was engaged in. Chhaya alludes to a deeper set of values in which the environment is embedded, which is an embodied characteristic that helps to differentiate herself and her family actively from other people who still do voluntary work but don't embody the social practice of meditation, for example.

In interesting contrast to the WWF, the IWC was solely made up of avid birdwatchers (specifically), wildlife filmmakers, and environmental scientists where a vast number of members were introduced to conservation and national parks early in their lives. This club, during the time of the fieldwork was solely an online venture.[46] Online discussions are held where participants can ask questions of an expert in a

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[46] More recently the IWC has started holding face-to-face events and even scheduling environmental holidays.

particular field (ranging from conservation to biodiversity). Apart from the founder – Dr Susan Sharma – all members I encountered were male. In fact most men in this club were young, often aspiring wildlife filmmakers. The responses from the members I interviewed can be summed up in a quote from a young amateur environmental filmmaker who said:

> "R – I don't call myself an environmentalist. In my own group we call them a *jhola* (a particular kind of bag associated with young left-wing students and activists) crowd – wanna-be's and activists. It is not bad. Just that you need to do something, like I have. Education needs to be stepped up. In my time I used to stop for birds and kids now are not bothered. They don't want to go out and enjoy nature. They are used to swimming in pools, they are not willing to accept nature as it is. Who cares? They all have pet dogs and cats and will buy a parakeet but that is far as it is. They will read about it and put it down in their exam paper but nothing happens. You have the *jhola* crowd with a small body of wildlife enthusiasts – I think it is a much better word. I have seen all kinds of people. Then there are people who are unknown and close to these lands and they are genuine people who want to protect their lands. They are genuine. [on a side note he asks me] Are you Bengali? Don't be offended. But there is something about these people who are interested in the environment [suggesting that I too am interested in the environment]. There is something about them. My father used to take me outside and it came to me. There should be more informal group interactions, who know about the issues and are willing to share" (Nishant Pagare, aged 25, IWC member).

Establishing a rapport with me (the interviewer) Nishant attempted to co-opt my allegiance to his worldview. He rejected the label 'environmentalist' instead suggesting

that allegiance to the environment was more nuanced (and possibly extensive) than what he thought the label offered. Instead, he prefers the use of the word *jhola*, a word that has symbolic meaning. The direct translation of the word *jhola* is cloth/jute bag. However, these cloth/jute bags are most often used by academics, the intelligentsia in India and young (often left-leaning) students. It appears that to this respondent it is not enough to be an activist (what he refers to as 'wanna-be' activists). To this respondent, truly engaging with the environment means stopping to watch a bird, and even taking the activism to the level of a career choice, i.e. an embodied practice that is broader in its scope. He talked about his background and childhood engaging, with the encouragement of his father, with nature where he says 'the relationship came to me'. This type of environmental relationship is different from that manifested by members of the WWF. It is a relationship with the environment that is embodied in a different manner, reflecting the tradition of the pragmatic conservationists of the 1970s. Similarly another IWC when talking about his family said:

> "I have a daughter who is 24 (mother and I were divorced) and I am in close touch with her – she has just come back from University, with a masters in Child Psychology. She now wants to join the NGO world and work on the environment. So I sent her to the deepest Sunderbans and now she wants to go back. In her particular case it is something more than fashion because she performed without even a whimper" (Bikram Grewal, aged 45, IWC member and well-known wildlife activist).

This notion of enduring hardship to *truly* encounter the environment was particular to the responses of members in this group. IWC members derive economic capital by engaging with the environment and this club. Most members have careers in the environment and wildlife field and choose to be involved in the IWC to enhance their

career chances while also weaving in narratives of what it means to be legitimately interested in the environment. It is not enough to have a job in the environment sector (photographer or film maker) rather one has to embody a habitus that manifests as specific values that support the possession of a job in this arena. These values cannot be received through formal education (as stated by the respondents) and are imbued in the home; a habitus that is reproduced through the generations. Being a member of this club "provides each of its members with the backing of the collectively- owned capital, a "credential" which entitles them to credit, in the various senses of the word" (Bourdieu, 1986: 21). The barrier to entry for this club (even though membership is actually open and free) is a particular language, a code of awareness that is reproduced rather than produced.

Conclusion

Being a part of a social group, for example, a wildlife club may have multiple benefits. Some of these benefits may be accrued through the act of finding networks and contacts for work, as was clearly the case with members of the IWC. A significant benefit to belonging to the IWC was to share knowledge and to belong to a community of environmental practitioners, with no obvious intention to display these credentials to other people than by simply demonstrating ones long-term devotion to the 'cause'; a habitus that was reproduced and innate. Being a member in this wildlife club advances the accumulation of economic capital but also requires a language or code of awareness that is reproduced rather than produced through formal education or other sorts of learning. This particular type of middle-class actor has the appropriate habitus and cultural capital to engage in the activities in this club and accumulate both economic and cultural capital through membership and participation.

On the other hand, being a member of the WWF, requires financial commitment

and one needs to have disposable income that they are willing and choose to spend to participate in events and gain membership. The values exhibited by members of this group are both global in form, with elements of spirituality or romanticism woven into the narratives on relationships with the environment that also enables access to forms of pilgrimage that utilise the environment at the core of the narrative. Members chose to trade economic capital to gain a form of cultural capital that they recognised and were willing to pay. This class fraction embodies the environment as global middle class citizens. They tactically deploy economic capital to accumulate cultural capital. Through trading economic capital in this manner these individuals were able to demonstrate their distinction from other class fractions but only recognised more popular forms of environmental value, i.e. neo-traditionalism and a form of global environmental values.

Chapter 8 Conclusion: valuing the environment in middle-class identity formation

This work is situated within a broader literature that examines middle-class values and identity-formation in India. The Indian middle class has been studied through many lens including religious values (Jaffrelot, 1996) political allegiances (Baviskar, 2005, Fernandes, 2009) and more recently consumption (Brosius, 2010, Donner, 2014) and to some extent, the environment (Agarwal, 2005, Mawdsley, 2011). The interest in the environment and its examination through multiple lenses is partly as a consequence of the inherent heterogeneity of the middle class and the growth (in size) of this class over the past few decades and partly because of the rapid environmental changes that are now an everyday reality in the lives of the urban, Indian middle class. However, there is limited scholarship on how the middle-class values the environment, to what purpose and what drives these valuations. The limited scholarship is partly because, historically, the environment has been explored in relation to forest-communities and not the middle class as an important social class that has the ability to influence, quite simply, the landscape of the environment. Also, as I have said in Chapter 2, the focus of the relationship between the middle class and the environment has been largely limited to the study of the history of wildlife conservation (of which Mahesh Rangarajan (1996, 2001), for example, provides an overview of). This is also further limited in its scope, particularly since the middle class in post-independence India was comprised of individuals from a more narrow background compared to that of the middle class in more contemporary (post-liberalisation) India. Some studies have provided important insights on how some niche middle-class fractions value the environment (Mawdsley et al., 2009, Urfi, 2014); unfortunately, they provided little insight into *why* these fractions value the environment. This works examines middle-

class Indian's everyday environmentalisms and looks at how these vary across different fractions of the middle class, situating their environmental subjectivities (where relevant) and examining embodied norms and practices in relation to space, people and identity. The case study approach has facilitated a nuanced approach to examining the relationships that various fractions of the middle class develop and narrate about the environment, to then consider *how* middle-class fractions value the environment and, to a lesser extent, *why* these values are held.

A key revelation of this thesis is that the ways in which these fractions represent the environment serves a unique purpose. Individuals use the environment – both consciously and unconsciously - as a symbol to demonstrate differences between individuals within fractions as well as between other fractions. These differences provided individuals a way to demonstrate their shared allegiances with other individuals through collective forms of social practice or values of the environment that they held in common. In addition, the study offers four further revelations that build on the first key revelation. The first is that class characteristics are reinforced through the pedagogy of environmental education in schools. Economic capital strongly influences the ability to access particular forms of environmental education, consequently skewing experiences that, in part, shape class characteristics. This also reinforces the arguments made by Srivastava (1998) and Benei (2000) that the school environment and practices are early experiences that reinforce class characteristics and boundaries. The second revelation is the recognition that the environment is an embodied practice (what Bourdieu refers to as habitus and I refer to very broadly as *sanskara)* that manifests as rules and norms around space and access to space. However, there is also an on-going, concurrent and conscious deployment of the environment as a form of cultural capital that the middle class actively and tactically construct that is driven by subjective

experiences of the environment, what Agarwal (2005) refers to as 'environmentality'. This is what I recognise as Bourdieu's idea of classificatory struggle, that, in the Indian context, is a response to the constantly shifting political, economic and social dynamics that cause anxieties around identities and what it means to be middle class. These anxieties manifest as middle-class fractions employing narratives of various environmental concerns to make distinctions between the values of both the poor, and with other fractions of the middle class. The third revelation is that the middle class embody the environment in ways that are not held unanimously across all the fractions that were involved in this study. This thesis methodologically evidences an element of the heterogeneity of the middle class through their associations with and values towards the environment. The fourth key revelation is that the middle-class fractions constructed specific differentiable narratives of the environment in the process valuing specific symbols and symbolic acts to legitimise their identities by association. All these revelations are considered in more detail below in relationship to the questions (first outlined in the Introduction) that helped to uncover them.

Research question 1: How is the environment discursively framed within the formal education system and how is class reinforced through the content and practice of education?

Environmental education in schools privilege middle-class students to experiences that influence the creation and formation of environmental values, which help reproduce class characteristics that are largely exhibited by overtly tactical environmentalists. By focussing significantly on daily, proximate concerns in both the textbooks and practical application of the texts (in the associated Project books) the value of the environment remains focussed on urban concerns, facilitating the formulation of a particular form of environmentality. Students in middle-class schools

utilise the same textbooks as those from lower classes but are introduced to different experiences such as trips to national parks as part of the formal learning experience towards environmental education. The trips to national parks are illustrative of the types of field trips that students from middle-class schools are taken on as part of their studies on the environment, which deviated from a focus on proximate issues. The marked difference in the practical elements of the pedagogy of environmental education was evident in how students from different schools (different class fractions) framed the environment, environmental issues and concerns. Students in middle-class schools are offered experiences that facilitate the reproduction of the ability to recognise symbols of the environment beyond those that are immediate and proximate. Students from these schools are thus are able to articulate narratives of environmental values that extend beyond daily concerns. Class characteristics, while not solely influenced by the education system, are reinforced and reproduced through the pedagogy of environmental education.

Education in India is a key route for the state to create responsible, morally upright citizens. Environmental education, particularly, is singularly drawn out in the seminal education policy document - the Kothari commission report - evidencing the important role that the environment plays in delivering morally upright and responsible citizens. It is also referenced separately in the Indian Constitution. The environment is considered an important component of the content of education and is considered both a crosscutting theme as well as a subject in its own right, requiring practical pedagogical approaches to most effectively deliver the material to students. The textbooks on environmental education describe the environment primarily using the language of dirt and pollution, providing images and narratives that draw the link between poverty and environmental degradation. In addition the textbooks also reinforce consumption as a

key marker of middle-class identity, legitimising consumption of the middle classes without making any reference to the links between consumption and environmental degradation. Subtle narratives are also developed on the causes of many of these problems that are framed around class and responsibilities of classes towards the environment particularly vilifying the lower classes, which is also how overtly tactical environmentalists frame the environment, using the symbol of the environment to distinguish themselves from the lower classes. The content of environmental education offers a context-specific narrative of the environment that represents the environment in its everyday, proximal form. However, the practical activities that middle-income middle-class schools offer to their students provide access to symbols of the environment that transcend proximate issues that concern day-to-day life in large urban cities. However, access to these experiences are the privilege of middle-income middle-class schools and middle-class children, as a consequence of the economic capital required to participate in these activities. The two middle-income schools that were involved in the research for this thesis also further reinforced what it means to be middle-class by focussing on the use of English (rather than Hindi) that would enable students to embody some key markers of middle-class identity.

In contrast to the students from the middle-income schools, students from the lower class school were largely concerned with daily, proximate issues that they encountered – waste, garbage and water shortages. The practical activities that they were involved in included tree planting and vermi-composting, both of which conflate dirt and garbage with the environment. Through this process of limiting experiences these students embody the environment, as a habitus, in particular ways, which limit their ability to engage broader conceptual processes in negotiating the value of the environment more broadly. Access to experiences, in addition to the links drawn

between dirt, poverty and the environment, facilitates the reproduction of class using the language of the environment, often reinforcing the *sanskara* of the idea of cleanliness and its relationship to caste. This was also evident in how students from both the middle-class schools were interested in and highlighted the issue of conservation of endangered species – recognising representations of the environment that were more than simply superficial. However, the conservation of species was only one aspect of how students from middle-income schools considered the environment. They still referred to proximate concerns and the link between dirt and poverty, taking an approach that was similar to those offered by overtly tactical environmentalists for whom the environment was understood using the language of proximate concerns but still held tactical value as a form of cultural capital that allowed them to actively engage in classificatory struggle with others from their own class fraction. The evidence of these narratives of the environment in the vernacular of the students from the middle-income school suggests that the environment is a marker through which class fractions are delineated. In this instance, the environment is embodied primarily through cultural and religious norms that include notions around rules of space, class and caste. Environmental education in the schools seemed to construct the environment to support the reproduction of class boundaries through social practice. The textbooks, associated practical activities and conversations with students demonstrated that the environment was used, within the broader schooling system and approaches, to reaffirm class characteristics, which are reinforced and reproduced.

Research question 2:* How *and* why *does the middle class value the environment?

All three case studies in this thesis (examining narratives of members of residential colonies, of the Indian Wildlife Club (IWC), and the World Wide Fund (WWF) for Nature and an examination of environmental education in schools) were

constructed to answer this first question. It became clear during the analysis that the how and why of the first research question are interdependent. Very broadly, fractions of the middle class value the environment as a form of cultural capital. This is, partly, *how* the environment is valued. In addition, subjective environmental experiences and contexts influence the framing of environmentalities that also help understand *how* the environment is valued. The environment, as a cultural symbol, is recognised as a form of cultural capital by all fractions of the middle class that were involved in this research. However, the environment is embodied in different ways between various class fractions. Deploying their embodied habitus these individuals engage in a process of negotiating the value of rules of the field of the environment to legitimise their practices as authentic and valuable forms of cultural capital. All class fractions recognise the potential that the environment, as a form of cultural capital, has in enabling distinction and difference. They all participate in the field of the environment but overtly tactical environmentalists establish their positions through creating narratives that focus on proximate, daily and superficial concerns that relate to dirt and garbage, demonstrating an environmentality that reflects the political and social conditions in which they live. These individuals construct narratives of the environment (using economic capital) to demonstrate difference from the lower classes, in addition to also deploying cultural and religious norms to mark difference from the poor as a class fraction. Nonetheless, the recognition of potential cultural capital that can be accumulated by engaging with the environment is evident in how this class fraction (overtly tactical environmentalists) discuss and associate with the environment. This includes referring to the importance of acting in a positive environmental manner to explicitly demonstrate environmental awareness and by suggesting that the capacity to engage in matters of the environment can only come from values and morals that are deeply embedded, i.e. cannot be learned.

I now take the example of middle-class residents of the two colonies to discuss further the process of how these individuals, who I refer to as overtly tactical environmentalists, value the environment. Individuals in this class fraction discuss environmental concern as a form of innate morality to demonstrate that environmental concern cannot be learnt rather that it is embedded and intrinsic, i.e. an element in the structure of habitus. In suggesting this characteristic there is recognition of the importance of the environment as having the potential to offer difference. However, their concerns are largely elaborated using examples of everyday, proximate issues like concerns over garbage and water shortages. This preponderance suggests that while acting on environmental issues is regarded as important, offering status and distinction to those who do so, the environment as a form of cultural capital, for this fraction of the middle class is largely driven by subjectivities that, I argue, link to a particular form of environmentality. The environment is embodied in the way that they talk about dirt, cleanliness, space and poor people and the links that they make between poor people and dirt and pollution. What is interesting, however, is that the environment is also recognised as a form of cultural capital that helps to distinguish individuals from other members of the same class fraction. This fraction of the middle class weaves narratives of the environment that frame rules, which link to social practices that they recognise as legitimate, offering value to them in the form of cultural capital. This value is also often gained by trading in economic capital. While both class fractions seemed to recognise value in the environment as a form of cultural capital what was evident in the narratives offered by both sets of residents from the middle-class colonies was that economic capital was still implicit in the manner in which the environment facilitated difference. For example, the higher-income middle-class colony seemed to negotiate higher value for parks and gardens, which they believed demonstrated the middle-class-ness of a

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colony and its residents. This narrative was not evident in how the middle-income middle-class colony discussed parks, suggesting that lack of economic capital to have these spaces inhibits the recognition of the potential for symbolic value in these spaces. Action was also highly valued by both sets of respondents. However, the respondents asserted their actions (or lack of) as legitimate, occasionally even de-valuing actions like joining NGOs or other such explicit environmental actions. This was primarily done in recognition of the barriers that the individuals faced (both economic and symbolic) to engage in such activities. In denying value or legitimacy to particular forms of explicit action, respondents promoted their own choices as legitimate. However, the key element in this battle for legitimacy is the recognition of barriers to entry for certain forms of social practice, which in turn supports the development of narratives of the environment that legitimise certain forms of social practice over others (taking a plastic bag to the market over joining an NGO, for example).

Two environmental terms, in particular, were used only by overtly tactical environmentalists, which helped to recognise the particular concerns that they faced, which linked to their narratives of the environment. These two terms – clean and green - helped this fraction of the middle class to differentiate themselves from the lower classes (particularly poor people). The terms clean and green were used by individuals of this fraction of the middle class to create rules and boundaries for public spaces to justify the exclusion of poor people from these spaces, utilising the language of the environment. This particular articulation of the environment draws on a deeper *sanksara*, a habitus, that The *bhagidari* system of participatory governance, for example, supports in the delivery of, which are spaces for use by the middle class where poor people are bound by rules and regulations. While discussing cleanliness and dirt in the city as an environmental concern this fraction of the middle class primarily talked

about poverty and linked poverty to dirty places and, by extension, dirty people. The terms clean and green are fundamentally linked, by this class fraction, to proximate concerns of liveability, helping to draw boundaries between the middle and lower classes through referring to differing social practices as well as by creating narratives that conflate dirt and poverty. It bears repeating that only residents of the colonies and not the wildlife clubs constructed these narratives around poverty and dirt, particularly drawing on economic difference as underpinning why the difference persisted. These distinctions were made to demonstrate difference and distinction using the language of the environment, in which is implicit the difference in economic capital. However, the language is largely constructed so as to use forms of social practice, for example, acting in an environmentally-positive manner to suggest a form of innate concern for the environment that is specific to the identity of the middle class and not that of the lower classes, to delineate class boundaries. Through the messages of clean and green that are constructed by overtly tactical environmentalists, it is however clear that acting, which is a key marker of middle class-ness, is primarily public in its expression. This demonstrates that in order for the environment to have value as a form of cultural capital for residents of these two colonies (class fractions that share many similarities) it has to be validated by others through public acts. This also demonstrates an anxiety around identities that are linked to what are seen as public acts of good that need explicit validation from others in the class fraction. Fundamentally, the environment is used as a tactical tool to mark out difference and distinguish individuals from within the same class fraction. However, embodied social practice manifests in how this class fraction distinguishes itself from the poor.

I have argued throughout the thesis that the environment is a symbol through which distinction can be established and maintained and distinction can be created and

negotiated; it is a form of cultural capital that assists in demonstrating difference and through it establish distinction. The question that follows is '*why* does difference matter'? This question sits at the heart of theories of class. Fundamentally, class is about power and legitimacy. Class, as a sociological tool, offers not only a way to consider structures in society but a way to conceptualise power structures in society. The value of claiming difference lies in the power that it offers those who have differentiated themselves either, for example, by joining a wildlife club like the IWC. Bourdieu (1984) proposed that difference was embedded in one's habitus and the process of maintaining and furthering differentiation was negotiated in spaces that he referred to as fields. In these fields forms of capital - economic, social, cultural and symbolic – were used as currency to establish and maintain what Bourdieu referred to as the 'classificatory struggle'. The environment offers the Indian middle class the ability to differentiate and battle for legitimacy. However, in a context like India, where social, political, economic and cultural change is particularly rapid, resulting in significant shifts in social categories and their relation to class membership there are particular anxieties that are clearly manifesting. These anxieties can be seen in the how all the middle class fractions I worked with drew on narratives of the environment to formulate identities in relation to their own social practice and values.

Research question 3: How do members from fractions in the middle class - unique sites of production (as Bourdieu himself suggests) - re-negotiate and reframe the valuing of the environment?

The second research question asked how and why the environment was valued by middle-class individuals which, I stated, was primarily as a form of cultural capital. I also offered an example of how overtly tactical environmentalists value the environment as a form of cultural capital using symbols of the environment, while also referencing

proximate concerns over the environment; a core feature of their environmentality. Three fractions of the middle class (sites of production) have been examined in this thesis. The individuals in these fractions negotiate the value of the environment as a form of cultural capital but are limited by their habitus in negotiating and accumulating the value of the environment. In answer to the first research question I discussed how individuals, who I refer to as overtly tactical environmentalists, undertake the process of valuing the environment. With regard to the individuals in wildlife clubs, the question of how they value the environment varies from that of overtly tactical environmentalists. Two class fractions were identified in the study of two separate wildlife clubs. I refer to individuals in the class fractions as overtly tactical wildlife enthusiasts and wildlife enthusiasts. Members of the IWC were from a fraction of the middle class that did not share commonality of intrinsic value (of the environment) with members of the WWF. The significant benefit to belonging to the IWC was to share knowledge and to belong to a community of environmental professionals with no obvious intention to display these credentials to other people than by simply demonstrating ones long-term devotion to the 'cause,' within the group itself. Being a member of this wildlife club also enabled the accumulation of economic capital, primarily through the networking potential that it offered. However, members of this club spoke the language of ecological science, a technical language that created an invisible barrier for 'other' middle-class individuals. This particular type of middle-class actor derives both cultural and economic capital through membership, embodying the values of pragmatic conservationists. Members of this club were largely brought up in households where they were introduced to national parks and other similar spaces as a matter of routine, reinforcing the idea that habitus is reproduced primarily in the context of the home. However, for the WWF, the manner in which the environment

valued was through the accumulation of cultural capital by trading in economic capital. Exclusivity was true of the WWF but the exclusivity was the result of economic capital being traded for a form of capital that was less easily transferrable or acquired. These individuals did not share common backgrounds with those members of the IWC but clearly saw potential value in being associated with the WWF, as an environmental institution, which symbolises the environment largely using the language of global environmental movements, values and concerns. In making the choice to trade economic capital for the association, WWF members (who were largely non-resident Indians) were seen to explicitly associate with the environment as a signifier of global middle-class values. In order to derive status and enable distinction members of this group chose to expend economic capital, tactically spending economic resources to demonstrate distinction from other members of their class fractions. The action taken to distinguish themselves from others was linked to the environment being symbolised in the language of deep-ecology and spiritualism as well as a signifier of innate understanding of the value of the environment as members chose to participate in WWF-activities over other forms of recreational activities. Interestingly, the activities they participated in took the form of pilgrimagess, where the environment was conferred with spiritual value to which one might then attach the social practice (in this case, a *sanskara*) of undertaking a pilgrimage. The participation in these activities was also narrated so as to demonstrate the additional value they derived from environmental activities of the type they were engaging in through the club. It was evident that tactically this group recognised the value of the environment as a form of cultural capital. This was clearly not the case for members of the IWC, who embodied the environment as a form of social practice as career decisions that were more directly and intimately linked to wildlife conservation.

Being a part of a social group, for example, a wildlife club may have multiple benefits. Some of these benefits may be accrued through the act of finding networks and contacts for work, as was clearly the case with members of the Indian Wildlife Club (IWC). A significant benefit to belonging to the IWC was to share knowledge and to belong to a community of environmental practitioners, with no obvious intention to display these credentials to other people than by simply demonstrating ones long-term devotion to the 'cause'; a habitus that was embodied in more direct and intimate ways than that of members of the WWF. Being a member in this wildlife club advances the accumulation of economic capital but also requires a language or code of awareness that is reproduced rather than produced through formal education or other sorts of learning. This particular type of middle-class actor has the appropriate habitus and cultural capital to engage in the activities in this club and accumulate both economic and cultural capital through membership and participation.

On the other hand, individuals who are members of the WWF, are largely non-resident Indians (NRIs), who seem to share values with a global middle class. To them the environment is a cultural symbol whose value as a form of cultural capital can be accessed by using economic capital, for example by paying to participate in activities of the WWF. It is also important to note that one needs to have disposable income that they are willing and choose to spend to participate in events and gain membership. The values emulated by members of this group are both global in form, with elements of spirituality or romanticism woven into the narratives on relationships with the environment. Members chose to trade economic capital to gain a form of cultural capital that they recognised and were willing to pay. They clearly had the habitus to recognise the value of the environment as a form of cultural capital but tactically chose to expend economic resources to find ways to distinguish themselves from both other

fractions of the middle class as well as individuals from within their own fraction. Through trading economic capital in this manner these individuals were able to demonstrate their distinction from other class fractions using the language of neo-traditionalism, global environmental discourses and spirituality. By choosing to spend money on associating actively with the environment that is framed in the language of global environmental values, they negotiate the value of their representation of the environment as a form of cultural capital that they can then accumulate.

Finally, individuals who belong to a fraction of the middle class that I refer to as wildlife enthusiasts are engaged with the environment through their daily lives in a more direct manner. Individuals in this class fraction are career wildlife enthusiasts who have been introduced to the environment in the home through their families and frame the environment primarily using the language of wildlife science and conservation practice. To these individuals the environment is not simply an element of but the foundational structure of their lives where their careers, interests and values are all constructed around the environment. Wildlife enthusiasts believe that paying to go to wildlife parks and engaging in paid activities of other clubs does not demonstrate environmental awareness rather that it is the use of the environment as a fashion statement, reflecting an embodiment of the environment that Rangarajan (1996) describes as that of a pragmatic conservationist.

Limitations of the study

This thesis has presented a series of case studies to demonstrate that the delineation of class fractions occurs (in part) through social practices relating to the environment, drawing on Bourdieu's conceptualisation of class as an organising principle that helps locate individuals who share commonalities of social practice. The methodology adopted by this thesis has wider applicability. However, in taking this

approach it is important to recognise the primary limitation of this approach, which is that the study is restricted to the residential colonies and wildlife clubs that have been involved in the research with limited ability to make broader claims about the environment and other wildlife clubs (like the Bombay Natural History Society, for example) or other residential colonies even in Delhi. Also, the economic and political changes in India, more recently (with a recent national election), may fundamentally shift processes of middle-class identity formation, given the current anxieties that are already coming to the fore in public debates and the legal arena. These rapid changes clearly limit the findings of this thesis temporally. As is the case with ethnographic research, there are general limitations in the ability to extrapolate and the context (temporal and geographical, for example) is essential in understanding the salience of the findings.

Contributions and Implications

The research questions that framed this thesis are not frequently asked, and when they are discussions on environmental values draw inspiration from other sets of values, particularly consumption. The research offers a descriptive and analytical account of *how* the environment is conceptualised in addition to offering some initial insight into *why* the environment is important and conceptualised in the manner that it is. In doing so this research provides valuable analysis of the process of identity formation of the middle class, for which the environment is a tool, a form of cultural capital that aids in marking difference and distinction and boundary-creation. Taking a grounded-theory approach, the data has been instrumental in developing the theoretical framework and this approach has had limited application in the context of the environment and the middle class. In addition to the contributions to theorising on identity formation of the middle class, this thesis also actively unpacks the assumed, and

often unexplored, complexity and heterogeneity of the middle class. The methodology of this thesis was designed to demonstrate the characteristics of these fractions, which is an additional contribution to the theoretical focus on the middle class in India, evidencing through the methodology, the variegation in the middle class.

The second contribution that this thesis makes is the application of Bourdieu's tools of cultural capital, habitus, and fields to explore the process of identity-formation of the middle class, as a point of departure in examining how and why fractions of the middle class engage with the concept of the environment. It is evident that there are anxieties that the middle class struggle with in the process of identity formation. This is very clear in how they choose to assert themselves in the public sphere, for example, through the legal system. These anxieties – what I see as forms of environmentalities – are consciously produced. However, the various class fractions also embody the environment in different ways drawing on embedded social norms that link to caste and religion or post-colonial values on wildlife conservation, which they reproduce in how they conceptually encounter the environment. Bourdieu's theory of social class and the tools of habitus and cultural capital bring nuance to a discussion on the social practice that relates to the environment. However, given the nature of change in the Indian context, as identities and class structures and boundaries are challenged, there are more conscious processes that the middle class is engaged in, which utilises the environment as a tool to mark out distinction. These anxieties derive not only from change but from particular subjectivities that individuals encounter, which frames their environmentalities and how they, as a consequence, consciously engage with the environment and through it their identities in relation to other class fractions.

The third contribution made by this thesis is the analysis that it offers into the pedagogy and approaches to formal environmental education in schools. While offering

a descriptive account, which is novel, this thesis also contextualises the descriptions in broader theories of class identity. In doing so, the research offers a unique lens into the process of class reproduction through the education system in India.

This thesis has offered an application of Bourdieu's theory of class and social stratification towards examining the middle class in India, reflecting on the limitations, given the Indian context, of the approach to analytically engage with anxieties and challenges to class identity that is constant and rapidly changing. In doing so it has uncovered processes of identity formation using the environment as a form of cultural capital. Environmental degradation is a key issue in India, particularly in urban centres, where dirt, garbage, and air pollution, for example, have a profound impact on health and quality of life for residents. Numerous NGOs and civil society organisations have attempted to galvanise middle-class support to address these issues, in consideration of the mobilising potential of this social class. However, the extent to which the middle class has been receptive to their efforts is limited. Furthermore, as urban centres continue to become more crowded and space and quality of life become more dear, policies, particularly those that effect public action will have to be considered as do the short-term responses that middle class individuals will have to protect themselves against shrinking environmental resources, which will help to better understand their 'environmentality'. In order to better understand these responses and ways of influencing behaviours and action it is essential that there is a recognition of how the environment is conceptualised and valued so that any form of public action is understood in light of the longer-term commitments that various fractions of the middle class can make.

As the middle class continues to expand and grow, this social category will become of even greater importance (politically, economically etc.); increasing in size

and becoming more complex in its composition. This implies that the values, agenda and interests of the middle class become inherently more complex.[47] With middle-class growth and its increasing diversity it is likely that there will be further potential for change in the landscape of social class and social stratification. Further research on the mutating and growing middle class seems imminent, inevitable, and essential. In looking to the future, the issue of the environment will surface more explicitly as urban spaces become more crowded and there is greater competition for resources. This is already evident in how governance processes like the *bhagidari* system conflate class characteristics with access to resources. What is important to note, however, is that while there are economic, environmental, and political pressures, these pressures influence social stratification and class characteristics, as I have attempted to demonstrate in this thesis.

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[47] Current estimates for 2015/16 are at 267 million individuals (Shukla, 2010). Current trends suggest that the Indian consumer market will be the largest in the world by 2030 (Deloitte, 2013).

Appendix 1: Map of Sarita Vihar (South Delhi)
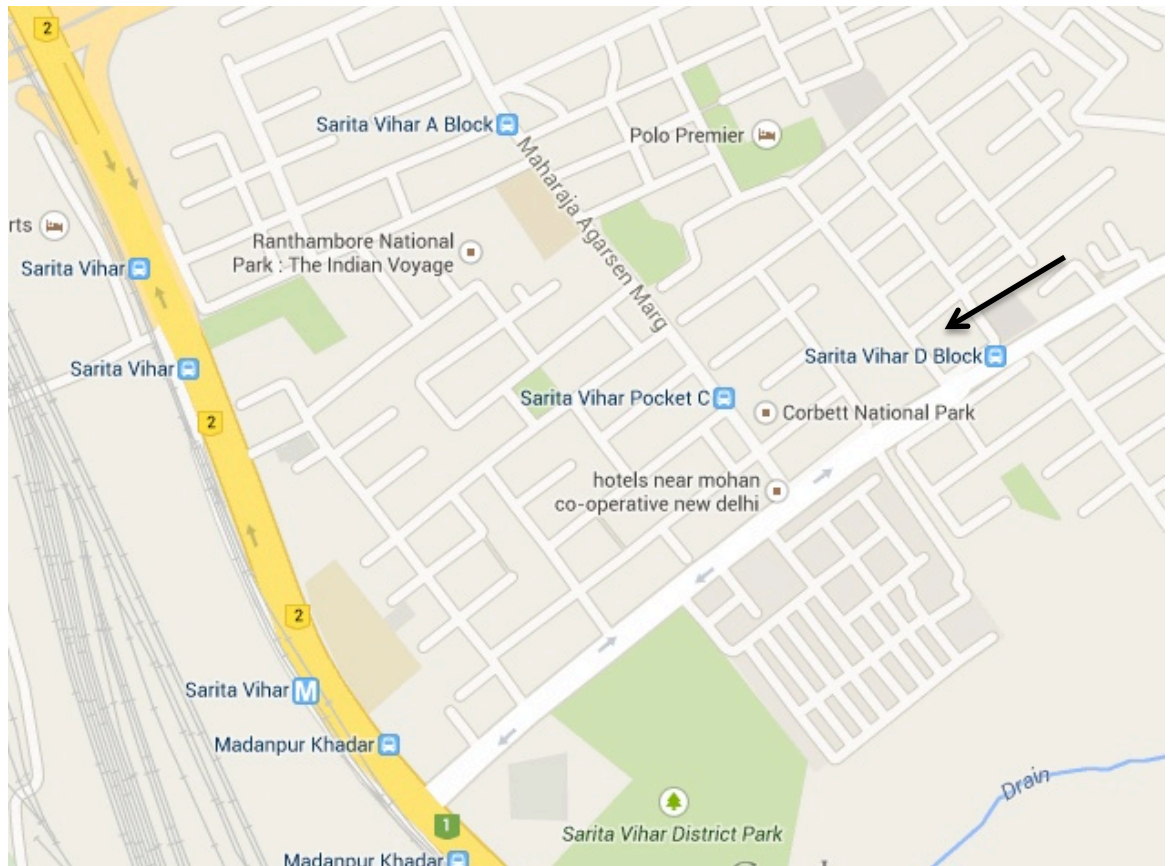
Map of Sarita Vihar D Block indicated in the middle of the map. (Map data @2014Google)

Appendix 2: Map of Vasant Vihar (South Delhi)
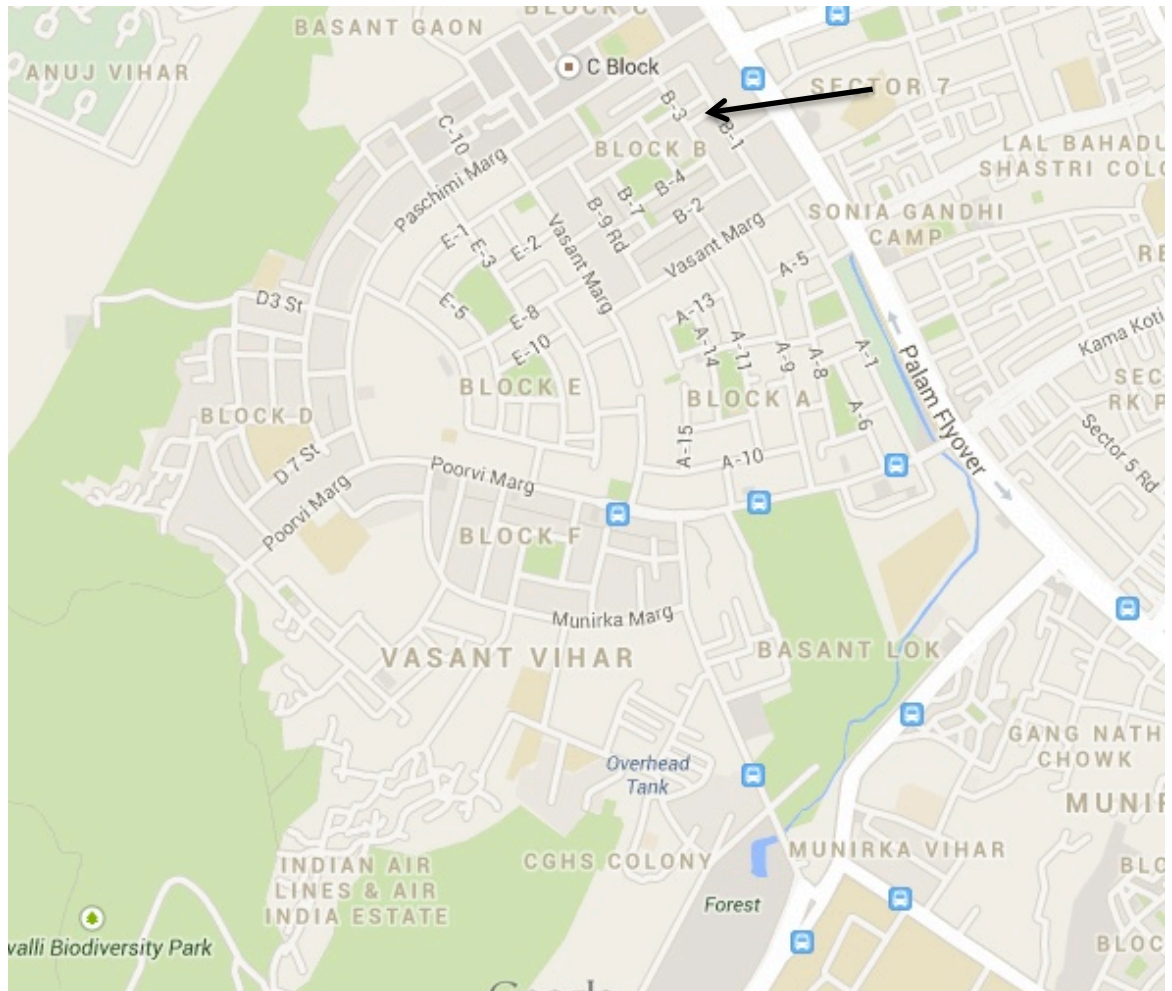
Map of Vasant Vihar B Block indicated at the top of the map. (Map data @2014Google)

Appendix 3: Location of Sarita Vihar and Vasant Vihar
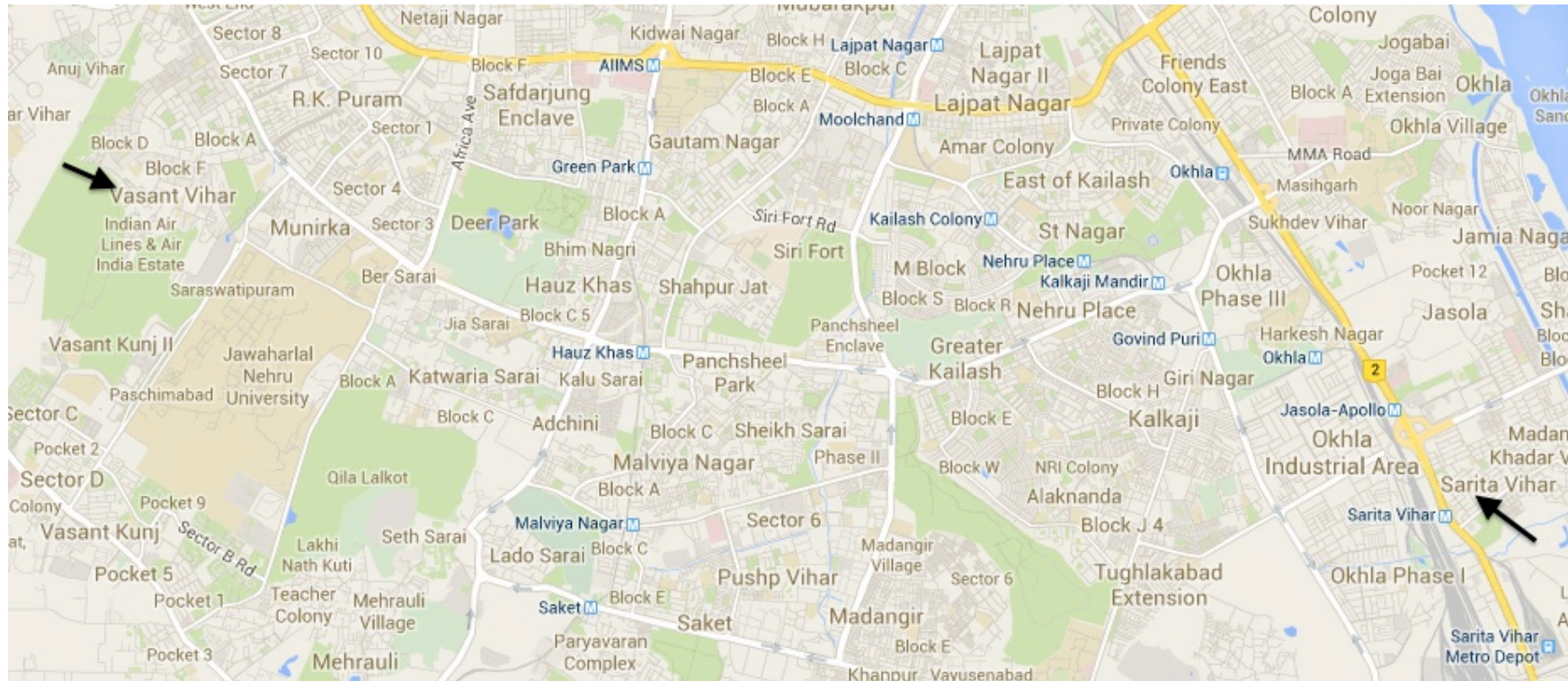
Map of South Delhi. Sarita Vihar D Block marked in the lower right hand quadrant and Vasant Vihar B Block marked

in the top left hand quadrant of the map. (Map data @2014Google).

Appendix 4: List of respondents interviewed

Name	Grouping	Age	Gender
Mrs Agarwal	VV	55	F
Mr Mehta	VV	50	M
Mrs Mehta	VV	46	F
Mrs Chandra	VV	58	F
Mr Yashodhan Gorapade	VV	20	M
Ms Shivani	VV	17	F
Mr Nand Kolyar	VV	66	M
Mr Anand	VV	46	M
Mrs Sheila Sharma	VV	40	F
Mrs Aradhana Misra	VV	34	F
Mr Mishra	VV	44	M
Mr Kapil Rana	VV	29	M
Mr Abhinav Shukla	VV	52	M
Ms Radha Gokhale	VV	25	F
Miss Anjula Arun	VV	28	F
House 95	SV	45	F
House 73	SV	46	M
House 172	SV	70	M
House 206	SV	44	M
House 222	SV	42	M
House 72	SV	34	M
House 54	SV	65	M

House 27	SV	65	M
House 27	SV	24	M
House 85	SV	40	M
House 85	SV	32	F
House 100	SV	42	F
House 215	SV	35	M
House 90	SV	40	F
House 110	SV	45	M (RWA member) (wife aged 36)
Nishant Pagare	IWC	25	M
Bikram Grewal	IWC	45	M
Sudhir Misra	IWC	36	M
Prasanna Gautam	IWC	20	M
Deepak Gupta	IWC	27	M
Nitish V	IWC	25	M
Susan Sharma	IWC	30	F
Ameen Haq	IWC	32	M
Col Valmiki Katju	IWC	53	M
Dr P.S.Easa	IWC	47	M
Yatish Yadav	IWC	25	M
Pranav Chadha	IWC	23	M
Sanjeev Tyagi	IWC	27	M
Frank Christopher	IWC	42	M
Promila Chaturvedi	IWC	63	F
Kumar	WWF	25	M

Jawahar	WWF	25	M
Ramesh	WWF	27	M
Sandeep	WWF	32	M
Aarti	WWF	28	M
Chhaya Sanjeev	WWF	42	F
Dr. N. C. Jana	WWF	41	M
Coumar	WWF	30	M
Dillip Meher	WWF		
Ananda Banerjee	WWF	32	M
srikanta k. panigrahi	WWF	43	M
Nischint	WWF	28	M

Appendix 5: Letter to Sarita Vihar Residents' Welfare Association

To

Mr A.K Goyal

President Residents Welfare Association

D 58 Sarita Vihar

March 8, 2005

Dear Sir,

Re: Interviews amongst Sarita Vihar Residents about their views on the environment and environmental issues

I had spoken to you on March 3 regarding interviews that I would like to conduct amongst residents of Sarita Vihar about their perceptions on the environment, pollution and related issues. I was hoping that we could schedule two Sundays when I could conduct interviews amongst residents of the colony. You had mentioned that there were approximately 200 houses in the locality. I would appreciate it if you could identify every 15th house in order for me to make a visit during the weekend. I am also attaching a letter which can be circulated to the houses that I will be visiting in order to inform them of my visit. I hope that I will be able to make the rounds of the houses over the next two Sundays (22nd and 29th) between 9am and 5pm. I have attached my email address in the letters for the residents but am sending you my number as well. I would appreciate it if the residents who wanted to contact me do so via you rather than directly. I appreciate the help that you have rendered and look forward to hearing from you.

Appendix 6: Sample questions for Sarita Vihar and Vasant Vihar Interviews

What do you think about the waste management practices that have been started off in your colony? What do you think the purpose is and what does it accomplish?

Do you think other projects like this should be started? if yes, what other projects? (Rainwater harvesting, solar heaters)

Do you do anything that is helpful for the environment, yourself? What? Why? How and where did you hear about it?

What do you think are the issues facing the environment? Is there environmental degradation and should people be taking it seriously? Who should take action?

Appendix 7: School Questionnaire

1. Where do you live?

    Aap Kahaan Rehte Hain?

2. What do your parents do?

    Aapke Maa aur Pitha Kya Karte Hain?

3. How long have you been in this nature club?

    Aap is Club mein kitne din tak hain?

4. Are you a member of any other clubs? Which ones?

    Kya aap kisi aur clubs mein shaamil hain? Agar haan, kaunse?

5. Do you go on hikes, nature walks and holidays with your parents or as part of the

    nature club?

    Kya aap jungle mein ya sheher ke baahar jaate hain? Kahaan?

6. What do you do in your nature clubs? What do you learn about and what activities

    do you have and participate in?

    Aap is club mein kya karte hain? Kis cheez ke bare mein padhte hain?

7. Do you get taught about the environment?

    Kya aap vatavaran ke bare mein padhte hein?

8. What about the environment do you get taught? Indian issues? Global Issues?

Vatavaran mein kis cheez ke bare mein padhte hain? India ke baare mein ya Videshi?

9. Where do you hear about the environment and environmental issues? (TV, newspapers, magazines)

Vatavaran or judey huwe cheez ke baare mein aap kahaan dekhte hain? TV? Patrika?

10. Do your parents know / teach you about saving water, electricity, waste, plastic bags, air pollution etc.?

Kya aapke parents aapko paani ya bijli ko bachana kehte hain? Pradushan ke baare mein kya who samjhate hain?

11. Do you know about endangered species? The Tiger?

Kya aapko jaanvaron ke maarne ke baare mein pata hai? Baag ke baare mein?

12. Does your house save water and do waste composting?

Kya aapke ghar mein paani bachathe hain ya gandagi kam karthe hain?

13. Have you been to the Zoo? If you have, do you like it?

Kya aap chidhiyagarh gaye huwe hain? Kay aapko pasand hai?

14. Do you think the government should do things to help the environment or should people do more to help the environment?

Kya aapko lagta hai ki sarkar ko vatavaran ke baare mein aur kuch karna chahiye ya logon ko kuch karna chahiye?

15. What are other environmental issues that you think that the government and

    people should pay attention to? Which ones?

    Kaunse vatavaran ke durghatnaon ke baare mein humein dekhna aur kuch karna

    chahiye?

16. What do you think air and water pollution are and what do you think are the

    causes and remedies (solutions?)

    Hawa aur paani pradushan kya hai? Unke kaaran or suljhane ki tarika kya hain?

17. What do you think the role of population is in environmental degradation?

    Kya jansankhya vatvaran ki bigadne ka kaaran ban sakti hai?

Appendix 8: Questionnaire for the Indian Wildlife Club and World Wide Fund for Nature Members

Indian Wildlife Club

BRIEF ANONYMOUS QUESTIONNAIRE (Kindly fill in the details and send the form back to the sender. Thank you)

What age group are you?

Below 20 / 20-30 / 30-40 / 40+

What is your profession?

Wildlifer / Student / Other (specify) -----------

Where do you live?

Delhi -- North / South / West

Gurgaon / NOIDA / Faridabad / Ghaziabad / Other (specify) -------------

What income bracket do you come under? (In rupees)

Upto 10,000 / 10,001-50,000 / 50,001+ (per annum)

Where did you hear about the IWC?

Search Engine / Magazine and Newspaper / Word of mouth / Family / Internet Banner / Other

(specify) --------------

Why did you join the IWC?

Issues / Information / Excursions / To provide assistance / Other (specify) ----------------

Do you travel to forests and National Parks regularly?

YES / NO – If YES How often? Every mth / Every 6 mths / Every year / Every 2 years /

More than 2 years gap

Are any of your family members of IWC as well?   YES/NO

If   YES – Parents / Children / Siblings / Other (specify) -------------

How long have you been a member of the IWC?

Upto 1 yr / 1-2 yrs / 2 yrs +

What issues do you keep track of? Specify ------

What issues would you like to see discussed? Specify ------

Do you feel that the club should be more active in addressing issues? YES / NO – If YES

– How? ------------

What do you think about the tiger issue?

Responsibility of the government / People should take responsibility / Inevitable natural

decline of species / People need to be moved out of National Parks (NPs) / people living

in NPs should be involved in protection

Do you watch any environmental channels on TV?

YES / NO – If YES which one(s)? ----------

Are you a member of any other nature/ecoclubs/organizations? YES/NO

If YES – Which ones? Specify ---------------

The information provided here will be treated in strictest confidence.

Dear Sir/Madam,

I am a PhD student at the University of London (Birkbeck College). My aim is to understand why it is that people join wildlife clubs and what issues they consider as being important. I would appreciate it if you, as a member of the IWC would fill out the brief attached questionnaire and return it to the address from which it was sent. I have already spoken in-depth to some of the members btu need to run a larger survey as well. The questionnaire will be used as part of my thesis and not for the purposes of publication. I would really appreciate the effort.

Regards

Deepti Sastry

World Wide Fund for Nature

BRIEF ANONYMOUS QUESTIONNAIRE (Kindly fill in the details and send the form back to the sender. Thank you)

What age group are you?

Below 20 / 20-30 / 30-40 / 40+

What is your profession?

Wildlifer / Student / Other (specify) -----------

Where do you live?

Delhi -- North / South / West

Gurgaon / NOIDA / Faridabad / Ghaziabad / Other (specify) -------------

What income bracket do you come under? (In Rs)

Upto 10,000 / 10,001-50,000 / 50,001+ (per annum)

Where did you hear about the IWC?

Search Engine / Magazine and Newspaper / Word of mouth / Family / Internet Banner /

Other

(specify) --------------

Why did you join the IWC?

Issues / Information / Excursions / To provide assistance / Other (specify) ----------------

Do you travel to forests and National Parks regularly?

YES / NO – If YES How often? Every mth / Every 6 mths / Every year / Every 2 years /

More than 2 years gap

Are any of your family members of IWC as well? YES/NO

If   YES – Parents / Children / Siblings / Other (specify) -------------

How long have you been a member of the IWC?

Upto 1 yr / 1-2 yrs / 2 yrs +

What issues do you keep track of? Specify ------

What issues would you like to see discussed? Specify ------

Do you feel that the club should be more active in addressing issues? YES / NO – If YES – How? ------------

What do you think about the tiger issue?

Responsibility of the government / People should take responsibility / Inevitable natural decline of species / People need to be moved out of National Parks (NPs) / people living in NPs should be involved in protection

Do you watch any environmental channels on TV?

YES / NO – If YES which one(s)? ----------

Are you a member of any other nature/ecoclubs/organizations? YES/NO

If YES – Which ones? Specify ----------------

The information provided here will be treated in strictest confidence.

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