

Dissertation

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Can Money Compensate?

Land commodification, urbanisation and social change in peri-urban
villages, Lahore

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Abstract

The dissertation looks at the role of cash compensation for land in villages southeast of Lahore, which have witnessed rapid land acquisition for elite gated housing estates since the mid 1990's. This development is primarily led by Defence Housing Authority (DHA) an iconic housing developer managed by the Pakistan army. The villages in the area have gone from being primarily sites of agrarian production and residence for diverse, multi-class populations to class segregated residential neighbourhoods of the larger city of Lahore. The DHA development in the area has proceeded incrementally since it started in 1977. The research focuses on the area of explosive expansion of DHA which started in 1999. The villages in this area offered a simultaneous picture of different stages of transformation from villages to new urban space. At the two ends of this spectrum are those entirely obliterated from the landscape and those waiting in anticipation for the buyers to arrive. In the middle are villages turned into walled ghettos amidst the new housing estate. The aggressive land use change in the name of development and fast-paced urbanization has looted the periphery in multiple ways, through complete removal of arable lands, scrapping of top soil, bringing graveyards to market followed by cultural impoverishment and loss of rural ecology. The research is an extended ethnography in the area from 2014 to 2022 that offers an empirical record of perceptions, experiences and material changes in the area. Based on the findings that are framed by the Frank's epigram 'development of underdevelopment', it argues that the villagers have suffered a significant loss of intangibles rooted in the historical village ecology where many aspects of life were based on non-monetary exchange. Cash compensation introduced unprecedented liquidity into the cash poor environment of the villages. Those who sold land gained cash but suffered an irreversible loss of intangibles and for the landless there was only loss and no gains in the new ecology. This is multi-sited ethnographic research in villages at different stages of transformation and in new localities that many of the new cash rich have migrated to and with added attention to the experience of the females in this major ecological change. The loss of intangibles such as security, identity, trust, reverence, interdependence and cultural capital for the already vulnerable, landless peasants, wage workers, elderly, females and children have not been recorded and theorised in the wide-ranging literature on socio-spatial transformation in South Asia.

Zusammenfassung

Die Dissertation befasst sich mit der Rolle von Bargeldentschädigungen für Land in Dörfern südöstlich von Lahore, die seit Mitte der 1990er Jahre Zeugen eines raschen Landerwerbs für elitäre Wohnsiedlungen mit Gates sind. Diese Entwicklung wird in erster Linie von der Defence Housing Authority (DHA) vorangetrieben, einem bekannten Bauträger, der von der pakistanischen Armee verwaltet wird. Die Dörfer in diesem Gebiet haben sich von primär landwirtschaftlichen Produktionsstätten und Wohnorten für eine vielfältige, vielschichtige Bevölkerung zu nach Klassen getrennten Wohnvierteln der Großstadt Lahore entwickelt. Die Entwicklung der DHA in diesem Gebiet ist seit ihrem Beginn im Jahr 1977 schrittweise vorangeschritten. Die Untersuchung konzentriert sich auf den Bereich der explosiven Expansion der DHA, die 1999 begann. Die Dörfer in diesem Gebiet boten ein gleichzeitiges Bild verschiedener Stadien der Umwandlung von Dörfern in neuen städtischen Raum. An den beiden Enden dieses Spektrums befinden sich Dörfer, die völlig aus der Landschaft verschwunden sind, und solche, die auf die Ankunft der Käufer warten. In der Mitte befinden sich Dörfer, die zu ummauerten Ghettos inmitten der neuen Wohnsiedlung geworden sind. Die aggressive Landnutzungsänderung im Namen der Entwicklung und der rasanten Urbanisierung hat die Peripherie in mehrfacher Hinsicht geplündert: durch die vollständige Beseitigung von Ackerland, die Abtragung des Mutterbodens, die Vermarktung von Friedhöfen, gefolgt von kultureller Verarmung und dem Verlust der ländlichen Ökologie. Bei der Untersuchung handelt es sich um eine ausgedehnte Ethnografie in dem Gebiet von 2014 bis 2022, die eine empirische Aufzeichnung der Wahrnehmungen, Erfahrungen und materiellen Veränderungen in dem Gebiet bietet. Auf der Grundlage der Ergebnisse, die von Franks Epigramm „Entwicklung der Unterentwicklung“ umrahmt werden, wird argumentiert, dass die Dorfbewohner einen erheblichen Verlust an immateriellen Gütern erlitten haben, die in der historischen Dorfökologie verwurzelt sind, in der viele Aspekte des Lebens auf nichtmonetärem Austausch beruhten. Bargeldentschädigungen brachten eine noch nie dagewesene Liquidität in das bargeldarme Umfeld der Dörfer. Diejenigen, die Land verkauften, erhielten zwar Bargeld, erlitten aber einen irreversiblen Verlust an immateriellen Gütern, und für die Landlosen gab es in der neuen Ökologie nur Verluste und keine Gewinne. Es handelt sich um eine ethnografische Untersuchung mit mehreren Standorten in Dörfern, die sich in verschiedenen Stadien des Wandels befinden, und in neuen Orten, in die viele der neuen Geldbesitzer abgewandert sind, wobei auch die Erfahrungen der Frauen in diesem großen ökologischen Wandel berücksichtigt werden. Der Verlust von immateriellen Werten wie Sicherheit, Identität, Vertrauen, Ehrfurcht, gegenseitiger Abhängigkeit und kulturellem Kapital für die ohnehin schon gefährdeten landlosen Bauern, Lohnarbeiter, älteren Menschen, Frauen und Kinder wurde in der umfangreichen Literatur über den sozial-räumlichen Wandel in Südasien noch nicht erfasst und theoretisiert.

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Chapter 1

Introduction

1.1 Visible and invisible change

‘The landscape of our village has transformed; it resembles a hilly area now’ (Javaid, 2015).

It was reported by a villager and witnessed later by the researcher that gave a new direction to MPhil dissertation which began in 2013 but also laid foundation for the later research. It was the beginning of ecological transformation in the village with removal of 1.5 m of topsoil from 0.405 ha of productive farmland. Removal of top soil was the most visible and manifest ecological disruption in the changes brought about by the shift in land-use from agricultural production to elite suburban housing estate. It was the creation of a new landscape with attendant levelling of land, raising of streets, planting of new vegetation and laying of infrastructure of drain pipes, electrical transformers, cables etc. This transformation was in line with neo-liberal capitalist restructuring since the 1990’s which had been driving commodification of rural outskirts of cities as land is acquired for development and investment under policies promoting economic growth through urbanisation (Myers, 2021). This urban expansion has caused irreparable social and environmental deterioration through virtual land grab such as, emergence of ‘urban’ diseases, food insecurity, amplified class differences, dispossession and development-induced displacement (Neef & Singer, 2015; Zoomers, 2011). Ecologies, human and nature vary from place to place, but human and natural monocultures are proliferating under an unchecked model of capitalist growth in global South, Latin America, Africa as ‘global recolonization’ (McMichael, 2016). These processes have been analysed in great depth in multiple locales in the south. However, most studies especially in geography and environmental studies have focused on the ecological impacts but do not focus on the social aspects of this transformation especially as it is experienced and expressed by the communities directly affected by the new development (Abdullah, 2023; Basheer & Waseem, 2022; Chen, 2024; Verma & Das, 2024).

Pakistan has followed the same trajectory and the periphery of metropolitan cities has assumed profound importance for investment for profit-making purposes. For example, land-

use change for development in Karachi has thrown agrarian-pastoral *Baloch Goths* (villages) into disarray and induced huge displacement with support and facilitation by state policies and action (N. Anwar, 2018; Hasan, 2015). Real-estate development on the outskirts of Islamabad (A. S. Akhtar & Rashid, 2021), removal of mango orchards for the construction of gated community in Multan (Z. Batool, 2021) have similarly usurped huge swathes of rural land and removed the poorer inhabitants. Pakistan has been known for having the fastest paced urbanisation in South Asia with not only an annual rate of 3% but is expected to have half of the population in cities by 2025 (Kugelman, 2013). Especially, in times of development in neo-liberal epoch that treats villages as empty, blank canvases, for the city expansion. The rezoning of a city through city masterplans to bring off-limit areas into available sites for investment and real-estate development (Goldman, 2020). It was further verified by a personal interview with Lahore Development Authority (LDA) personnel involved in developing Lahore Masterplan 2050 (LDA, 2021). The city masterplan 2050 was all about the expansion of city that includes villages only as sites for infrastructure development but not as socio-ecological realms comprised of communities.

This study focuses on peri-urban villages southeast of Lahore where development of elite housing society) took on rapid pace around 1999. After partition, Amritsar and Lahore got 84 villages respectively. Although with time several new villages were formed but the ‘area of 84 villages’ denotes historical villages¹. The villages on the Eastern periphery of Lahore city, have been under the radar of the Defence Housing Authority (DHA). Presently, these villages are in varying stages of socio-ecological change as most land has been acquired through cash compensation and development of elite gated housing is underway. This transfer of land gained momentum when Lahore Cantonment Cooperative Housing Society (LCCHS)² was revamped as DHA. This reorganization of LCCHS happened amidst a larger structural adjustment of economic liberalisation on the state level. A major policy plank of the neo-liberal agenda was urbanisation and development of cities as engines of growth (Y. Huang, 2022; Magdoff, 2013; Zoomers, 2010)

The research is an extended ethnography from 2014 to 2022 and offers an empirical record of perceptions, experiences and material changes in the life of villagers when land was taken in

¹ The Settlement reports of U.P. and Punjab and other works discuss local village-groups comprising of two to a theoretical of ‘eighty-four’ villages which had agnatic (paternal/connected by kinship or marriage) origin. There are number of names in vernacular terms such as *tappa*, *ilaqa*, *khera*, *mauza* (Marriott, 1953).

² LCCHS – a cooperative housing society developed for the retired army officers by the Pakistan Army in 1975. Since then, it has become self-governing real-estate developer. Later in 1999, it was converted to DHA (<https://dhalahore.org/about-us/history/>)

return for cash. The loss of land and new landscape is a material change but there was also loss of intangibles as communities were disrupted by physical displacement and psychological reorientation as money became the most powerful arbitrator shaping space and social position. The loss of intangibles such as reciprocity, sharing resources both material and social, security, identity, and cultural capital for the largely vulnerable, landless peasants, wage workers, elderly, females and children have not been recorded and theorised in the wide-ranging literature on socio-spatial transformation in South Asia.

In 2014 these villages offered a rich sampling of settlements at different stages of social and ecological transformation as one by one villages were being reformatted into a new urban space. At on one end of a spectrum of changing settlements were those villages which had been totally obliterated from the landscape and on the other end were those waiting in anticipation for the buyers to arrive to purchase their lands. In the middle were villages which had lost all agricultural lands and were now walled ghettos amidst the new elite housing estate.

The findings of this dissertation can be framed by the epigram ‘development of underdevelopment’ (Frank, 1966) as articulated by the victims of development in urbanising frontiers in the Global South (GS). The processes happening on the outskirts of metropolitan Lahore are part of the chain of accumulation in the core from peripheries in the Global North (GN). Local elites gain and lead this process, in this case through the development of suburbs for the rich by acquisition of cheap agricultural land from peri-urban villagers. The monetary gains and new landscape are experienced as underdevelopment of social well-being previously enjoyed by the majority, cash-poor communities in the peri-urban villages³. The research records the narratives of those who have experienced a rapid social change. Their narratives speak of a loss of intangibles and their degradation (both in terms of social and environmental from which there is no reversal) in this development which has brought tremendous material wealth to those who owned land. It argues that the cash received for land is incapable of buying community, values such as care, obligation, trust, brotherhood, security and love amongst a social group. Lahore has been expanding into its agrarian hinterland since the time of the British colonialists. However, ever since DHA appeared as

³ Big houses, open land, communal land includes wastewater ponds, shrines, graveyards, marriage houses etc. The availability of clean drinking water, good quality of food, space to keep animals as source of dairy and the access to abundant free fodder for animals to keep. The safety and sense of security coming from a community that was built over time, a relation of barter or payment in form of services and kind, due to which the subsistence was intact and people were not fully at the mercy of market and cash economy.

an aggressive player developing private, housing societies for the affluent (billboards installed in DHA announce “aesthetically designed for community living” or “DHA Lahore is a high-end living society”); the price on offer and the clout of the military have literally bulldozed a new landscape in the area (A. Ahmed, 2023). The dissertation records the villager’s narrative of ‘environmental and ecological change’ in a frontier of speculative development. The villagers across class, gender, generation and ethnicity shared a compelling assessment of socio-ecological decline. They tell a story of loss and the role of money and power of state i-e (the role of military in aggressive support of urbanising processes) in the making of a new environment and the marginalisation of the weakest. It contends the easy dismissal of ‘nostalgia’ for the lost village, and ‘land’ and iterates the importance of the ‘voices’ of the most affected. The communities in these villages and ecologies are presently trapped in the capitalist growth model, going through unfathomable change often dismissed by labelling them as nostalgia.

A significant body of literature addresses multiple aspects of this unbridled urban expansion: displacement and dispossession experienced through the emplacement (Anwar, 2012; Neef & Singer, 2015; Tassadiq, 2022), the role of state and its power (A. S. Akhtar, 2006; Dwyer, 2022; Gazdar, 2009; Hussain, 1984; Levien, 2017; Levien & Upadhyay, 2022) or how the change in socio-economic patterns have modified the use and outlook towards land through rural urbanisation in southern Punjab (M. A. Z. Mughal, 2019). This study records and analyses the invisible social change as perceived by the locals and juxtaposes it with more evident material change. Given that society and nature or human and environment are intertwined, hence, commodification of land is also transformative of social relations which changed as monetary exchange value recalibrated the worth of everything that provided sustenance, shelter and security to indigenous communities. An array of resources of use-value such as land-based produce accessed through traditional social arrangements and multi-use commons acquired monetary value and became inaccessible to communities causing disruption of existing social and ecological formations.

Peri-urban villages are microcosms subject to rapid transformation brought by massive cash influx entering rural communities as a monetary compensation for the land. The transaction however entails not just loss of land but also the agrarian life attached to it. The compensatory packages cannot compensate for the ecology which is lost due to profit driven development. The periphery and communities are the living, breathing proof of urban expansion as a failed development policy that has jeopardised natural resources such as fertile

soil, productive land, water and sabotaged the social realm by fragmenting communities through cash induction. The commodification of land has in short destroyed relatively stable socio-ecological zones and cash cannot compensate for this ongoing underdevelopment.

1.2 South-east, Lahore as a research site – Why?

Lahore is the capital city of Punjab province, located in the northwest of Pakistan with an estimated population of over 14.4 million in 2024 with annual change of 3.06% (Pakistan Bureau of Statistics, 2024). In the past five decades, the built-up area in Lahore has expanded to 532 km², whereas this urban expansion has happened at the expanse of fertile agricultural lands, vegetation and other cultivable lands (Minallah et al., 2021) which is expected to be 1320 km² by 2025 (Ibrahim & Riaz, 2018). DHA alone is rapidly expanding towards southeast and east, covering almost 20,000 acres across its nine phases in the given direction (Abbas & Wakil, 2023). It was once the restricted area for the development in order to save agricultural lands and to protect the border.

Punjab as a region has undergone massive transformation since Britishers took over (Talbot, 2011) through land privatization, transformed agriculture, enclosure of commons and extraction of resources (Ranauta, 2020). Especially the Canal Colony projects unbridled the process of urbanisation in Punjab through agricultural colonization (B. Singh & Singh, 2019). Historical texts show that suburban sprawl into rich agricultural lands in Lahore is not a new process, its roots go back into mid-19th and first half of 20th century when the colonialists started development of the city for their new political and economic needs. Lahore witnessed the developments of civil lines through residential quarters for the colonial bureaucracy, cantonment, railway infrastructure and colonies and modern residential areas mainly for middle and upper class consumption (Chattha, 2012).

This study focused on an area which had seen a very slow and limited urbanisation, villages in close proximity to the city centre and well connected to the central city through major roads. The area has seen large scale land transformation in a relatively short span of time from agricultural land to suburban developments and particularly of the most elite social class in the country. Most of these villages situated in the area are historical in nature, existed prior to partition are the carriers of tales of partition. Many of these villages were named after *Sikhs*, are still known by the same names such as *Sarja Marja*, *Natha Singh*, *Mota Singh*, *Heera Singh* etc.

Typically these villages were hubs of land based production and considered some of the most fertile land in the Punjab (Zaman & Baloch, 2011). This production consisted of major crops such as wheat, rice, corn and fodder but also vegetables such as carrot, pea, radish, green legumes, potato and fruits such as guava, strawberries, melons etc. However, almost half the population of these villages did not own land and had diverse livelihoods mostly linked to agriculture and livestock. In addition, they did wage work in Lahore city, and carried on petty production and small-scale commercial enterprises in their spacious homes. Cash was generated by the landless and small peasants through produce which was sold in the cities including milk, chickens, and cow dung cakes. They were able to supplement their cash incomes with in-kind acquisition of grain through harvest labour, free firewood and fodder from commons such as graveyards and greens along irrigation and drainage channels. Most significant to their subsistence was the social capital which allowed them to secure grain on loan from farmers. This subsistence remained secured till the DHA arrived in the area and started taking agricultural lands. This land acquisition spurred by the DHA after the building of new terminal of the Lahore's international airport. The community of settlements had created a larger set of relationships amongst each other, with land they lived on, the livestock which they looked at insurance and the source of basic dietary items. These villages can be described as suburbs of the poor wage workers, entrepreneurs and petty producers which provided a rich and secure support environment for children and females.

The trend of elite suburban development with its extensive road network and walled enclosures shifted around 2002 from being mostly towards south of Lahore to the south-eastern periphery, the site of this study. The presence of the cantonment and proximity of the border with India had till then constrained development and restrained the creation of a market in land for housing in these villages. This restraint (proximity to the Indian border and needs for approvals by the military) on growth on the eastern periphery of Lahore ended once the army itself became a major land development agent in the area.

Initiated in 1977, in the first four phases of this housing with the total area of 11.3 km² were developed from 1978–1993 (Zaman & Baloch, 2011)⁴. Where first four phases took 15 years

⁴ Phase 1, commenced and completed during 1978-1982. Phase 2 (1981-1984), Phase 3 (1983-1988), Phase 4 (1986-1993), Phase 5 (2001), land acquisition was done between 2002/2003 for phases 6-10 however phase 6 was officially launched in March 2005; phase 7 was launched in 2008 which is further divided into two phases, phase 1 of it was developed between 2008-2015 and the development of its second phase began in 2015 till to date; whereas the built-up began around 2006/2007, DHA got the NOC approval for EME (Phase 12) in 2006. DHA acquired EME in 2003, massive development happened in 2012 and was named as DHA Phase 12; reports reveal that EME officially began in 2006. DHA Phase 8 development commenced since 2016. IVY Green was

to be built, the remaining nine phases developed in 24 years. The rapid pace of expansion of the elite housing on the south-east makes its distinctive.

The research focuses on expansion since 1999 when Lahore Cantonment Co-Operative Housing Society (LCCHS) was converted to DHA Lahore through a provincial ordinance. Later in 2002 it was federalized - taken as the birth of DHA Lahore (A. Ahmed, 2023; DHA website, n.d.; Siddiqa, 2007). Since then, the southeast periphery of Lahore became a hub for business in land for DHA which opened floodgates for several other private developers such as Imperial Garden and Paragon (on the other side of *Barki Road*). Nonetheless, DHA has been considered as a brand in housing which is meant to meet the needs of the rich. It is a posh resident and has been known as a status symbol. People living on a piece of land, called DHA, are sitting over millions of worth of properties (see Fig. 1), therefore, it is fairly easy to place them in the top social tier.

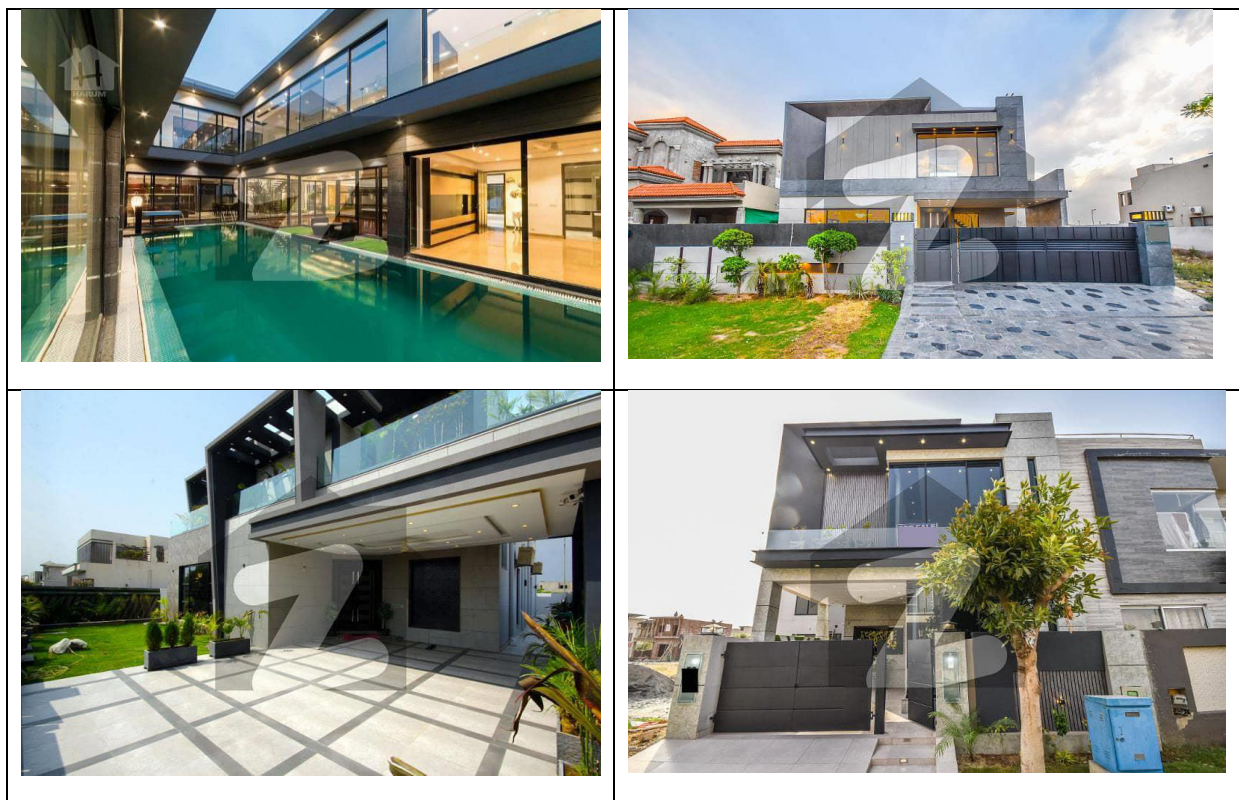


Figure 1: Examples of house prices in posh locality 'DHA': 0.05 ha house with full basement, DHA, 108.5 million PKR (360406 €, top left), 0.05 ha house without basement, DHA, 68.5 million PKR (2275376 €, top right), 0.03 ha house, DHA, 50 million (166086 €, bottom left), 0.01 ha house, DHA, 16 million PKR (53147 €, bottom right). All pictures have been taken from (https://www.zameen.com/Homes/Lahore_DHA_Defence-9-1.html). Prices of the houses are variable based on phase, location, design and architecture

launched in March 2015 and (sector Z) development started from July 2016, Phase 9 called Prism was launched in February 2016, DHA Rahbar (Phase 11), previously known as Rangers Society, later on it was taken over by DHA was launched in 2015 and phase 13 (DHA City) was launched in July 2010. DHA took 15 years to develop first four phases, however the remaining phases and extension i-e 9 phases were developed or on the road of development within less than 24 years. DHA Phase 10 has been launched recently, in April 2024. The information has been collected from DHA homepage, different websites and YouTube.

1.3 Contribution

Urbanisation brought transformation in the peripheral villages of Lahore over the long haul of a couple of centuries. Since the 2000s it has happened rapidly in villages of southeast of Lahore. It also underscores that development can't be seen and followed by blind optimism that has legitimized resource confiscation from the GS and now same can be witnessed from city-periphery dichotomy, the development as 'executioner' of villages, agrarian economy and rural ecology to facilitate the rich and wealthy. Yes, this is not a first study on development critique yet the vast literature cannot pay much attention to bring voices of the most unheard to the fore ethnographically for the provision of empirical record of localised communities' perceptions and experiences.

Existing literature highlights physical, symbolic displacement and place attachment (Atkinson, 2015; Bose, 2020; Celestina, 2016), the role of state and the violence of laws (A. S. Akhtar, 2006; Barman & Chowdhury, 2024), spatial transformation using remote sensing showing land use change/vegetation cover/surface temperature (Abdullah, 2023; Zafar et al., 2024), groundwater as a resource and its extraction (Birkinshaw, 2022) etc. A glaring omission is a record and theorisation of the narrative of the local communities - their everyday encounters with the process and its role in changing individuals and community, by restructuring and revamping space and place. Land is not just a physical landscape but it is intrinsically social in character. Villages are the holders of unique ecology because there is no isolation and individualism in rural life. Land binds people, people are obliged to mother earth that provides them livelihood, food, subsistence. Villagers in turn do not treat land as a commodity but feel responsible to take care of it. This brings people together because agriculture needs a manpower, labourer, even in hierarchal structure, people from top to bottom tier are co-dependent. Agricultural labour, artisanal castes used to provide services to farmers, landlord pay back for services in kind. The villagers either learnt or inculcated the art of sharing and reciprocity which provided them safety net. People did not know physical and emotional hunger (discussed in detail in chapter 5). The graveyards that become the biggest bone of contention when realtors laid their eyes on burial grounds of emotional significance, the preservation of history, a sense of belonging to lineage and a secured piece of land after death. The world is crumbling, ecology is disappearing and communities are already starving for the sense of connectedness they had due to their relations. The quality of life is declining due to the loss of intangibles which they cherished the most. The intangible wealth can't be seen through naked eye, the quality of life and how it is impacting cannot be

judged by looking at physical manifestation of development through land-use change. But, in order to understand what development has brought to the table, what these marginalised communities have gained or lost, one must have to go deeper, has to put façade aside, has to develop trust and compassion for people to fathom the reality of development, to identify the real beneficiaries and the ones who are paying for it. The question of ‘how’ is of paramount importance and can only be addressed through ethnographic research which itself is a contribution and fills a methodological gap. Even today, geographers don’t place ethnography as a method in the field, whereas the primary method of choice has been ethnography to study people their aspirations, fear, the power of resistance, opinions about the process across class, gender, generation and ethnic groups. Through this study, I also put emphasis on including methodologies that can help in finding answers instead of focusing on a particular field. It is an interdisciplinary project and research should be beyond labels and tags. I am writing this dissertation on behalf of all the knowledge-producers (the interlocuters) who wore heart on their sleeves and allowed me to share part of their lives.

The other aspect that this work foregrounds is the rejection and dismissal of nostalgia. It is a powerful emotion that holds significant unheard stories of change and experiences which also provide a reference point to draw comparison with the present. There are hardly any studies available on sociology of nostalgia from south Asia; deserves due recognition in sociology (Jacobsen, 2023). I argue that nostalgia must not be seen superficially and it should be given a due recognition in research that revolves around communities and their relation with development. It is easy to sweep it under the rug by calling it ‘a memory of old good days’- indicates detachment and lack of empathy for those who have been deprived of their traditional lives. Nostalgia itself is the documentation of change that is written on every individual’s mental landscape also an indication of active minds, very much alive and registering observations, giving eternity to people, place, relations, environment through all five senses. The memories were once their real-life events and emotions. Therefore, nostalgia is nothing but the reality of their lives, that is why provides a realisation of loss when they can no longer experience in present times. The communities are trapped in a process of change where they can feel the loss but can’t revert it. It is not incorrect to say that nostalgia plays role in giving birth to poets and the creation of folklores and poems. A few Punjabi verses from a long poem about change, written by a local poet are translated. The following excerpt is about a new face of a village post 2002:

*Now my village is plagued by a new disease
 A businessman arrived desiring to buy land for money
 Roads and houses constructed, have surrounded the village from all sides
 Eyes no longer see the agricultural lands, gone are water channels and water wells
 mother earth which fed us our daily bread and butter is ruined
 All the gardens and orchards are destroyed and crop field are seen no more
 Everyone is chanting ‘money, money’, but no one any longer calls and remembers the ‘poet’*

(The ‘poet’ is replaced with the original name of the poet by a researcher to keep his anonymity)

The change has also been recorded and made visible through the use of Remote Sensing and Geospatial Information System (GIS). It is an excellent tool to develop maps for the virtual representation of change in pixels. There were no maps of villages of Lahore⁵ apart from a Russian map (1955) which is quite old and that we garnered from the Heidelberg University Library. I could not get any updated, recent maps dedicated to villages which shows the neglect even on the level of cartography of village geographies. Lahore city masterplans do not show any villages in the peripheries that were going to be lost in the city expansion. Therefore, through this work, effort is made to develop maps to keep a history of these locales which has not been documented in recent times⁶ and is in the process of being totally transformed. Remote sensing data need to be validated on the ground which otherwise would leave discrepancies in virtual and on-field data. My intimate knowledge and photographic documentation helped to create a reliable record of the terrain.

The sum and substance of the significance is that it is tale of environmental change in a frontier of speculative development based on the narratives of the villagers. It is a story of

⁵ The one-on-one conversation with GIS expert in Lahore (2024) also confirmed the lack of work on mapping which is unfortunate.

⁶ Before British came, India had several kingdoms as per political division but village life tied with culture shaped ‘India’. The Battle of Plassey in 1757 ended the Mughal rule and started the British rule in India, which was also the harbinger of surveying and mapping that continued well for over 100 years. The geography of India was not much known upto 18th century, but several maps of India that were came out from i France, Venice, England and Holland, based on information collected from people (e.g., traders, mariners, travelers, route surveys. The British came to Indian Subcontinent as it was rich in resources and biodiversity which attracted Europeans and East India Company to land in 1600 for trade purposes. Hence after, established three presidencies: Bombay, Madras and Calcutta during the early decades of 17th century for trade. Later two events (1757 battle and Tipu Sultan’s demise in 1799) led to other two events in the history of geographical survey in India – the setup of Survey Department and the invention of Great trigonometrical survey (GTS) in India. Three major surveys – GTS, topographical and revenue surveys were carried out in most parts of India during 19th century that were integral for mapping from the field and village to country level. During the late 19th and early 20th century, most of the villages (6.4 lakhs) were surveyed and cadastral maps were prepared. These practices were closely linked to attempts of British Raj to conquest, rule, control, administer and resource exploitation. The information is taken from (Kalpagam, 1995; Meenakshi, 2023; Paudel et al., 2021).

melancholy for the majority and happiness for a few. It attempts to evaluate a local project of ‘development’ in light of the narratives and manifest change in the lives of villagers and perceptions. For small landowners it did bring money but took away many intangibles that can never be commodified. Greater prosperity came to those who are already prosperous but even their narrative of social change did not paint an entirely positive view of development. They however did appreciate the monetary gain and the advanced, modern amenities they had acquired. Other than economic class the village communities are an amalgam of gendered, ethnically and religiously differentiated individuals. They in case of the villages are more directly attached to land-based production and deeply connected as community. The historical Punjab village was a self-sufficient functioning whole with its own production and local services⁷. The encounters are influenced by the geographical location too, for instance, speaker from a ghetto, participants from walled off localities, those who live in a village and then the ones who have migrated (in-situ or moving out to an upscale locality). In addition to that, *who is facing it and how*, cannot be conceived unless the gender, age (young, middle or senior) with respect to their class are taken into consideration. They all come together to tell from first-hand experience to let others know the facts. They tell a story of loss and the role of money and power of state i-e (the role of military in aggressive support of urbanising processes) in the making of a new environment and the marginalisation of the weakest. They lamented the loss of communities, a feeling of being displaced without physically displacement. They are nostalgic over the loss of *Mahoal* - an environment, they will never be able to recreate with one-time compensation money, because everything is not for sale! The nostalgia is real, an amputee will of course keep missing a limb which was once a part of his life. The loss of land, culture, traditions, community is an invisible amputation and people recall it everyday.

⁷ The agricultural land is immobile that binds communities to it and provides stability. It is life-bearing in plethora of ways. Land is the major means of production and subsistence. People even in villages in contemporary times are still not fully dependent on market economy and their survival is dependent and managed within the village. Even the landless does not go hungry. The exchange was more in kind rather through money. A focused group discussion (2021) at Pathanke’s Lambardar house, a Patwari explained, *‘People in villages are more dependent on animals than the produce as yield happens in every 6 months whereas, through animals, one can earn on daily basis. But the thing is that the debts are paid through services in kind. For instance, in Padhana, loan is also in form of serving a cup of tea for 6-month (time between from one produce to another) let us say. It can be done through sugar as well. We say, when I will get the wheat harvest, you may take one or two sacks of it, in exchange serve me tea for a year. This is how artisanal castes take wheat or fodder as payment for their services.’* Money is not involved in villages as it is in the outside, therefore, their reliance is more on community based on trust, keeping word, courtesy and resources coming from an agrarian setting. Therefore, there is degree of stability in opposition to what cash-economy offers i-e volatility and uncertainty.

The work aims to bring into view evident material changes as well as the psychological, emotional toll that development processes take on communities and distorts the social landscape in agrarian societies once tied to land and livestock. The planners and influential realtors are thriving on commodifying intangible assets out of which security is the most valued. Fear of the outsiders, new expenses and loss of identity - is now pervasive. The periphery and communities are the living, breathing proof of urban expansion as a failed development policy that has jeopardised natural resources such as fertile soil, productive land, water and has destroyed relatively stable ecological zones. The militarized colonization of land has sabotaged the social realm by fragmenting communities where cash induction has played a vital role in deepening class cleavage, mutating social ties and the inculcation of sense of individuality supplanted by collectivism.

In order to understand and to ensure social justice, planners and state have to understand development from the perspective of those who suffer it. To understand the processes critically, the notion needs to be dropped, ‘this is not new, it happens everywhere’, ecologies are diverse and unique in nature and if something happens everywhere – it gains a lot more significance and screams for not just serious but sincerest attention, a need for recognition and acknowledgment instead of getting used to it.

1.4 Research question and objectives

Can cash compensate for loss of community and ecological destruction in peri-urban villages of Lahore? Study examines ‘how’ peri-urban communities ‘experience’ the urbanisation as the State’s project of development resultant in socio-ecological change through market in land and influx of cash as ‘compensation packages’.

The objectives are:

- To determine the role of cash as compensatory compensation in restructuring space and society in peri-urban villages in Lahore
- Document change in socioecological worlds based on local voices especially females in rural communities
- Situate the development of elite housing in peri-urban villages within larger processes of urbanisation on national and global level

1.5 Structure of the Dissertation

Chapter 1 introduces the study, its significance, reason for choosing it, central thesis, objectives and how the thesis has been structured.

Chapter 2 gives an overview to the study area where research has been conducted. This chapter also describes the history of urbanisation in Lahore. However, to compare spatial and temporal change happening due to driving forces such as economic developments and presence of power structures and also to see how it is different in contemporary times.

Chapter 3 is about the theoretical framework in which the work has been theorized. It also highlights the relevant themes that have been taken into consideration as they deem relevant and quintessential to strengthen the argument. Also, to fathom urbanisation as a multifaceted process that has transcended the conventional definition, stating migration from rural to urban areas. Now, cities have expanded viciously, broken and disrespected the boundaries of stable ecological zones that used to sustain cities also but now bearing the brunt of hollow developments and helpless in facilitating the myopic view of economic growth to support lie which neoliberal economic policies implemented by states want people to buy and believe regardless of their will.

Chapter 4 is a detailed description of methodology adopted to carry out research. It is a mix of qualitative methods – however, ethnography was the primary method of gathering empirical data on social change. The physical locale was mapped to show the change in land historically and in terms of ecological aspects that have mutated. and quantitative – There is a dire need for mapping as maps are not available in any significant detail or variety for the city and particularly on rural areas in Pakistan. The purpose of making maps for the virtual representation of change over the long haul is an attempt to give due importance to villages with their proper placement on map. It will be a contribution to cartography. Chapter 4 provides a detailed account of ethnography, the purpose of choosing it as a primary method and why it turned out to be a tool to fix all the pieces of the jigsaw puzzle. The reservations due to researcher's positionality and limitations have also been exposed in both quantitative and qualitative research methods.

Chapter 5 is the soul of dissertations as it illustrates results being drawn from the data collected from the people in their natural, lived environments. The chapter has two distinctive halves such as physical manifestation of land-use change and the social degradation and how

both these paramount features are deeply connected to form an ecology. Both physical and social transformation are further classified into sub-themes. Results are supported by using quotations from interviews and arguments are referenced by the ones who were on-ground, real-life knowledge producers with face and voice.

Chapter 6 is the discussion chapter with the purpose of looking at similarities but also the dissimilates by comparing it to other case studies available in the literature. It is also to underscore the area or aspect of the process that has taken different forms, shapes and names over time yet still not commonly talked about. It is significant not because there are not many studies available that look at the process through people' experiences, mundane routines, aspirations, apprehensions and whether they are changing or evolving with the invasion of money, and if the gain and loss account has any consistency despite having success stories. Cash or money as a symbol of power may fix certain problems but if it can ever compensate what people are losing in the process from where their true power, resilience, resistance and certainty is coming from which the market world can't provide to the volatility it has. Research also argues that such developments are only taking developing countries backward and needs to be re-conceptualized as it is only deteriorating quality of resources and degrading lives by aggrandizing the class cleavage, disparity and crack within communities by instilling capitalist's behavior such as individualism instead of collectivism and competition in lieu of reciprocity.

Chapter 7 is the last and final chapter of the dissertation in order to conclude the study.

Chapter 2

Study Area

This chapter sheds light on the process of urbanisation and its role in shaping Lahore historically. It is not a new process but has gained tremendous traction in the times of neoliberal globalization. Neo-liberal policies are aimed at unleashing economic growth through urbanisation that has created high demand for land. This land transaction and its transition is facilitated by the state, market, urban restructuring, land use planning and state policies including evictions and displacements. Lahore's periphery too has witnessed immense land development through the aegis of private capital supported by state policies as well as through the state's active participation as development partner of the private sector⁸.

2.1 History of urbanisation in Lahore

The history of Lahore is 2000 years old, gained much prominence during Mughals, however, dynamics of Lahore in terms of urban expansion and gained shaped and momentum during colonial times (Abbas & Wakil, 2023). Punjab was annexed by Britishers in 1849 and since then it underwent through massive transformation in the name of modernity/coloniality through land privatization, developed agriculture, enclosure of commons and extraction of resources (Ranauta, 2020) and most importantly Canal Colony Project in the region, with the establishment of extensive water irrigation network which turned barren land into South Asia's one of the major centres for commercialized agriculture (Ali, 1987). The agricultural colonization through making canal colonies unbridled the process of urbanisation in Punjab (B. Singh & Singh, 2019).

⁸ Neoliberalism has also restructured social hierarchy by putting military at the top as influential capitalist class and the backbone of the national security apparatus. The 'authoritarian state' has formed with the help of five apparatuses i-e army, police, courts, bureaucracy, prisons to accumulate capital and power for military class and its foreign 'allies'. Harvey (2005)'s understanding of neoliberalism with regards to military is typified by 'cronyism', where corporations have close connections with military and provides them a route to military to access markets and take up infra- urban development projects. The alliance between the military and local and foreign capitalist classes play role in obtaining primary control over the urban land markets in country's major and big cities. DHA, Lahore has expanded into rural realm on the East-side in proximity to the cantonment for which it targeted agricultural lands and village communities to create high-end gated society by maxing out the real-estate value and to minimize resistance through reinforcing security infrastructure. It is only to cater the upper classes meanwhile poor and marginalised villagers are treated as burden. DHA ascertains its authority to design its own bylaws which were in violation with Lahore Master Plan, also has excluded itself from the requirement of LDA's approval for land development due to its legitimate position (the shared information has been gathered from literature, especially Ahmed (2023)).

The Punjab region was of immense importance to Britishers and a stronghold for British colonial power prior to independence and partition of sub-continent in 1947. The development of canal colonies with the establishment of canal-irrigation system during the late 19th century was not only to develop a commercial agriculture system in Punjab but to erect the power- structure which could support British rule in the subcontinent (Ali, 1979). The conversion of uncultivated area or ‘desert’ into rich agricultural lands, the development of means of communication and transportation through railways, cantonment areas, cash crop production replacing local agricultural practices were not for the good of common man but to serve imperial rule and accumulation. It was exploitation of the natural resources of the region and by ruination of the traditional economy (B. Singh & Singh, 2019). The development of canal colonies led to massive changes in the physical and social landscape of the Punjab region. It created one of the biggest migrations from the more developed regions of East Punjab to the newly colonized lands in the West. For the colonists it provided a huge workforce for large scale commercial agriculture and the migrant families inhabiting canal colonies sent their sons to serve the British army (Ali, 1988). Akhtar (2006) says that the development interventions gave British immense power and made it easier for them to get hands on the means of production such as land and water resources by allotting huge tracts of lands to select upper caste of landed agriculturalists and military personnel thus creating a class of loyalists. Faction which was of no use to the British Raj were excluded from land rights and land grants such as the landless artisans and rural poor. It was the time when communities were divided into two major categories i-e land owners and the landless.

The bottom line is that the urbanisation of rich agricultural lands in Lahore is not a new phenomenon, roots lie back in 19th century colonial rule (W. J. Glover, 2008) as the new colonial developments of civil lines, cantonment, railway colonies and modern planned areas were developed outside the walled city. The direction of most post-partition development was towards the south, given the river Ravi on the west and the border on the eastern periphery. Most of the planned development was in line with the modern paradigm of grid-iron sprawl for primarily middle and upper class consumption (Chattha, 2012).

2.2 Continued colonization

Even after gaining independence, the elites left by the British including military and civil bureaucracy have been taking the advantage of their position and accruing control over land and pegging down highest defence-budgets by claiming the reward for their courage to

protect the borders. Their involvement in politics of the country and alliances with landed class and feudal landlords, mushroomed their strength, influence and power. Alavi (1972) explained Pakistan as post-colonial society (PCS amongst others) followed the inherited structure consists of the organized bureaucracy and high-powered military structure which was established by British i-e the presence of powerful bureaucratic-military apparatus to rule indigenous social classes), and native bourgeoisie (once used to oppose military and landed classes) was not strong and apt enough to develop a new structure by themselves, hence they couldn't dominate even in post-colonial period. On the other hand, weakness of one class gave more power and strength to military bureaucratic oligarchy to maintain and gather more power to be autonomous in order to rule the society.

The military not only became politically influential but also built an economic empire over the haul as they were involved in multiple economic activities; however, the military's interest in acquiring land to multiply its financial gains has become more evident through DHA's rapid expansion on the south-east periphery of Lahore in less than two decades. Not just for villagers but for DHA also, land is a symbol of power. Siddiqua (2007) states that the military is dominant when it comes to agricultural land as it controls 59% of the total land in rural areas. Further she mentions that land which was allotted to military personnel from 1965-2003 in Lahore alone was 273,413 acreages (110,646 ha) and the built-up area by DHA in Lahore only is 30,000 acres (12,141 ha).

2.2.1 Military's real-estate venture - Defence Housing Authority (DHA)

The armed-forces real-estate business through developing gated housing schemes known as Defence Housing Authorities (DHA) has been one of the most profiteering ventures. DHAs have been built in major cities of Pakistan such as Lahore, Karachi, Islamabad, Multan, Bahawalpur, Gujranwala and Peshawar (Article, 2023). It has been considered the most upscaling gated community which is not just a residential area for affluents but known as a brand in housing. DHA is a military real-estate business and one of their ventures through which they have built their economic empire and uncontested political position gives them power to 'rule'. DHA's ideology is designing residential communities is the continuation of colonial practices that is and will only exacerbate social and economic differences (Shahbaz, 2022). DHA has been expanding at the expense of rural areas from where the authorities can easily acquire land from villagers at the lowest possible rate to create huge profit margins. The acquisition raises questions on 'choice', fair deals, compensations, use of violence and

coercions and several unjust tactics which label land tycoons as feudal landlords. (Land acquisition process in contemporary times will be discussed in detail in result section)

For instance, Akhtar & Rashid (2021) takes Islamabad as a case study to foreground the processes of urbanisation, fuelling dispossession of urban and rural working classes living on agrarian-urban frontier to lubricate windfall profit making business activities through real-estate development due to land speculation under ‘financialization’ which is a common practice in several other places in the world. Authors argue that the city and its development in the country is highly militarised and draw a linkage between militarization and urbanisation primarily ushers to unregulated suburbanisation and inappropriate utilization of land. Military has taken over 12% of state land of which 62% alone from Punjab. Since Pakistan’s military is the country’s largest gated housing scheme developer (Rahman, 2016), has been acquiring land through Land Acquisition Act, 1894 which helps military to have financial gains that often results in displacing communities. As the military has been involved in the politics and has been maintained privileged political clout, it gives an easy access to details concerning city development and planning which in turns more becoming for real-estate profit-making (Siddiqua, 2007). The removal of Multan mango orchards for the DHA (Z. Batool, 2021; Staff, 2022) was another manifestation of the cruel and dismal side of the development by the most influential realtor who is also the face of the State.

2.2.2 The power of DHA in Lahore

The army announced the launch of its scheme for developing housing society for retired army officers in the vicinity of Charrar village in 1977 (see Fig. 2). While initially, Charrar residents were reluctant, yet they sold the land as the prices were sufficiently high for the small, cash-poor farmers. Dwellers used the money to buy larger parcels of land farther to the east but kept their houses. All the land except the settled land and graveyards were acquired by the then Lahore Cantonment Cooperative Housing Society (LCCHS) which has since 2002 been restructured as Defence Housing Authority (DHA). The first four phases of this housing were developed in fifteen-year time span from 1978–93 (Zaman & Baloch, 2011) and then it took unimaginable pace from early 2000s till date. The development by DHA is underway at bewildering speed erasing historical villages, fields, orchards. The proximity to the Indian border and needs for approvals by the military, for growth on the eastern periphery of Lahore ended as the army itself became a major land development agent in the area. Today DHA Lahore has 13 phases in total and has covered 44,000 acres (17,806 ha) of land in the

city (Plopterty, n.d.). The land acquisition for later phases happened in 2002 around *Barki* and *Bedian* roads and built-up began in 2006/2007. Starting again from DHA phase 5 which was launched in 2001 and had acquired large swathes of agricultural lands on the south-east of Lahore (Anjum & Hameed, 2007). The expansion continues and does not seem to come to an end⁹. In order to acquire land, the ‘land acquisition law 1894’ that has not changed much since the colonial era, according to which developer has to pay compensation to the landowner¹⁰.

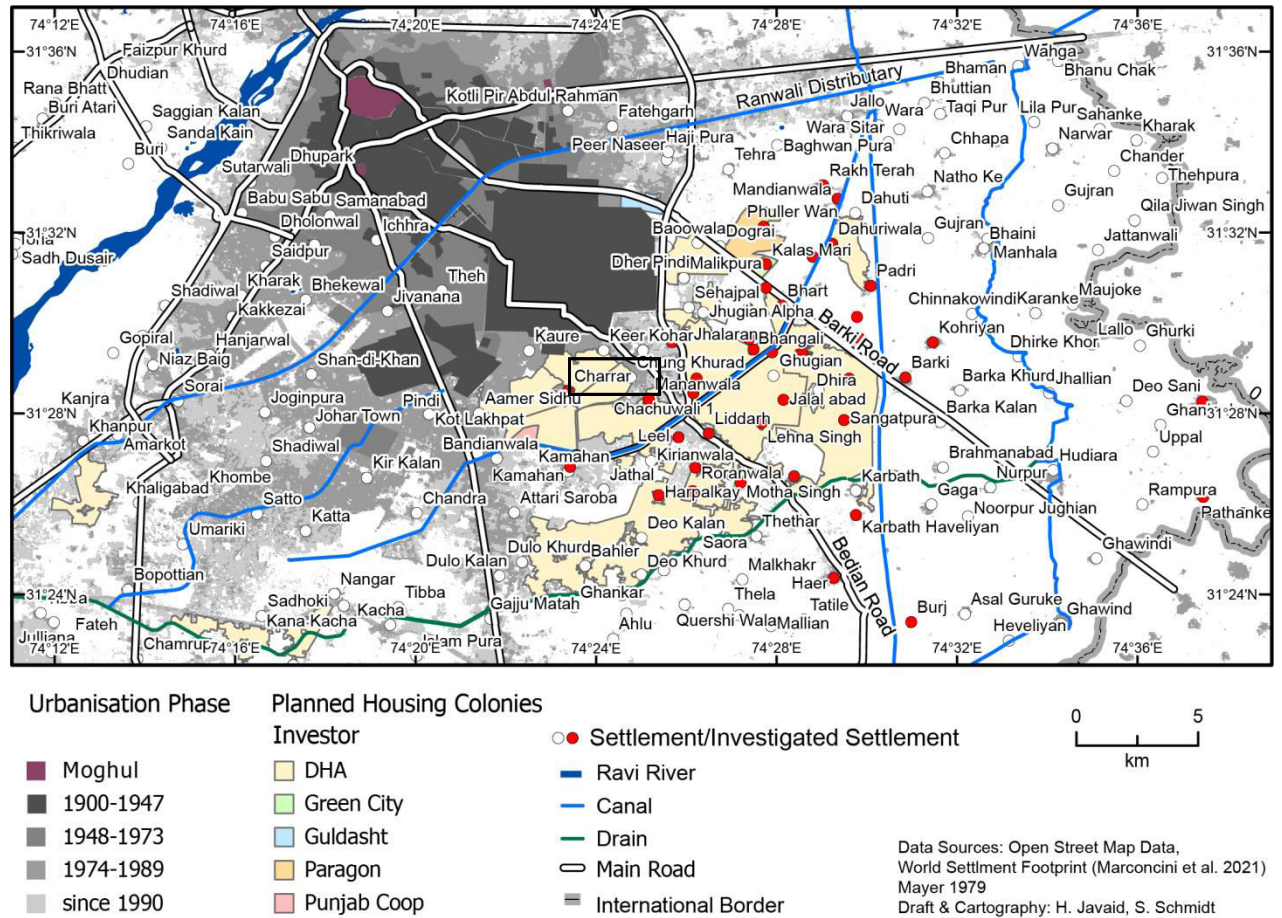


Figure 2: Spatial and temporal change in Lahore; Charrar set the path for the military

⁹ The personal interview (2024) with well-established land providers who work for DHA revealed that according to development-related future plans of DHA will cause BRB canal and *Hadiara* drain to be removed. Also, the military farmlands across *Barki* will be erased as DHA is aiming for relentless expansion.

¹⁰ DHA is private housing scheme and LDA is the Government or State's controlled urban authority responsible for land development in Lahore. LDA was supported by the Punjab Acquisition of Land (Housing) Act 1973 which was enacted during the Bhutto's reign. It helped state to take-over land at affordable rate which was 40,000 PKR (133 €)/0.405 ha until Zia-ul-Haq came and not only cancelled the Act in 1985 but replaced it with Land Acquisition Act of 1894 which was a huge set-back for LDA (A. Ahmed, 2023; Anjum & Hameed, 2007)

2.3 Research site – Peri-urban villages southeast of Lahore

Southeast of Lahore is the latecomer in the process of development. The periphery took a long time to get urbanised as the cantonment lay between the city and the border area villages. Border itself constrained development as it was a huge reservation for people due to geo-political concerns and fear stemming from the rocky relations between two countries, due to which the creation of a market in land for housing was on halt. Later, all masterplans for Lahore concentrated on the south-eastern periphery for development which was characterized by suburban sprawl. It was only in the masterplan (LDA, 2016) for Lahore, that agricultural area around *BRB Canal*, *Bedian Road*, *Hudiara Drain*, *Khaira distributary*, *Barki Road* and *Shalimar Link Road* was designated for development (Javed, 2015).

The south-eastern periphery of Lahore has been undergoing massive transformation since 2000. The change in physical landscape took on a hectic pace with the construction of the new terminal of the *Allama Iqbal* international airport opened in 2003, adjacent to the old terminal on the south-eastern fringe of the Lahore city. This former rural area is dotted by dozens of villages which till 1947 lay sandwiched between the twin cities of Lahore (Pakistan) and Amritsar (India) which are 2500 km² apart. The area on the eastern outskirts of Lahore is not new to drastic social change. Lying close to the border between Lahore and Amritsar the villages were thrown into the turmoil of population exchange in 1947. Historically too as the villages between two major cities of Punjab, it had been very prone to impacts of urban political and economic change compared to the villages deeper in the hinterland. However, recent social change is more structural. Even during partition 1947, villagers had moved as clans, they were mostly from villages sharing links through marriage and exchange and their basic way of life was tied to the land. The twin cities of Punjab, Lahore and Amritsar bore the brunt of 1947 partition the most (Talbot, 2007).

Today the international border between India and Pakistan divides this area almost in half. Two major roads *Barki* and *Bedian* connected towns before the partition of British India. This is a rich agricultural land watered by 117 km² long *Bambanwala-Ravi-Bedian* (BRB) canal, also called *Ichogil* Canal runs on the eastern boundary of Lahore and its distributaries, built in 1948 by locals for defence purpose to ensure safety of the city (M. Khan et al., 2015) which too flow seamlessly across the border. These villages feed the city as agricultural lands have a capacity to produce variety of food such as vegetables (e.g., carrot, peas) rice, wheat, maize,

mustard, sugarcane and fruit trees (such as mango, orange, guava amongst others), are also a source of manpower for the city.

The class structure in the rural realm is attached to land itself. As, (Ahmad, 1970; Gazdar & Mallah, 2012) explain rural stratification is not only on the basis of agrarian classes but also organized in a social order according to the occupations (agricultural and non-agricultural), socio-economic status (possession of cattle, income generated from the harvest, ornaments, utensils, furniture, tools) , asset ownership and in (Ahmad, 1970)'s word, 'two broad division on the basis of occupation are cultivators (*Zamindar qoum*) and non-cultivators. Nevertheless, there are further subdivisions within these major groups as well. Big landlords are at the top of the social hierarchy who themselves never cultivate land but hire others to work for them. Then comes rich peasants, who work themselves but hire others also. Middle peasants who are only dependent on their own labour and do not recruit others. Poor peasants, who are landless but still belong to the category of cultivators as they work on other people's land. Finally, artisans who also work as agricultural labour and service providers to the village. Rich landlords are the ones who control means of production which gives them power and influence over the others (Hussain, 1984). Authors might have looked at the class structure differently but one pattern remains unchanged, the people at the lower rung were treated as disposable and their weak positions only weakened further since British times and the cycle continues. The green revolution turned big landlords into capitalist landlords, middle peasants or small landholders had to give up on their land and had to be totally at the mercy of landlords which increased the exploitation. Land reforms which were introduced to resolve the issue of unequal distribution of land never worked out and failed to protect the landless and working class due to political and power clout of the big players (M. A. Z. Mughal, 2019).

During Mughal era, there was a protection to peasants and even the landless which was coming from a rural structure in place. The landlord and tenant/share cropper had co-dependence on each other as all were tied to land as means of production. Grover (1963) in his paper discussing land rights of various classes in Mughal era, quotes Jahangir who issued order that *ryots* (peasant or tenant farmer) could not be expelled against their will, neither did they settle men and cattle from other villages in his own Jagir; loans must also be provided to increase agricultural yield and to bring wasteland under cultivation. Further he states that in the Mughal Age, the state never claimed absolute ownership or farmlands and also recognized private property in land. Moreover, the hereditary rights pertaining to land

ownership, its sale, purchase, mortgage, transfer were bestowed upon *Zamindars* (agricultural colonisers), even the tenants working on the land had also the hereditary rights. The people on the lowest rung of social ladder such as landless who were hired for cleaning jungle or as seasonal labour during the harvest were given the share in the produce according to existing customs and rules in a village. Most strikingly, there was no serfdom or 'villeinage' that would atrociously tie peasants to land and feudal lords, existed during the Mughal epoch. In addition to that land was not even taken as a commodity the way it started happening in late 18th and 19th centuries. British invasion in the sub-continent not only broke the very structure that used to provide shield to every class despite its shortcomings and corruption but the introduction of redeveloped structure which was meant to support a higher class of feudal lords to acquire patronage brought landless, artisans and small peasants to the sheer exclusion, marginalisation due to pierces safety blanket. British Raj left the subcontinent but colonialism never loosened its grip even in the post-colonial era.

2.4 Historical significance attached to Villages in the research area

In keeping with the broad land holding profile of Lahore district (GOP, 2011) small landholdings and intense cultivation define the local ecology of the eastern periphery of Lahore city. It is a community of villages connected both socially and physically. Shrines dot the landscape and are sites of annual fairs frequented by villagers from across the area and communities are linked by caste and marriage relations. The interlinked water courses, natural drains and shared road connections to Lahore bind the wide plain does a web of social relations.

Most villages are historical and have been inhabited for a few hundred years¹¹, however, some are smaller settlements of dozens plus homes, where people usually who moved in clans are residing. Many villages, such as *Padhana*, *Charrar*, *Heera Singh*, and *Lehna Singh* were dominated by big non-Muslim landlords prior to 1947. The land of the non-Muslim was distributed to migrants from India, the *Meo* community from *Rohtak* and *Karnal* were one of the notable communities who came and took over the land vacated by non-Muslims. Many of the migrants were Muslims who lived close to the border on the Indian side and had historical and familial ties to these border villages.

¹¹ Personal correspondence with local historian Iqbal Qaiser who is compiling the histories of villages of Lahore district based on the descriptive narratives of the village census in 1881.

Majority of the villagers were small farmers but there was a large number of landless, artisanal castes, poor Christians and Muslim Sheikhs (lowest caste Hindus who had converted to Islam). Muslim majority villages were poorer than those with Sikh and Hindu landowners, for example, the village of *Mandianwala* has virtually no migrants but among the Muslims, there was no big landlord. Villagers in some villages such as *Mandianwala* and *Barki* considered their relative equality in poverty, the basis for their strong community spirit. In *Barki* village, a local lawyer remembered fondly the enthusiasm with which the villagers had voted the populist politician *Zulfiqar Ali Bhutto* to power in the 1970 election. He felt that there was no significant abuse by police and violent crime typical of other parts of Punjab where there are powerful feudal lords. Large parcels of land in few villages belong to the military farms and a large acreage belongs to an important Sikh temple, *Gurdwara Dera Chahal*, which is administered by a special government department the Evacuee Trust Board. People cite the influence of the military and the absence of feudal culture as a reason for a relatively crime free environment and security in the area. *Dera Chahal* has gone through a visible change from an area surrounded by agricultural lands to asphalt roads, renovated houses and urbanised living where the façade does reveal mixed-class residential area

Pakistan was once known as an agricultural-based country now; it is known as a ‘transforming’ country according to a World Bank report based on the relative contribution of agriculture to economic boom and employment (Dudwick, 2011). He also combines ‘the poor’ and geography of the city that is economically behind ‘rural areas’ to examine the rural-urban transformation in South Asia. The purpose of giving this reference is to re-draw attention towards the south-eastern periphery of Lahore especially since the time when in 1999 Lahore Cantonment Cooperative Housing Society (LCCHS), as the name signifies ‘military lands’ which is now DHA phase-1. DHA took another jump when it was finally federalized in 2002. Then the creation of the terminal of *Allama Iqbal* International Airport in 2003 under the rule of *General Pervaiz Musharraf* opened floodgates for land acquisition for the infrastructure development. The infrastructure at such a large scale opened the floodgate for setting up a robust market in land and the presence of the military in the area provided a certain amount of security to people who felt encouraged to invest. This peripheral area which was connected to the main Lahore city through major road networks, later by the ring road, was the agricultural area and the suburbs of ‘the poor’. People used to commute to the city for work and travelled back to their homes in villages. The soil was so fertile that it could grow any seed a farmer would sow. At least one of the family members did not give up on

farming, people with small landholdings might not get the higher returns but used to produce for the household consumption that provided them freedom from market. The houses on the periphery were usually big with a space to keep the animals. The common businesses in these villages were farming and milk selling which used to go hand in hand. Labelling a place as 'poor' only on the basis of Gross Domestic Product (GDP) does not do justice. They were cash-poor but rich in resources and socio-ecological assets. However, this wealth does not fall in mainstream economy but has become an agenda when it comes to plundering and robbing the place of its resources and villagers' social capital. Villages one after the other were subsumed in developing a city for the wealthy faction of society at the expense of those were treated as mere cog in the wheel. DHA being the biggest actor started acquiring agricultural lands through brokers by keeping the business under the wraps. The presence of military and its business in land became rife through physical manifestation on land use change. The most recent development is the building of cavalry ground underpass, *Ghori Chowk* flyover, *Bedian* underpass and Walton flyover to provide signal free commute to the DHA residents that makes 1.5% of total Lahore's population for which Punjab Government spent PKR 7 billion or 23,144,168 € (twitter, 2024). In the past two decades the pace of urbanisation transcended the period of change happened in Lahore in the past two to three centuries alone. The virtual representation of physical transformation (see Fig. 3) is appalling as it clearly shows the infrastructure spreading over the terrain like a fire. It shows a dichotomy even within the limited region between urbanised city and green agricultural areas towards the east.

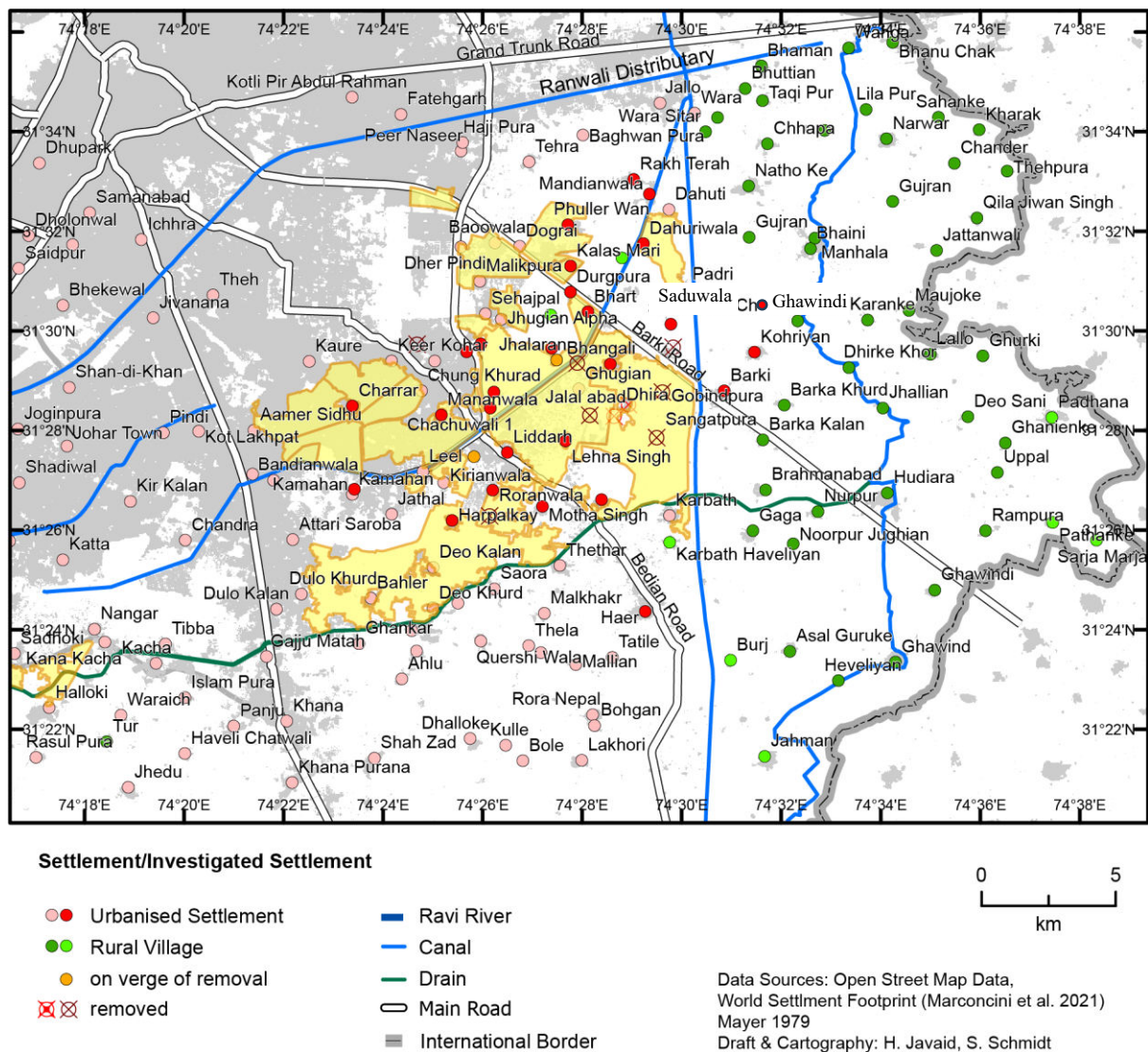


Figure 3: Footprint of Defence Housing Authority (DHA), Lahore

Where Fig. 2 shows expansion of Lahore over the period of time, starting from Mughal era as Lahore held a special place for Mughal emperors. With the arrival of British raj, and the establishment of canal colonies, the city transformed tremendously. The development continued after partition which was (as mentioned earlier) south-ways over the long haul. However, neoliberal epoch unleashed irregular unchecked city expansion towards east also where DHA has been the primary player (see Fig. 3) but has opened floodgates for many private developers and investors. The pace of urbanisation is unimaginable. Lahore took couple of centuries to be transformed, but the south-eastern periphery took 20 years only through rapid urban expansion and commodification of arable lands and causing havoc in localised communities agrarian world. The DHA's 40-year journey (1977 till to date) in totality when military started acquiring land from Charrar and getting bigger and powerful with passing years (see Fig. 4) pertinent to building high-end gated communities and emerged

as the most influential developer that claims to be answerable to none. Otherwise, 25 years (1999¹² to date) of military's established economic empire of which DHA is a big part The Phase 10 has just been launched and announced in February 2024.

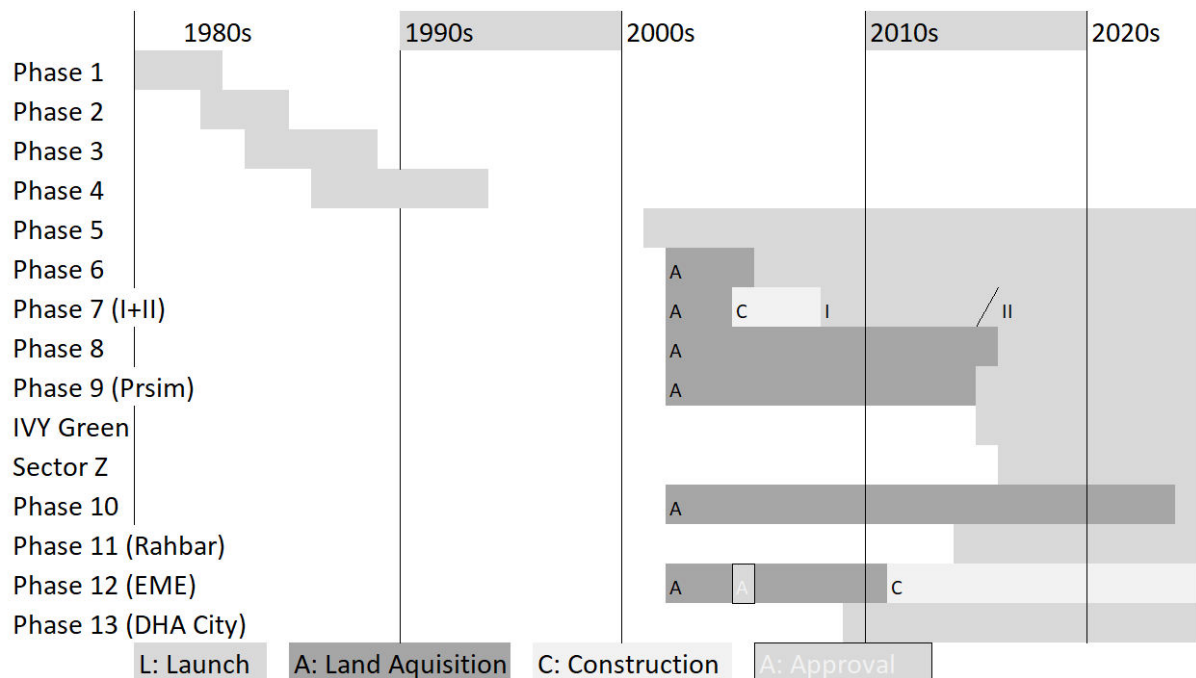


Figure 4: Years of military's real-estate business in Lahore

A following list of villages including those which were removed already and researcher could not get a chance to visit. Nonetheless, the purpose of adding these villages to the list is an attempt to develop an inventory of villages which were and are present in the area (see Fig. 5). The ones which are present are going through transformation either in form of on the verge of extinction, pocketed or walled off by the DHA Phases or other private housing schemes, also, the places that have become an example of degraded ecology and have become a ghetto. The villages are divided according to the development stage these locales are at:

- A) Razed Villages:** These are the villages that are removed from the face of the earth completely and supplanted by the symbols of modern infrastructure.
 - **Completely razed (7):** Pathanwala, Heera Singhwala/Heera Singh, Gobindpura, Jalal abad, Sangatpura, Haveliyan, Luhar Pura
 - **On the verge of removal (in total 3):** Chak¹³ Dhira, Jhallaran, Natha Singh

¹² 1999 - when LCCHS finally converted to DHA (<https://dhalahore.org/about-us/history/>)

¹³ Chak refers to the villages which were established in canal colonies under the British Raj.

Note: The DHA phase 8 masterplan indicates the removal of Chachuwali in near future.

B) Settlements: Agricultural lands are sold and houses are left behind, hence are now no longer considered as a village. Also, the removal of arable lands and the urbanism-takeover in the localities is conspicuous (in total 26): Jindra Kalan (a part of it has been taken over by DHA), Chak Bhart, Lehna Singh, Dahoorwala/Dahuriwala, Kohriyan, Harpalke, Kalasmari, Bhangali, Chachuwali 1 and 2, Tibba, Mananwala, Roranwala, Liddarh, Gohawa, Mandianwala, Haer, Charrar, Saduwala, Ghawindi, Kamahan, Mota Singh, Phuller Wan, Dera Chahal, Durgpura, Barki

C) Villages (in total 9, including border villages and military farm villages): Burj, Chughalpura (Habib abad), (Rakh) Padri, Padhana, Pathanke, Sarja Marja, Jahman, Jindri, Haveliyan/ Karbath Haveliyan

Note: Border villages are distinctive as they are farthest to the east and in close proximity to the border, it cannot be invaded by development (for now) due to defence purposes, similarly tall trees are not allowed to be planted for the same reasons. These villages are put under same category as they are still having agrarian living, the rural culture is still intact. Yet, the border villages are taken as a reference point.

D) The gated communities to which people migrated from villages¹⁴: Punjab Co-operative Housing Society/ Al-Ameen Housing Society¹⁵, Guldast town, Paragon city, New Abadi Barki¹⁶

¹⁴ After selling agricultural lands, people bought agricultural lands to the farthest; who sold houses either migrated to other villages where they could have a similar environment or the ones who had better resources moved to newly built housing societies. As moving to DHA is not a cup of tea for villagers, hence not everyone can move to high-end locale that is already labelled as high-class, posh or elite. It is not about the financial affordability but affordable living in terms of psychological and social context too. Buying a house and a luxury car does not allow these migrated villages to fit-in the society that is unable to look at them as equals. In order to make their place, people are supposed to carry themselves in a certain way that includes spoken, branded outfits, latest material gadgets etc. It demands people to lose themselves in the process of becoming an acceptable version for the upper class which is a mere fallacy. Therefore, people tend to move out to such gated communities where they would not feel out-of-place and can find people who are coming from the similar backgrounds.

¹⁵ However, these gated communities also have a reflection of class segregation, might not be as stark as compare to DHA, but it does exist. This gated community is close to DHA phases 3 and 5 and almost at the back of the latter. It is comparatively a small society with 200-300 houses with clean roads. In terms of *braderi*, there is mixed population such as Meo, Jatt (who actually own this place before society was built) and army officials also have plots in the society. Jatts usually have a large landholding and the Meo families (personal interview)

Note: The above-mentioned gated communities are not the only ones where people from villages migrated or new settlers came from other places to live in those communities. There are many and soaring with time. However, the people I have interviewed were from these newly formed societies.

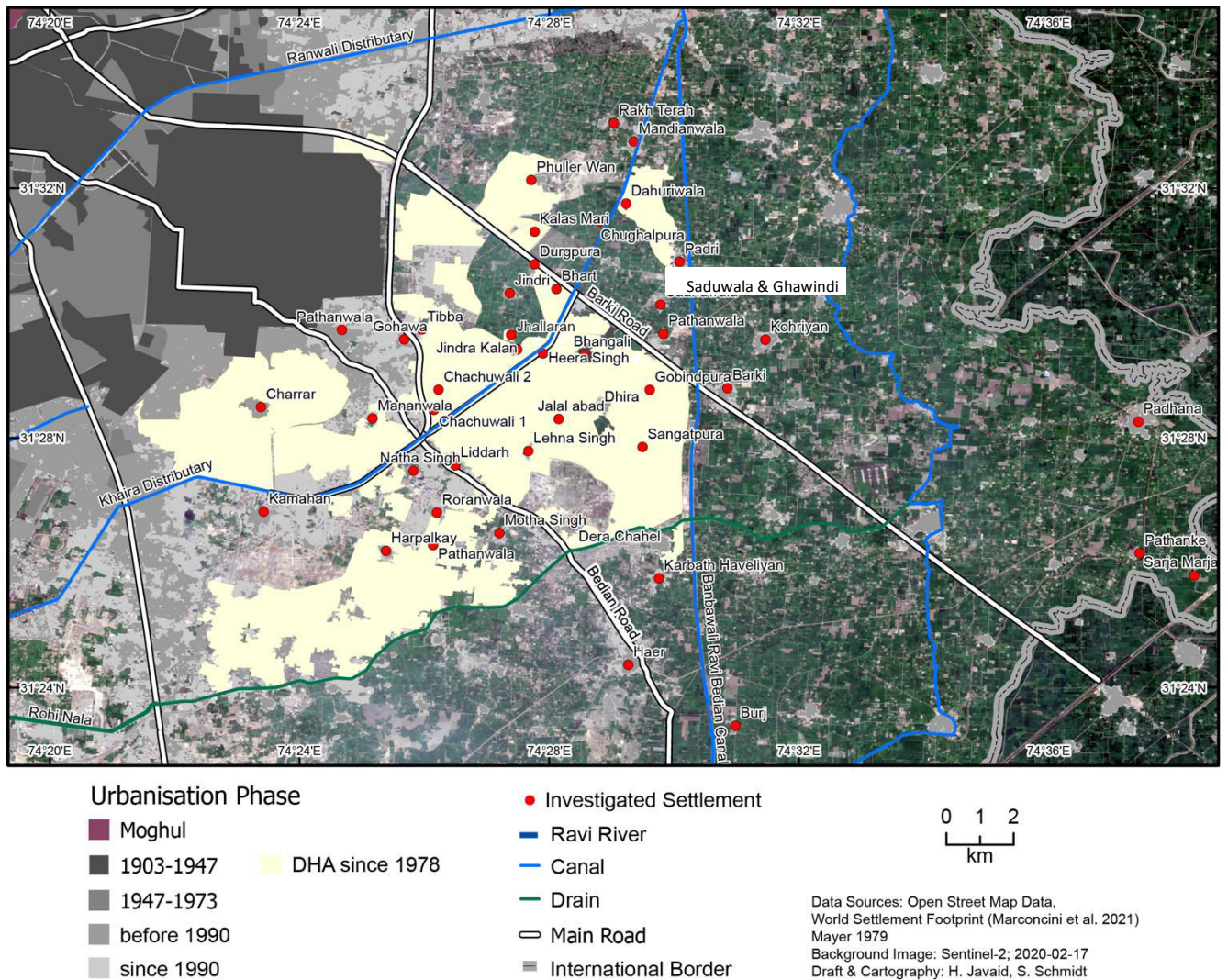


Figure 5: Investigated locales around Barki and Bedian road, Lahore

were amongst the three families of Lehna Singh who had good amount of land, sold it to DHA, bought farmlands in Haer and joined property business. It can be characterized as a locality for the middle-class. Whereas, people from Kalasmari preferred Paragon and one of the reasons lie in the proximity, so that after moving out, they could stay close to their village community. Paragon, Green city, Punjab Society can accommodate the middle class.

¹⁶ However, it is different from the above-mentioned. People who moved here, were coming from Sangatpura or Nathoke, where they did not have the agricultural land and residential area was also quite small. Men in the families were working as wage laborers. The landscape of the society was not close to above-mentioned gated communities and people from lower-income groups were residing there.

Chapter 3

Theoretical framework

3.1 Introduction

The research focuses on socio-spatial transformation due to rapid urban sprawl and attendant environmental disruptions on the periphery of Lahore. It is a documentation of conversion of long sustained village settlements into degraded socio-ecological realms. It is a holistic study aimed at analysis and theorisation of processes of social and material change in the wake of land commodification - the creation of a market in land. Land in the villages was commodified once powerful cash rich investors appeared on the scene to acquire land for development. The cash compensation for land was accompanied with the force of policy and institutional support of the state in favour of land transfer for elite housing. Dispossession, displacement and loss of agrarian land was justified by the award of cash compensation to the landowning farmers. The theory of urban political economy (UPE) has been a holistic and critical and very productive theoretical framework to unfold the actors, institutions and power dynamics that are not only in terms of social and political position of certain actors but the power and influence that comes from money to develop areas for profit (Swyngedouw & Heynen, 2003). According to Swyngedouw & Ward (2020) neoliberal development on the periphery which begins with large scale land grabbing is nothing less than a venture for creating 'mass proletarianization'. UPE was christened as such by Eric Swyngedouw in 1996 but has deeper roots in Marxist political economy (Heynen, 2017). David Harvey and others (Harvey, 2001; Kugkhapan, 2014) theorise the process of land development for urban expansion as a spatial fix strategy for capital. Therefore, the 'question' of geography and its politics is of immense importance in this trajectory of capitalist development not only how it alters space or reproduces it but also how unique geographies provide ground for capitalism to grow though uneven development (Smith, 2008). In present times such development is not only destroying environmental resources but depleting social capital and dismantling traditional societies of global South. Narrative or storytelling in urban world contributes in forming perceptions, which has an impact in forging reality (Ameel et al., 2023). Notions attached to even or uneven, development or undeveloped varies with 'who' speaks for 'whom' and 'how' one narrates the story of change. Rural communities have been living through a process and become weaker and poorer (in the literal and figurative sense) as a

result of state policies aimed at investment in new developments creating landscapes for upscale lifestyles of the rich and erasure of rural locales with local production and subsistence.

Importantly, the most distinct character that drives phenomenon like urbanisation is ‘accumulation’ not only through ‘dispossession’ in economic terms and tangible assets (such as land, home, means of livelihood) but this study is looking at dispossession on much deeper but underrated yet fundamental aspect of change is the dispossession of intangibles that make a quality of life. The aim of this study to make visible the invisible. The villages that are lost in the process used to carry history and its own identity like all those villages who are still standing in precarious conditions, putting people and communities in constant state of anxiousness with a fear of losing sense of belonging and identity to a place, sets the displacement clock which might never stop ticking (Celestina, 2016). The communities are at warfare where they could see cash ruling. Also, the development changing the fate of rural-cultural subsistence finally to be drawn into the market economy and then be lost in the labyrinth of monetary gain and loss.

3.2 Relevant theories and concepts – Building theoretical framework

Political ecology as a field has attracted scholars from various field such as anthropology, development studies, environmental science, sociology, geography so and so forth. Despite varied backgrounds, researchers tend to learn the relation between social, economic and political dimensions to understand the environmental and ecological change. This term was first introduced by French Bertrand de Jouvenel in 1957, and anthropologist Eric R. Wolf in 1972¹⁷. In the 1970s and 1980s it evolved as an approach for studying change especially in the so-called developing countries. This research has started looking at the process of urbanisation through the lens of political ecology and has been put in the Marxist’s urban political ecology framework.

According to Swyngedouw & Heynen (2003), it is a holistic view of the connected socio-political (power structures) and economic processes with a historical understanding of ecological/material world space as a dynamic living environment. Rapid urbanisation is a limb of ‘development’ across the global South creating large-scale commodification of peri-urban and rural land under a neoliberal capitalist development paradigm. The neoliberal economic model has imposed free markets, promoted privatization, resulting in massive

¹⁷ <http://www.ejolt.org/2013/02/political-ecology>

enclosure of public and private land (land grab/ global land rush). It has brought in its wake displacement, dispossessions, loss of livelihoods, plundering of natural resources, food insecurity, environmental and ecological degradation. The ‘development’ narrative of world class cities presents this as introduction of modern infrastructure of road networks, airports, industries, high-rise buildings, secure (gated) communities. Gross suburbanisation on the urban peripheries of cities such as Lahore, Pakistan is seen as path to unburdening the historical inner city, provision of employment opportunities, and influx of cash for poor farmers and a gateway to better life (based on increased consumption). Therefore, UPE can allow to acknowledge the process of ‘urbanisation’ as a concoction of various underlying processes such as political/role of a state, coercion, violence of power (termed as extra economic forces), economic models and policies, social and ecological which all contribute in making urbanisation as a leading process for creating unequal landscapes and inequitable societies with the motive of capital production in cities (Cornea, 2019). The present-day development and the disposal of communities is seen through David Harvey’s theory of accumulation by dispossession where most of wealth or resources goes under the hegemony of a few by depriving the masses. This further leads to his another theory called spatial fix, according to which capitalism needs to find places to dump surplus capital to avoid over-accumulation (Kugkhapan, 2014) which resultantly creates uneven development (I. Khan, n.d.; Smith, 1982, 2008).

However, urban political ecology is focused on ‘city’ unit not only for analysis (Brenner, 2014) but the ‘methodological cityism’ has excluded other aspects of urbanisation processes (Angelo & Wachsmuth, 2015) happening spatially. Urbanisation is not just an urban form or phenomenon but a process of capital accumulation that is not limited to cities only but have expanded to rural areas which carry a different ecology all together. Glover (2021) shared a part of his personal communication with S. Gururani regarding ‘agrarian urbanism’ (Gururani, 2020) that much of the urbanism in India is more deeply rooted in agriculture and the agrarian mode of production burgeons relations of land and community, hence, urbanisation is no longer a city-phenomenon but is ensnared in ‘rural processes and relation’. This is comprehensible that why agrarian question has caught attention again, and why it is pivotal to combine agrarian and urban studies together to have deeper understanding. As the transformation on the agrarian-urban frontier can’t be grasped unless it includes land question which, the ‘urban studies’ especially centering on GN do not apprehend with same urgency.

This is one of the reasons that why south Asian urbanisation driven by changed agrarian dynamics cannot be seen from the same lens as of the GN (Gururani & Dasgupta, 2018)¹⁸.

Social relations are embedded in spatial relations and deeply intertwined whereas capitalism has reduced everything to exchange-value in a way that money is ruling the all aspects of life (Moore, 2015). In the villages, studied for this research, the injection of money is destabilizing and impoverishing the communities. The villagers of per-urban Lahore whose agricultural lands were acquired for a price had lived fairly independent of monetary exchange for many essentials of their lives, both material and intangible. They were cash poor but rich in many aspects. Conceptually it can be compared to Frank (1966)'s 'the development of underdevelopment' which argues that countries are not underdeveloped due to lack of potential of growth but the First World became powerful and wealthy by keeping other nations underdeveloped for their vested economic and political interests. The borrowed development theories and policies from the GN state that development happens in stages and underdeveloped countries are labeled as situated in early stages of development. This is done by rejecting their past social and economic history based on exploitation during colonization. According to Frank (1972) this unequal relation between core and periphery has also created a class of elites and dysfunctional social, political and economic structures enmeshed in capitalist relations, further he (1979) used India as a classic example to explain the process of fostering unequal development through trade and socio-political scenario. The same analogy is used on the parasitical nature of relation of urban areas on the hinterland or traditional societies which are not backward but the modern enclaves and the growth of a ruling class make are 'developed' at the expanse of the hinterland. Hence, capitalist neo-colonization has rekindled the history not on the global level but within the city and its dependence on the countryside for food and labour, and now for land and resource grab. Moreover, the term 'underdevelopment' must not be seen only by the wealthy and powerful First World's standpoint. The villages and these communities were stable, sustained, dependent on each other but not on the uncertain, volatile market world where without cash, a man is crippled.

¹⁸ Urbanisation is certainly not a new process, but the urban transitions occurred in GN after 1800 with industrialisation, and second industrial revolution during 19th century whereas in GS the urbanisation took pace since 1950 or even later (<https://ourworldindata.org/urbanization>). However, the period of 1980's onwards- the era of neoliberalisation has increased the process through structural reforms, land markets, FDIs, infrastructure building and unimaginable urbanisation for more consumption. The GS urbanisation is accelerating and distinctive due to change in agrarian mode of production (Gururani & Dasgupta, 2018). In Pakistan, there is a need to have more explicit and empirical research on rural land and communities and how state policies and power relations create havoc. Nausheen Anwar highlights important processes leading agrarian-urban transformation as a deeply political process

However, since they don't comply with the mainstream definition of the developed societies, it does not mean that they are.

The lens of political ecology (Blaikie, 2008; Robbins, 2012) is a holistic approach that does not isolate but looks at the intertwined nature of social, political and economic policies which eventually cause environmental change. It helps revealing urbanisation as a multifaceted process of capitalist accumulation which is not limited to population shift, and infrastructure building in the city centers to make them engines of growth. Urbanisation as development policy in GS (Clarke, 2018) is imposed to serve the ends of global capitalist expansion. As a matter of fact, from 1980s and early 1990s, capitalism strategically shifted to neo-liberal policies and revolved into phase called neo-imperialism (Enfu & Global, 2021). Critical development studies and the political ecology (Bobby Banerjee et al., 2023; Watts, 2017) literature illuminates the web of actors, institutions, political dimensions and the power dynamics of that shape, state policies and the role of 'money' in expelling, displacing, alienating populations, jeopardizing ecologies and the emergence of resistance against extraction from local political ecology by the indigenous communities. Capitalism in its neo-imperialist incarnation is unapologetically sabotaging the stable environments and creating sacrificial zones. This stream of critical literature has predominantly focused on case studies from South Asia, East Asia, Latin America or GS countries.

Rapid urbanisation across the Global South is resulting in the large-scale commodification of peri-urban and rural land under a neoliberal paradigm of capitalist development (Banerjee-Guha, 2009; Murray, 2004; Shin, 2016; Smit, 2021) has created free markets and promoted privatization resultant in multi-faceted destabilized ecologies. The most talked and raised issues such as displacement, dispossessions, loss of livelihoods, plundering of natural resources, food insecurity, waste, environmental and ecological degradation (Bebbington & Batterbury, 2001; Hall, 2013; Narain, 2009; Neef et al., 2013; Sali & Sali, 2012; Simon, 2008; Zoomers, 2010). The process begins by acquiring land and everything else follows.

3.3 Theoretical Framework for the dissertation

“Underdevelopment is not due to the survival of archaic institutions and the existence of capital shortage in regions that have remained isolated from the stream of world history. On the contrary, underdevelopment was and still is generated by the very same historical process which also generated economic development: the development of capitalism itself.” (Frank, 1966).

Andre Gunder Frank introduced this theory in 1966 and his work on 'Capitalism and development in Latin America' was considered to be one of the most crucial works on dependency theory. He argues that underdeveloped countries are not to be blamed for the failure infact, in globalized and highly interconnected world, the Western nations purposely failed to develop countries considered to be lagging behind in the race economic progress. Further he says that core nations such as the US and UK are the elite metropolis, happen to progress on the shoulders of the peripheral nations by treating them merely as a source of cheap raw material and manpower. This sort of exploitative relationship can be seen historically via slavery and colonization in the past and in current times through international trade, the rise of multinationals (and financial institutions) and the reliance of undeveloped countries on Western or foreign aid (F. Ahmed, 1975). Frank also draws a difference between underdeveloped and undeveloped by saying that all developed countries were assumed to go through the same path of development and rest of the world needed to catchup, is a false notion. He also criticizes modernization theory of Walt and Rostow states that countries need to pass through a linear process or stages from traditional to modern by acquiring practices and values from the developed world. He made a point by referring that such development theories are failed to see that how capitalist system was a cause of underdevelopment and not a solution. This whole chain of metropolis and satellite can even be seen within a country as well.

Although there are critiques (Amin, 1976; PSIR, 2021) being levelled up against Frank's theory such as the representation of theory quite simplistic and generalized; focusing primarily on economic factors whereas all other aspects such as political, social, cultural, environmental that might be adding up to the state of underdevelopment are least explored. The other criticism is that Frank puts blame on developed countries for the other half underdeveloped through exploitation or vertical relationship between metropolis and peripheral countries but it does not include the historical ties due to which the dependency structure was built in the first place. For instance, what were the colonial reasons that gave rise to structural dependency or why India could not have scientific development but eventually got dependent on the western countries. Also, the other critique to dependence theories is that it is static in nature, it draws a conclusion that peripheral countries will forever stay in the state of underdevelopment due to exploitation from the core and they will never progress. Whereas, the practical example that negated this notion are the emergence of tiger

economies in late 1970's and 1980's, which were export led countries such South Korea, Taiwan, Hong Kong, Singapore.

Despite coming across the criticism and after consulting different theories, I have realised that the dissertation most appropriately falls under Frank's (1966) theory 'the development of the underdevelopment'. The dissertation majorly argues that when space and place go through transformation it is not just a visible change that can be seen through naked eye but the invisible changes directly associated with intangible assets peculiar to ecologies and communities need to be deeply explored to see the impact of development on the process of change. In this particular study, the dependence of main city on the periphery was initially in terms of getting the produce but the neoliberal policies for the economic expansion have commodified agricultural lands, agrarian landscape and livelihood which is not just a vocation but a lifestyle composed of traditions, culture, norms, values. This in turn used to provide people not just to eat but the assets of security, safety, togetherness, identity, people at each other' services, network, power coming from their own local ecology and cannot be traded from the market. The communities through aggravated resource grab have experienced the profound decline in the quality of land-based-life. It shows that money alone and masking of landscapes with imported symbols of modernity are not uplifting but dismantling the social and natural spaces. This is all done to build the posh gated communities and for the creation of world-class city as a replica of western model of modern living to attract investments at the expanse of marginalised communities. The villages are not going through underdevelopment in terms of losing life-sustaining agrarian structure but the loss of intangibles which were essential to build a quality living. However, while doing so, the cultural, political, social and economic models were taken into consideration while framing this work under Frank's theory.

3.4 Connected themes

3.4.1 Land-question and economic models

Land acquisition is fundamental to many forms of accumulation, deemed 'development' with a promise of economic growth. Especially, since the period of (neo)-liberalisation, instead of state-led demand for land has not only been shifted but amplified to private demand for land for building infrastructure, industrial purposes and real-estate venture (Chandrasekhar & Ghosh, 2002). World Bank, governments and their state proposed policies favour large scale land acquisition (for development) causes impoverishment, loss of commons, jeopardizing

communities (particularly those living on state-owned land and have weak legal position) especially by denying their rights to traditional ways of living (Arrighi et al., 2010; Denis, 2018; Hall, 2013; Kröger, 2012) with aim of creating world-class cities (Goldman, 2011) or ‘megacity syndrome’ (Mpungose & Maharaj, 2022) through ‘worldling from below’ (Simone, 2001). The multi-lateral donors like World Bank, big endorser of myopic, profit-centric, plays selfish game of capitalism in the name of development through infrastructure building in global south (Steel et al., 2017) rendering fringes as a *Tabula Rasa* (Kennedy & Sood, 2016) or ‘undeveloped land’ as *Terra Nullius - the myth of empty land*, rendered as ‘wasteland’ during colonization, has legitimized local communities’ displacement and dispossession (Bhandar, 2018) which is still relevant today when one looks closely at the villages. These vulnerable geographies have not only given life to historical processes and standing as a proof of violent restructuring through homogenized city plans for the sake of corporations and imperial interests.

As Levien (2017) explains the ‘importance’ of land and its dispossession for the booming development projects especially since liberalisation. It is not just a response to fix the problem of over-accumulation but it is highly political in character where state takes active part in resource distribution through extra-economic forces as well. Further he adds, when coercion can be persistently used against people to expropriate land from them to give to another class, should be termed as ‘regime of dispossession’ which is institutionalized to deprive owners of land has two striking attributes; state’s roll-back to chuck real owners out of their land for economic purposes that are akin to certain class of beneficiaries and other is to create means of creating obedience for people to succumb to requisition.

Hence, the development-based economic models liberated land-markets especially for the development of Special Economic Zones (SEZs), infrastructure building and urbanisation has accelerated the land grab (Zoomers, 2010) from which benefits are not equally distributed but aiming at catering a certain faction at the expanse of masses. Misra (2021) also foregrounds the unjust tied with affectees’ social class and caste and its role in plating economic benefits and new ownership statuses up for the elite by exacting acquisition of farmlands from farmers in SEZs in India. Despite their weak positions and the marginalisation of many due to hierarchies predicated on monetary power and caste, put up resistance against state and corporates to safeguard traditional village economy.

3.4.2 Peri-urban land - the new hub for investment

The peri-urban region has borne the brunt of urban development in recent times. It is the site for land speculation nurturing real-estate (Cartier, 2011; Goldman, 2011; Narain, 2009) facilitating market in land across the countryside (Banerjee-Guha, 2009; Chattopadhyay et al., 2014; Levien, 2012, 2013) making periphery the landscape of change (Gururani, 2020; Gururani & Dasgupta, 2018). The rural villages on the periphery of the city are conveniently made into urban villages once it becomes the site for expropriation for urban development and the involvement of state and urban plannings to encroach on farmlands to turn them into symbols of development, make the periphery 'spaces of suspension' which keeps settlers anxious and edgy (Ou, 2021). The conversion of rural to urban landscape has been a lucrative business in real-estate for the elites, has created new ways of grabbing mainly land and water through financialization (Gutiérrez, 2024) The land and soil acquisition processes in peri-urban villages explain the contradictions of capital. According to Harvey (2001) such processes behind building fixed space are indispensable for extracting profits and capital accumulation till a certain time which is then followed by demolition of the same landscape to make room for new 'spatial fix'. The following section explains how these processes are driving change in villages.

Peripheral Urbanisation is a phenomenon based on reticular set of processes. It does not necessarily the city's expansion toward its periphery or margin but it is a 'mode of production of urban space' that can happen anywhere. It involves the role of residents who actively take part in producing space but state makes sure to clear the way for market in land to fuel capitalism which engenders displacement of 'auto-constructors' (local residents who renovate their houses and improve neighbourhoods at their own pace and time). However, the poor pay the price of upgraded localities as they become out of their reach. Hence, it is a process that always revolves around replacements, evictions, reproduction on a piece of land which is cheaper (Caldeira, 2017). Such peripheral spaces are ideal for investment for several reasons, such as peripheries close to city provides flow of labour, capital, availability of infrastructure that offers easy transport, commute and trade, not under stern strictures of law which state, developers and other actors involved can use in their advantage and above all, land is cheaper (Gururani et al., 2021) for the sake of speculative urbanism (Goldman, 2011).

The peripheries have not only revealed the real side of development led by urbanisation and discounts slogans of 'development goals' but also state's role, imported economic policies

and their pivotal place in destabilizing ecologies, natural resources that must not be treated anything less than ‘national reserves’, communities and how it has been siding the rich. For instance, (Mishra & Narain, 2018) the increased land value does benefit a tiny section of well-heeled rural people but there are other impacts such as declining clean drinking water quality, seepage problem, building of urban canals which begin with clearance of sandy land where vegetables used to be grown, expansion of wastewater irrigation, water theft, conflicts, loss of grazing lands and emergence of dengue fever in *Budhera* village. Dharia (2021) zeros in on the corruption that is enmeshed as physical, political and economic phenomenon is culpable for incalculable social and environmental injustices. The irreparable consequences of state’s support in gradual, haphazard turning of agricultural, forest land to encourage financialization in land coupled with dispossession of many can be observed in multiple ways. The development of masterplan for the city expansion by encroaching into ecological-sensitive areas such as arable lands or forested turfs which is a huge attraction for real-estate for the development of gated housing communities for money-making without giving due consideration to the provision of suitable basic services such as water, road networks, sewer and power supply system, create urban metabolic rifts.

3.4.3 Land laws and compensation packages - subtle form of violence

The land-use change based on land acquisition act bring in money via monetary compensations, an effective way not only to take over the land but setting up land market and converting farmers into small realtors and to camouflage social injustice via ‘compensations’ (Alias & Nasir Daud, 2006; Ghatak & Ghosh, 2011; Mahalingam & Vyas, 2011; Mallik & Sen, 2017; Sarkar, 2014, 2015; Vijayabaskar, 2010), to bring ease to violators (Nair, 2013) engendering inequality (Tassadiq, 2022). Especially in case of urban villages situated on the periphery, the negotiations over compensation between actors- residents, village committee, government officials and developer could take years to settle (Nguyen, 2017). However, young adults instead preferred to become realtors, speculators, rentiers through state compensations they received as they had no spot in urban high technology and capital intensive developments (Zhan, 2021). The land-use change is the harbinger of land dispossession for several rural dwellers. Once they go landless and become proletariats, many of them become fully ‘proletarianized workers’ (Chuang, 2015; Swyngedouw & Ward, 2020).

3.4.4 Land interventions - social in character, regardless of a process

The urbanisation is a process of socioecological change, because land is not just physical terrain but extremely social, therefore, land question and land struggles are inevitable (Bose, 2020). The urban expansion produces new environments and uneven geographies - new urban social and physical conditions by undermining commons and local ecologies, where social actors defend and create own new environments with respect to class, ethnicity, gender conflicts and pronounced power struggles (Denis, 2018; Swyngedouw & Heynen, 2003; Vij & Narain, 2016). Hence, causing several long-term implications such as threat to food security, heat island affect and several other socio-economic problems (Du & Huang, 2017; López et al., 2001; Satterthwaite et al., 2010; Wu, 2008).

The peripheral urbanisation has also been called 'lust for land' (Denis, 2018), land grab/land rush (Neef et al., 2013; Neef & Singer, 2015; Zoomers, 2011), 'foreignization of space' (Zoomers, 2010), gentrification (Davidson & Lees, 2010; Doshi, 2015; Farahani, 2013; Forrest, 2016; Smith, 1982, 2002; Waley, 2016), subaltern urbanisation (Mukhopadhyay et al., 2020). It could be a use of several terms to define the process but also has been looked through a framework of accumulation by dispossession (Bhaduri, 2015; Magdoff, 2013; Shin, 2016). He & Wang (2019) explains 'enclave urbanism' which in general is defined as homogenous unit that has its own social, cultural but economic features. However, such enclaves in recent times have several social implications due to symbolic representations attached with architecture - gates, walls, fences, boundaries that draw keeps people out who do not fit into this domain. This spatial and social division notifies segregation and exclusion on the basis of class predominantly. As Angotti (2012) connects urbanisation and orientalism to make a point of development being driven by high consumerism and individual's agency, only benefits the affluents who can easily get their hands on land and other resources without considering underprivileged who are displaced. Although S. Li et al. (2012) learns that such enclaves can be a source of high social capital.

Suburbanisation - a process of encroachment for executing development models on the greenfield, outside the cities, wash out several villages results in urban sprawl; is important for capital accumulation that lies in the expansion of urban space that leads to annihilation of certain space by time. The development of suburbs is intended to centralize capital to urban areas by reducing entire society to urban society (Smith, 1982), a sphere where there are series of urban and environmental processes that negatively affect some social groups and

benefit others (Swyngedouw & Heynen, 2003). The free market, liberalization in land market, commodification and other moves for capital accumulation has been doing cultural damage and threatening the moral economy (Scott, 1977) of close-knit communities.

3.4.5 Gentrification

Ruth Glass introduced the concept of gentrification in 1964 in city and later it was extended to rural areas in 1990s (Lu et al., 2022). Gentrification is another urban process which assures social that carries the legacy of capital mode of production. Smith (1982) explains the process as the replacement of working-class residential areas by middle-class (higher social class) of people who have a better buying capacity such as landlords or developers, however, he also makes a distinction between gentrification and urban redevelopment i-e the construction of new infrastructure on land which is already developed but doesn't involve rehabilitation as gentrification does. Whereas, Tomba (2017) also explains gentrification as replacement of one class by another which is higher in social hierarchy but it is more than that. Further, he adds, it is not just a phenomenon to increase value of land and reshuffling of different aspects of a city such as political, economic and cultural, rather it is significant for the state to ascertain its ownership and control over land. Shin (2016) sheds lights on pivotal role of gentrification and redevelopment in freeing real-estate properties to attract investments, causes displacement in order to fuel speculative urban accumulation. Hence, the characteristics of gentrification for urbanising cities are class replacement, social reshuffling which entails displacements, not just physical but symbolic displacement through creating alienation for the local (Atkinson, 2015) evictions, state's control over land and handing it to the rich promulgates 'uneven development' for the capital expansion primarily through Marx's 'annihilation of time and space'. As Smith (2002) connects gentrification with globalization especially through emergence of the idea global cities which invites foreign direct investments (FDI) and how neoliberal urbanism is a gamut of socio-economic and geographical shifts.

Ghose (2004) discusses impacts of rural gentrification in Montana due to the influx of immigrants which not only changes the physical realm but contorts the cultural landscape. The transformation of local wildlife habitats and open spaces into expensive localities that are no longer in reach of the long-term inhabitants makes them edgy. Further she highlights the similarities in both rural and urban gentrification such as both involves class-substitution, its effective role in producing the new middle-class and service sector, that comes with a part,

consumption pattern plays. Also, the gentrifiers who act as capitalists seeking benefits from real-estate opportunities. Finally, high real-estate prices expel local residents. All the processes happening on land, (T. M. Li, 2014) explains that land which often treated as a thing or a commodity is not piece of rug but a whole ecology; it's physical entity, provides resources that further forge relation with communities and surroundings which gives 'land' a social character too. Similarly, Yang et al. (2018) points out rural gentrification (expansion from city to outskirts, a process that involves revamping of houses and public areas) as urban phenomenon that has transformed villages in China both socially and spatially, and this change has been led by predominantly villagers based on landownership. It does benefit landlords but due to increasing rent gaps and property prices, young people have to move out. Author pinpoints the role of financial gains through rent-seeking which drives gentrification. Lu et al. (2022) writes about the impact of rural gentrification on one of the villages in China and how physical and social landscape changed with in-migration of the new emerging middle class. Three prominent differences could be seen in terms of production, consumption and the role of government in the process.

3.4.6 Social Capital and Community Spirit

Social capital is typically defined as set of shared values, traditions, networks that forges an idea of togetherness amongst community members due to reciprocity and interdependence which act as a safety blanket. Woolcock & Narayan (2000) used maxim, 'It's not what you know, it's who you know', which almost sums up the concept of community building. Scott (1977) found the culture of sharing, working together, having common land and generosity towards each-other as basis for their resilience against tough times by maintaining subsistence. Marglin (2008, 2010) underscores the role of market economy in breaking down the communities. Deep social ties that bind people together and form community are constantly getting weakened by dominant market-driven economic ideology that has generated chaotic, individualistic and imbalanced human life. He uses the example of Amish people who refused to kneel down against the market world. Similarly, Velayutham & Wise (2005) discussed a village of Tamil Nadu which they call 'translocal village' to explain how caste and kin-based ties forming a community, provides a certain social control, fraught with responsibilities, morals, trust, networks, obligations help maintaining the moral economy of a village even from afar. Polanyi (2001) mentioned commodification for the societal collapse especially culturally, as 'value' is seen and measured differently in market world which is a flip side of pre-capitalist societies' perception of intangibles – invisible to the naked eye yet

as fundamental and requisite to human life as food and water. The communities are robbed of the essentials by putting a 'value' to it which market can understand. Now, 'value' lies in the capitalist mode of production is equated with the 'amount' of labour being used to make a 'commodity', also known as labour productivity; a productivity, commodification, accumulation carries a character of plunder and appropriation (Moore, 2015). The frontiers play a significant role for capitalism to thrive and to strategize transformation by cheapening work, nature, lives, services, food, care not only by establishing economic power but to exercise control over a 'web of life'. This has devastated the ecologies, indigenous communities, society-nature relation to keep the capitalism going (Patel & Moore, 2019). The conservation and preservation is nothing more than a 'bourgeois environmentalism' (Baviskar, 2018; Crowley, 2022). Whereas, the environmental protection is only possible if communities are left in charge. Sinha et al. (2013) helps understanding the relation between local communities and resources and the importance of governance in the time of encroachment and heartless privatization. At the same time, it allows to fathom the concept of sustainability and the role of communities in protecting these resources. Vandana Shiva's chapter in the book called 'Governance of commons and livelihood security' (Shiva, 2013) explains the local communities are also the guardian of their resources as they are fully or partially dependent on commons for livelihood and sustenance. It is one of the characters of the sustained ecologies that they view earth as its mother and enjoy nature's bounties and in return maintain ecological-centric lifestyle. The biodiversity, water, soil, air, forests etc. that are of utmost importance to the locals because it provides them freedom and self-subsistence. On the other hand, as Locke explains that the capitalism thrives on the freedom to 'steal'. Hence, enclosures, privatization of resources, rendering ecologically sensitive areas such as forests as 'wastelands' by the British and introduction of state policies to keep local communities astray by denying their right to access is the cause of impoverishment. Whereas, enclosures as 'development' is the 'progress' for the corporations, privateers or the colonizers. However, Garrett Hardin's theory of 'Tragedy of the Commons' says otherwise (Hardin, 1968).

In traditional rural culture, 'value' lies in character, exchange of intangibles such as trust, conviction, networks, barter not only in terms of grains and food but also with regards to tough-times, emotions, moments of grief and happiness. Having said that, there is body of literature as critique of 'trust' and 'networks'. As, Levien (2015) discussed two famous theories on social capital to fathom social change brought by economic processes in rural

Rajasthan, Bourdieu's individual social capital which works well in unequal societies and could be a huge resistance to inclusive development. The other one is Robert Putnam's theory of collective social capital according to which norms, trust, networks benefit not only individuals but higher the social capital, higher will be mutual benefits through collective action. However, author says that individual with strong network or connection more so due to his hierarchal position or contacts with influential, get benefitted the most through such state-led development. In fact, due to the absence of collective social capital which has been eroded either due to exploitation in the hands of those whom people trusted or headmen who were more concerned about their own gains, has weakened the resistance. As a matter of fact, the contemporary economic processes favor the individuals with strong networks otherwise it would have become an obstacle to development. Moreover, the migration trend in and out of the villages also change the dynamics. Huang et al. (2022) found out the reduced social capital not only amongst actors i.e structural capital but cognitive social capital has also been brought down. The stock of conviviality, identity and sense of being known has always been indispensable to resolve conflicts and to maintain peace. Nonetheless, Edwards (2004) shares a feminine perspective on social capital where family is the basic social institution and how the fundamental unit called 'family' and social capital, considered to be the basis of social cohesion are strong but weak and frail at the same time that runs on gender division, power relations and intergenerational relationships.

Eglar & Chowdhry (2010) gives an extensive account of one of the Punjabi villages called *Mohla*. This writing helps in understanding how the rural villages are structured and organized in terms of caste, class hierarchy, the rural economy and the relation of exchange and reciprocity introduced as '*vartan bhanji*', the significance of land its prestige and multidimensional aspects that is not only the source of livelihood but also it bonds generations together and build *biraderi* (brotherhood). However, the place also went through a transformation in relation and codependency through somewhat disappearance of *vartan bhanji* when a village shifted from rural to market economy and influenced by the symbols of modernity. The onset of modernity be it from urbanisation, infrastructure building, industrialisation, highways, education to reproduce labour to increase the supply of workers for the factory owner and corporation locally and internationally, the consequences have commonality. This can be pinpointed through studies recording transformation in creating new place value and social change associated with it. Such as the impact of tourism and Karakoram Highway (KKH) in Hunza (Essa, 2016), (F. Batool et al., 2016) study on Bhera

city in central Punjab, Pakistan in decline in health, water, food quality, the dismantling of local businesses, trends shift to modern education and job which create diaspora also, the building of stress, inequality and stripping of traditional and cultural values, gadgets and material gain – the symbols of progress for the capitalist world are actually depleting and regressing societies which were once rich and affluent in its own way, far from the horizon of mainstream worldview of ‘richness’, yet true.

The studies on communities establishing the impact of ‘development’ but also unfolds reasons for the present situation in the world, chaos, violence, neoliberal and neocolonial, neo-slavery, distrust, depression, diseases, broken family structure and list never ends. However, the places like villages, forests, inhabiting marginalised communities and peasantry give a wakeup call and solutions to save of what is left (if any). The agrarian-urban frontier (Cowan, 2024; D. Khan, 2024); is studied in different ways. It has revived the agrarian question, the changing social relation, the peasantry as a lifestyle (in alliance with nature – was a key of sustenance and sustainability) and also name it as ‘landscape of accumulation’ (Searle, 2016). One of the takeaways from the peasantry is that society and nature were not competitors, people were ecologically conscious and aware of their limits and also to respect nature’s limits too. Unlike capitalism where greed is the only religion and necessity is replaced with urge of having more (Coman, 2024).

3.4.7 Women and their world

According to Agarwal (1989) the women especially from agrarian and tribal settings considered to be oppressed, overburdened and marginalised due to various reasons such as on the basis of access to basic necessities, property rights, access to land that goes to male members, varied earnings opportunities and work environment (which treats workers according to their gender), dismissal of ownership to the means of production keep them submissive to men. Despite all this, women have a deeper connection with their surroundings be it forceful or imposed gender roles, but their relation with ecology make them integral part for safeguarding resources and have played pivotal role in various environmental conservation movements. Further she mentions the holistic approach of women towards the ecology persuades them to put up resistance famously called *Chipko* movement. The women did not look at trees or forests only as the source for providing resources but attendant hazards that would happen with felling of trees, as women have more direct contact with natural resources (Mago & Gunwal, 2019). However, when it comes to gender-based

despotism, radical feminism finds patriarchy as a primary reason for women subordination and inequality. Whereas, Comanne (2021) says that gender based inequality works for capitalism. Nancy Fraser's interview for the book called *Feminism for the 99%* (Arruzza et al., 2019) explains the feminism as class issue. In order to resolve it, feminists need to be anti-capitalist, otherwise they will keep empowering a certain elite faction and leaving the masses to exploitation and abuse. It underscores that women's rights and gender equality cannot be understood and resolved unless it must be seen through class question which is created by capitalist mode of production (Malatesta, 2019). The globalization has developed a 'global care chain' also and now developing countries are not only experiencing brain drain but care drain also, where women are major contributors who work in developed countries as nannies or domestic help. The creation of 'invisible ecology of care' or the flow of care is not only from the poor to rich counties but even within a country, it is visible to see rural and urban areas within the same city. Love and care are renewable resources, a 'new gold' which is in demand for extraction from the GS by the GN (Hochschild, 2004). The intangible assets, their commodification and the trap of market economy is stripping traditional societies, marginalised communities and depriving mothers from their traditional role, but also depleting children of mother's love. Farris (2013) highlights neoliberalisation has an immense impact on the commodification of care. Similarly Smith (2008) explains the role of state in dividing society into different classes which it regulates to serve the interests of the upper or ruling classes. Moreover, state is also responsible for causing women's oppression through gender-based division of labour. The migration of male members to cities to serve factories leaving females behind in the village, has made women free, independent, empowered when it comes to decision making but has increased (even if it is for short-term) the workload and responsibilities (Kaur, 2020; R. Singh, 2018). Women in rural areas are perceived as closer to the environment and fully immersed in ecological relations. It is easy to take in as women and earth are inherently nurturers. Carpenter (2008) looks at the relation between women and livestock and women as primary collectors of fodder for the animals which itself is toilsome. Livestock husbandry and farming has a deeper connection in agrarian settings. The study is conducted in Pakistan which also draws comparison pertinent to labour division between pastoral and agricultural societies, owning of livestock and women as decision makers in selling or buying animals and how to use their connection across the villages to find suitable persons. It also explores rainfed and irrigated farming systems and its impact on fodder which is a valuable resource to feed livestock especially for the poor households. For instance, the shrinkage of uncultivated land and wastelands lead to

fodder reduction. This in turns underscores the importance of communal land and its protection.

Akhtar et al. (2019) takes southern Punjab as a case study to explain role of women in socio-economic sphere. The study explains the integral role women play and take care of several chores such as taking care of families, livestock, from sowing till harvesting on agricultural fields. They are active in economic activities to help their men to generate money yet their contributions are not acknowledged and valued. Women have almost no place in decision making at family and community level. They have taken *Dera Ismail Khan* as a study area to analyse the rural women in decision making when it comes to income generation for family, such as agricultural patterns, land use, crop selection and also the minimal to none say in family-related decisions. Study find out that the women do have better understanding towards budgeting the finances, yet their part in making decisions such as in education, marriage, family resources or income is not much appreciated and welcomed. Petesch & Badstue (2020) took 32 villages from South Asia including areas from *Khyber Pakhtunkhwa* (KPK), Pakistan to look at the relation between gender norms and poverty (reduction). It acknowledges the active involvement of women in agriculture and other economic activities to bring wellbeing to their families. However, it does not change much when it comes to men's domination over women and resources. There were cases recorded by the study where women were the reasons for dragging their families out of poverty through small-scale agricultural enterprises. Especially those who had a strong support system from men in their families (relations of domination), such as husband, father or a brother.

Feminism is now in its fourth wave which began around 2012 till to date. While critics argue that the word 'wave' is misleading and does not do justice as presenting women struggle over time as oversimplified version of complex history. The core contribution of feminism and different schools such as radical, Marxist, liberal have raised several important issues such as role of class, race, security at workplaces, right to vote, property rights, unequal wages, subjugation, male dominance, sexual violence, and patriarchal society that does not let women thrive. What is less explored is the question of religion, and inclusion of women for whom the meaning of 'agency' or 'freedom' is not borrowed from the West and their self-worth, aspirations, desires, lives have been shaped from non-liberal traditions (Mahmood, 2006). The study is based on ethnographic account of women involved in piety movement in Cairo, Egypt mosques. The study shows a perspective from women who have been regarded as oppressed and trapped in male authority. From the article, I would like to quote her writing

related to ‘veil’ as women’s voluntary decision as virtue of piety especially when it comes to a bodily conduct and idea of shyness - ‘haya’ (that is synonymously used for someone being underconfident) and modesty.

3.4.8 Nostalgia

One of the aspects of dissertation is the question of nostalgia. Although, mostly literature on nostalgia is available in the field of psychology due to which is challenging to incorporate affectively which is from the field of sociology. Jacobsen (2023) in his writing pinpoints the lack of attention being given to nostalgia by sociologist and remained silent on emotions. But, from 1980, sociology started acknowledging emotions and nostalgia is one of them. Nostalgia is somewhat defined as the longing for the past, a desire to reverse the time or to bring the former phase of life again which is cherished profoundly. It can be individual or collective linkage to the past but is a real social emotion (Juhl & Biskas, 2023). Nostalgia is usually referred as ‘bittersweet’ that on one hand recalls the hurtful experience of loss (of good times), the ‘sweetness’ part is associated with warmth and tenderness of the memories from the past (Sedikides & Wildschut, 2016). Nostalgia is also viewed as a combination of a memory, idealization and romanticization of the past. It has the potential to diminish the negative and glorify the positive experiences of the past life (Davis, 1979). It is real because it acknowledges what an individual once had. There can be several aspects pertinent to loss but the additional dimension to the ‘nostalgia as loss experience’ is ‘the sense of loss of individual freedom and autonomy with the disappearance of genuine social relationships’ (Turner, 1987). The other relevant aspect of nostalgia to the dissertation is called ‘solastalgia’ which means that people or communities that experience connectedness to their environment, feel afflicted and distraught due to the environmental change (Albrecht et al., 2007). Nostalgia also is a source of identity especially when once sense of belonging to a place or community is threatened or sabotaged due to any reason, this is when nostalgia awakens by attaching one’s strings of identity in present times to the previous one and provides cushion for the self-continuity (Sedikides et al., 2015). Literature also differentiates between private and collective nostalgia (Wildschut & Sedikides, 2023), also distinguishing between the former and ‘historical nostalgia’ - a collection renumeration and celebration of the past (Stern, 1992). The reciprocity and exchange especially of intangibles develop a community. The sense of identity and affinity is of paramount significance, therefore, social connectedness is not just a basic psychological need but also imperative for wellbeing (Baumeister & Leary, 1995). Nostalgia in social context is connected to shared set of values,

ideologies and circumstances. Therefore, it needs to be given more attention and value rather than sweeping it under the rug by calling it just the ‘longing for old days’. Even if it is, it carries substantial information to answer *why* through visiting personal journal of an individual or a community’s life events and a journey of transformation. Nostalgia is the invisible documentation of physical, emotional and cognitive landscapes.

3.5 Different outlooks towards the process

Pakistan shares historical conditions which have shaped the trajectory of the nature of urban development mentioned above. Historical accounts of economic change in Lahore (Chattha, 2012), rural urbanisation and agriculture (M. A. Z. Mughal, 2019), the changing patterns in land governance and marginalisation of farmers on state-owned land in *Okara* (especially military as a primary actor) and the role of CPEC¹⁹ on rural people (Mehmood, 2019) power of state in Pakistan (Akhtar, 2006) are available. Qadeer (1996) has written an extensive account on unfolding the urban policies in Pakistan. Role of state policies in other metropolitan cities such as the case of land grabs for development in Karachi’s periphery. The villages (*Baloch goths*) that have been thrown into disarray with huge development-induced displacement (Anwar, 2012, 2014, 2018; Hasan, 2015). There are studies on conversion of arable land to construction sites and its impacts on the resources (Zaman & Baloch, 2011) whereas, Anjum & Hameed (2007) wrote in favour of peripheral housing by taking systemic approach at the end of policy makers, also put emphasis on better transportation facilities. Cermeño (2021) highlighted planning and policies in land transformation on the Lahore’s periphery. However, there is no holistic study of social and ecological change in peri-urban villages of Lahore built through an intensive collection of narratives especially females and the lower classes. They have experienced rapid in-situ urbanisation with growth of more capitalist developmental ventures. This has led to cash invasion in the communities which were cash poor historically. This study fills in how peri-urban marginalised and the poor communities have been living through development-led urbanisation through ethnographic research to document gain and loss account. Ethnographic research itself in Pakistan has been fairly limited and remains undertheorized, given that most ethnographic theory is rooted in the experience of Western scholars of studying non-western cultures (Ugwu, 2017).

¹⁹ China-Pakistan Economic Corridor

Chapter 4

Methodology

This chapter explains in detail the methodology being adopted to achieve the aim of the research in detail. It is primarily based on qualitative research methods. Primary data collection was done through multisited ethnography which itself constitutes several steps. This section will not only be shedding light on each and every step involved in the process but will illustrate ethnography as the journey that has evolved research and a researcher as well. It also accentuates the significance of ethnography as a method for the documentation of socio-ecological change through urbanisation led processes in the fields of geography/human geography. The other integral part of the methodology is to show spatial transformation through pixels. These maps were developed under the auspices of Dr. Susanne Schmidt for a virtual representation of change over time.

4.1 Ethnographic Research - Journey to Enlightenment

4.1.1 Background - Trapped in a Shell

Before I map out in detail the methodology being adopted to support the central thesis. I would like to briefly explain how it began in the first place. During MPhil, *Shuhada* town, a small portion of DHA phase IX, scattered on 500 acres (202 ha), 3.5 km off the *Bedian* road, where road construction had just commenced in 2013, was taken as a case study. At the time, thesis was looking at the land-use change and the impact of such housing schemes on the environment with the integration of a small chapter on social impact. During the time, came across locales and communities which became the motivation for further empirical research for the doctoral dissertation. Little did I know that it laid the foundation for doctorate degree but introduced me to the methodology, I was barely known of, later became integral for data collection. It was not only for the research but turned out to be self-exploratory journey simultaneously. The next section explains the choice being made.

4.1.2 Why Ethnography?

It is a multidisciplinary research project that looks at urbanisation and related processes happening on the outskirts of Lahore city through the lens of political ecology but framed under Frank's theory as mentioned explicitly in chapter 3. Political ecology itself as a critical

research field has known the inter-relation and interconnectedness between biophysical and cultural/social world and how they undergo reorganization under different political, economic policies and power structures (P. E. Little, 2007). Without incorporating the influence of politics, the ‘ecology’ of a certain environment and its science cannot be understood. As Forsyth (2003) says that science and politics cannot be dealt separately. Therefore, this interdisciplinary field opens a forum that invites researchers from a vast array such as social sciences (anthropology, sociology, geography), natural sciences (e.g., environmental sciences or ecology) or humanities to perceive complex socio-environmental realities by drawing its linkage with power dynamics, inequality and political economy (e.g., globalisation, neoliberalism, economic development) from different aspects (Bryant, 1992; Roberts, 2020). Similarly, ethnography helps connecting dots by enabling a researcher as receptor of information not only through all five senses but also catching and decoding information emotionally, mentally, physically and sympathetically.

In simpler terms, ethnography is a qualitative research method to gather fine grained details about people, community in the given space and time and their relation with their lived-environment (Jones & Smith, 2017). Ethnography as a methodology can have several variants (Hammersley & Atkinson, 2010), yet participant observation is central to ethnography (Laurier et al., 2017) where researcher spends considerable time to read, study, observe through sincere interaction with the social groups. Geographer used to practice this methodology in the 19th century but were not the primary consideration for human geographers for most part of 20th century, it was in the early period of 2000s when ethnography and ethnographic fieldwork became increasingly adopted by political geographers, but by this time human geographers also putting emphasis on ‘everyday power relations’ (Ghoddousi & Page, 2020). It is a combination of techniques depending upon situational requirement such as audio recordings, field notes, interviews etc.

The study is based on multisided ethnography which was first coined by George E. Marcus in 1995 (Marcus, 1995). It goes beyond the bounds of single-site ethnographic study due to which the ‘mobile positioning’ allows to follow people, material, cultural reproduction, connections across one-given-space as a vessel but to follow the flow in more than one sites (as they are significantly continuous yet spatially discontinuous) (Falzon, 2016). It has a power to bring forward grounded narratives across multiple geographies. In my research the multi-sited ethnographic approach was apt as the research site, comprised of several villages,

hamlets and urbanised locales was under continual transition, and people and communities are in the process of social and material landscape reconfiguration.

The following section shows the on-field training for carrying out an ethnography ‘before’ doctoral degree formally began in 2019.

4.1.3 Ethnographer in the making - Time to sprout

Lahore being my hometown was a big advantage for me. It was convenient for me to go to the field, spend a good amount of time and return home by sunset. Nevertheless, in the formative years (especially from 2016-2019), I had to face sundry challenges, most of them were because of my shy demeanour and the time I needed to open up which hampered engaging people in conversations with. I also had a language barrier. Punjabi was by far the language of most people; I could understand but could not speak fluently which was a big problem. I realised its importance when people showed reservations in responding to my questions asked in *Urdu* (the lingua franca of the educated urban people) until my mentor repeated the same in *Punjabi*, which at that time reduced my confidence even further. However, those challenges were blessings in disguise confronted in those early days. I spent a couple of years in the field at different intervals and tried to overcome these hinderances that were hampering my journey of research. I started working on language by closely listening to my mentor while she was engaging with people, practicing it at home, with colleagues, at workplace, value-laden reading *Punjabi* scriptures and most importantly through transcriptions that I did in the recorded language and then used to read them over and over again. That not only helped me in picking up *Punjabi* vocabulary but also the other skills of ‘how to decode data’ and pin down themes, was another skill that I had to learn. The other advantage from re-reading transcriptions and re-listening recorded interviews was to develop ability to read between the lines and to pinpoint missing links and aspects that needed to have more attention and be further investigated. Other issues were related to the ‘ethics’ of ethnography which could sometimes make things unseemly and difficult. For instance, seeking permission to record interview or to do it secretly so that the interviewee would not feel hesitant or pressurized, always appeared as a conundrum. With time, smart phones became common in villages and people being very observant tend to get to know that they were being recorded which at times put me in spot. Also, taking pictures covertly somewhere that sometimes used to alert people again could be unfavourable. I, thus, learnt through practice that village people had their own decorum and tradition must not be breached.

Although I had so much to learn but one thing I already had, was a sensitive ear and my propensity towards understating the social issues. The rural people in general were very cooperative and forthcoming but they need to build trust, understand who you are but they do not trust certain sections of the society like the state, the media and the property dealers. You need to assure them you do not represent them and your project is purely academic.

The next section explains organisation of fieldtrips during degree program.

4.2 Scheduling fieldworks - Quest for data collection

“Without fieldwork experience, scholar’s feet were never planted firmly on ground”.

Mukerjee, R.K., 1929, Fields and Farmers of Oudh

Fieldwork is the crucial and indispensable part for fact finding, connects researcher to the real-world and provides learning from first-hand experience (Phillips, 2017). Theoretical framework and fieldwork are not isolated but complementary to each other, if theory can give direction to fieldwork, without the latter theory cannot be solidified (Joshi, 1981). Hence, to restart data collection, fieldtrips to home country were carefully discussed and planned. As per research plan, three visits in three consecutive years were scheduled to allow me to stay updated with ongoing development happening on the fringes which in turn would provide a timeline. Also, spending four to five months on collecting empirical data and then analysing, discussing and sharing it with others helped to identify and see through the blind spots and in sharpening questions for further work. The planning phase was smooth on paper but execution was not without unprecedented glitches. Supposedly, the first fieldwork, after the commencement of doctoral degree had to take place from March to June 2020, second in 2021 from March till July and the third and the final field trip again from March till the end of July, 2022.

The pandemic of 2021 put a lot of plans into disarray. Back in 2020, when I was leaving for fieldtrip, the Covid was hardly any threat in Pakistan but one week post landing in Lahore, circumstances changed. It was not just the lockdown but the fear of contracting this deadly disease that halted the research work completely for which I had travelled all the way from Germany. Since, I could not go to field and due to the uncertainty of the situation, instead of extending my trip, I decided to fly back. Going back means, I had to wait till the next year hoping things would get better. However, the whole first year of PhD went down the drain as I went back empty-handed. In 2021, my plans for field trip again became a huge matter of

concern and I was told to reorganize my research plans to exclude fieldwork, so that my health and safety would not be compromised. Nonetheless, it was practically not an option and I wanted to take a chance by all means. Hence, after much discussion, I managed to get the approval and I flew back to Pakistan with the intention of being in field no matter what. Fortunately, the way empirical data collection panned out, it was worth the risk. Nonetheless, how to draw a starting line became a labyrinth, the succeeding section sheds lights on it.

4.2.1 From-where-to-begin to data-outpour

Discussion sessions with my former faculty fellows at the Lahore School of Economics (LSE) was the point of departure. In the light of our discussion, I decided to start my work from Lahore School where many drivers come from the same area. LSE helped me in finding people from different hinterland as most of the staff used to come from the nearby villages. Especially Mr. *Tariq Gill* and Mr. *Basharat* went out of the way to broaden my data collection through fieldwork. They took pains to help me unconditionally because they themselves became interested in the nature of research only on the basis of the acquaintances we developed over the long haul. On the other hand, I learnt along the way that my village respondents themselves wanted to be heard and seen, regardless of gender and age. There, I realised that ethnographic research offers way more than I had imagined. Apparently doing nothing for the ones from whom I was collecting knowledge and oral histories but offering an ear and to let them know and feel that they were heard, noticed, and valued turned out to be priceless for them as interlocutors mentioned this at several encounters. People in those villages, trapped in a process of development, were immensely willing to share their side of story of transition that how things had been changing in both physical and social realm.

Longitudinal ethnographic research with multiple field-trips, was thus conducted from 2014–2022, however, for this chapter, I will be highlighting the fieldwork from 2020 onwards; where interlocutors were not subjects but real knowledge producers regardless of age, sect, ethnicity and gender, whose time and information is considered as gift (Falzon, 2016).

1 st Fieldwork	March to July 2020	Pandemic
2 nd Fieldwork	March to July 2021	5-month
3 rd and final Fieldwork	March to July 2022	5-month

The younger ones limned the present, the middle generation depicted the comparison of their younger selves with today's generation but also helped me realising the reasons for intergenerational difference of opinions and how maturity and past experiences opened a window to see the real assets of life. The aged men and women were real encyclopaedias of untold, unrecorded tales of history, migration, partition turmoil and change over time, not just in landscape but in relations, warmth, trust, network, community spirit, food, water and a list goes on. They looked like temples of cognition and wisdom. They were the keepers inherently of intangibles – a value system not attached with money, to make them last. They were also the analysers of the past, today and tomorrow and critics of their own. Therefore, ethnography was used as a primary method for this collection of empirical data from 40 peri-urban villages on southeast of Lahore, located at and around two main connecting roads *Barki* and *Bedian*. Little (2007) says, 'political ecology as an ethnography', this deliberate method of choice is the foundation of the research to unpack the social complexities tied with spatial-temporal changes and to catch the nuances. Ethnography as a methodology contributes in understanding urbanisation that can help policy makers, planners and practitioners (Koster, 2020) because these processes, meaning, experiences are not homogenous or universal but vary across place and space (Herbert, 2000). My positionality as a female ethnographer privileged me to document 'change' through rural/peri-urban women's perspective which is the integral part of the research. The following section will break down ethnography into sub-methods which were used to investigate the research question.

4.3 Fieldwork

4.3.1 Field interviews

The in-depth interviews are a subset of ethnography because this very method persuades a researcher to join people in their natural settings to become a part of their lived environment (Barwick & Miller, 2023). As decoloniality of knowledge also through ethnography research strongly suggests to have an alternative way of understanding 'other' according to 'how communities see and do', it is one way of respecting interlocutors' experiences and knowledge (Manning, 2018). It teaches a researcher to be utterly respectful towards other people's time but more of their pace, wavelength and allow space to build trust and confidence. The relationship between land and people has drastically changed with the creation of the market in reshaping and restructuring the peri-urban environment.

Ethnography is the method of choice given its holistic approach to delve and fathom the multifaceted realities of socio-spatial change of people's natural environment. This research methodology offers a creative, reflexive, interpretive process through continuous and iterative field works (Tanchareon, 2005). It is the full immersion and submersion of researcher for developing relation with people and places who are not just subjects but the knowledge producers. Being a participant who constantly observes, participates in and processes information from people's surroundings is essential to unfold impacts of urbanisation on communities. 'How' people have been experiencing change is a fundamental question that can debunk various myths circling around like 'cash is tantamount to peace and happiness', 'development has improved lives' and that 'nostalgia' of the past is overrated and make people delusional. This research has shown how research methods from different fields may be used for transdisciplinary research projects without tagging them as methods of a particular discipline.

The snowball technique helped conducting 112 interviews²⁰, including telephonic interviews- 38 interviews (2014-2019) as preliminary work; 53 interviews (March-July, 2021), 20 interviews (March-July, 2022) and 1 distant interview in 2024. The in-depth, semi-structured interviews were conducted from 2014-2022 at 40 plus locales²¹. 56 focus group discussions and 56 one-on-one interviews were conducted at multiple sites primarily in Punjabi and Urdu languages while a few confabs were the amalgamation of *Mewati/Urdu* or *Mewati/Punjabi* dialects, with denizens across generations, class, ethnicity, religion and gender, intertwined with participatory observations. During the process, I learnt how to evolve the preparation for fieldwork to have more productive results. I often try to find the connection first, also tend to get familiar with the interlocuter beforehand through the informant. I started spending time on writing questions that could help gathering more data or relevant themes in terms of similarity, disagreements, contradictions or other surprises. But once I reached the people's lived environment, I let them take me through their lives and environment. Yet, keeping mental record to which aspects I needed to redirect the conversation. The places which were all new to me, I tried build rapport first to get the ball rolling. These one-on-one engagements were recorded in mobile phone, in order to preserve each and every word as it was told and spoken. It is of paramount importance to save dialogues so that one can listen to them

²⁰ List is attached to the appendices as Appendix B.

²¹ List is attached to the appendices as Appendix A.

repeatedly as their words in local language provide a unique depth and detail which a casual listening could miss.

4.3.2 Transcribing interviews

Afterwards, these recorded interviews were converted into written text which was a toilsome and time-consuming process. For the matter, I did not use any software for audio conversion or data analysis. I did the job manually. Although there are software for the job yet many researcher still opt for traditional way of manual transcriptions that provide more precision and accuracy to data (Tang, 2023). I also took help from one of my acquaintances to share some load. For that I am deeply grateful to Mr. Nadeem who generously helped me transcribe audios to text. As there were several long interviews, therefore, in order to save time, the recordings which could not be transferred on pages completely, I heard and re-heard those recordings and transcribed the excerpts of the interviews which fit into themes. Although, this exercise took plenty of time but the advantage of doing manual transcriptions is that it helps immensely for deep immersion into data to get meaning and more insight to pay heed to details which otherwise could be overlooked (Bird, 2005). The transcriptions (written version of interviews) played an essential role for data analysis by extracting themes and also to underline contradiction if there is any, but also to allow researcher to re-visit interviews with aim of reading between lines for better understanding and interpretations (a blend of what was told and what was seen and observed). Since, I have not used any computerised software for data analysis and done it myself, after making a transcription, which were hand-written in a separate journal. After audio to text conversion, I spent time in reading interviews to see which information I could get and what were the areas that needed to be probed. Those extracted themes were taken as ‘manual codes’, for instance, water, food, inflation, development, money, land, military, coercion and so and so forth. It was important for me to take into account ‘who’ was talking (class, gender, age), their natural setting (village, urbanized locale, ghetto, walled-off locale). This helped me to keep my biases aside and to fathom the ‘truth’ from the interlocuter’s perspective. This is where art of listening plays vital role (in collecting data), an ethnographer can offer, which is way more than participant observation (Gerard Forsey, 2010). To which I agree as I experienced the same while I was in Christian village called Durgpura, 2-hour long interview with a group of men in Dera adjacent to Haveli (a cattle-keeping place). Dwellers showed trust on me by being brutally honest about the process taking place, the role of government, the army, marginalisation and vulnerability due to the social group they belong to and how the class difference was

accentuated by the role of money through commodification of land and the story of loss (mostly intangibles along with health, food and access to clean water) which was entwined with their individual material gains. I asked their names and mentioned, *'Your identities will be kept confidential'*, they unanimously replied, *'We don't care Madam, even if you write our names, all we want is to be heard, we have no clue what are you capable of in terms of bringing betterment but we can't thank you enough for coming here and for lending an ear, it is more than enough for us'*. Valediction was fraught with prayers for me but a need to be recognised, seen and heard was undeniable and there I realised what services an ethnographer can provide unknowingly to the community even if they are ephemeral with lasting impact. I encountered the same in several different occasions. The transcriptions or recorded versions were proved to be trips down the memory lane which did not only help in refreshing my memory but to develop and strengthen a connection with people I spoke with. I also taught myself by going back to interviews about posing questions and how to indulge people in a conversation to find answers without putting words to their mouths and also allow them to talk me through their lives and stories of change, the way they liked.

For the interviews I tried to sample as many categories of people as possible. Among officials and professionals, I interviewed state officials such as people working at revenue record keeping department, police officers, lawyers, (indirect conversations with) architect and activist, LDA officials working at city planning department and involved in making Lahore's masterplan 2050 and DHA officials. I also interviewed local businesspersons such as property dealers (one category of relators are of those who were big landlords and then became into land business since long, others had smaller land holdings and adopted this profession more recently. Amongst businesses, those in milk-based businesses were also interviewed. Of course, the main category of interviewees were the residential communities. Residential community could be seen as group of people living at a place for ages (neighbours, usually in relation to each other), clans who migrated together from the other side of the border especially *Mewati* or *Meo* community which distinct them as a separate community due to a different ethnicity and language and who were known to be outsiders. Community can further be divided on the basis of religion such as Christians (minority) and Muslims (majority) and also based on two main sects - Shia and Sunni Muslims. However, gated community is another form of community which is supposedly an upgraded version of living, was taken into consideration especially in terms of those who used to live in a village and then moved to relatively upscale locales. The group of people who live farthest to the

east of Lahore, I name them as hybrid communities. Further classification was done on the basis of socio-economic background or in simpler words 'class', on the basis of gender as men and women have different encounters with development-led change and across three set of generation (teenagers, middle-age group and old).

4.3.3 Field notes

Field notes are means to record observational data on field, which are usually handwritten. However, it is not a straightforward activity and also not possible to capture everything while on field (Hammersley & Atkinson, 2010). The habit of taking field notes was another important part in the process which I started developing in the later years of the research. Jotting down what one had seen and observed on the field while being there in person helps in keeping record of observations without losing them. However, keeping journal and a pen while talking to people without any prior contact and reference, sometimes became a hurdle as much as recording interviews without bringing to their notice in the beginning. Through my personal experience, I realised that people became stonewalled or highly hesitant while talking which hampered the process of building trust. It is of no surprise that why villagers especially in the area who had been facing development get more skeptical at first, at times they misunderstood me as DHA personnel, occasionally as a journalist, however this very thought that came to their mind, at times worked in my favour because they wanted to have their story being heard. With women from walled off villages particularly, it was often difficult to record them either as notes or tapes, if I went up to them without being accompanied by any known face from their locality. One of such anecdotes when I went to Chachuwali (a walled-off locality, where arable land had been taken already). I went there with no prior contact, hence spent days in forging social relations. After a few days, I went back but saw a different atmosphere which was less welcoming, hesitant and reluctant. Even felt being avoided by the ones I was familiar with. I was perplexed and constantly questioning where I went wrong, what exactly must have happened in the past few days and how to fix it. Due to my gender, I had the advantage that I could talk to women freely which was one integral source of data collection through in-depth conversations or interviews. Finally, my anxiety came to an end when one of the former interviewees who was an elderly woman let me in her house again and had a talk briefly. While walking me to one of her neighbours, she eventually expressed, *'People are little suspicious about you because you come here, sit with us, record us in your device and leave'*. Though it made me a little nervous at first but I was happy at the same time because now I knew how to mend it. I spent

a considerable time with women, re-introduced myself and my purpose of visiting the village, explained a need for recording interviews, and opened the floor for them to ask me what they wanted to for their satisfaction which was important to win their trust back. During that time, I kept my notepad, a pen and a recording device all in bag. After a thorough inquiry, they hugged me, welcomed me again and treated me as one of their own that made me rest easier.

I had to rely on mental notes and soon after getting out of the place, transferring what was stored in memory onto a notebook was a priority. Women living already in enclosed areas by the DHA tend to look for an answer in response to, '*What can you do for us?*', however, women on the fringes were more open and amicable.

4.3.4 Time to reflect

Writing field notes is one step but subsequent step was to spend time alone with a day-long activities and observations recorded in a field journal, at the end of the day allowed me to go through the entire day's drill but also it is time to reflect. What was seen and observed, and then what was heard - deluge of information which comes through different means could also become confusing. Therefore, sitting by oneself with data and blending it with context provided interpretations was an important thing to do. It helped find gap in narrative and plan the next respondents and queries.

4.3.5 Discussions

I have broken down various steps in the methodology which were taken but 'discussions' which followed, were the most needed part of all. I had to have either discussion sessions on telephone or in person, time to time (if not immediately after field work). After returning to Germany, I also had long discussions with my discussants in Lahore via zoom meetings with which always proved to be a way forward. Discussions persuaded me to mull over things which I was not paying much heed to, they pushed me to understand different concepts and theories which I barely knew before. The 'discussion sessions' unlocked me every single time.

4.4 My Positionality

It is imperative to talk about the positionality especially from the gender and class perspective. Undoubtedly, I have an advantage that Lahore is my birthplace. I had been going to villages for a long time which made me more conversant with people, their surroundings, dos and don'ts, how to dress myself up in order to blend in, a language that is pivotal in

creating a zone where people wouldn't hold themselves back from wearing their hearts on their sleeves and most importantly giving them time and space to trust and to get myself aligned with their pace out of utter respect. I often tried to find a contact beforehand but there were times when I randomly entered a home without knowing anyone and started making acquaintances which also put me in odd predicaments. The villagers with strong community ties can easily identify an 'outsider' from a distance. I was native to the city but an 'outsider' at the same time to rural areas. As Mughal (2015) also established through his writing that being home-grown doesn't save one from being labelled as outlander. Being a female researcher, my experience revealed that gender gave me an advantage. Office personnel, people working in court, police officers, revenue record holders etc., I found it easier to talk to them in order to access contacts or data. In fact, there were instances where security guards did not let me stand in a male queue and escorted me directly to the relevant person and waited there till, I was done. Best interviews were done in villages where I was considered trust-worthy and people felt safe while talking to me. Men in villages were very respectful and out of regard, they stopped by just by noticing that I might be looking for someone and then gave me their ample time generously and contacts to continue doing my work. In subsequent visits they would accompany me to introduce me to other relevant contacts in the village. I also believe that I could talk to women comfortably and spend time with them because my gender gave them comfort, although I found them more inquisitive about nature of my work and what I was doing on streets in scorching heat but also very appreciative of the fact that someone came to their door to know 'how are they doing?'. I also noticed that young women who were in their twenties were thrilled and enthusiastic while having me at their place because they found me different from them in regards to social standing and educational background, as few mentioned out loud.

Nevertheless, it was not all rosy. Safety and security are the foremost concerns when it comes to females, roaming in places they hardly know. It happened in my case as well. I was always escorted by a trust-worthy person the whole time, I used to have my own conveyance to reach places where I had to conduct fieldwork. However, I avoided making my way into highly urbanised, crowded settlements by walking. There were instances where I felt scared and harassed even if I was alone for hardly five minutes, those few minutes seemed like years. Due to research purposes, I had to exchange mobile numbers for further inquiries and further references. I was uncomfortable situation at times when I had to deal with such entities who tried to breach work ethics. For this reason and also because of easily commuted access I

decided to spend day on field but not nights as well. This may have given me a setback to an extent but this is why I thought sometimes if only I were a male, things would have been different, yet I can't deny the far greater perks of being a female researcher.

4.5 Limitations

I faced immense difficulty with getting access to data that specifically related to DHA and most of the times I ended up failing at getting hands on this. Also, while I was on field in the area where landscape was changing, settlements were walled off and especially if the area was disputed because settlers did not want to vacate land, there I found people extremely reluctant to talk, mostly those who occupied the lower ranks in hierarchal order. Security guards who worked there, also tend to get suspicious and at one instance, guard did not hesitate to scare the woman off whom I was talking to. The access to revenue records was also a tedious job as Mauzas were divided amongst different people, and those people were often not so generous when it came to sharing details. Sometimes, they were ready to talk but did not want me to record or take photographs of the records. Similarly, with the archival records also, although the archives have been well-organized or at least responsible members have been doing their best to keep the records secure, yet as for me, the records from 1990s were unavailable due to peculiar reasons and getting access to them was a long process to which relevant personnel suggested you to look for an alternative. Therefore, relying totally on fieldwork for collecting as much information as I could was challenging and also instilled fear in me if I was doing enough to do the justice to all those people who gave me even five minutes of their time. Like, I mentioned in the above section that I did not go to places where I could not feel comfortable and secure, hence, I would say that gender did limit me at certain occurrences. The Covid-19 did have affected a schedule and in order to compensate and to keep up with the timeline, had to manoeuvre research plan.

4.6 Remote sensing²²

Multitemporal satellite imagery was used to visualize the urban expansion and agricultural land loss between 1965 and 2023. The usage of Corona data, due to its high spatial resolution and dates back to the 1960s, in combination with Landsat-data and Sentinel-2 data has proven to be particularly suitable for the investigation of urban expansion (Dame et al., 2019; Hussain et al., 2023). Therefore, a high spatial resolution panchromatic Corona image from

²² I again would like to thank Dr. Susanne Schmidt for her time and efforts in developing these maps.

1965-10-4 (spatial resolution 0.6-1.2 m), a multi-spectral Landsat 5 scene from 1988-02-23 and a Landsat 7 scene from 2000-03-19 (both with a spatial resolution of 30 m), and a Sentinel-2 scene from 2023-02-21 (spatial resolution of 10 m) were downloaded from earthexplorer.usgs.gov.

Furthermore, to visualize the expansion of the built-up area since the 19th century, the world settlement footprint (WSF - DLR) was used for the evolution from 1985 to 2015 and 2019 (geoservice.dlr.de). Furthermore, the urbanized area before 1980s, classified into pre-colonial, colonial and postcolonial was digitized based on the map drawn by (Schimmel & Mayer, 1982). The location and outlines of the DHA phases were derived from DHA plans which are available online (dhalahore.org). All maps were georeferenced and the outlines were manually digitized on screen. Village names and locations were derived from Open Street Map, Google Earth and the historical topographical map (sheet NJH 43-2, series U502) in the scale of 1:250000 drawn by the U.S. Army Map Service and compiled in 1955.

4.7 Secondary data

Most of the secondary data was taken from the literature available in form of research articles, books, DHA official websites, social media such as twitter. The newspaper editorials were also the integral source. *Iqbal Qaiser*, a Punjabi historian has been the first-hand source who munificently provided me data from his lifelong work on Punjabi villages. The other source was poems, folklores or poetry on rural life which were collected from different sources such as directly from poets or available on social networking sites on rural living.

Hence, this chapter intended to accentuate the methodology being used to conduct research but also tried to break down elements of certain methodology to explain how empirical data was gathered.

Chapter 5

Visible and invisible socio-ecological transformation

5.1 Introduction

The research aims to study socio-ecological change in the peri-urban landscape of East of Lahore city through a historical account of recent developments. This study started in 2014 and extends till 2022, the last year of field research and this chapter presents the findings from 2014-2022. Since 2000, this area particularly grabbed the attention for housing area investment and infrastructure building which opened up the market in real estate. The land lust has caused immense mutation in physical and social realm. This chapter divides results in two broad categories i-e physical and social change eventually transforming environment. Nevertheless, this very division was to see the change in tangibles which were accessible to naked eye and how this impacted the real assets in form of intangibles which were the products of a certain ecology and shaping the communities the way they were prior to the advent of development.

The southeastern periphery once dotted with several (peri-urban) villages composed of large swathes of fertile agricultural lands irrigated by BRB canal and its distributaries. One of the differences between border villages (farthest to the east) and peripheral villages is that border villages only use tube wells for irrigation, they do not have canal water, whereas most of the southeast area is canal irrigated. Since canal water is much better for the crops, it provides strength to the soil and better yield (Lambardar-Pathankey, 2021). The agrarian land envelops settlement area which is called *Laal Lakeer / Lal Dora or Red Tape*. During British Raj, a red line was drawn on maps to demarcate village population separate from the farmland, it was also used by the revenue department to divide *Abadi* from productive land.

The part of the village i-e inhabited area (comes under *laal lakeer*) does not have a land entitlement document or registration unlike for privately owned lands. Hence, this particular part has a collective ownership. Therefore, when people want to sell the area under red tape, it is usually done by a mutual decision and amount is divided equally amongst them. The peri-urban villages are connected with two main historical roads *Bedian* and *Barki* - formerly

known as *Harikay Road* (SO²³-Durgpura, 2021). Many of these villages were before partition such as *Jahman, Durgpura, Natha Singh, Heera Singh, Hudiara, Sarja Marja, Dhira, Padhana, Mandianwala, Bhangali*. Other settlements which were born after partition such as Chachuwali. It was inhabited by the migrant *Mewatis* who after crossing the border stayed at Walton, later moved to *Liddarh* but due to their distinctive language and ethnicity got into clashes with local clans, eventually, they came to *Chachuwali* (Chachuwali, 2021; DHA Broker-Chachuwali, 2021). The villages are comprised of different communities such as *Mewati* or *Meo, Rajpoot, Malik, Awaan, Jatt, Arayi, Gujjar, Rahmani* and artisanal castes *Saqqay, Taili, Nae, Julaha*, weavers, *Mochi* (Cobblers), *Lohar* (Ironsmith), *Tarkhan* (Carpenters), *Muslim Sheikh* (lower caste Hindu who converted to Islam), *Easaee* (Christians), and *Bhangali* has *Shia* and *Sunni* communities too.

²³ The codes are used to identify interlocutors. The detailed list of interviewees and their coding is attached to appendix B at the end of the thesis.

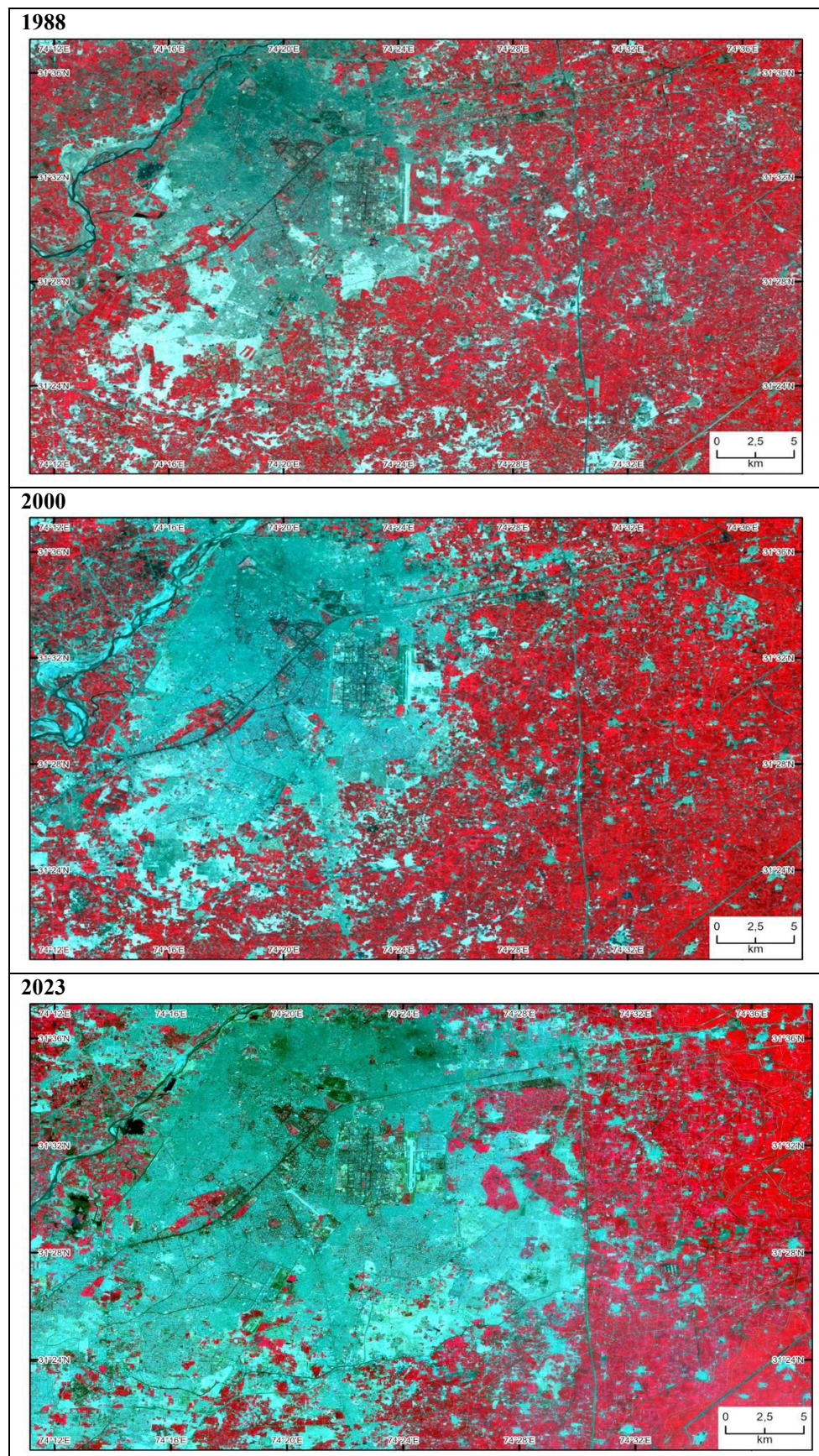


Figure 6: The virtual presentation of land-use change (1988-2023): 1988 (top), 2000 (middle) and 2023 (bottom)

The above image (see Fig. 6) is the virtual representation of socio-ecological change in pixels. The urban sprawl is rapidly moving towards the east and has been taking over agricultural lands from poor localized communities and jeopardizing them in the name of development. This 'development' which is 'state-captured' real-estate by the DHA as a primary and the most influential player, with uncontested power, unshakeable economic empire and declared being unanswerable to any authority whatsoever – is the executioner of agrarian part of the city but the provider for aesthetic living for the elite. The agricultural land was not just an immortal piece of earth that has potential to feed and sustain but agrarian mode of production was a way of life where cash and market economy were far behind but reciprocity, pay-in-kind and interdependency were the foundation. Most of the left half of the map is the built-up area and on the right side, farthest to east, close to the border is still standing as a rural realm. The map shows the expansion of DHA phases and its sectors in leap-frog fashion, consuming several historical villages. The villages as mentioned earlier are at different stages of the development but it has marked the ones that no longer exist to provide a record about villages that have been lost in the process and the locales that have not been displaced but urbanism has overwhelmed the area. The land commodification and urban sprawl is relentless under neoliberal policies that promote such development projects is not circumscribed to land transformation only, it is a beginning to a bigger change i.e. environmental, social and ecological change, absolutely externalized from the compensatory packages being offered to the cash-poor farmers whose status already render them disposable and insignificant at multitudinous level. The map shows the land-use change and pins the localities, can help in understanding that places do not change in isolation, material change leads to change on all three landscapes – cognitive, psychological, emotional. The villages and settlements being shown in the map are not just the physical spaces that are going through reconfiguration and reformation but also has been experiencing class shuffling, in-situ migrations, change in community due to uninvited encroachment of so-called development that is class centric and callous to environmental and natural resources. A development that has converted every resource with use value to exchange value including the intangibles be it trust, reverence, connections, community, network, power of togetherness, security, fear, coping tools in the time of need and whatnot.

The region used to produce cash crops and several vegetables such as wheat, rice, corn, fodder, peas, carrots, tobacco, potatoes, tomatoes, radish, leafy green vegetables and fruits such as guava, oranges, sweet lime etc. As mostly people were involved into agriculture,

what they produced was also being sold in Lahore city through nearby markets or *mandis* such as in *Koth Lakhpat*, *Bhagwan Pura*, *Badaami Bagh*. Farming and livestock were almost tied together, therefore, besides vegetables, the area had provided milk also. Hence, apart from farming, milk business was another source of livelihood for the locals. As far as landholdings are concerned, small landholders and landless can be traced in every village, whereas big landlords are none or a few in each village. People who do not own land also used to work as tenant croppers before the sale of agricultural lands commenced by DHA from Charrar in 1977, then *Jalal abad* in 1996, *Sangatpura* and from the rest (see Appendix A), land acquisition picked up pace in early 2000s, some villages sold their land in around 2006 such as *Chachuwali*, *Durgpura*, *Gohawa*; *Natha Singh* village was sold in 2011, *Saduwala*'s land was taken in 2012, *Pathanwala*'s land was purchased by DHA in 2013 and the buying is still going on to date. DHA buys parcels and gathers the land first and then it starts transforming it, therefore, a timeline for land acquisition can be observed. This is why, the study site was able to show a whole picture of change as these villages were found at different stages of the development, yet occurring simultaneously.

After partition villages were divided between Lahore and Amritsar district, each region got 85 villages which were there before independence with the centuries' old history such *Padhana*, *Pathanke*, *Lehna Singh*, *Mota Singh*, *Natha Singh*, *Liddharh* and so on (FG-DHA Land providers, 2024). Further it was told that since then '85 villages' which was at that time, a number of pre-partition villages but now used as the identification of the area as the villages in numbers have surpassed 85. During the current data collection these villages were at different phases of take-over development²⁴. From the relatively pristine border villages through the walled off villages and a village reduced to a slum or ghetto provided the journey of a village on the path of development leading eventually the complete removal of the village such as *Sangatpura*, *Gobindpura*, *Jalal abad*, *Haveliyan*, *Heera Singh*. The next section answers, 'What is a village?'

5.2 A 'Village'

The following excerpt has been taken from the multiple meetings and long conversation with a *Charrar* resident, who was 50 years old when was met the first time. He was born and raised there and saw the place changing its shape and color in front of his eyes. By profession he was a barber, who now had shifted his shop in Defence. This village will remain of

²⁴ See an Appendix D

importance as it was the first village from where acquisition started through one-on-one dealing with DHA which also set the precedent for the DHA to never come to the forefront.

'Charrar was 80% of shamlaat and 20% of the ownership. We did not have big landholdings, so we were tenant croppers. What used to happen was that people who were doing cultivation as tenant/share cropper, they did not have their own land, after partition once Sikhs left, land became under the ownership of those who were already cultivating it. There were large tracts of agricultural lands and people like us who lived around farmland, our bread and butter were associated with that land. Although we did not have a big land but we were into agriculture, now the same land is buried under DHA, where there is K-Block water tank, we used to have our 'Dera' there, I still remember myself playing there. I remember it very clearly. DHA started acquiring land from this village in 1977 and by 1980 DHA started building. This very area where DHA has been built over, was once extremely fertile land. Everything we used to produce from fields and there was availability of everything, you name it and you have it. The wise elderly people resisted it, they went to General Zia's office and told his staff to find a barren land for construction. This particular area used to produce pea that entire Lahore ate. Now 250 g of pea costs 100 rupees (0.33 €), which was once available almost gratis. Where there is now DHA phase 5, people used to grow high quality carrots and one could smell it from a distance, it was considered the house of carrots, now you can no longer find that kind of vegetable. Even landless never slept empty stomachs, food was never an issue even if somebody did not own the land. You see, when you grow pea, you can grow another two to four vegetables at the same time, radish pods on the boundary wall of the field, these were of certain height that also provided protection as nothing could enter the field, along with it, we grew gourds. With pea, okra and coriander were also produced, and in the center, we grew carrots and saag (green leafy vegetable) in winters. Whether people owned land or not, they could go outside and pluck the desired vegetable for cooking. Then we had big houses and now we are cramped into marlas (25.3 m²). Before DHA, we had big houses with haveli (a separate area to keep the animals). When I got married, all guests at the wedding were accommodated at home, and were served food at the same place, now if someone dies, we cannot accommodate ten people because house sizes have shrunk.'

Village fairs hugely contributed to the recognition and identity of the place and the generations who spent time in a village setting still use farmer's calendar and festivals to specify dates and events. He continued, *'A village fair happens every year even till now from*

2 days or one month of Bhadun²⁵ (15th August-14th September), we still have the same zeal and excitement for the village fair and this excitement is way more than our Eid festival. When this event arrives, all our married sisters, daughters, come back to their homes without any invitation (their arrival requires no invitation), drummers especially participate, festival has its own color and vibrance. One can learn a lot from the event, as some people present drama, sing Sufi songs, other one would recite Waris Shah's famous poetry Heer, attendees could gather and learn historical things. Then, there are stalls selling local produce. It brings so much joy and happiness to us, it is almost like a son's wedding.' (Charrar, 2016; 2021).

The border villages were of interest to have a picture of what a village looked like. Villages like *Jahman, Sarja Marja, Padhana, Pathanke* are amongst the places where a semblance of the above described still looks closer to reality of rural culture. This helps a great deal in imagining peri-urban villages and their agrarian ecology prior to disruption. They are located farther of the east, close to the Indian border. People have not left agrarian mode of production and still tied to milk and land for crop production. Apart from seasonal *Rabi* and *Kharif* crops, dwellers produce vegetables according to their will and the need for personal consumption (see Fig. 7).



Figure 7: Fertile agricultural lands of rice (left) and wheat crops (right)

Fields are watered through tube-wells and hand-pumps are also used to acquire drinking water from the ground. In order to protect the quality of groundwater, the wastewater ponds (see Fig. 8) are built and cared after by the communities.

²⁵ See Appendix C to have a look at Punjabi months.



Figure 8: Wastewater Pond, Pathanke, 2021

Livestock is the other source of livelihood and nutrition (see Fig. 9). Peasants keep a portion of the milk they produce for domestic use and sell the rest in the market. However, who are into selling milk business, the trend has shifted to selling milk in entirety for money.



Figure 9: Communal 'Dera' for keeping animals, Pathanke, 2021 (top) and Open communal grazing land, Jahman, 2019 (bottom)

The village and its land are multipurpose that accommodates all (see Fig. 10)



Figure 10: Space shared by all: Boys are bathing in canal (left) which is also used for cow baths (right)

Other than owner, farmers' cultivators are either share croppers or contract farmers who pay upfront rent in cash to the landlord. Electricity is available but the need for fuel is met through woods and mostly from cow dung cakes (see Fig. 11) although gas cylinders are now also coming into use.



Figure 11: Mud-houses, cow-dung cakes for drying, Sarja Marja, 2021 (left); drying and preservation of dung cakes for heating and cooking (right)

The rural setting offers security to women and young girls which is completely amiss in urban setting and urbanised localities. Some women are also involved in money-based economy by doing jobs in the city. But women who are living in villages are not left behind when it comes to earning. They are indulged in doing craft work at home. Some are into making ornaments from different materials and sell it, others do embroidery and stitching which is also receding in villages now. Hence, houses are also cottage industries in which women actively take part. Other businesses by women include the opening of small shops

next to their house. I have also seen woman as an owner of the vegetable shop and runs it with her husband. The shop was located in Charrar, on a crowded street, yet she felt comfortable as she was surrounded by people who were either the community or relatives. They take the orders for the embroidery work from a middleman who buys it from them. They also make other household items like strand and weed hand held fans, plates and containers to keep bread (see Fig. 12) down below:



Figure 12: Women's handicrafts: (hand-fan in the making, embroidered pillow cover, breadbin (left) and fancy embroidered cloth piece (right (2021); trinkets in the making by a woman in Kohriyan, 2016 (bottom)

Women also make earthen hearths and 'tandoors' to cook and make bread at home wherever clay or earth is used as construction material be it wood burning hearth (see Fig. 13, on the left), plastering, kitchen shelves (see Fig. 13, on the right) or making a raised terrace for seating and work, women take part. This craft and design are quite apart from the any needed agricultural work in the fields and care of animals, and a variety of household chores.



Figure 13: Kitchen in rural houses with a gas stove made by women (left) and kitchen shelves made from mud (right)

People have big houses that accommodate culture of joint family. Such villages are still practicing reciprocity and the culture of sharing with strong community ties where dependence on people has still not been replaced by cash.

Another layer can be seen through villages which are on military farmlands (a glimpse of a border village in Fig. 14), they are more ‘hybrid’ cultural settlements that have several similarities with above mentioned villages but also participating in modern-world money-making opportunities predominantly through rental incomes and non-farm jobs. They are closer to main roads which gives them accessibility and connection to the city. Residents of such settlements still get grains and dairy from farms and cash coming from house tenants and family members employed in city jobs. Examples are *Burj*, *Chughalpura (Habibabad)*, *Jindri*, *Jindra Kalan*, *Rakh Padri*; they are changing materially but trying to keep the intangible cultural intact.



Figure 14: Sunset in a border village - Sundown (somewhere) in rural ecology, 2021

Rural world is not a utopia, neither it is a perfect world free of worries and discomforts, yet people call it a heaven, *'City can never be a place even close to what this village is'* (FW/2-Sarja Marja, 2021). At another instant, a middle-aged man standing in front of his house with his relatives as neighbours, amongst those who did not sell the land whereas most of the village had been bought by DHA, had been negotiating and eventually locked a deal, said, *'We are asking for 16.374 € / 2.5 km², if they offer half of it why would we leave our heaven'*, (Chak Dhira, 2022). Nonetheless, the priceless intangible assets are the product of history and ecology. Once the ecology is gone, it takes away the hidden treasures too. Therefore, the next section is an attempt to elucidate, 'what is the ecology of a village in this area?'

5.2.1 Ecology - smells like 'home'

Away from the hustle and bustle of the city, driving far to the east a road covered by shadowy trees, was taking me to manifest the 'rural'. The main road led to the unpaved bumpy path surrounded by greenfield swinging with wind. I was engrossed in witnessing a different realm which was otherwise only heard in conversations - quiet, serene, green, open but covered with vegetation, gold-wheat and fodder sprouting by tearing chest of mother earth, under the blue sky filled and mixed with yellow coming from fiery sun. The perfect blend of colors all in the nature's palette. Finally, a car stopped and voices brought me back to look meticulously at the rural culture still prevalent in village *Sarja Marja*, the last village of Lahore, shares border with two Indian villages *Chhina* and *Narli*. *Jatt*, *Malik* and *Arayi* are three castes found in this village. *Pathanke* is *Meo* village as only *Mewatis* reside there. The account touched upon below was recorded during a field visit in 2021, 2022 to the mentioned

border village due to which other border villages such as *Padhana*, *Pathanke* and the ones on military farmland such as *Burj*, *Chughalpura*, *Jindra Kalan* were also validated.

I felt being invited by the place to see myself the sustained ecology and ‘almost-textbook’ rural world. Despite my reserved demeanor, I soon found myself as one of them, a feeling that is amiss in urbanised, modern and especially elite areas of the city. *‘We live in a paradise, here we have everything, we grow vegetables which other people can also pluck from the ground, above all, we feel free to go anywhere within a village, there is no fear in walking alone as I experience in the city’*, a young girl broke the silence though her words as if she heard my thoughts while my gaze was wandering all over the place (FW-Sarja Marja, 2021). *‘Let me take you to the tube-well, it is closed for now but it is our favorite picnic spot in summers. My sisters, friends and I take stroll in the fields in our free time which is very invigorating for us, it is our safe haven, therefore our male figures don’t have to accompany us’*. She took pride in iterating the security which rural setting offered them, especially when I stopped after seeing a group of young boys coming from the opposite side on a narrow dirt road, they moved past us without raising their eyes which was uncanny as compared to harassment females experienced in so-called developed areas of the city. She took me to her home where her parents were already standing at the door to welcome me with their open arms. I felt humbled not only to get to know them but to see that humans and space they share, create an environment. It reminds me of Cecelia Ahern’s quote ‘Home is not a place, it is a feeling’, a researcher who was an ‘outsider’ yet had a sense of belonging. None of the gates had locks, women were inside of the houses not only as guardians but to keep their homes open for others. None of the members asked my names at the entrance unless they took me inside with great respect and I introduced myself without being asked. *‘Curd, yogurt, milk, ghee, butter etc., they are all home-made, we never get short of milk as we have animals’*, one of the women pointed out to the pot placed on low fire to make yogurt (See Fig. 15).



Figure 15: High variety of food in the rural area of Lahore varying from home-made curd (bottom), mustard seeds for oil production (top left) to beans, coriander and mint leaves (top right)

More people joined in once I stepped out of the house to take a tour of the village. An army of young, well-behaved, sensible boys, young girls, and two middle aged men took me on the tour of the village. There were open spaces where aged men with their 'hookah' sat with others, having a chitchat, some gathered to spend quality time outside of small shops in the late afternoon. Milkmen were getting ready for 4pm ritual of milking cows in order to send it to the main city. An unmetalled village roads between open spaces on one side and mud houses on the other. While on a walk, children were playing old traditional games (unsupervised by their mothers but watched over by several sets of eyes. The shared culture was reflected not only through common-animal much more keeping places but also through their personalities. I hardly heard 'my, mine' but 'we, together' were the much more common pronouns. As I was told by one of my respondents, *'When people live together even big*

issues are solved whether it is match making, arranging dowry, they stand together in grief or tragedy, the grievance is shared, the happiness is shared'. People are still tied to agricultural mode of production, living as tenants on military land which is not permitted for financialization. They keep two parts of the produce and one goes to military. Their other occupation is selling milk. It is not cash-free culture but most of the basic needs especially quality food and a community to ensure safety net, brotherhood, manpower, keeps their physical, emotional, mental and financial subsistence and stability intact come free. People in border villages still produce their own food on a parcel of land where they grow crops (see Figures 15). These are mostly those who are the tenant croppers, *'We have got a land on contract, we pay rent annually which is 30-35K (98-114 €), where there is an availability of irrigation water, they pay 40K (131 €) per year'* (FW-Sarja Marja, 2021).

Apart from the availability of land to grow which gives them power to produce and maintain subsistence, how else they cherish the form-of-land the most is the roof over their head. The normal architecture of the house in a village (see Fig. 16), regardless of geographical placement is used to have a spacious veranda surrounded by smaller rooms as people preferred to have ample space to facilitate others (Harpalke, 2018; Charrar, 2021). The houses are large enough to have ample space for relatives and friends to get together in an open area surrounded by rooms. *'We live in heavens'*, words I heard from many different persons, *'look at the fields, feel the breeze, one does not miss fans, we still love to sleep on the roof at night, talking to each-other across walls and rooftops without needing a gadget. Our men might not earn much but still they have kept us with respect and care, we have a lot to cherish. We can't even imagine to migrate to city'*, a woman from (FW*N-Sarja Marja, 2021) added with whom I had a candid conversation on the low wall of a rooftop, a vantage point to savour picturesque view of the village. Similar account was delivered at another military farmland back five years back, where women appreciated the openness of rural living not just in space but in hearts too (FW-Rakh Padri, 2016). And not just for the people, as they consider animals and livestock no lesser than their family, they make sure that they have ample space for keeping animals also. It is common in villages that the houses are big and in complete harmony to adjust human and non-human family members. For them, they are their children who need same amount of attention, love, affection and the level of commitment and responsibility as a human-child needs and deserves. Luckily, I got a chance to eye-witness a relation of women with their livestock when I was sitting in a Mewati village Chachuwali with Meo women and having a long conversation yet feeling the anxiety in the

air through unsettling body language of an eldest woman of the household. I was intrigued to know which she felt and then she said, *'My cow is in labour, today is the time'*. Mewati women and young girls were all waiting to welcome a new member to their household which was a calf as cow was in labour. Since, young females do not take active part in looking after cattle and especially during birthing time, ladies of certain age (regardless of their marital status) are not even allowed to mark their presence while cow is giving birth. Same goes with men at home. Hence, there was a separate room for her where eldest woman in the house who was constantly checking up on her, caressing her, calming her down and who herself was going through a concoction of emotions (thrilled, worried, eager, anxious), calling out other elderly women in her neighbourhood through walls, who started getting together. There was a strange silence inside the house where young women (married and unmarried) were waiting for the news to arrive. It took me time to swallow that it was not her daughter but that was how she was treating her cow. Before bidding farewell, I hugged and asked, *'how should someone congratulate at this time?'*, she smiled at me and replied, *'just like when a human-child comes into the world'*. The conviviality of people from villages be it at any stage of transformation is still 'rural' in nature i-e filled with warmth and happiness despite the geographical placement, which they carry with pride.



Figure 16: Traditionally large houses (mud houses in first two rows in Sarja Marja, 2021); House in Durgpura, 2022 with modern touch (bottom left); Animal-keeping space in house in Chughalpura, 2022 (bottom right)

The above-mentioned text was to give an idea about a village regardless of its geographic location. Be it farthest to the east, touching Indian border where defense considerations do not allow mainstream development enter or the peri-urban villages in south-east Lahore around two main roads. The now-urbanised locale or milieu-in-transition were once very similar to border villages. The subsequent sections illustrate how urbanisation in peri-urban villages as a development policy that floods cash into these marginalised but self-sufficient realms, has been causing change. It also gives a reality check from ground realities and local people's reaction about whether it is a progress or regression. And what is the purpose of displacing and replacing the current population with an upper class rich low-density population at huge cost.

The next section draws a picture of change that is very evident through material transformation when one is travelling from ecologically sustained areas to places that carry overwhelming symbols of modern development and material change. It is like a time-machine that enables a person to visit the past and compare it with contemporary times.

5.3 Making of a new landscape

'Welcome to market-island', I said it to myself when I drove back from the eastern side of Lahore to the peripheral area, lying on southeast. Carpeted roads, infrastructure, landscaping on the sides, fancy entrances and roundabout monuments. This transformation begins with the DHA's promise of the modern and aesthetic living (see Fig. 17) only for the ones who can afford it. The development project aiming for the elite by the state institution is the encroachment in the life of a local community. One of the most visible forms of interference is through creating space for general public that is linked with common resource with multiple perks, which breaches the privacy of these rural communities. For instance, *Shabbir Sharif* Road alongside *Khaira* Distributary (a long water channel, shown in figure down below, where women and young girls still come to wash cloths and also male members of the vicinity use the water channel to wash their bikes and rickshaws, leads straight to *Barki* Road. The distributary is sandwiched between two busy road and fully expose women. Women were seeing being conscious with their *dupatta* (a fabric to cover head) while sitting on relatively steel slope for laundering, some were using the same fabric to cover half of their faces as veil. Men accompanied them to ensure their safety, standing vigilant at a shorter distance, keeping sharp gaze at every passer-by (be it in a vehicle or on foot). Localised communities also carry invisible walls of privacy around them, safeguarded by their culture

and traditions. Trespassing land by the realtors, infringement on their space in for the sake of modern development is equivalent to barge in that is uncalled for.



Figure 17: DHA as a real-estate developer versus environment: DHA's promise for the rich (top left), Invincible - Defence Golf Resort (a new DHA project) (top right), Multifaceted relation between canal and locals (bottom row)

The *Barki Road*, projects two-sides of the same coin (see Fig. 18) of 'the development' – dismal and gloomy versus lucrative and money engendering (taken as the parameter to measure prosperity through economic boom. The pictures down below were taken on site at different periods, chosen ones tell the story of landscape from going through change to become a new face. The road in between used to separate place in two halves, on the left side of the road there were several villages, privately and state-owned. Now, the most common sight is the placement of banners, billboards, ground-mounted signboards talking about the construction of phases or extensions and their upcoming projects. The fleet of loaders and excavators digging ground, heavy sound of bulldozers to level the terrain need no introduction and dust-blinding sites are the new faces of the area which was once quiet agrarian realm. The productive land is disappearing, white walls with red strip standing as a symbol of power-display and DHA's sovereignty. The other side depicts the business hub. It is a commercial area swamped with a number of real-estate offices, developers' offices,

international food and coffee chains such as Gloria Jeans. The picture on the left shows the journey where heart of the earth was crushed to build the imported modern symbols of development.



Figure 18: Market in Land

The merciless scrapping of a 1.5 m thick layer of top soil, cutting down of trees and orchards, clearance of land as a preparatory step for the construction and extension of DHA phases and sectors. An old cattleman lamented the loss of nature's gifts and State's shallow priorities while he was grazing his cattle in the middle of DHA phase, *'Ten, ten trucks used to stand here for loading mangoes and guavas and were delivered to the city, and now there is nothing'*, (Bhangali, 2021). Loss of agricultural lands and the butchering of fruit trees for erecting concrete jungle are amongst the forgotten treasures that are never compensated. The military backed-up business venture, popularly known as DHA ensures secure, comfortable living and high-end living for the elite in a trailblazing gated housing. However, the land over which these symbols of modernity are shining, comes from peri-urban communities who produced and sustained themselves as well as many others through a plethora of tangible and intangible assets. Relatively sustained ecologies have been reduced to degraded, service-sector, caught up in everyday struggles of life. A well-established property dealer from *Haer* (2016), summed up the process of land transaction, how and for whom it worked, in these words, *'Rich are getting richer and the poor are becoming poorer, because the wealthy take away everything which once belonged to the poor'*. Following collage (see Fig. 19) shows the route of development via agrarian economics to create the 'aesthetically beautiful':

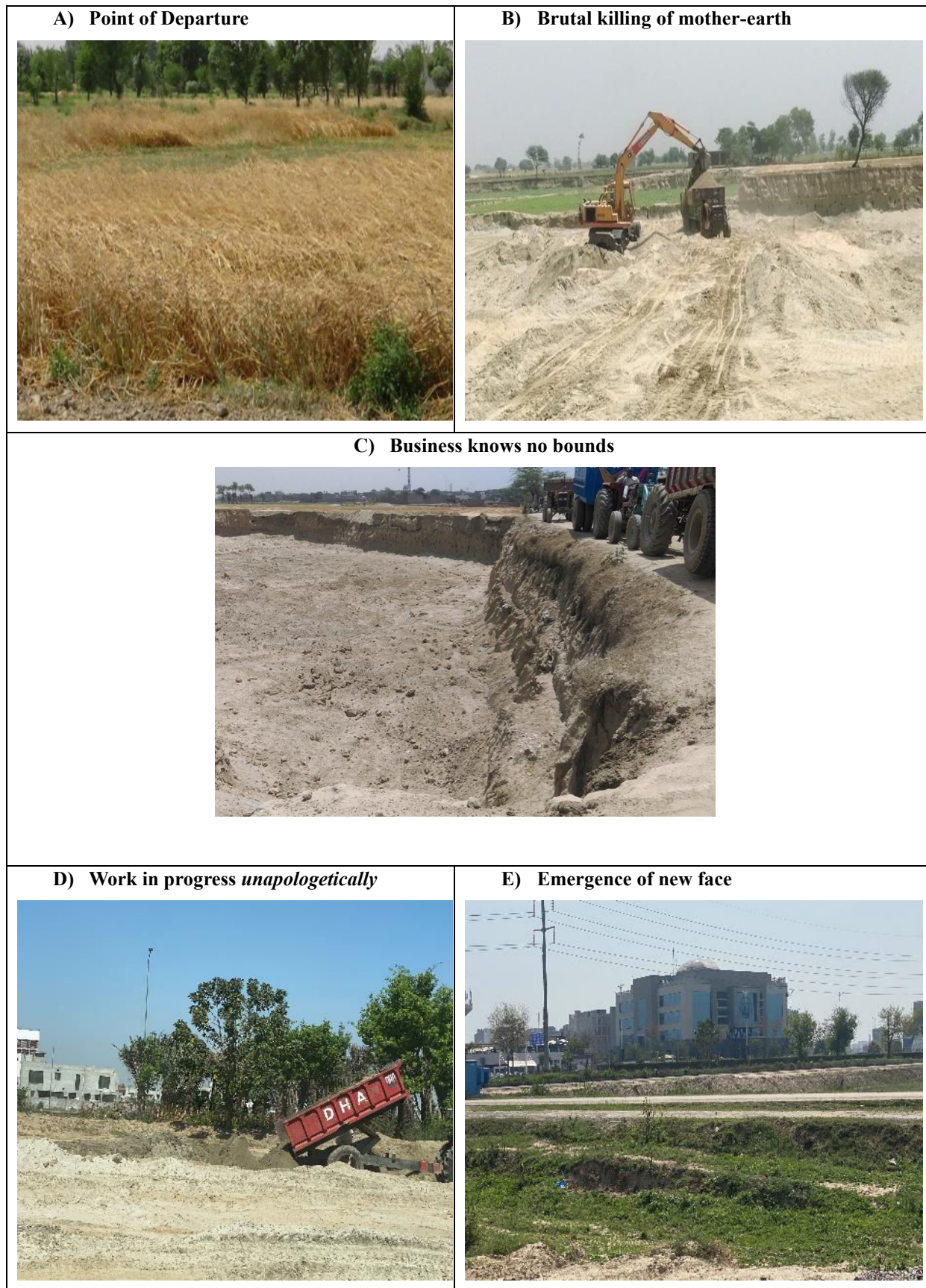


Figure 19: Life-cycle of the agricultural land in the epoch of neoliberalism

Urbanisation on the periphery of built DHA has entered the village to create psychological turmoil also. The amount of fear is associated with the class denizens belong to. The photo (see Fig.20, top), is the depiction of one such occurrences, while I was roaming around and saw a woman from a distance with her cow and calf. The ground was uneven and looked like hills that woman and her livestock had to climb and cross after every few steps. She was a Christian woman, holding a wooden stick in one hand and constantly looking over her shoulder. I wanted to talk to her so I began walking through terrain in an attempt to meet her halfway. I though did get a chance to have a brief conversation during which she told me that she was from Jhallaran and soon this village would be erased (Jhallaran, 2021). She was talking to me but her gaze was all over the place. All of a sudden, a man shouted who was a security guard, '*What are you doing here, go away*', yelled angrily. She ran and disappeared in no time. While I was returning, he stopped and interrogated me which was telling about DHA's scrutiny. He further revealed that where we were standing right now, these were all agricultural lands, but DHA took over and now the villages behind the wall (Jindra kalan, Jhallaran), they would be erased surely. At another instant, a woman with her children was plucking fodder from the ground, she got scared when I got closer to her that without doing her job done, she gathered her children and left immediately. It made me realise again that fear is real and legitimate.





Figure 20: Life between 'maze' and 'amaze'- people are striving to 'remain', 2022

There is a lot to more the story that is not apparent on the surface and needs to be unwrapped, despite what can be observed through naked eye. Tangible change is easy to fathom but this is not all, it is just a beginning of social change - physically, psychologically, emotionally, morally and traditionally it is a shift from one world to another without moving an inch and economically by a restructuring and reshuffling of class structures. Roots of 'change' are deeper than what they look like (see Fig. 21) is used as a metaphor of such intangible chaos).



Figure 21: Behind the walls - World transforms, Chachuwali, 2021

5.3.1 How does this happen?

The urbanisation is predicated on creating an insatiable craving for ‘space’ and ‘place’ in ‘time’ to build new structures such as road networks (see Fig. 22), housing schemes, communication networks by dismantling the old landscapes. Research site has undergone massive transformation by transforming agricultural lands to DHA posh housing society, its extended phases, commercial areas, bridges and whatnot. All of this is happening by upending the agricultural lands and displacing and enclosing the previous settlements or the complete erasure of peri-urban villages.



Figure 22: Mist of progress - ‘blurred’ the sight, 2022

The underlying processes for carrying out this physical change begins with the acquisition of land. The land acquisition happens in different forms, either through seemingly direct purchase of a land parcel or scrapping for use of top soil for use elsewhere or by transforming, land from graveyards and shrines and other commons such as routes, schools, mosques, wastewater ponds, grazing lands and other ways of taking over the land is done by tricks, deceit, threats, scuffles and violence (Villagers, 2014-2022).

5.3.2 Land acquisition

‘DHA has raised the value of land,’ a realtor claimed (FM-Haer, 2016); *‘People are becoming millionaires overnight’*, these are some of the most off heard narratives from property dealers. According to them it is simple, people are selling lands and in return they are receiving money (according to land acquisition law). They also realise and point out that there is no rule or law but the law of the money *‘There is no law in here, only one who has money is successful. There is no resistance over selling of land and why would they have*

resisted. In fact, on the other hand people compare their respective land deals: he got 2 crore²⁶, I would demand 3. How could DHA face difficulty, people took money and are spending it, not in thousands but in crores' (Bhangali, 2021). It is also a common belief that people happily and wishfully sell their land but at the back of their minds there is a realisation. 'DHA will take over this land in any case and once they map out their phases, whatever appears on the surface, they will remove everything. People have small holdings but DHA is ready to buy more than they can offer. People are happy to sell and DHA is more than happy to purchase' (Natha Singh, 2022).

DHA does not make all payment for acquired land in money but also a share of housing land. However, after the *Charrar* incident, DHA does not come in the open to lock the deal, it hires the investors or brokers instead who work for DHA. DHA offers 2 kanal (0.10 ha) of land for 8 kanals (0.405 ha) of land acquired. It means after giving away 0.405 ha, DHA in exchange provides 0.10 ha and keeps other 0.30 ha for itself to build roads in the area. The importance of road building could be imagined from the excerpt below:

It was an incident that showed another side of land acquisition, that did not need to be the farmland, but houses too. It occurred while I was in the beginning of the research and roaming around in Dera Chahal in 2014 and found a group of elderly men sitting outside a small hen's slaughterhouse. I could hear their laughter from afar which caught my attention in the first place. There were small, tiny houses on the right-hand side of a narrow road and the shop was across the street surrounded by agricultural lands. I introduced myself as a researcher and expressed my desire to have few minutes from them, they started dispersing in no time and that left me in an entirely mind-boggling situation. I bought myself some time to regain the confidence and finally mustered up the courage to talk to the man from the group who stayed back. 'What do you want? He asked angrily. 'I already have received the notice to abandon my house, now stop bothering!', the man yelled. He was crossed because he thought of me as someone from DHA, demanding him to leave his land. DHA has been the most powerful developer, used to purchase land from villages for the construction of gated communities but the old villager's reaction conveyed much more. Later when grey-haired realised that I am just a researcher and have got nothing to do with DHA or his land, he became a cooperative and hospitable being. He showed me his home and said, 'DHA wants us to vacate the house as they need to demolish it to widen the road'.

²⁶ 1 crore PKR = 32698 €

The portrayal of land acquisition by DHA seems fair but it is not only intricate but a far cry from the ground reality, coming from gamut of people's experiences. So, DHA issues files - one file (each of 0.05 ha) for 0.405 ha costs 55-60 lacs (17693-19301 €²⁷), (Researcher's data, 2013- 2015), now the price for a file for same amount of land has spiked upto 13million (42971 €), (Bhangali, 2021). The land in *Harpalke* was sold in 2004, at that time 0.405 ha of land was for 11.448 €, the same amount of land was sold in 2018 was around 261.660 € (Harpalke, 2018). However, there is another party involved that acts as a bridge between DHA and the landowner who is known as broker/investor or middleman. The investors who actually work on behalf of DHA, is usually a trusted member of the community, help fix deals at lowest possible rate through bargaining and gradually upping the rates with respect to flexibility or rigidity of the holder, variation in prices also depend upon the location as well. This has been established throughout the research journey by various brokers and landowners, villagers that insiders are hired by DHA to deal. A DHA broker from *Chachuwali* zeroes in on the fact that even if the broker from the outside, yet they need to involve someone from within who is fully informed about landholdings and people and also is trustworthy for the locals (FM-Revenue Office, 2021). However, land prices have registered a steep increase with time. *Chachuwali* resident (2021) had 1-acre (0.405 ha), out of which 0.202 ha was sold for 50-55 lacs PKR (16328-17961 €) in 2004, whereas the other half of land was sold by the owner in 2013 for 2.5 crore PKR (81644 €). According to Villager (Kalasmari, 2022), 1-acre (0.405 ha) of land was sold PKR 2-300,000 (965.07 €) in 2003 and now 1 marla (25.3 m²) costs 2573,53 € (FM-Kalasmari, 2018; 2022). There are cases where people sold marla (25.3 m²) for 3500000 PKR (11259 €) reported by focus group discussion (2021). Currently 1-kanal (0.05 ha) land is of 35-50 million PKR (Gujjar-Chachuwali, 2022).

Rates have been fluctuating, bases on DHA's desperation for land which shifts more power in negotiations to denizens, where land lies and people's resilience and resistance to make the best out of a deal. Although, not every village got an opportunity to decide for themselves, nevertheless, the general pattern for land transaction has been consistent wherein investors play a vital role in making a deal with owners (without bringing DHA to the forefront and acting as a veil that keeps DHA hidden until it wants to be no longer secret), get the price fixed and owner being paid by the investor himself and files are transferred in the name of

²⁷ The PKR conversion to euros is according to current exchange rate on May 12, 2023, i-e 1€= 310,86 PKR

investor who becomes the owner of land being offered by DHA. He is then free to sell it anywhere he wants. So, investors provide land to DHA by purchasing it from the landowner and he himself becomes the owner of the land as a personal purchase given as compensation for the land acquired. The investor directly pays the landowner in cash and file (entitlement to land) goes to investor who is now the landlord and DHA gets the land for real-estate purpose. People from the village who worked as investors have become billionaires by exploiting the community's trust. DHA sends its investors to do all the work for them. *'This village had an investor, he started scamming people, otherwise village would have been vacated long ago. He did so many things, he took the land, sold it to DHA, used people's money, that pushed people 6-12 months backwards. See, if you buy 100 acres (40 ha) and make payment to sellers after a year, then it is better to go to DHA directly. He went a lot ahead in his life. Right now, he is owner of 35 Murabba (354 ha) land within this Lahore city and the places he owns on the main are a separate story, his greed is still not satisfied, such is the addiction of money'* (Chak Dhira, 2022). However, apart from Charrar, Pathanwala was another village, comprised of 10 homes (families from the same lineage) 10 Murabba (101.17 ha) of land where DHA directly dealt with people back in 2013, that is when the village was sold (Pathanwala, 2018)

People also call DHA investors goons or the land mafia, who can go to any length to get the job done (Lawyer-Durgpura, 2022; FM-Durgpura, 2021). Gujjar (Chachuwali, 2021) shared an incident of someone who in he knew well which speaks volumes for the role of investors. *'DHA has its investors and has given them all the liberty. DHA never comes to the front, even when you go to their office, they will tell you to wait and then they will send a person on their behalf who is the broker/investor. Four months ago, incident happened to a well-established and a resourceful Kamboh. He had a well-maintained land, with guava and sweet lime orchards, peacocks, hens, goats. He was not ready to sell his land unless DHA paid him the desired amount, when things did not workout. DHA asked its investor to get the land by any means for which they paid him 50 crore (1.634.758 €) to make this happen by hook or by crook. Investor distributed 5crore (163.500 €) amongst the police officials including S.H.O and his deputy. An order was issued for a raid in the middle of the night. He brought 40-50 policemen, 10-15 other persons, accompanied by D.C. They also brought tractors and bulldozers. In the blink of an eye, the walls were bulldozed, entire land was ruined, the animals looted and nothing saved. He was not paid even a single rupee as compensation. He could not file a case in the name of DHA either, because when he would be asked, who did*

this? He could tell the name of a person (investor), the accused investor might work for DHA yet was not a DHA employee. Roads have already been built on that area'.

Some people think DHA only acquires agricultural land and leave the settlement as it is, thus, inhabited area doesn't get displaced in the process. However, data collected from people (2014-2022 and personal observations) prove otherwise. Some part of *Haveliyan* village was intact in 2021 but was completely removed in 2022, *Heera Singh* is nowhere to be found except for its shrunken graveyard. *Sangatpura* is history, *Gobindpura* has disappeared into thin air. *Chak Dhira* is on the verge of removal; *Natha Singh* is another such example where the entire village has been sold except for one house whose owners are not ready to leave until DHA comes to terms with them. *Chachuwali* residents (2021) are certain that like other villages, this settlement will also be removed, it is just a matter of time. Therefore, the final fate of a village is totally in the hands of DHA, according to realtor's needs and will. *Chak Bhart* has been pocketed and *Bhangali*, *Kalasmari* and *Harpalke* are also walled off. *Charrar* and *Durgpura* are amongst settlements which are service sector for the residents of the gated communities.

DHA does it secretly to avoid people having time to organize to resist. The other benefit for hiring investors to do work on behalf of DHA is a strategic move to keep prices as low as possible. As, DHA is a brand in housing, buyers tend to increase their demand the moment they come to know that this land is going to be taken by DHA. *'When investors started buying land (around 2002 to 2003) from the village, no one knew at the time that it was basically DHA, people were unaware that DHA was coming because we could only see the investors. Broker was offering 8 lacs (2573 €)/ 0.405 ha, whereas we demanded 10 lacs (3216 €). After a few years when DHA finally came out of the closet, deal was sealed at 20 lacs (6434 €) per hectare. By 2003 agricultural land of the village was completely sold. Land was rented out by DHA to tenants for farming. In 2007-2008, topography took a new shape',* (Chak Bhart, 2022). Similarly, in *Heera Singh*, the locals said that they were used to army conducting military exercises in the area as they often do, given that it is a border area. Only after they had sold their land did they learn that the land was being surveyed for DHA development. In 2002 most people had sold the agricultural land for 17lacs (5468 €)-20 lacs (6434 €) per 0.405 ha, those who sold in 2007 sold agricultural land for 10 million PKR (32169 €) per 0.405 ha or five times the earlier price. Later in 2015 about a dozen households who waited out the longest sold their residential land for 42 lacs (1351 €) per 25.3 m² an

astronomical price for land matched only by land prices in the highly commercialized properties in the inner city of Lahore.

The local land assemblers are effective in persuading the whole community to sell. They also are able to sell all the commons and the compensation is divided among the villagers. Typically, the most are gained by outside investors who buy the land in bulk and then sell it to DHA. The real gains are made by the large investors who have both holding power and inside knowledge of future development plans in the area and finally DHA which sells the individual developed plots at many times the original value of land. The linkage with the army makes them more attractive for private investment as there is less fraud than civilian run schemes. However, in many places, the villagers complained that the middleman never even informed the locals that the land is being acquired for DHA. After taking over the agricultural land, once they erect a boundary wall as a symbol of their ownership and colonial supremacy, locals are no longer allowed to farm the land and also leave the land fallow to let it die on its own pace if needs be (accounts gathered from researcher's own experience through MPhil thesis on *Shuhada* Town-a DHA's project, 2013-2015).

The most profits are made by large investors who got large parcels of land through local assemblers and also invested in buying files for future plots. The villagers who owned no agricultural land got the worst deal as their typical homes of 10 *marlas* (253 m²) or less were of no interest to DHA, which does not buy settled land except in special cases. The best they can do is to rent it out to migrant workers but that too has few takers. The poorest and often illiterate were also cheated by corrupt dealers and land assemblers. Many of the farmers who sold their land and moved to far off places were also cheated, attacked and harassed by powerful locals in places far away from such as *Layyah* and *Pakpattan*. Only those who had local connections or relatives were able to prosper in the new places (Patwarkhana, 2016; Harpalke, 2018; Fi-Kalasmari, 2018). The division in the land did not turn out to be in favour of those who had small landholdings and several shareholders. The money came from a land transaction made blood relations to stand against each other. '*DHA has severed several blood ties*' (Natha Singh, 2021). However, villages who are on the verge of removal, '*People who only had land over which their house was built, looked at DHA deal with hope as many members were living in a cramped space, could buy land elsewhere and could build walls around it*' (Chak Dhira, 2022).

5.3.3 Soil acquisition

'Landlords are running businesses even by selling the soil, ' (Natha Singh, 2021).



Figure 23: Selling 1.5 m of top soil to pay off debt or marriage or medical expense cripples the ages land

The soil acquisition process (see Fig. 23) is another way to compel people to leave their farms to facilitate high-income faction of society. It is a simple process both in terms of acquiring earth to make the raised base of asphalt roads and also very straight-forward exercise to prepare land for transaction down the line. It is an undertaking in which compensation amount is fixed i-e 2 lacs PKR (618 €²⁸) for 1.5 m top soil/acre (0.405 ha) between landowner and contractor hired by Frontier Works Organization (FWO) - an engineering branch of Pakistan army. Land remains under the possession of landowner, but soil is sold to the contractor. The extracted fertile top soil is used to raise the road level by 0.9 m on average as shown below (see Fig. 24) (Villagers 2014-2022).

²⁸ According to current exchange rate on May 13, 2023 i-e., 1 € = 323,40 PKR. Since, currency has been changing very frequently, therefore, I am mentioning the rates in Pakistan rupees but also in euros to make it fathomable.



Figure 24²⁹: 0.9 m raised road - at the cost of productive soil and land, 2021

When a farmer sells the top soil which is the soul of agricultural land, either he has to wait for three years to allow land to be resurrected or have to spend more on chemical inputs and fertilizers to add. However, farmers reported that once the top soil is gone, land's ability to produce can't be restored to previous level (Kohriyan, 2016; others 2014-2022). The small 'compensation' may help cash-poor farmers to meet immediate needs without much ado but the environmental and ecological damage is only externalized knowing the term 'compensation money'. It may not be incorrect to say that selling top soil for a few bucks is killing the goose that lays the golden eggs. It was reported at several instances by the interlocutors (2014-2022) that *'Once the top soil has been removed, the land can never be the same again, either it needs to be left for years to gain its strength back or increase the input of chemical fertilizers substantially to enable the land to gain the same productivity'*.

Ecology has been degraded in multiple ways, other than making the land unfit for crop production, once the land has been lowered, these agricultural lands have been used as waste disposal sites by the municipal waste disposal staff. In village *Mandianwala*, a few hectare-sized ditch created by soil mining was used as a garbage dump (see Fig. 25) by the municipal waste disposal staff who managed to save fuel by paying a small price to the local landlord who was keen to have the land raised. Later the same landlord sold the garbage to others who needed material for filling. Similarly abandoned village ponds in *Rakh Padri* have become a garbage disposal sites without any official sanction or planning. *Phuller Wan* also had a waste disposal site, currently none of them is no longer operation (Lawyer, 2022).

²⁹ Jahrestagung des AK Südasiens, 21. /22. Januar 2022, Bonn/online, Heidelberg: Heidelberg Asian Studies Publishing, 2023 (Geographien Südasiens, Band 14), S. 6–9.<https://doi.org/10.11588/hasp.1166.c16858>



Figure 25: Waste pit in a village called Mandianwala, 2016

The desperation of farmers for cash for various urgent needs is leading them to destroy their own productive assets. The need for cash will only keep increasing even when they have sold their land and have moved to an urbanised lifestyle in an urban location.

5.3.4 Graveyards – another site for land acquisition

‘DHA asked us to sell the graveyard. Our parents are buried there, tomorrow we will have to have a place to be buried, then our children will be back to the same graveyard. Selling graveyards is equivalent to selling one’s parents and who would sell the parents, what would we leave behind’ (Fi-Pathanwala, 2018).

Peripheral land is money-engendering machine for DHA; therefore, it brazenly wants everything that exists on the surface, is put up for ‘sale’ including all kinds of structures such as schools, roads, graveyards, shrines, drains, wastewater ponds (Villagers, 2016-2022). The other popular site for landgrab is burial ground (see Fig. 26) as dead can’t resist being displaced and disrespected, while the ones still breathing are in dire need of cash. A woman (Heera singh, 2016) expressed her disbelief and remorse on newfound mindset of people, *‘Did anyone ever hear of such thing?! Did anyone ever disgrace a grave?! People have sold graves in greed...the only major concern is now Money!’* (FW-Heera Singh, 2016). In a house full of *patwaris* (revenue record holders), brokers (2016) candidly told me, *‘After selling land people sold graves/ graveyards and shrines (to DHA). One marla (25.3 m²) of*

the graveyard was sold for PKR 10 million (33184 €) especially if grave or graveyards is at a good location or comes in a commercial area. Now every person who used to plough fields is now a property dealer. Once he earned 2 lacs PKR (645.16 €) from one deal, he made it into his business’ (FM-Patwarkhana, 2016).

However, most of the altercations that led to casualties happened for defending place and space after death. The grave transaction was simple where the only condition for compensation was a documentary proof with the deceased while unmarked graves were shifted without a compensation. The maximum bid being heard so far for selling a grave to DHA is PKR 10 lacs (3318 €) (Villagers, 2022). This phenomenon is still not as rampant because people still are culturally and emotionally tied to place not only because of their departed loved ones, also because they want to secure a piece of land for their own burial which otherwise has become a costly business. Graveyards or shrines have served multiple purposes for rural dwellers, as open common space, a spot to get together, annual festivals and grazing land for livestock. Till recently the annual *melas* (festivals) at various shrines dotting the local graveyards were celebrated at many villages. Each village graveyard was a living history of the community and literally rooted in the soil. The land acquisition has not only intimidated people by the idea of losing farmland or home but also has made them insecure regarding the availability of land for burial, as old couple who shifted to gated community from a village which was obliterated, *‘We both (couple) were thinking that where will we be buried; it’s all about fate wherever it takes us. But we would have been easily buried if we were there’*, (Fi-Guldasht town, 2016).



Figure 26: ‘Infamous’ graveyard of Heera Singh: ‘This graveyard is not a DHA’s property but Heera Singh’ (left). However, over the last decades, the graveyard has shrunk (right)

Cemetery-for-sale, is not just a site for having more land but also for fostering hatred, inequality, dumping sense of insecurity and losing history that graveyards carry along. Its effect multiplies when it happens to minority or a non-Muslim sect. It works well for divide-and-rule in a community. The fact that it is persons from the same sect who make the transactions, such occurrence also reveals the power of cash in winning over, unfolds the dark side of trust and network over which communities thrive and survive. A Christian lawyer from *Durgpura*, (who is also handling the local case of his community's graveyard said, '*We won't hesitate if we have to fight legally to protect our graveyard which DHA is dying to acquire. They have not even touched Muslim graveyard but they are after ours. People themselves are more responsible who become accomplices to DHA for a chunk of money. DHA wants to shift Christians' boneyard to make it a part of military dairy-farm so that DHA can use the property as per their wish. Other unfortunate thing is that usually people get divided into groups in such matter which makes even more difficult to work things out. Historically this cemetery was known as Mariyanwala (a place where Sikhs used to burn their loved ones to ashes). Once they left, people in the vicinity started using it. This is a combined graveyard for Christians from Chak Bhart and Durgpura, this parcel of land was given by people of Chak Bhart to their servants. My grandfather was the first to be buried in this God's acre in 1980*' (Fi/22-Durgpura, 2022).

Monetary compensation was irresistible for Charrar residents but nevertheless graveyard became the site for resistance. The residents of Charrar fought against the DHA to save their graveyard. In Charrar the villagers had banned the burial of non-locals in the village graveyard. Given the astronomical densification of Charrar, the villagers were afraid of losing space in their ancestral graveyard. They had a practice of collecting money for indigent migrants and sending their remains to their places of origin. The Christians in Charrar too have a large well-maintained graveyard. People in *Kalasmari* took a stand to save the graveyard. They have had it since 1965, most of the rural land went underneath Green City Malls already, but then people stood up to save the remaining area (Fi-Kalasmari, 2018). *Durgpura* is another village where the Christian community had to protest to save its graveyard. A village where Muslims and Christians have been living together for ages in harmony, the Christian community's struggle to secure their graveyard inculcated a sense that a minority being treated differently as DHA had not touched the Muslim graveyard. The cultural life of the villagers and their identity was tied to the landscape. The festivals, where on one hand are recognition for villages, these festivals have also been a source for festivity

for hitched women. As they bring married off girls, women back to their villages which give them opportunity to spend time with families and friends. They do not require formal invitation, their arrival to home on festival is inevitable.

The village graveyards being a site where there is an assertion of village identity there is also a widespread silent resistance. Many of the villages which had not walled their graveyards have now walled these once more fluid spaces. Local leaders realising the sensitivity and pride people feel towards their graveyards, too, have taken lead to raise funds to get the graveyards walled and build *Janazgahs* or covered spaces for the burial prayers. A local resident, also works for DHA told me, *'I myself bought land (in Chachuwali) and dedicated it for the graveyard (see Fig. 27) and I am also building a spacious Janazgah in there'* (FM-Revenue Office, 2021). It is now a new landscape with hardened boundaries and identity politics. While a nostalgia for the lost land remains, it is still harder to recreate the lost social landscape.



Figure 27: Open Janazgah (right) and graveyard (left), Chachuwali, 2021

Villagers recounted a cycle of events throughout the year and across the landscape. But more importantly, each village graveyard was a rooted living history of the community. The land acquisition has not only intimidated people by the idea of losing farm land or homes but also has made them insecure regarding the availability of land beside their departed loved ones. It was mentioned time and time again that the members who have migrated to other locales still wish to be laid to rest in their own village graveyards. The local communities still look after the cemeteries collectively. Nevertheless, graves and people attitude towards them also depict change as how quickly money can switch a person from fighting to protect a grave to sealing deals; from 'a collection of heritage and family legacy' to 'just bones that can either be

shifted or be forgotten' for money (see Fig. 28). Although, this particular transformation is not rampant as fire and villagers have fought to secure the burial grounds and to protect shrines that are normally found in all villages (see Fig. 29). I have heard people talking about graves as after-life- home that should also be spacious, also draw comparisons between city and rural 'post-death-living, *'When a man dies, he used to get a big palatial grave, now it is available in size as it is in cities. If you really want to see what a big house looks like, then go and gander at grave, it is roomy and strong. If you go to Lahore, they twist the bodies and bury it in a small hole-sized place,'* (Bhangali, 2021).



Figure 28: Graves surrounded by rubble



Figure 29: Shrine linked with Dahoowala

5.3.5 Environmentally stable zones at disposal

Aggressive land acquisition for development is leading to land-use change, tangible environmental degradation in terms of piling of waste, dumping of natural resources, dust, smell in the air and contamination of groundwater, allergies due to dust, amongst the physical manifestation of change. Developers keep the gated communities clean by dumping waste in small settlements, treating them as elite's trash bins, *'They don't let us throw trash outside, if we do, they file a report against us'*, an old woman from Chachuwali articulated the unjust treatment towards those on whose 'wealth' DHA had been profiting (FW/1-Chachuwali, 2021). What she told me was validated by a warning from DHA, written on the wall of an enclosure by them (see Fig. 30).



Figure 30: Warning on the 'mighty' wall: 'One who dumps waste in DHA premises, will be handed over to the police; DHA Lahore', 2021

Solid waste management has become an important issue for the cordoned off communities to deal with. The pile of solid waste throughout the route from crossing walls, entering *Jindra Kalan* to *Jindri* and so forth, (see Fig. 31) 2022:



Figure 31: Gifts of urbanism – trash and solid waste. Residential community (left) and trees are buried in trash (right)

The extremely useful cow dung has also turned into waste. It cannot be used as manure because agricultural land has disappeared and as for its use as fuel, there is hardly any place for drying dung cakes. The educated females are averse to taking care of animals, which was also associated with collecting cow dung, making dung cakes, applying them on the walls of mud houses for cooling affect and keeping them as source of heating while cooking. So, cow dung and dung cakes have become commodities which are saleable products on Amazon. Food grown using cow-dungs as fertilizer is advertised as organic and as such has gained higher commercial value. Food grown from such natural fertilizers are expensive. This is the irony of ‘development’, one’s gain is someone’s loss. The increase in the use of packaged products and plastics has also created a crisis of disposal. Given the loss of commons, roads have become waste dumps and the villages are full of garbage in all parcels of land not in private hands (See Fig. 32)



Figure 32: Face of destabilised ecology

The groundwater contamination is another ecological distress that has struck every village surrounded by gated communities. It happens as septic tanks contaminated the groundwater, people in villages also have started building modern sanitation system that contaminates groundwater, yet it is not common in villages. The disrupted fresh water channels giving foul odour create stagnant, black water ponds, banning the entry of people who once belonged to that land to ensure ‘well-being’ of the rich. Furthermore, mobile towers that must not be installed even in the proximity, can be seen in the middle of a village such as *Bhangali*, *Kohriyan*, *Kalasmari*, *Durgpura* is the manifestation of callousness of DHA towards village communities.

DHA can be considered the harbinger of large-scale development in the area, there had been an ongoing slow appropriation of land in the suburban villages by individuals and businesses took advantage of the rent gap and set up their operations in the area³⁰. Unlike activities owned or controlled by members of the community such as small crafts, milk and vegetable production or plain residence for commuting workers, more gentrifying trends in the area had set in as well as use as a site for waste disposal (see Fig. 33) keeping the high-income localities clean.



Figure 33: 'Aesthetic living' is a privilege, Bhangali, 2021

5.4 Tricks, deceit, power play to acquire land

In the village of *Lehna Singh*, a wall was built around the village after the agricultural land was acquired, blocking the residents' movement from the village (FM-Lehna Singh, 2018; 2016). Villagers from *Harpalke* and *Natha Singh* raised the issue of on-purpose non-provision of basic amenities such as natural gas as one of their tactics (FM-Harpalke, 2018; Natha Singh, 2021). All common lands, roads, government schools, graveyards are also acquired in a process which promotes greed while appearing to deliver value in monetary terms. Usually, the common lands under state control are all parcelled and their compensation divided among the villagers. In *Heera Singh* some members of the community put up strong resistance against a surreptitious appropriation of the school land by a land grabber in cahoots with the education department. *Heera Singh* is one of the few villages where even homes have been sold and the village is obliterated except for two houses and a mosque. The last group of homes which had negotiated a good price through a tenacious show of unity before moving was given an unrealistic target of two days to move their homes. They managed to

³⁰ Since the 1990's farmhouses (luxury mansions in the countryside) became popular with the elite in Lahore. Inexpensive land was also acquired for setting up small scale operations such as furniture making workshops, gypsum tile making, waste recycling, gaming facilities and schools etc.

fulfil this condition through a remarkable organization of the evacuation. However, they narrated this as a tactic used to force the villagers to agree to a lower rate (Fi-Guldasht Town, 2016).

A DHA broker who belonged to the village *Lehna Singh* narrated the ordeal of injustice and resistance. The people (of *Lehna Singh*) had filed a case against the disruption of the power supply as DHA was removing the overhead wire network of poles from the land around the village which was now DHA property. DHA surreptitiously removed all the poles in a single night and connected them to the underground power supply of DHA. The villagers had no will to fight the case further as they had a power supply and without the physical presence of the poles which they had hoped would stall DHA's development work and be a bargaining chip for seeking more amenities from DHA was gone. They had earlier successfully negotiated to get their graveyard walled so that it was safe from future encroachment. DHA had also provided them an elementary sewerage system as the drainage ponds around the village were no more and there was no passage for waste water. However, they complained that the system provided by DHA was very poor quality. Many villagers had left the area as it was not pleasant to live there (Lehna Singh, 2016). People in *Chachuwali* also expressed their anger due to sewerage problem as DHA disrupted the passage of water that used to go directly to the sewerage or wastewater pond (see Fig. 34) due to which people living close to wall complained about foul odour. Also, DHA provided two out of three phases of electricity and that caused the issues of short circuit and damage of electric appliances (M; FW/1-Chachuwali, 2021)



Figure 34: Wall separating wastewater pond from the village, 2021

Many poor landless workers found commuting difficult as DHA often stopped young males and harassed them. Almost a fourth of the village houses were empty. During the focus group discussions at *Haveli* (a place for livestock-keeping), a young man expressed, *'One of the main routes were blocked by DHA, they do allow bikes or cars to pass but they do not let the trolley loaded with fodder to pass. He mentioned repeatedly that, 'DHA has made lives miserable; we can't take the animal out in wastewater pond, it is difficult for animals also in summer, people are forced to sell their animals which are the livelihood'* (FM-Chak Dhira, 2022)

The land that has already been taken is enclosed by the DHA for the building of gated housing can be seen from afar due to symbolic walls (see Fig. 35) which realtors erect with multiple literal and figurative meanings. Interlocutors, throughout the years of fieldwork, belonging to different villages reported struggles they had to face due to enclosure cum exclusion. Keeping cattle for domestic is a normal practice in villages whether they are into farming, milk business or not. Several dwellers had to sell their animal because they were not allowed to take their flocks out from the walls erected by DHA otherwise, they were charged with heavy fines. Animals are undesirable entities which in most areas are not allowed to cross the gate, also taking animals for grazing in left-over land comes with heavy penalty, *'Beyond the wall, there were open tracts of land as far as eye could see, we used to leave*

animals there for grazing, fodder was in abundance and for free. Can you see those bungalows? Heaps of wheat used to be stacked up on the land where there are big houses now. And, where you are standing right now, this entire left-side of pathway was crowded with cows and sheep. If you had come 10-15 years ago, you also could have seen variety of vegetables which the villagers used to grow for personal use. Now, this place is no longer the same. They (DHA) do not allow us to take animals outside, if we do, they penalize us with PKR 5000-7000 (16.5-23 €), this is why people are left with no choice except sell their livestock’, (W1; FM-Jindra Kalan, 2022), explained.



Figure 35: ‘New-colonisation’ developing ‘detention camps’, Durgpura, 2022

It is interesting to see that people’s livelihood and their professions create a difference of opinion towards the same issue as they tend to have different stakes. The educated faction of a settlement especially male members from age group of middle teens to mid 20s and also the established property dealers (2021) expressed a different viewpoint in response to DHA’s restriction on villagers for taking their animals out, which is nothing less than seeing themselves from the eyes of elite. According to them, DHA is right in doing so as who would want to live on dirty roads, they are just taking measures to keep their locality clean. In fact, a property dealer and investor from a village looked down upon living in a place where he was born and raised and also trying to convince fellow community members to move to a better place leaving filth behind (*gund se niklo*). In traditional rural living, where land is deemed as ‘mother’, a pet animal is like a ‘child’ to them.

During a discussion with men in *Jindra Kalan* (2022), an elderly woman joined our conversation and group of men greeted her with utmost respect and introduced her as ‘*Amma ji*’ (mother - title of respect for an elderly woman) and said, ‘*These are her animals*’, to which Amma ji replied with remorse, ‘*Child, I used to have a lot of cattle, we were into milk selling business which was our main source of income and supported me throughout, when DHA came here, I had to sell them, these are the only ones left*’. She was an open-minded, progressive rural woman, who made sure that her children would get education regardless of gender and also helped her daughter-in law to complete her studies successfully. She extensively talked about the rural life and perks without covering up. ‘*If I compare the old and new life, the former living was way better, we had less money but it never felt like that we had nothing. We had healthy food, quality relationships, open land, clean air, water and whatnot. This ‘change’ has ruined everything.*’ The photo down below (see Fig. 36) screams the unsaid, such as lives at two extreme ends, a new life across the wall yet hard to climb.



Figure 36: A colonial wall where two worlds divide, 2022

However, young girls/ young mothers and some middle-aged women (30 to mid 40s) had a different complaint towards building of walls. They take it as their journey from freedom to confinement. The detention walls have denied their freedom to roam freely in the premises of village which have already been encroached by the DHA. Aged women have advantage of their age and others can't put restrictions on them but young girls and middle-aged women have to be very cautious and majority of them prefer to stay inside than to be questioned by

men. As women in *Chahcuwali*, from three different age groups gathered at one place expressed their perturbation during different encounters, *‘In old times if boys and girls were sitting together, no one raised eyebrows because it was not an issue at all. Now if we (girls), by any chance look outside from a door then brothers would instantly question what are we staring at. Things have become tougher for us (young women and girls). Now we are confined to our homes, we just don’t go out. This is one of the main reasons why even women get-togethers don’t happen very often’* (FW/2-Chachuwali, 2021).

This is not just a wall-of-partition that speaks for the change but road building itself is a strategic coercion for giving up land. The road construction caused damage by the complete land-use change on the one hand and by taking away the productivity of arable land away from where the top-soil was excavated for the base of new roads on the other hand. The soil excavation is socio-ecological degradation of arable lands in areas outside DHA and has a strategic role in persuading people to sell their land. The scrapping of top soil causes unevenness in landscape by deepening the ground-level creating ponds of water after rains as well as obstructing the flow of water courses and irrigation channels. So, if one person decides to sell the soil it instills fear among neighbours about loss of the quality of land, agency to sell and the power of negotiation over money when it comes down to this. The unevenness in land has created pits where water gets filled in (see Fig. 37)



Figure 37: Perils of ‘uneven development’: Outside of the Christian’s graveyard, 2022 (left); ‘Hollow’ development ‘hurts deep’- holes in the heart of earth (right)

5.4.1 Coercion, Violence and Resistance

Villagers reported, hired ‘staff’ kept only for intimidation purposes and another group that could terrorize through life-threatening scuffles. *‘DHA is a mafia, they are no different from goons’*, this is how villagers in certain villages name them. DHA’s manner of dealing varies

with the owner's landholding, the strength of the community, and the social class they belong to. DHA's injustice, violence, and desperation for taking over land increase against the weak and the marginalised. Resistance is a privilege that is only permitted to the strong. The marginalised faction often goes unheard and unseen. DHA just treats the land as vacant and starts cutting roads over those available plots without even asking the owners. There were a number of cases in *Kamaha* and villages around *Baba Shah Noor*, where owners have proper paperwork of their plots and still none of them got the compensation for using their properties without asking. DHA does not hesitate in putting people behind the bar (FM-Durgpura, 2021).

According to villagers, the prices they were offered by DHA proved very effective and the villagers agreed to exchange their land for a price they thought they could not refuse. In *Charrar* they emphasized the unity of the community and how even the minority Christians of the village were part of the committee through which they negotiated rights for the village from DHA. Their relationship with DHA was largely amiable and they managed to get most of their demands fulfilled. *Charrar* has multiple paths to the outside, sewerage, water supply, and gas to the village, came because of resistance followed by bargaining with DHA.

Village communities find their strength in unity and therefore there were instances where tables were turned due to resistance being put by the villagers. For instance, people in *Chak Dhira* stood against the DHA in every possible way be it through physical showdown reluctance to bow down or verbal representation of concerns, apprehensions and demands, dwellers succeeded in saving their main official/ government route (*sarkaari rasta*) and got sewerage facility too (Chak Dhira, 2022). Also, Gujjar in *Chachuwali* (2022) highlighted the friction between DHA and people, '*Chachuwali denizens were completely against selling their main government route to DHA, they used to say that as long as their people were sitting here, they would keep their govt. route at all costs. It was a legal battle which they fought and had stay on route for 10 years. Afterwards, 10-12 influential, clever and stronger members of the community shook hands with DHA and sealed the deal for PKR 20 million (66301 €). Rest of the village could only cry in disbelief but only too late*'. There have also been instances of violent conflict such as the one in 2007 when one person died during protests against DHA's attempt to unlawfully occupy part of the village graveyard.

Rural dwellers may tend to sell their lands 'by choice' but their resistance for keeping homes and graveyards out of the reach of market speaks for their deep emotional attachment to their

soils and cultures. A group of men used to stay at graveyard to keep an eye on land grabbers in *Durgpura* (L-Durgpura, 2022), even women came out of their houses and blocked the road for three to four hours to make themselves heard (Fi/22-Durgpura, 2022). Similar way of guarding was seen at *Bhangali* at holy shrine (Bhangali, 2021). Another brawl happened on DHA's road construction at *Harpalke* village resulted in the arrest of 15 protestors (Dawn 2021). *Barki* village reported fight over the main route when three young men were the face of resistance and eventually one died in the hands of DHA (FM-Durgpura, 2021).

5.5 Peri-urban areas - Site 'of' social degradation

This section aims at communicating people's loss and gain narratives that is intangible and have been experienced by the respondents as representatives of the communities, regardless of their social class, monetary wealth or assets in the form of number or type of animals. They included people ranging from big landholders to the majority small landholders to the landless and wage workers or those on monthly salary, or running rented shops. It incorporates men and women from three different generations. The purpose of having range is to avoid biases but to grasp nuances. Above all, it creates a rooted narrative of loss and gain from their mundane life experiences and routines. It begins with the most obvious changes such as in food and water and intangibles and includes expression of the even more powerful intangible determinants of their life through people's own voices.

5.5.1 Degraded food, water and health quality

'People have got huge amounts of money, in millions and uncountable sums, now sellers have easier lives than before, yet this is not development. Let me tell you what development used to look like, a university where you were a student, from that point till here, there were guava orchards, mango tress looked nothing less than a Bore tree, wheat was all around, water-well was also a get-together spot for members, that was life', (Bhangali, 2021). Another interlocuter who was an old teacher once said, *'This is not a way-forward, it's a lie who says so! We are getting destroyed and moving backward', (Chachuwali, 2021)* who bought 8 ha elsewhere after selling his 0.40 ha to the DHA and had a large beautiful house in the *Chachuwali*. He also lamented what people were getting in exchange of land for enticing compensations, *'The quality of food has been tremendously affected since we have lost our means to produce food for domestic purpose only, now we are buying everything from the stores and everything is debased or artificial, water has been contaminated due to which hepatitis and jaundice are now common diseases. Now, DHA has carpeted the roads but the*

road construction is still going on all around the settlement, until that point 90 persons out of 100 have contracted some form of asthma allergy to dust pollution, breathing-related issues are not uncommon anymore’.

The above-mentioned excerpts are taken from direct conversations with interlocutors in their different respective villages but they were all subsistence farmers at one time. They had relied on nature and its resources and were convinced that nature offered a stability which modern farming is incapable of. It was also intriguing to know that villagers clearly drew a line between getting rich and well-being. Denizens realise and don’t deny the increasing need for cash but more so because modern farming has destroyed the soil which was able to feed, sustain and meet the basic needs of their lives. Water-wells closed down (see Fig. 38) with the arrival of development, ground water is unfit and now access to clean water is one of the issues.



Figure 38: A closed water-well in Chachuwali which was operational till 2006/7, 2021

A well-established agriculturist and landlord explained, *‘Every household had animals generally 2 to 5 as source of fresh milk. Food was in abundance especially and people were very generous. If someone’s animal in a village had dried and he asked for milk, people would feel pleasure in helping him and neighbours gave milk in large steel vessels. And, elderly women of the household would add a chunk of butter in a glass of buttermilk if someone had come to the door for buttermilk, out of concern for the person’s children. So that, he could be able to serve ‘pratha’ (a fried, layered flat-bread with ghee inside) a dry one’*, (Chak Bhart, 2022).

It is no longer in people's hands to be generous when they don't have for themselves. This is one proof that places don't change alone but mutate even the spirit. When people had abundance of food, so were their hearts that believed in sharing and magnanimity. Now it has become difficult for the majority to be hospitable. As a woman migrated from *Mananwala* to *Mehar town*, works as a maid (2022) expressed, *'Since it has become expensive to be a good host, now it depends on the type and position of the guest, according to which we decide upon the type of food or snack that we are going to serve, rusk or cake'*. Of course, these peri-urban villages have dealt in cash for a long time, women even used to carry a bucket full of cow dung cakes on their heads and walk to *R.A. Bazar* or *Bhatta Chowk* to sell or sold milk, people also used to sell fruit in nearby '*mandis*' etc., (Fi-Chachuwali, 2021). Yet, their lives were not revolving around money making, trapped in labyrinth to find ways to multiply even as recently as 15-20 years ago when rest of the urban model caught up people in a rat race and sucked their lives and time in a whirlpool of fast-pace, relentless model of illusion of happiness that only comes with money. It is not too long ago, when city was not only divided in terms of landscape but also the way of life which citizens were living was different from those at the periphery and rural. *'Just like landlords, even landless had animals at home for the sake of having ample milk, butter, ghee, buttermilk and whatnot for children,* (Fi/22-Durgpura, 2022). Villagers (men and women) repeatedly mentioned reasons for selling animals as open spaces were no longer there and fodder although ample on agricultural lands to feed the animals, now had to be bought from the market which was too difficult for them.

The disappearance of good quality, nutritious food from their mats was one of the most important mentions in interviews. It makes sense as food was not just to satiate hunger but it was the building block of strong healthy body indispensable for work. Repeated sittings with women from different generations at their homes in 2021 were awakening, *'When we cooked a simple chickpea dish, it tasted delicious, now even you cook meat, it is tasteless. Now people use sprays (pesticides/herbicides/insecticides etc), sprays which are nothing but poison, now every crop is dependent on sprays, how can they taste good.'* Further she said, *'No one ever had to worry about food, meat, eggs, milk etc everything was in bulk, people did not have to see a doctor'*. Women repeatedly talked about chemicals as culpable for bad quality food which were responsible for diseases. While talking about the quality of meat, vegetables, grains, they were able to recall not only taste but the fragrance of rice grains and other cereals. On another instant, one woman said, *'Now food is not the same as it was in the*

past because now farmers have to put in lots of chemicals and pesticides, in our times the use of chemicals was almost minimal so food was pure' (FW/1, FW/2-Chachuwali, 2021).

A group of women were calling wheat factories out for selling 'wheat-lookalike', that had no taste and nutrition, even hard to chew. *'We don't like to have flat bread (roti) of the flour which is available in markets, it feels like rubber so we use our own wheat flour'*, (Fi, FW-Kohriyan, 2016). Such differences can only be pinpointed by those who are conversant with what natural food tasted like and the wonders it can do for human health. A farmer in *Burj* (2022), said waste was an urban problem because in nature everything becomes an input, such as animal waste to be used as manure tend to produce way better quality yield than the chemical fertilizer. One of the countrymen was telling me a difference in food quality and how the factory processes were turning healthy food into shallow edibles that could satisfy the stomach but were unable to provide the nutrition that the body demands. He used commonly available wheat flour as an example to explain his point. According to him, wheat flour that people used to eat was pure and comprised a major mainstay of our health. When this wheat is processed in mills, they remove all nutrition ingredients (Bhangali, 2021).

Not only the food has been degraded also the ground water too in every peri-urban village has been and contaminated rendered and unfit for human consumption since DHA and other gated communities appeared where *gurkiyan* (septic tanks) are still not common especially in villages sitting on military lands water quality is still better, nevertheless the peri-urban settlements have reported every time about degraded quality of water. *'Can anyone believe that village does not have clean drinking water?! This unimaginable has happened to us in almost every village you go to. Development has destroyed everything'*, (Chachuwali, 2021). Ground water contamination is now the discourse.

In the past they might not have pocket full of cash but were inundated with plethora of tangible and intangible assets, clean water and quality food which no amount of money can buy today. Since urbanisation took over their lands for construction of elite housing scheme, it had wreaked havoc on the ecology of the area. The polluted water in every village under the dirt and dust of development-based encroachment tells the story of its failure. *'We had best drinking water just like mineral water. But now water level of clean water has dropped to 450-500 feet (137-172 m), one has to drill a borehole upto this depth to have good quality water and majority of us can't afford the expenditure of drilling so deep. Some wealthy neighbours have a borehole at this depth, though'*, a teacher explained the prevalent water

condition which was not thinkable for rural denizens themselves. *'Now, access to clean water has become a task which has an exorbitant price. One has to have a motor which currently costs 13.500 PKR (44 €) and requires very expensive electricity (people are afraid to receive that electricity bills) then additional PKR 20-25000 for borehole (82 €-price increases with depth of a bore), (Fi/22-Dugrpura, 2022).*

It is not just the expenditure but an added job to men's daily chores and transport. Men either get water from the nearby filtration plants (see Fig. 39) such as *Shareef* hospital, from within a gated community such as *Paragon*, or from a village where the water quality is still tolerable such as *Mian Singh*, who can afford get refilled bottles that costs around PKR 50-70 (0.23 €), (Fi/22-Durgpura, 2022). Others acquire water from within DHA or the Nestle filtration plants (Bhangali, 2022). Communities sometime contribute to have a filtration plant to put up in a village such as in *Kohriyan* (Kohriyan, 2021). A few filtration plants have been installed by philanthropists where rural people can't afford to have a bore, they get water from outside the village, roughly 2-2.5 kms/ 4-6.3 km² away (Chachuwali, 2021).



Figure 39: Poor man's burden: People carrying water containers on their shoulders, 2022



Figure 40: Once-multi-purpose small canal passing through Durgpura, 2022

The issue is that a priceless essential ingredient has been transformed into a commodity by modern agriculture and urbanisation augmenting need for cash. The problem here is not just taking a priceless resource for granted but the environmental destruction (see Fig. 40) is a way of making water a commodity for those who had abundance of it in the past. The privatization of such basic amenities has augmented the need for cash but also has divided people on the basis of ‘who’ can have a deeper borehole can be labelled ‘wealthy’. In a number of accounts, people found septic tanks as the main reason for the groundwater contamination, *‘Water has become contaminated since people started building septic tanks in their houses. The waste water from these tanks is contaminating ground water.’*, an elderly woman (FW/1, FW/2-Chachuwali, 2021) recounted the common discourse. The gated communities such as Imperial Garden and Green city built around villages have badly affected the groundwater due to septic tanks in houses. *‘The rice produced from this land, when it was being cooked, its fragrance could be felt in the next seven to eight houses, such good quality rice. And as far as water quality is concerned people used to compare it with cow’s milk because this area had a very good water quality. Even a person beyond the age a hundred years, would not have a hunch back. Now water quality has deteriorated a lot’*, (Poet, FM-Kalasmari, 2018, 2022).

Besides, food and water, the open spaces, communal land, spacious houses all had a role in people’s well-being. However, the dilemma is that people have lost the agricultural land open spaces but size of the houses is also trimming down. People who were the owners of big

spacious houses ended up in cramping in small spaces as rental income is new-trend and people have been converting their houses to quarters for renting out to others (reported by people at several instants (2016-2022)). Villagers in border villages or military lands still have large spacious places, women find peace on open roof of big houses, lighter breeze and quiet environment (Sarja Marja, 2021). *'We can't imagine moving to the city and start living in small quarters, where one could hardly breathe, there is no electricity right now, but we are sitting on bedstead under tree, and we not feeling hot like one would feel suffocated in cities, this is the beauty of a village'*, (FW-Rakh Padri, 2016). The villagers mentioned their relatively large homes in the villages where they could entertain guests, add rooms for expanding family, keep animals and run micro production units. As one exclaimed *'We have come to (live) in marlas instead of kanals³¹'*. The older females were particularly wistful recalling the open spaces where they could keep chickens, plant trees and sit in the sun and shade. They complained of the lack of space for large family gatherings, had changed the nature of ties, as now the weddings or other family affairs conducted in commercial halls.

As, the place was contributing to the health and fitness of the people. It has affected women way more than men as they are now totally restricted to houses, getting obese and carrier of several health problems such as knee and joint pain. DHA not only restricted their mobility by erecting walls around them but has also attacked the landscape of well-being, *'People are getting sick now by being confined. In old times, we used to walk around (in fields), used to sit under the trees which kept us fit and healthy. Now, fans are making us sick. The breeze in the open fields was so invigorating, it is unbeatable. In the past, people put their light bedsteads in the fields where (group of) men and women used to sit in the open, now we (women) are confined to homes only*, an old woman reminiscence (FW-Dera Chahal, 2021). The families who shifted from a village to gated housing such as Paragon and *Guldasht*, had modern houses (see Fig. 41), cars to commute yet new environment took a toll, as a woman from *Guldasht* (2016) stated that she got diabetes and hypertension within two years of being at the new place and she still preferred to sleep on the roof at night, *'I feel so suffocated here, there is no life as I had in a village, it's all jammed here. There is nowhere to go, in old times, I could go out with a child in open green fields any time I wanted, now I am stuck here. We (village friends) used to sit at one place, used to eat together, used to go out to buy shoes or clothes etc., there was no dependency on our men. It was so different in village'*, (Fi-Guldasht Town, 2016). Similarly, a family who have been living in Paragon after moving out

³¹ Local measure of land 30 sq. meters and 500 sq. meters respectively.

from Kalasmari for the past three years now, *'It was easy to stroll and roam around in a village, here, it is only this place (a house), you walk from one cot to another and that is it! We are used to have 'Charpai', we brought it here also with us. Now, I really feel as I am forgetting to walk,'* (FW-Paragon, 2022).



Figure 41: Body shifts, soul struggles – keeping past alive: Modern house in Paragon (left), Traditional cot (right), 2022

Village and good health have been associated for the longest time, their health was not only because of good food, safe drinking water but the byproduct of an ecology, farming itself is a laborious job that toughens body and demands proper nutrition. In the village their mental and emotional health was constantly guided by spending time together. All these added years to their lives. The absence of the Covid-19 especially any fatalities was a clear manifestation of the fact that rural living protected from urban diseases. A big landholder from *Chak Bhart*, a successful agriculturist who runs his farms and grows food as his business, honestly accepted, *'If you see what chemicals need to be added to increase yield, you will stop eating vegetables, I myself produce cucumber but I don't let my family to eat, it is best to eat cereals only'*, (Chak Bhart, 2022). It is not just the quality that makes people nostalgic but abundance as well. The ample organic food which rural people had independent of food-markets, has now been taken away from them totally out of reach of the poor. A good food which is the basic right of every individual regardless of social class has now become a luxury. As Christian women (2016) accurately said, *'These malls are only for the rich, these places can do no good for us, we can't even go in there'* (FW-Durgpura, 2016). It is no longer about the healthy food but the provision of food three times a day for (joint) families due to cash-nexus and price inflation is a lot to put up with, as an old woman said, *'Rice, mustard, jaggery,*

wheat, chickpeas, fodder, every crop was there. Cotton, vegetables, we had everything. And those who did not have, they worked on someone else's land and got what they needed in return, in kind. Now we have bills to pay, several mouths to feed, don't know how to deal with this. Should we bring food from the market or buy milk, how should we prioritize'. Further she shared her concern that how knacker the task it had it been lately to place food on the table, most of the basic food items which were integral part of their diet had gone already and lassi (buttermilk, high-nutritious summer drink, made up of milk, yogurt, sugar and butter), 'Old times were way better. Animals were there, we cut fodder for them from the fields. Now 1kg milk without adulteration cost PKR 170/kg (0.56 €/kg) which is nothing but water. Now wheat is PKR2000/mann³² (6.63 €/mann), previously we used to have it from our fields' (FW-Chachuwali, 2021). Another woman in Durgpura (2022) recalled, 'In former years, milk, rice, wheat, were from home, vegetables too used to come from fields. Cash was less but so were the expenses. Love is dying, now without mobile phones, it has become difficult for people to stay in touch'. No wonder why women find deep connection between food, and its abundance and a culture of sharing and caring, and open spaces and welcoming homes as source of harmony and affection.

5.5.2 Urbanisation and social class

A graduate student of Development studies commuting on the sale of top soil (2016) praised the policy and said, 'The lands of the villages was worthless in money terms till DHA arrived laid out the plots and started buying and transporting the topsoil to raise the level under the roads to make good quality roads for cars and build a developed housing scheme.' Some other people from villages talked about the 'value' of land and gave credit to DHA for turning land into gold. An established property dealer and well-connected with the local influential lot considered land as nothing that had now become of considerable worth since DHA set up a market, 'DHA has aggrandized the worth of land, everyone is doing business over this, the entire market is now in realty. We also have come into this and it has brought money to us and money brings power. Money helps in establishing contacts but relationships die', (FM-Haer, 2016).

The dynamics and perception about land and its value has been fluctuating. Back in 2014, people showed resentment towards the process and pointed out environmental benefits of trees, plantation and farmland. They also vented out indignation towards the State and its

³² The current (2024) rate of Wheat per mann in the open market is Rs. 4000 (13.26€) in Punjab, Pakistan

beneficiaries. It was also notified by many that people with small landholdings had nothing much to do with land as it couldn't sustain them, therefore, such owners were more inclined to sell (Sikh-Dera Chahal, 2014). Gradually, importance of land increased even for the landless and that too in terms of mainstream economic financial gains. As, it was frequently heard, *'People who had even small-sized lands, they sold and bought two or three times more of a land elsewhere. Hence those who had agricultural land, turned out to be the lucky ones'* (Villagers, 2014- 2022). By the year 2022, landless people who only had homes were waiting to be asked to sell, *'Look at the house, all the land around this house has already been sold, DHA has placed their poles as a symbol that land has been taken. This person has 3 marla (76 m²) house, lives with 5 children. Once he gets paid, he can easily buy 10marla (253 m²) house elsewhere'*, (Chak Dhira, 2022). The property dealer also added that now majority of people were moving to far flung areas where they could buy agricultural land and could keep a residence too.

Established businessman from Harpalke expressed hike in land prices (2018), *'The land transaction (in Harpalke) started in 2004, at that time 8 kanals (0.405 ha) were sold for 35-36 lakhs (11550-11884€) and now prices have gone to PKR 7-8 crore (231073-264084 €). My own 4 kanal (0.202 ha) land was sold in 8 crore (264084 €). However, villages are still populated, people go to cities only for business purposes. When the land was sold, 8 kanal (0.405 ha) was sold for PKR 4 crore (132036 €), after selling land they bought 10 Killa³³ (405 ha) in far flung areas, some bought plots, some established markets the majority of people spent money in buying luxury cars'* (FM-Harpalke, 2018).

At another instant, a group of property dealers spoke about increased monetary value of land and its effect on blood relationships, *'In past times, the land did not have that high value in monetary terms as it has today, previously, sisters used to relinquish their share but now they are claiming their legal rights in property. Now people don't rely on persons relationship these days but on money'*, (FM-Patwarkhana, 2016). In an unvarnished conversation with a revenue record holder (Patwari) of Mauza Liddharh and a well-established DHA's broker from one of the peri-urban villages, Chachuwali who still had his residency in a village talked about irresistible prices but also kept mentioning the aftermaths or cost people were paying, *'Before the arrival of DHA, every person used to have 12.5 acres (5 ha) of land on average, no one had in 'marlas' (a marla is one twentieth of a kanal) but now they are living in 'marlas'. When I started working as a realtor 20-25 years ago, I used to sell 2 lacs/ acre (660*

³³ Killa and acre are the same. 1 acre/Killa has 8 kanals i-e 0.405 ha

€0.405 ha) now in 2021 it is 16 cror/acre (528415 €/0.405 ha). He continued, *‘There is only one fight and that is because of hunger, since people start getting money, they have become busy in their businesses, now no one fights anyone. However, this is undeniable that when people had less money everything was extremely well managed, food was home-grown, dairy too was coming directly from home, people had bigger hearts; now the more cash people are receiving, more greedy they have become. Now everyone misses out on peace but former times were very peaceful because people were more contented with whatever was available to them, now people constantly struggle to multiply the money. This new development has taken time away from people. As relationships develop only when they are given time, this is why bonding has weakened, money has engulfed a lot, people have lost their health to persistent stress and depression, now sugar (diabetes) and blood pressure is extremely common’*, (FM-Revenue Office, 2021).

One thing was evident, terminologies have their own meanings and perceptions in different environment *‘khush-haali’* (happiness) *‘maara’* (weak), *‘tagra’* (strong), in rural context and now with the arrival of newly constructed environment, these nomenclatures carry new definitions, such as *‘khush-haali’* is linked up with ‘having money’, *‘maara’* is the person who is at lower rung of social ladder, *‘tagra’* is the one who is financially sound and secure. A big landlord drew my attention towards ‘change’ being brought by DHA in people’s lives through inundation of money, *‘Every person is dependent on money. People who had small landholdings such as 2 Killa (0.809 ha), they bought 40 Killa elsewhere, people got the amount they had asked for. But, DHA has broken the relationships, now a man thinks that now that I have money I can forge new relationships, sisters who did not get share in property have disowned their brothers. Paternal uncles (two brothers) fought with each other over money. Now, the only thing endeared to the people is money’*, (Natha Singh, 2021). A property dealer in the Paragon office (2015) defended the land commodification and projected it as life-turning episode for a layman, *‘People happily and willingly sell their lands because the compensation amount which they receive couldn't be earned in their whole life’*. There is no doubt that exchange of land for one-time offer is indeed life-changing decision but for better or for worse? The ‘willingness’, ‘free-will’, ‘choice’, all such words sugarcoat the exploitative expropriation. For instance, *Chachuwali* is pocketed within DHA sector and its extension. As people reported that as DHA provides electricity but it does know its tactics to trouble the poor villagers. They need cash to tackle the problem of malfunctioned appliances due unavailability of proper power and the foul smell due to blockage of

sewerage. *'I myself went upto DHA office and asked them to buy my house so that I could leave, but they refused outright by saying that we do not need to buy yet,'* (FW-Chachuwali, 2021).

Majority of the people in these villages were either small holders or landless, however, *'In current times all have become landless'*, (FM-Mandianwala, 2016). Rural dwellers, who especially were tied to land because of agricultural mode of production and livestock keeping were more sensitive towards the process of urbanisation and land transaction. A disgruntled old man (2014) once showed his remorse in words, *'This government is only for the rich, who cares for the destitute'*. Similar sentiment was again being heard by a man who ran a small shop on *Barki* Road when the Covid-19 grappled people with fear. But the corona exhumed all buried skeletons of capitalism, *'There is no corona in villages but otherwise has made lives of the poor extremely difficult,'* (SO-Durgpura, 2021). It is incorrect to exclude social class or hierarchy from the process of urbanisation to answer 'how' and 'who' is getting served'. Development is not one-size-fits-all model, it is meant to create disparity and inequality to keep the ball rolling. Therefore, experiences and standpoints towards the process by those who have been caught in this can't be generalized. The land transaction for the compensation money was neither a linear nor a lenient process as it was experienced by big landholders and well-established realtors. *Jhallaran* (see Fig. 42) is the village which has become a disputed territory as people are not on board with DHA, it also comprises of Muslim (bigger houses, better off) and Christian community (at the lowest in hierarchal order). The economic and social background is source of 'voice' too, one of the big landlords who already sold his land and now was running a shop and a hotel at *Jhallaran* was vocal and fearless about everything going on in there, but members of Christian were scared, hesitant and unwilling to talk. The social class, people belong to, was screaming through walls (researcher's personal encounters, 2022).



Figure 42: Power play and class dynamic: Big Muslim house locked due to dispute with DHA (top); Christian locality at the back (bottom), Jhallaran, 2022

Mandianwala village had a community where equality in poverty put them together like a rosary. There were no migrants and neither of them left the village but agricultural lands were sold to Paragon (another gated community) and to DHA lately. Dwellers may have got desirable amount of money but real struggle began afterwards. They went through the hoop in form of betrayal, frauds, migration, rejection from locals, use of force to take over land without payment and so on and so forth. *‘Madam, this is no progress but our bad luck. We*

have brought this havoc to our own selves'. They talked about incidents which hit them as epiphany, *'A man who was a resident of Shahdra but he bought land in our village, afterwards he sold the land, purchased it elsewhere, but when he went there, locals did not accept him. He was crestfallen, his sugar level dropped, eventually he died the same night. Another member from our village, he had two shops at Jullo, after selling them, he bought a land in Laiyyah, and then we heard that he broken his arm and was walking around with a sling around his neck. Ultimately, he left everything behind and came back. All officers, institutes are allies, they pay deaf ear to us. Only those people had success stories in land, who bought it in villages where they had acquaintances or familial ties* (FM-Mandianwala, 2016). Another encounter validated the relation between social status of actors and urbanisation and its associated gains and losses, *'We (the poor) pay the price for the rich people's comfort, they (DHA) build roads over people's land without even informing, we struggle to fulfill basic food needs, who would confront them'* (FM-Durgpura, 2021). All the agricultural parcels in *Mandianwala* have been sold to realtor for the development of a gated community. It was a village where entire community was tied to agrarian mode of production and since the urbanisation encroached, people have had to find jobs elsewhere, usually as gardeners, gatekeepers, wage labourers, and rental income gained more attention, other joined the army of property dealers - a booming business on the periphery. Denizens did not leave their houses; therefore, settlement was intact.

Land transaction started in *Mandianwala* in 2003 and by 2016, all arable land was sold. This phenomenon was not only new but a shift from moral to cash economy happened in an unimaginable pace. The former life was still fresh in their minds and rural actors were constantly weighing and questioning, what this new development had given them and what they had lost in the process. *'A man who sold his land is tantamount to selling one's own mother. When we had land, you may sow wheat grains, sugarcane, chillies, vegetable, whatsoever, people used to pluck freshly grown crops the fields to eat and it was so satisfying. One can have a mother in life only for once. Hence, when land is sold, we can never have our lives back which we used to have, it is almost like, our mother has died. Our village was such a place for girls, they did not need to be accompanied by men to roam around and no one ever dared misbehave with women, because people used to know each other and had respect for each other in eyes. In such a short span, blood pressure has become common. If people had small parcel of land, they could get more on contract elsewhere, not just land but households had cows to have milk and other dairy products for*

free. Now we have to buy everything from the market. Land, was not just a dead, immobile piece of earth but was source of respect; we have lost it' (FM-Mandianwala, 2016).

Despite individual resistance (according to the economic status of the seller) that come with money, people appreciated the arrival of DHA in different ways. People did have mentioned that selling land provided them money and who knew how to use the money well became prosperous. *Durgpura* is located on the main road, a huge geographical advantage to the locality, value of land has risen after DHA showed up, the building of road networks also helped community members in commuting to seek work. The other advantage, people talked about was the annulment of *Chaudhary* culture which has been a distinctive characteristic of rural areas. *'Now everyone has become Chaudhary, no one has to serve big landlords, people are doing jobs and making money independent of Chaudhries. The times when one was dependent and worked as a servant, the Chaudhary could call you whenever he wanted, those days are gone'*, (Saduwala, 2021; Gohawa, 2021; Fi/R-Durgpura, 2022). Most of the villages either did not have big landlords or they are very few in number, and those landlords who sold their lands, shifted their residence too; hence servants from the village were no longer required. This is where people give credit to DHA for appending a historically prevailing culture. Although, most communities expressed their reservations towards *Chaudharies* and lives being tied to one rich powerful household but *Kalasmari* populace had a different viewpoint, *'Chaudhary was like a shaded tree, he used to keep you safe from court, police or bullies in any form. If he could not go himself but just sent a piece of cloth to the relevant bureaucrat the message was delivered, that was his power. Losing Chaudhary was nothing less than becoming an orphan,'* (FM-Kalasmari, 2022).

A picture down below (see Fig. 43) shows the biased character of the development where its fruits and benefits are not evenly distributes and highly class-centric.



Figure 43: Face of the progress only for the 'chosen ones', 2022

For the longest time, it was a belief that DHA only bought agricultural lands and 'never' displaced the settlements. It is true for those villages which are big in size and have a big community such as *Liddarh*, *Hudiara*, *Bhangali*. DHA erects walls around them but displacing them is not at all favourable from business point of view. However, it is inaccurate that village settlements did not face displacement at the hands of DHA. *'DHA does not only buy arable land but houses too. Once they make a map for their phases, they don't keep anything on it which is not included in their maps. This entire village has been sold, there, we used to have a big Bazaar, the whole Chak Dhira has been sold'*, (Natha Singh, 2021). The market in land has brought cash in that has become driving force behind the loss of reciprocity but what has successfully ingrained in people's mind is that money is now the ultimate power and this land transaction could be a life-changing event to which people wait for.

5.5.3 Warmth of relations to cold market world

The peri urban villages were urbanised villages already as they were connected to two main roads, people used to go to city for work therefore city life was never a conundrum to them. However, their rural world was not dominated by money or cash which is why the biggest currency they had was the community which was built over generations (Accounts collected 2014-2022). Their dependency was not totally on the market world which is volatile, unstable

and unreliable but their strength and ‘insurance’ for tough times was coming directly from the interdependent relations where help, care and affection were not commodities and could never be had through cash transaction but it was done through the culture of reciprocity (Chachuwali, 2021; Chak Dhira, 2022). The real-estate business in the shape of creating gated communities is booming by selling intangibles which they neither can deliver nor ensure. The ‘knowing’ each-other is a part of rural culture which gives them a safety blanket, *‘There was a time when one could hardly see anyone at night and people would feel scared, and now within 7-10 years, there is no difference of day and night. When I set up this small shop here, a woman came up to me and congratulated me. I was unsure of her reaction and asked her a reason, to which she responded, ‘Brother, now if we come to this road at 10 at night, we would know that a member from our community is sitting there already’*, (SO-Durgpura, 2021). I personally have experienced that how beady-eyed community members could be and how readily their brains could spot an outsider from afar, no matter how meticulously he tries to blend in.

Now, their world is changing and they are trapped in the process of development where they can see where the true ‘value’ lies. Interlocuters were from varied social classes, apart from rich landholders, denizens who gained advantage from land transaction shared the meaning of quality of life which was not different from the ones who were at lower rung of social ladder. Despite material gains, villagers unanimously lamented over the loss of intangible assets which used to determine their quality of life and no amount of money could ever buy those assets back, *‘It was a stress-free environment back then, everyone used to stay connected. Blood pressure is not a disease, it is a result of disturbing stream of thoughts (to acquire more and more). People had a good life in old days, used to spend time together, if I had cooked something, everyone could join and take a bite, women making breads in clay-oven, everyone is eating together, buttermilk was in bulk. We have lost mental peace now. This pretentious world is nothing but a lie, fraud. Community was fraught with love and empathy now relationships are open for bidding’* (Fi-Chachuwali, 2021). There were resented reports by people throughout field work at multiple peri-urban villages about the loss of healthy dietary intake, water and air got contaminated, people forced to sell their animals (source of dairy and organic food) due to non-availability of the communal land and agricultural turfs, and increasing sense of insecurity again due to fragmentation of the community (FW/1-Chachuwali, 2021; FW-Paragon, 2022; FM-Kalasmari, 2022).

Women had a huge contribution in order to provide understanding about how the process of development through urbanisation unravelled itself. There is an ongoing debate revolving around women's safety and harassment, and the exercise of power over women by men (patriarchy), talking to women in rural settings elicited this different set of experiences. It revealed that harassment is an urban issue and restriction from men is their concern for their women's security instead of oppression, *'We are bonded to each other in harmony and love, be it marriage or be it any difficulty we all stand together. Another thing, it is a very safe place as everyone knows everyone. We women never feel afraid of being harassed if we go out alone'* (FW-Dahoorwala, 2021). The discussion with women in border and peri-urban villages and enclosed settlement unties the role of a woman herself as a carrier of an ecological set of relationship not only within the family but also within the community. Women also act as a rosary that ties family and community along with livestock and land (FW-Heera Singh, 2016; Burj, 2022). Spending time with them burst many myths that I had carried whole my life in a metropolitan city such as they were not found under household chores duress, household duties were reduced as compared to before, animal keeping was also not totally a woman's responsibility. In fact, women and men used to take care together or men were the ones who handled the hard part of this task (Women, 2021; 2022). Young girls are studying with no pressure for taking over household duties which is one of the advantages of joint families.

The women in peri-urban villages shed light on several social issues such as inflation, adulteration of food and water, how the loss of open spaces has affected their health badly, they raised the issue of greed with the arrival of DHA as it brought people opportunities to have financial gains, distancing people by engendering inequality and its corollary effect on finding suitors for children's marriages. Above all, the sense of security they felt in a village where they never felt the need to be accompanied by males, where they also looked at their counterparts as a team instead of two individuals in constant battle to establish authority, *'People are getting sick only by being at home. In old times, we used to walk around (in fields), used to sit under the trees which kept us fit and healthy. Now, fans are making us sick. The breeze in the open fields was so invigorating, it is unbeatable. In the past, people put their light bedsteads in the fields where (group of) men and women used to sit in the open, now we (women) are confined to homes only'* (FW-Dera Chahal, 2021). Therefore, for these women losing the community is tantamount to losing roof over one's head. The relations they built over time by sharing space and time gave them sense of belonging and identity

(Kalasmari, 2022) which holds them back from moving to better-off localities, *'A major question arises in mind is that where to go after selling the house and what if we wouldn't get the environment that we have here'* (Fi/22-Durgpura, 2022). However, people were also very open about the cracks already appearing in relations ever since money had taken over lives even blood relations were drifting apart, *'There is no warmth or respect in relations anymore, people only worship money'*, this was heard time and time again throughout.

5.5.4 Conclusion

The direct conversations with people over the years and personal encounters at places revealed the impact of urbanization which is projected as 'development' is 'hollow' but its damages are not curable. The urbanization on the periphery where villages as landscape and villagers as marginalised communities experiencing it, has unfolded the true character of capitalist development. This chapter has shared the narratives and experiences they have had with 'development' from wide range of actors, coming from villages which are at different stages of development simultaneously. Hence, there is a gamut of experiences being encountered on material, social and psychological landscapes. Moving across different classes, gender, generation and ethnicity through multi-sited ethnography to record empirical data was a heartfelt endeavour to grasp nuances and through acquiring depth and richness. as microcosms of socio-ecological change unmasked the neoliberal development projects and processes. The policy makers, planners, developers, city officials, realtors, they all measure development solely in economic terms and physical landscape that needs to be the replica of the western modern world. This chapter sheds light on the quality of life and its essence for rural people which they repeatedly mentioned that what they have lost in the process can never be compensated by any amount of money. The research brought those on the forefront who are invisible as they are not deemed to be significant in the process, their money-poor status renders them valueless on so many levels or not considered to be seen. It also accentuates the fact that reality of development as a project and urbanization as economic growth policy is human and physical monocultures can only be understood through the lens of those who are paying the cost of it.

Village peeps found 'money' culpable for the loss of reverence and other intangibles but also found themselves trapped in a vicious cycle of money-making that made exchange of land enticing, *'Villagers are themselves waiting for DHA to take over their land, because they used to do farming and now that 'mahool'(environment) has changed, so gone are their*

aspiration about agriculture now, this area is no longer the same, (Fi-Chachuwali, 2021). People in the poor-enclaves are still holding on to what is left, *'We still have a good environment here, we all know and meet one another with warmth. This is a fact although that money can't buy the happiness but it has now become a necessity too'*, (Fi/22-Durgpura, 2022). The subtle violence of cash has effectively battered the defences of the poor, cash hungry farmers and in the process took away the base of their social cohesion, land. Through demands and needs for cash have been upping for such as modern education, in case of medical emergency, electricity, fuel, debt, dowry, child's marriage etc., even their new found wealth may not be adequate for long. Not only through reports by personal interaction with the ones who got great deals and became millionaires overnight or common villager joining hands as a relator, despite a few success stories, they shared the similar narratives of loss and gain account when it came to intangible and tangible assets, *'Development has come with a cost, food, water, health, relations, courtesy – all have got ruined,'* (FW-Bhangali, 2022). It was found that they had a clear line between wealth and well-being, being rich and happy or contented (Villagers 2016-222). The picture down below (see Fig. 44) should be seen as the representation of environmental destruction, dismantling of rural realm, converting relatively stable zones as sites into destabilised zones for producing monocultures. This picture also delivers the chaos and damage done to the world that can only be felt, as certain landscapes e.g., psychological, emotional and cognitive landscapes cannot be seen but one can solely try to understand by being in contact with those who are facing it.



*Figure 44: Dear Rural Ecology, Rest in Peace... IT IS OVER!
Ecology's burial ground, 2022*

Chapter 6

Discussion

The neoliberal economic model has come with a huge cost with regard to environmental damage but dismantling of social structure has a domino's effect on people's lives. The conversion of arable land into urban land has several environmental and social implications. Simon (2008), mentions the issues, challenges and opportunities due to urbanisation in peri-urban villages or regions of rural-urban interference. He stated loss of cultivable land not only coupled with degradation but also has jeopardised local food reliance and production of surplus to be sold to urban dwellers. Land acquisition is fundamental to many forms of accumulation, as mining operations, monoculture industrial farming, infrastructure building, gated communities etc., deemed 'development' with a promise of economic growth. World Bank, governments and their biased policies play significant role in 21st century colonization through large scale land acquisition (for development of already developed part of society). This in turn causes tangible and intangible impoverishment, loss of commons and quality of life, jeopardizing communities (particularly those living on state-owned land and have weak legal position) especially by denying their rights to traditional ways of living (Denis, 2018; Hall, 2013; Kröger, 2012). This is relevant to an extent where people are living on the periphery which is suburbs of the poor and majority of them are not only from the lower economic background but have weak or no legal documentation of property. People who are on state-owned land are relatively safer than those who live on privately owned land but are not financially strong.

It was also noticed in the villages of Lahore that people due to weak economic background and lack of means to put up resistance and to exercise their agency when it came to land transaction, they eventually had to give in. However, the ones sitting on state-owned land were at dual advantage, as they were far from land appropriation, still one of the members of the family living on state-owned land, obliged to continue farming, which provided them two-third of the produce, people could stock grains, keep the animals, had farmlands to have fodder for animals. Most of them were into milk selling business as well coined with urban jobs such as rental income or family members into other profession apart from farming; provides them more stability. Such communities were earning through different ways, hence, their position as a resident on a government land is secure as compared to those who are

sitting on privately owned lands. However, this is also can't be said with utmost surety as *Jindra Kalan* is also on military land, but some part of it has been sold to build DHA gated community and has been walled off from the side that connects DHA residential society. People can vividly recollect what was right in front of their eyes till 2007/2008 and what came afterwards reminded them of loss of assets and a sense of rejection. Similarly, *Chughalpura (Habibabad)* is another example of such village on military farmlands which is a little far from the main road that makes it isolated, even that land has also been up for transaction but illegally. Village communities are certainly not homogenous and the heterogeneity is coming not only through their economic backgrounds but also the sect they belong to and the religion they follow. For instance, Christian community can be found in every rural settlement who are the at the lowest in social hierarchal structure, they were mostly landless and being a part of minority somewhat became advantageous for the developers. They are easier targets to not only expel but also for creating rift and doubts amongst the community. It is nothing less than killing two birds with one stone.

Goldman (2011) takes Bangalore as a case study to argue the role of state and its policies to facilitate speculation-based activities which causes rural dwellers to displace especially due to insufficient proof of their ownership. The state's aim of creating world-class cities or 'megacity syndrome' (Mpungose & Maharaj, 2022) has irreparable affects. This study has taken a village as microcosm of socio-ecological change to study the impact of obsession of making world-class cities in order to open floodgates for foreign direct investments (FDI) and local also. It helps in disentangling capitalism and now neoliberalism as economic models in creating monocultures. States are unwilling to recognize that urbanisation as development model can't be taken as one-size-fits all not only in regards to social structure and communities but also neglecting environmentally stable zones, treating them as disposable unless they will be converted to concrete jungle, has been failing mankind. Qadeer (1996) explicitly talked about different phases of urban development plans in Pakistan and the era of 1970s onwards (commenced with upscaling of Lahore Walled City) as the beginning of inference of international bodies such as World Bank, through urban policies. The World Bank's funding as 'aid' was nothing but a noose around recipient's neck, where receiver was supposed to abide by policies and models. Further, he underscores the period of 1980s and 1990s as a shift to private sector for development, dictated and pressurized by World Bank and IMF. 1990s - when cooperative housing societies became major land developers, urban land markets were booming and speculation raised the bar for high returns. The multi-lateral

donors like World Bank, big endorser of myopic, profit-centric, selfish game of capitalism in the name of development through infrastructure building in global south (Steel et al., 2017) rendering fringes as a *Tabula Rasa* (Kennedy & Sood, 2016). The idea behind making a ‘world-class city is an image building but also a form of colonization that dictates developing countries to prove their worth by building the replicas of developed countries. The only parameter to prove that they deserve to be ‘controlled’ by international financial institutes. Lahore has lost large swathes of agricultural lands and social landscape, losing social capital as a result of land and resource grab. For instance, the cruel scrapping of soil from agricultural lands to dump it elsewhere for road building and high-income enclaves amicable for the rich; letting agricultural lands die once it is enclosed; complete removal of tracts of productive farmlands for the construction purposes, further validates the capitalist treatment of land as nothing but a *Tabula Rasa* and also the dismissal of social and ecological landscapes. The transformation for the sake of city expansion has been promoting consumerism at the expense of environmental degradation and aggrandizing social ills such as targeting weaker and making them even more marginalised, displacement by pushing people out of their own land, breaking communities to deplete social capital, making gateway for the emergence of diseases and the list goes on. This research has witnessed that development policies and city planning works in a way that supports the high-income faction of the society which ensures miscarriage of social justice.

Denis (2018) discusses the urban processes on the periphery in GS since liberalization phase has invited gamut of actors including the poorest household and working classes who are eager to cash value of land they own. Especially, the financialization of land that does not involve development of the land itself but can be put up for exchange in market in land, makes land desirable and favourable for the real-estate growth. The peri-urban region bears the load of urban expansion the most in recent time, also a tool for land speculation nurturing real-estate (Narain, 2009) facilitating market in land across the countryside (Banerjee-Guha, 2009; Levien, 2013). The land as a commodity has made periphery the landscape of change and also brought ‘agrarian urbanism’ in light to shed intimate connection between agrarian question akin to ‘land, labour, tenure, livelihood’ with rural-urban interface (Gururani, 2020; Gururani & Dasgupta, 2018). Such processes as peripheral urbanisation if on one hand is converting farmers to small real estate agents or property dealers but also creating as (Chuang, 2015) states – an army of ‘proletarianized workers’. People who were into agriculture and milk-selling especially in pocketed villages are serving as service sectors of

the elite with jobs which have no guarantee such as car-washing at people's residence as per demand, or as a domestic help has become very common amongst women, even villagers themselves have started hiring other women to work as maids in home which was not a common phenomenon in a village otherwise. The big landlords used to have staff but now even small landholders or people with some form of better source of income, they prefer to find maid that is becoming easier due to large pool of women as house help to pick from, is available. This also allows household in gated communities to be exploitative as they have a queue of women who are ready to work at lowest possible rate of household chores (especially the ones who have migrated from other areas). This reminds me of the fact that women's rights and their ill treatment can't be understood and resolved unless we look at it from a class question. Capitalism has been thriving on dividing societies into distinctive groups based on who has and who doesn't, therefore feminism can't be put separate from the process that has persuaded women to be available to sell their care and affection for corporate working women on salaries (Comanney, 2021; Malatesta, 2019). The general perception regarding women in villages as suppressed and being trapped in patriarchal clutches also came out different. Their marital relationship was a partnership to them in lieu of power relation.

The new development processes, urbanisation to be precise that has been happening at the loss of agricultural land and transforming it into elite gated housing societies is seemingly a linear process but it has a lot to it. It is a shift from an agrarian mode of production (MOP) to the neoliberal. A former MOP was the reason of subsistence absence of which has now made people totally dependent on market economy which is highly volatile. This subsistence was attached to the structural organization of a rural ecology where despite its imperfections, was giving basic shelter to all. Land as a means of MOP have had profound importance and this is where Britishers changed the dynamics through the introduction of private landownerships and made half of rural population as landless (Bhattacharya, 2019). Grover (1963) stated that the State was the proprietor of jungles and wasteland for agricultural purposes but it did not exercise its ownership over the cultivable land which were already in the possession of the *Raiya* (peasants). State claimed share of the produce but not the entitlement to the land. Moreover, no serfdom that tied peasant to land existed during Mughal age, also, agricultural land was not considered as a saleable commodity the way it became in the late 18th and 19th centuries. An epoch that fortified the unjust land distribution since then, rendering all artisans and landless *ineligible*, hence out of the race of people demanding the land rights. But

favoured the landowners in elevating their wealth at the cost of those who were made invisible and voiceless. The primary issue lies in the land distribution system which according to Punjab Land Alienation Act 1901, clearly divided rural population into agricultural and non-agricultural or cultivators and non-cultivators under the colonial rule, agricultural labourer was reduced to mere wage labourers. This continued during Punjab land reform that decided to allot land only to tenants who did not own their land or cultivators with small landholdings. This resultantly yet again dismissed the class of non-cultivators (Gazdar, 2009). The exploitation was further intensified with the arrival of green revolution in late 1960s which benefitted the ruling classes and according to Ahmad (1970) converted big landowners into capitalist agriculturists. Hussain (1984) also pointed out that how capitalism-led agriculture robbed small farmers of their freedom and made them completely dependent upon big landowners for loans, agricultural inputs etc. Moreover, the market gave more power to landlords due to their political and social position to act as mediator. The capitalist farming shifted poor peasants from sharecropping to cash rent. Due to which, to combat with increasing cash rents and debts, they had to sell a portion of their subsistence harvest output at low prices. Despite all this, the new development on the fringes opened a gateway to new form of capital accumulation which seemingly appeared to have a chance to better life and to get rid of agriculture with no returns. However, the research put emphasize on the fact which were voiced out by people time and time again that cash could be the gain but the intangible assets they had been losing in the process including their identity, are gone for good. They also have a strong realisation that they could not be able to adjust in better-off gated communities as neighbourhood would remain unwelcoming for them. This known-fact has persuaded people to go to familiar villages or village-like settlements but also by creating new spaces which follow the same path. As people in groups shift to a newly-found place and start dwelling – give rise to formation of a new village. *Ghawindi Khush-haal Singh*, is one such example where Christian community shifted from *Bhangali* and started living in a new settlement.

The use of land acquisition laws, converting private property into ‘public purpose’ by the State with the addition of never-be-able-to compensatory package is a way to legitimize the land and resource confiscation with the characteristics enclosure, erasure, eviction, exclusion and extraction from the Global South (Neef et al., 2023). From the city point of view, where once can see the similar dichotomy in form of not just a city but how peripheries are being extracted to cater the wealthy, present a picture of GS and GN at a microlevel. The land deals

in struggling economies have a lot in common with peri-urban villages of Lahore but the attribute of ‘erasure’ (Devine & Ojeda, 2017; Neef, 2021) is striking. The authors are talking and exposing the side of tourism, the creation of unequal power relations between host and guest and interwoven forms of violence in the practice. The purpose of mentioning it here is that these once villages were rich with history, the stories of partition, the turmoil these places went through, the symbol of resilience against the times and the ability of a place to embrace who wished to reside. They had their identity and recognition due to their cultures and tradition that gave them a sense of belonging. The removal of these places including places that are sentimental to communities especially graveyards and shrines (used to carry name of a village), is a direct measure to wipe the slate off. It makes me realise that how sorted that rural people are when it comes to their priorities. They cannot fight every battle and when they need to pick one, they do it not on a whim but wisely. It reflects through their stern stance and firm unwavering resistance to guard their graveyards and shrines. Even the earliest times when communities succumbed to unimaginable prices of land transaction, but the same community of *Charrar* fought tooth and nail to protect their graveyards. Although, people’s perception has been transforming and going through restructuring but their emotional attachment to the graveyards – a place for burial, ancestral strings but a source of identity and recognition too. Still, there are villages who sold their graveyards such as *Heera Singh*, *Mota Singh*, *Sangatpura*, *Jalal abad*. The ethnicity also plays role as it is also ties with socioeconomic status. For instance, Christian community is more prone to selling graves as happened in *Bhangali*, where Christians sold a few graves. As they already are at a lowest social rung in the village, landless, therefore, their urge for gaining as much as they can comes out stronger. On the other hand, Christians in *Durgpura* did not let DHA takeover their graveyard. Hence, the use of ‘cash-compensation’ as a tool works for the realtors and seemingly for sellers in a way that capitalism justifies the land grab and dispossession by projecting it as a life-changing event for the ones who could never have imagined it. For instance, setting up land market and converting farmers into small realtors and to camouflage social injustice via ‘compensations’ (Alias & Nasir Daud, 2006; Ghatak & Ghosh, 2011; Mahalingam & Vyas, 2011; Mallik & Sen, 2017; Sarkar, 2014, 2015; Vijayabaskar, 2010), to bring ease to violators engendering inegalitarianism (Tassadiq, 2022). The study on peri-urban villages also confirms that these ‘compensations’ that are far from reparations and making up for losses of all kinds especially the intangibles that can never be created again. Also, these compensation packages are nothing less than ‘redeem-packages’ to justify environmental degradation and fragmentation of communities, taking away of land that was

means for mode of agrarian production and source of subsistence; can mean nothing. Also, a land that has a social character too, determines social relation within and across hierarchies where dependence on people is the key and the intangible assets which are a product of historically created ecosystem - determine the quality of life for rural/ peri-urban communities. On the other hand, the land commodification has put an end to '*Chaudhary*' culture with which most of the village communities are contented to be their own bosses and has created the presence of absentee landlords. The land transaction brought bliss to the ones who knew how to use money wisely and this made the business in land as a realtor to the top.

The project has not only seen how different rural and urban realms are in multiple ways but also tend to see how and why villages which considered backward regions, are stable, sustained and communities are richer in ways which modern economic world can't process. Another character of cash compensation is that realtors find it just as owner is getting an 'offer' only and he has liberty to decide whether he wants to sell or not. It has persuaded me to think that how tricky this word 'choice' can be. Who can exercise 'choice' in truest way is primarily dependent on persons socio-economic status. Especially, when it is negotiated between two set of people with extreme power imbalance. Therefore, urbanisation is not just a process of producing new terrains of uneven geographies but ruthlessly dismantles socioecological spheres (Denis, 2018; Swyngedouw & Heynen, 2003; Vij & Narain, 2016) that makes an 'environment' and especially the brunt on periphery due to the development through intense rural reconfiguration.

The peripheral urbanisation has also been called land grab/land rush (Neef et al., 2013; Neef & Singer, 2015; Zoomers, 2011), gentrification (Davidson & Lees, 2010; Farahani, 2013; Smith, 2010) and many have seen through a framework of accumulation by dispossession (Doshi, 2015; Magdoff, 2013; Shin, 2016). Swyngedouw & Ward (2020) explains the social character of land which is for market it's just a commodity, a fungible thing but as a matter of fact, it is attached with value, symbols, meanings, culture, emotions, social organization- all such embedded traits which make land not just a laying piece of earth but very much living and central to ordering of life in a community - are all ruled out from capitalist accumulation process. Also, etymologies play a role in making processes legit, holding different meanings on the basis of 'who' is looking at. In rural areas, land is the fundamental to all human, human-nature, livestock, biodiversity relations embedded in agrarian ecology. Land is static, immobile but has the ability to not only produce food but relations. Farming itself is not just a livelihood but a way of life which is why losing arable land is far more than just

losing livelihood, it is a loss of life. Development treats geographies as a chess board where moving a piece from one square to another does not affect a piece itself. This is how planners, realtors, policy makers, the state believes and treats communities which in reality devastates people emotionally, mentally, physically. The removal of land from a village is a tipping point. Safransky (2017) discusses struggles by dwellers on land which government wants to convert large parcels of land into urban forest by labeling them as 'vacant' whereas residents of Detroit, farmers and community members fought over it by claiming that it was not vacant but 'inhabited'. The study also has seen closely that how words, meanings, perception and value towards tangible and intangible assets but the outlook toward a certain process changes based on gender, class, social standing, livelihood, association and the way someone establishes the connect. This also insinuates that the power dynamics be in regards with money, in form of land that is tantamount to the power and influence, plays significantly not just between a community and a realtor but also within the community. Which is why, in urban political ecology, such development is indispensable for capital accumulation, creating a sphere for environmental processes that negatively affect some social groups and benefit others (Swyngedouw & Heynen 2003).

Levien (2015) through his study on special economic zones (SEZ) in Rajasthan argues about the role of individual social capital in making farmers as successful brokers at the expense of fellow villagers. Thesis does recognize the misuse of trust by an individual as a broker or group of individuals who were not the investors but amongst the influential amongst the community and partook in selling communal land against the wish of the rest and did it without informing the fellow community members. However, it can't underestimate or negate the power of collective social capital which is the only safety blanket and source of resistance against the big guns. One of the losses, they lamented the most is the diaspora or a loss of a community. The point to ponder is whether displacement is the only way to break the community? The answer is, 'no'. The inhabitants have started feeling a certain disconnect amongst the community members since money has invaded as one can now vividly see the financial background of a member which has created a distance amongst people. As Marglin (2008, 2010) unequivocally expounds the impact of market-economy in dismantling the stability of a community through instilling greed to gather more, individualism and by making inequality very obvious. Communities who had a symbiotic relationship with the places they inhabited on. They were bound to take care of the commons as they were dependent on them for the livelihood and to meet needs of their day-to-day life. This

harmony with nature was coming from the collective and communal consciousness, which developed their sentiments towards the place. Indigenous would give 'value' to a place is utterly a flipside to what economists or developers or policy makers define 'value' as. Not just the livelihoods but emotional attachment to a place gives rise to insurgence and revolts, persuades people to fight till the last drop of their blood. When I look at the villages which mostly are no longer fit into this box, the surrounding area has started to transform, same place yet causing alienation and detachment, gradually and slowly people are getting detached which doesn't give them a solid reason to hold on to. Tragedy of the commons can only be suggested by mainstream Economist as commons and privatization are not only the opponents in the same ring but latter is the fundamental to flourishing market economy. Tragedy of commons is not the locals but external stimuli in form of urbanisation. The contamination of village water resources is one such example. The state's paternalistic attitude towards land from land settlement to redistribution intertwines with social reconfiguration processes to introducing acts to acquire, sell and transfer land has jeopardised communities, environmental and ecological health of the places which will not circumscribe to a development-hit place only but it is a fire in the jungle above and beyond control. The agricultural areas are nothing less than gold mines, the only irony is that developers mine gold and dump it under asphalt to raise road level in order to save few bucks on fuel and transportation, leaving the living soil mine dead and crippled.

The development through urbanisation in peri-urban villages has been an eye-opener to make us realise that how far these flawed policies and ruthless economic models have gone to crush the masses of the society to cater advanced stages of capitalism. Abundance of food has become a history and quality food is in dreams, food security has been jeopardised and whatever we have left in the name of food is nothing but a poison. The modern agricultural techniques have turned agriculture into hub for disease engendering areas and has forgotten the earth is a living being and needs its own time and space to rejuvenate after the harvest just like a mother requires rest to heal after birthing. The inference of 'modernity' to food in form of fast foods and bread and renouncing traditional way of eating healthy has already been proving that modern and being healthy can't be found in the same package. Yet, access to good quality food now goes hand in hand with one's economic status and social standing. Likewise, water has not only been contaminated but has become a new financial status-tester for community members. Now access to clean water which was freely available and was in abundance is now in reach to those who can afford it. The enclosure and exclusion based neo-

liberal development that is also an era of neo-colonization is the resurrection of violence and exploitation historical literature is filled with. The process is committing crime at multiple levels, grabbing land as a resource, depriving people of their capacity to produce food to feed large families easily, is a food theft also. Cow dung was used as manure and a natural fertilizer but requires land, since the unavailability of land the dung cakes are now a sellable commodity on amazon and other multinational retailer marketing sites in the world of e-commerce. Every village used to have at least one water well which no longer can be found. The availability of clean ground water was not an issue, but now it is and in order deal with it, men have to take time out to fill bottles from nearby filtration plants which villagers did not need in the first place.

Meeting women in peri-urban villages introduced me to a flipside of what people normally heard of women in such areas. It can be from strict gender roles to stories of oppression and control by men and minimal to none say in decision making especially economic matters (S. Akhtar et al., 2019; Petesch & Badstue, 2020). Women have been recognized as deeply rooted tied and bound to the ecological roots and better understanding of the environment (Agarwal, 1989), their relation with livestock and provision of fodder and the question of wasteland was also raised (Carpenter, 2008). As women are more directly connected with natural resources especially in rural world other than forest, women's role in managing and conserving environment is undeniable (Mago & Gunwal, 2019). The other aspects of women in literature were discussed in terms of landownership (Agarwal et al., 2021) and women empowerment in agricultural terrains where farming is the primary profession (Agarwal, 2020). However, the women in villages of Punjab centring Lahore city (as it is the area where research was conducted) depicted a picture of a woman who was confident, articulate and well-aware of on-going social issues more so, through their day-to-day experiences. These women broke the stereotype of a woman which has been created over the long haul. Although, it merits to be researched more and deeply. However, what I have experienced was a breath of fresh air.

One of the interesting aspects which was unwrapped during conversations session and seeing them personally was the equation they shared with men at their houses and their role in decision making especially in budgeting monthly expanses, doing savings for rainy days, children's marriages and education. Not even once, women talked about their counterparts with animosity but expressed their emotions akin to marital life, otherwise. They don't present it as a perfect life but acknowledge the hardwork of men they put in to provide for

their families. Also believe that house can't be a home unless women take care of it. Hence, women called it a partnership and spoke highly of men as their team mates. There are still women from certain castes such as *Jatts* and *Rajpoot*, where they still don't like their women to work outside the premises of home, however, parents don't hesitate in sending their girls for education despite the fact that education is an expensive task for the majority of families. The other myth which was associated with women covering their heads as a sign of oppression and dictation from patriarchy was busted. As it is women's agency to dress up in way which is modest and they take pride in it. It is relevant to be inclusive about women's agency for embracing their traditions with pride and own free will (Mahmood, 2006), needs to be regarded as freedom even if they are out of the scope of Western idea of women's liberation and freedom. The element of '*haya*' is not only in covering their heads but conducting their regular lives as well including animals. The building of separate room for a pregnant cow and taking care of her privacy was personally witnessed. During labour, men and young unmarried girls are not supposed to be there but elderly women gather to take care of her just like their own daughter. The girls are getting education, nonetheless, doing jobs is still debatable and vary from clans to clans, *Jatts* and *Rajputs* have been against of women working outside the premises of their houses even if it is agriculture. Whereas *Arayi* had a different take. Similarly, now girls who are educated are working as teachers yet not so rampant. But, the point to ponder is that women not working to earn money is deemed as women suppression and a patriarchal move to clench their counterpart from being independent. But there is a very minimum documentation of women who says out and loud that men are the breadwinners and it is their job to provide, women already have a lot to do then why to add more their platter. Women working as domestic workers is a rising profession and wives now have to get out of their homes to provide care and other services to their employer's family rather their own (Farris, 2013; Hochschild, 2004) due to financial crunch they experienced, especially with the loss of agrarian ecology. It again has raised the question of 'choice'. Are they happily emotionally depleting their children and families with their absence or they are dragged out of their houses to work for money? The other important issue they brought attention to was about finding suitors for children, especially for daughters it became even more complicated due to dowry. The child's marriage was not brought before 2018 but in past recent years, every mother talked about it and connected it to greed which has no end. Also, came to realise that parent's decision for choosing a suitor for a child is not a gender-based but goes with an approach which says, 'Parent know the best and obedient children trust their elders' decisions'. Although families do have started asking their

daughters but that ‘asking’ is more or less ‘informing’. Love marriages are still stigmatized which is again gender-neutral. Women are still not included in ‘Panchayats (village councils), however, *Rahmani braderi* in *Durgpura*, provided a different picture which again was far from mainstream gender discourse. They mentioned an elderly woman in the village, who they used to go for the final decision especially after her husband died. Upon further asking, they explained the only reason for approaching her for final say was because of her wisdom came from her life-long experiences which no younger person could come at par with. The purpose of mentioning these anecdotes in discussion chapter is to underline that gender discourse, women’s experience, their relations, their idea of freedom and liberty and so and so forth can’t be seen from radical feminist approach and also none of this can’t be generalized even with soma country. One can come across striking differences between women in a village of southern Punjab and Central Punjab; intra gender experiences show a range going from border to ghettoized settlements and also from a village to upscale locality. Their exposure to freedom to confinement is real, the emotional toll to which their physical body also reacts is a truth, the feeling of being alone and caged is not a fiction, the remorse for losing the shadow of trees, they used to sit beneath and used to have chitchat with their friends helping them to lay everything off their chest is not a delusion. When they were deprived of a land which is projected as a ‘deal’ and a win-win situation for the villagers; they have a lost a quality of life and signed up for a morphed version of a life which they were never prepared for.

The perception of respect and reverence has been redefined that fits well in the capitalist world. Now, ‘respectable’ is the one who has higher house as a display of wealth instead of a character. *Mewati* have a tradition of not marrying their children to immediate extended families, now a tradition which was followed by generations after generations had changed as land transaction by DHA had made it difficult for people to stick to their traditions. Market in land on the periphery has been a known fact which is why greed for dowry has gone to a next level. Therefore, even *Mewatis* have started doing cousin marriages. One of the debates which usually pointed out that women are not given their due share in inheritance by men, is not incorrect totally but literature does not say a reason why. Till now, women’s share in inheritance is dependent upon a factor primarily the owner’s economic class and above all, a person’s will. However, one thing that has been constant is the sense of responsibility in men either as a father or a brother towards their sisters and daughters, of providing not just material needs but safety, security, marrying them off yet continue taking care of her where it

needs be. The gated communities even couldn't ensure safe secure environments which villages used to have. Hence, proved that intangibles can be used by real estate developers for promoting business but despite demanding hefty cash, residents in gated communities are on their own. This clearly indicates that such intangible assets are the product of a certain ecology that binds society and environment together, a new cash-based ecology that thrives on individualism has never aimed at producing a culture of collective care but the protection of personal interests.

It is not incorrect to say that land teaches us how to live in a spirit of togetherness without stepping over the fellow dwellers, adjusts not only humans but animals and all other forms of life. The architecture of the houses has tremendously changed over time which forced me to think its effect on human's perception and way of thinking even by being at a same place. It also shows that kind of culture a community wants to have prevailed can only happen when material conditions are in accordance with it. For instance, mud houses (still can be seen in farthest villages) evades a sense of inequality amongst people and also spare their energy to be invested in fitting in by cemented and painted walls. The walls of the houses were not high that let neighbour be unaware of other neighbour's situation, the walls were not thick enough to obstruct their ears to hear a brother's cry or call for help. Women could talk to each other just across the walls and they tend to gather in no time whilst they need to show up without being dependent upon mobile phones or landlines. A real connection built over time through thick and thin to hear the unsaid, all that it needs. The open veranda of the houses from where people could see the sky was not just a source of ventilation and natural light to enter but the beings were also receptive, with accommodating hearts, veranda were enough to keep reminding them to share space with other members, doors are kept opened to let people in without hesitation and host is always there to make sure they attend the guests. The open places in villages, which are not so hard to find, they can be anywhere as under the shaded tree, near the tube-well, outside someone's shop, in shrines or a porch outside a mosque, men gather and spend time with each other. A hookah still can be taken as a symbol for gatherings. Those open spaces have room for everyone to grow and thrive regardless of age. Women could walk freely without any fear which is a blessing in itself. This fearless environment is not available in gated communities as realtors promised to provide. Children have had play grounds where they would socialize with others, meet elders and spend time in playing with other children in a secure environment where their parents in specific don't have to watch-over as entire village is guarding them. Now, modern architecture publicizes the

economic status of the owner, as a wooden, tattered door with rusted chains, having crumbled wooden grains are comparable to loured foreheads, both divulging haplessness and struggles. On the other hand, high, concrete walls, rooms to individuals, locks on the doors have turned people inaccessible to the next-door inhabitant. Instead of being free, they are encaged, utterly dependent on others to do chores for them and to ensure their security and that too on 'pay'. The cash does wonder, one – it wants you to think that you are invincible and can have an army of people at your service (which is partially correct) but what it does otherwise that transactional relations are ephemeral, uncertain and volatile. In a way humans are still dependent on other humans i-e elites on the poor and poor on the rich – but now without strings attached. Now, the cash is the only weak-link between two classes which keeps elite even more scared insecure the whole time as they are losing the ability to trust because this intangible asset can't be bought.

The other striking aspect of this development model which allows to draw comparison when it comes to gain and loss account is in terms of intergenerational difference of vision. It has not distant one family from another but has created isolated units within each house. Time was another asset which in agrarian setting was available to them as people used to work together, women contributing either through farming or carrying food to fields as a gesture of care, affection and their duty towards a provider. Children were equally involved in activities, such as on field, or taking care of an animal which conditioned them to be around elders from whom they could learn skill but life lessons also. Now, teenagers are completely out of the agriculture and modern education tells them not get their hands dirty. Children at one time wanted to leave the village and to be shifted in better areas but since villages are no longer a village and they have urbanised; therefore, children do not mind living there. Also, cash enables parents to provide electronic gadgets which keep kids included in the modern world but excluded from their intimate relations. Young children have no reason to disdain a life that used to revolve around agrarian landscape, however, the parents and elders of the family seemingly helpless when it comes to inculcating same values in their present generation with which they themselves were raised. Food preferences have been changed, day-to-day routines have become urbanised, the lack of space must have triggered it but the invasion through mobile phone, computers, video games and internet have consumed most of their time. Children from pocketed villages were seen playing on roads in DHA phases which was not safer and would not be able to take advantage of roads for long. Raising children as per parents' wish has slipped out of their hands due to multiple factors. The mobile phones and

internet have already put a child in an isolated box where he or she has her own world which parents can't supervise all the time. Secondly, the modern education which helps producing for the upper classes and completely detaches from their surroundings is almost like planting a seed in artificial conditions far from its roots and a place where it belongs. The words and their concepts in children's minds are different from their elders which is one primary reason for youngsters to have dismissal for the value of community as they can't even comprehend that what does it offer. The community's concern is taken as 'interference', their care and protective attitude is deemed as 'restrictions' or an anchor to young person's freedom. Villages do have schools for girls and boys and parents are doing everything in their capacity to provide education to their children. More so because, they are already put out of an environment that could provide them skill and resilience from a community to survive. Now, they are totally dependent on urban jobs where there are number of people are available to fill a few spots. Furthermore, one distinct feature of urbanism and urbanisation is to create individuality, isolation and where taking care of children by the mother only has become a difficult task and especially when she is also working, giving her time and care to employer's children, neglecting her own. Also, due to in-situ migration, settlements are getting bigger in size that has put their security in peril and keeping a beady eye has become quite a task. It has made way for other illicit activities such as drugs. Families stated one of the reasons for moving out to gated communities, because they felt unsafe at a place which became alienated to them due to the arrival of so many new faces. However, primary reason for leaving their own place was to provide an environment to children that deemed fit for their coming generations to grow.

But perks have their own cost, as villagers are losing their language, a sense of identity and a never-ending struggle to settle-in in getting conversant to place which is a whole new world, where they are still considered backward and uncivilized. Families who have gained big cash amounts and afford to have a house amongst the elites have increased their expenditures with added burden to become their 'look-alike'. Combat begins with wearing branded cloths to expensive gadgets. For instance, men who want to expand their connections, they try to please others by keeping things which are only to show-off to prove that they deserve rich man's time and a connect. This is continuous psychological and mental exertion because it requires them to change not only from head to toe but from the core. No matter how nicely they dress up but inability to talk in language of the posh is a deal-breaker. Eventually, families had to forfeit and they returned where they belong. Nevertheless, now in present

time, decision to have residence 'where' has become more complicated as its do or die situation due to increased land prices and property in village. Who are intended to move out is tantamount to burn boats. It is a one-way street where people can't decide on a whim but have to think wisely to be on which side of the road. The periphery has been suburbs for the working class, tenant farmers and peasant, small landholders, a very few big owners but majority landless. The city life and symbols of modernity have never been a conundrum to them as they used to commute to cities for work and they still do. But previously, they were not that exposed but now they are living in such a way where so-called ideal living remains in front of their houses all the time, expensive cars passing by keeps reminding them that they are way behind. The beautiful houses, clean streets, gated entrances just across the street plays and manipulates with rural dwellers' minds, as it seems like as if they need to stretch their hand and they can grab a moon, it's a delusion though, yet hard to escape and avert. Who have made it to the other side, there is a gamut of experiences akin to gender and generation. Women feel trapped and bound, secluded and lonely, instead of being freer, dependent on men to accompany and a car to commute. This has only given them diseases especially hypertension, diabetes, joints pain and obesity. Since, there is socialisation is minimal to none, the women folks they could rely on are no longer there to lend their hand to help, a shoulder to lean on, a sensitive ear to listen and a valuable presence. Women are still trying to keep the village home vibe by putting *Charpayi* instead of bed, still call their community members in a community instead of investing time in befriending their neighbours and yet prefer to sleep on rooftop at night.

The study is not a presentation of rural life as a utopia or a fairy-land free of miseries and difficulties. Rural dwellers never have claimed an agrarian-life as easy. It is not about seeing cash for the first time since DHA arrives as they were already into selling goods in cities such as milk and cow dungs etc, yet people are lamenting a past life and can clearly see what they have lost in the process regardless of class, gains and professions. Yes, prior to DHA, people did not have options for switching professions and to make money through other means which now they have. Yet, they feel losing everything while they are trapped. Why lives have become more challenging than they have had till 2007? Or is it in the head of urban people that rural life is not only backward and uncivilized but difficult too? The study is the voice of the unheard and faceless people in the eye of planners. The rural dwellers who have been experiencing 'change' that is even hard for them to wrap around their heads, a transformation that has caused upheaval in just less than 20 years. The pace of change that has happened in

recent past in these rural settlements due to urbanisation is unfathomable compared to the change happened in 200 years to the Lahore city. This is mind boggling indeed and inhabitants have got trapped in the process of change. They have shared a history, the perks that agrarian life used to offer for free without being dismissive of farming as arduous and laborious livelihood. Women while recalling and comparing their former and present life and shifting from mud to concrete houses, they never held back from sharing their unconditional relation with their surroundings and how their presence was fundamental in maintaining houses and creating 'home'. Yet, what they share is story of loss – especially a loss of intangibles, which they consider a determinant of quality of life, tied to agrarian mode of production and physical landscape.

They were cash-poor, way rich though. They might not have resources or amenities which make city life 'modern' and hollow but people in rural realm had more control and independence due to subsistence which earth and rural ecology provided them. They had open lands for animal to feed, they had soil to provide them organic food and large number of mouths to cater in abundance with little or no cash required. Their houses were large enough to keep livestock as their own family member. Now have crammed into small places, whereas several know that they would not be able to get such big houses in cities to live. The food was rich in nutrition, their drinks were fulfilling and in accordance with seasons instead of modern artificial juices and fizzy drinks. The water in villages was clean and accessible to all for free which now has been replaced by contaminated water and a source of diseases such as Hepatitis. Now people are eating poison in form of food due to intensive use of pesticides and chemical fertilizers with aim of higher yield neglecting the fact that inhabitants have been deteriorating their health and reducing life expectancies. The villagers knew it well and could clearly draw comparison in type of food, its taste, smell and health quotient their food used to offer, is now all gone. The availability of clean water has now become a symbol and measure of person's financial strength because water which was fit for drinking available at 60-90 feet, has now gone down to 450-550 feet depending on area. Therefore, now one needs to have a deep borehole with an electric motor to extract water from the ground is a huge expense. The microclimate has changed and so are the routines. A man has created with an internal body clock that is in sync with dusk till dawn, the modern living runs against the body clock and has made is vulnerable to catch disease. The absence of the Covid-19 and dengue that grappled the city could not enter a village, speaks volume. Village peeps used to live in an empire where they collectively take responsibility for resource use, deal with community

issues locally without any foreign interference, local production (from food to transport to cloth to houses and list goes on) was the source of their subsistence which in which their independence and power used to lie. They were once far from being integrated into larger capitalist growth model which now has incarcerated them, behind unseen bars and invisible cages. Now, they are totally dependent on cash to survive that has happened by depriving them from their land, their freedom to exist independent of market-world with added burden. Such as, men now have to bring water from places outside the village, people have to buy fodder from the markets that needs transport and fuel, men and especially women are getting sick as they have no open space to go to take stroll in a fear-free environment. Stress has mounted, hypertension is becoming common due to competition and need to make and multiply money which again is a never-ending race with no finishing line. One may get to hear that 'greed' has changed people; however, I would like to contemplate over this term 'greed' too. Even if people have become greedy and self-centred, what has changed them? They might have cash influx but what they get slips away from hands because now they have to spend money even to acquire butter and milk, they can no longer get grains and save them till the next harvest or next year, when they were bestowed with plenty even beggars would not sleep on empty stomachs. Now, they have to be worried for the provision of three meals a day to their children. Hunger is biggest of the evils. Rural ecology had a atmosphere that used to thrive on sharing and reciprocity yet had copiousness of everything. The more they share more they gather especially in terms of intangibles. The security for women and children, watchful eyes on kids entering adulthood to keep them on track was coming from the historically built ecosystem which no gated community and urban living can ever ensure. Villages have a secure environment because no one is stranger to each other, on the other hand, people in gated communities urbanised living spend money to have safety but are filled with fear to an extent where doors are always locked and no one tried to know a person living next to them. In villages, people are standing shoulder to shoulder through thick and thin, in urbanism – it is survival for the fittest and every being is on their own. It is rural culture where folks tend to sit together regardless of gender, either under a shaded tree or on the wall of a tube-well, on the canal or in open fields, getting together at someone's home or open land in the village; but they do take time out for each other to lend an empathetic ear, to listen to each other which at times is all a person's needs, therefore there was no sense of loneliness and isolation. The modern living coming from capitalism has taken the most precious asset from people and that is Time. It has hemmed in people in such a way where they act and work like machines and have no time to even feel. The isolation due to extreme individualism

has put people into depression where they have to spend bucks to be heard to feel lighter. The rural ecology is of use and exchange value, but here I am not taking 'exchange' what profit-hunger world means. The exchange of warmth, trust, friendships, bandings, respect and reverence; exchange of goodwill, care and need to nurture between soil and people, people and environment and amongst people. The maintenance of culture and traditions to prevails with an effort to transfer the same values to the coming generations to create an ecology which feels like home, is a continuous work and can't be possible if we remove the landscape that compels people to stay, connected and interdependent.

The rural settlements that have experienced change and under the overwhelming processes of urbanisation have created rifts in environmental metabolism but amongst communities' members too. If not abruptly but gradually, people are drifting apart even if they are still sharing the reconfigured space. It is hard to overlook that urbanisation aims at increasing consumerism and attacking means of production, dispossessing with subsistence is a harbinger to social change like an avalanche. Money comes in and here the disintegration begins with social restricting, new class formation through either adding more layers to the class or by reshuffling people on the basis of gains they have made from land transaction and then how aptly they used that money to place themselves in elevated class. But this is not it, alienation and distance between people is also because every single household is exposed now. When places change, symbols, meanings, terminologies evolve too. And, capitalist web of relations talks only in the language of numbers (money or cash). This instantly shifts person worth from his character to amount of material accumulation. People instead of refining from inside pay more heed to look presentable so that they can be accepted in the world of the rich. Similarly, to have a beautiful façade of a house has become of paramount importance which automatically put labels on doors that can be noticed from afar. This further teaches people to choose connections wisely – a further exclusion of people in the hands of their own. It takes toll on psychological and emotional well-being of the dwellers. The ones who are from low-income group start cutting themselves off because they want to keep their self-respect intact. As they begin to feel less wanted and if they go to their rich neighbour's house now, they might misunderstand or be skeptical about their visit. Within one household, a lot has been happening, male members are bound to provide so they have to leave houses to work but since expanses are only getting higher due to inflation, therefore such communities carry more brunt with change in political situations and policies each premiership brings in. in contemporary times, it has become more evident that what villages

had was successfully catering its people, meeting their needs by providing means of production and least dependence on market which is now absolutely the opposite of what they experienced. Hence, women also have to leave to seek work as maids or domestic help to help their better halves to earn more so that they could provide education to their children regardless of gender and could save for rainy days especially for medical emergencies. Hence, mother's care is now getting exchanged for money, leaving her own children unattended. Even village households have started hiring maids which is a new phenomenon, not yet rampant though.

The exploitation of rural communities has been there even prior to independence, with time it has only got worsened. Since, partition, there were no land reforms, none of the measures were ever taken to rectify mistakes by sincerely trying for fair land distribution. Britishers divided agrarian community into set of two i-e agricultural and non-agricultural, very conveniently removed farm labourers, artisans and were exempted from the land entitlement or its ownership. Then Green revolution in Pakistan came in 1965 and several small peasants and farmers and the owners of small landholdings were cut loose and very smoothly accumulated by big landholders who became capitalist landowners. Now in the name of urbanisation, land has been taken away from people and when the aim at getting rid of settlements, realtors adopt several other tactics without any fear and hesitation. This is a process of creating natural and human monocultures which ultimately serve those who have power and money. Even those who were at advantage and sitting over a valuable land, have learnt with time, how to make the best out of it, still talk about what have they lost in regard with intangibles and are so convinced that no amount of money can never give them back what they have lost – a sense of identity, recognition, peace, a sense of belonging, relations, warmth, trust, community, safety, a world that works on sharing and not on greed, where people do not have to prove their worth through modern gadgets but through character and their dealings with others. An ecology that offered them good food, water, health all free of cost and now even health has become a luxury which is only for the ones who can afford it. The stability has been replaced by chaos, peace has swapped place with tension, ecologically stable terrains are now degraded slums where people are seen sitting around trash and then moving out of a village to DHA depicts a picture that is degrading and humiliating for the ones living across the street. It is a constant reminder of acute class difference. Last but not the least, through this study, I would like to reiterate that labelling their experience as 'nostalgia' and rule out the fact that even nostalgia is stemming out of their life-long lives

experiences are essential to taken into account if we want to understand what development project does to communities. Sustainable goals are flawed and business model only that are unable to recognize the importance of indigenous communities, their traditional lifestyle and the significance of their inclusion for environmental protection and conservation. One can't safeguard a resource, a place or even a thing unless he is emotionally attached to it. The emotional significance gives longevity to a resource as it instills the sense of responsibility towards environment, people are living in.

Chapter 7

Not everything taken can be compensated by Cash!

Concluding a dissertation is no small feat. As I reflect on the journey undertaken, it becomes apparent that the visible transformations occurring in peri-urban villages are but the surface manifestations of a deeper and more complex phenomenon. While the landscape undergoes tangible alterations such as fields flattened, settlements displaced, scrapping of top soil, the true scope of change remains largely concealed. Extended ethnographic research beginning in 2014 continued till 2022 revealed how the visible land-use change, modern infrastructure of roads, electricity and new landscapes announcing the arrival of an iconic brand of gated housing for the affluent effectively camouflaged the socio-ecological disruptions i.e intangible and material losses suffered by the village societies in the process of ‘development’. The villagers were ostensibly compensated by high cash returns for agricultural land acquired for ‘development’. The empirical record acquired through the research and analysis presents a narrative of the role of cash in the local geographic and historical context, the character of the State and other institutions in the process of urban development.

7.1 What this study offers?

This dissertation studied urbanisation and its processes not through a city-centric approach but through the lens of villages which also put emphasis that ‘urbanisation’ is no longer a rural-city migration but the definition has evolved with time and the urbanisation has transcended the bounds of cities. This is why, it is important more than ever to give places, geographies and ecologies due recognition as impacts of urbanisation, gentrification, speculation or land financialization cannot be generalized. The process of land transaction for urbanisation, industrialisation, agro-farming has been happening in different parts of South Asia, but we report what’s new about it in the context of peri-urban villages in Lahore, Pakistan? Its significance lies in the record of the urbanisation process in contemporary context when it has become a ‘trend’. The research is a critique of mainstream development under neo-liberal policies that focus on profiteering and infrastructure development projects are undertaken or endorsed by the State, which plays a major role in marginalizing the marginalised (Tiwary, 2024). There is no study from Pakistan which based on empirical qualitative data to record the process of urbanisation as experienced and manifested is seen

through a focus on village settlements. It is a holistic study to document change due to the adaption of neo-liberal economic regime by the State policies, and where army as an institution of the State is a major player in the development. However, the focus of the study is not the State as in other studies such as Ahmed, 2023; Shahbaz, 2022, etc. This study takes a more of an ecological perspective to uncover the material and social change. Gutiérrez (2024) discussed the role of domestic elite in acquiring land from rural areas and using ‘financialization’ as an alternative process for accumulation. The focus on a collection of villages in the area helped to map the phenomenon at different stages of transformation and also the differential impacts on particular locales with their own socio-historical context. The ‘undeveloped’ villages to those totally obliterated by the new gated housing development presented the rural past to the contemporary lived reality of villagers and land. It maps and assesses the losses and gains as experienced by a wide cross section of village society, including different classes, ethnicities, gender, and age. It records the transformation in values, identities, sense of security and attachment to land as expressed by villagers and analyses the same in conjunction with changes in built environment, consumption, routines and demography of impacted communities.

7.2 Places - lived and remembered

The rapid transformation of peri-urban villages on the south-east of Lahore provides an opportunity to look closely at the process of change that a ‘land’ goes through as it urbanizes. The land was not productive due to the presence of fertile agricultural soil but the communities who used to produce and helped feed the city. For developers, it was low value land which could be developed and marketed for profit. This development however is the harbinger of bigger transformation from where there is no turning back. Land is more than a physical entity and a source of produce and subsistence. For the local communities, land and land-based relations were the very fabric of their lives. Land is not an empty piece of turf; it is an ecology which has its material and symbolic role. It supports a collective life and instils a sense of belonging, responsibility which leads to communal management of resources and ownership beyond the idea of private property. Land is the source of power to community. It cannot be treated as a piece of rug that can be wrapped and put elsewhere (T. M. Li, 2014), it is highly social in character and pivotal to create an ecology that gives quality of life to villagers.

However, land acquisition is the foremost and primary need for capitalist urban growth as it is for all state 'development' operations such as mining, monoculture farming, infrastructure development. In the market ethos, the developer and state offer cash compensation for land and presents it as a 'fair deal'. This so-called compensation externalizes not only environmental costs but social costs as well. Harvey says, *'The state has to guarantee, for example, the quality and integrity of money'*, the ultimate goal in neoliberal era, for which State has played role in turning everything into commodity such as land, education, health etc.

The villages of Southeast Lahore were studied as microcosms of socio-ecological change. The research entailed two types of record. The change in land-use, built areas, infrastructure and vegetation was mapped using remote sensing. The data collection on social transformation employed ethnography the major methodology to record the transformation as experienced and narrated by the villagers. Available local history and publications was also used to develop a picture of the change in the area. Ethnography allowed me to listen to the villagers tales and change as a consequence of the process of development of the new elite suburbs and the ghettoization or erasure of villages they once inhabited. Overwhelmingly for the socially marginalised it was an account of loss. The capitalist economic model has been fostering human and natural monocultures that are now proliferating under an unchecked model of 'cities as engines of growth'. This process has been extensively researched by critical scholars in geography and environmental studies. A vast body of literature (as mentioned in chapter 3) is found on displacement, dispossession, cash compensations, the role of state, laws regarding land acquisition and compensation and whatnot! However, a critical gap has been the absence of any record of the experience of the villager's assessment of the socio-ecological outcomes of the development of new housing enclaves of the rich on village lands. The question of 'how' these communities go through change through development which brings cash in their lives is a process which is not well documented. Ultimately, it happens to make people realise that they were independent and freedom was their strength tied to land – now gone. It then created a necessity for 'modern-version' of parameters of respect and value that are totally dependent on material conditions. Further reality hits when they are treated as unwanted entities and sore to aesthetics, therefore they need to restricted to maintain the standard. Now, animal market will flourish more as villagers need to sell animals which was also the insurance to them, as no place and permit for grazing is available. They belong to a different social class and less privileged, now this bitter fact of life has sunken more when inequality presents itself unabashedly through cash

and its ostentatious display. Now, gifts of capitalism have annihilated their space by giving a sense of alienation through gentrification, depression and anxiety has set in due to competition and never-ending race of making, gathering more and more. This depression has marked its presence in form of high cases of hypertension, diabetes. Loss of open land, commons and a routine aligned with rural living was a source of healthy body which now is replacing itself with obesity, joint pains, laziness and cases of cancers are also emerging. Onset of fragmentation through cracks in communal bonds due to perfect show of inequality and class polarization, continuous state of distress due to fear of losing identity and displacement, the scars of displacement, losing a sense of security coming from a community and a ceaseless struggle to fit-in if they move to upgraded localities. Which demands to have a rebirth – lose language and former way of living, be up-to-date and display proof of wealth to command respect from new neighbouring community. Therefore, villagers prefer to go to places with similar environment where they are outsiders if they don't have acquaintances or relatives at a place that can make their lives difficult otherwise. The cash nexus and their shift from dependence on land and people to cash and market has made them realise that urban living can provide amenities (which again of poor quality as 'who' gets what is pre-decided) but it can offer a good quality living which urbanism can never provide.

7.3 Last words

All ecologies are subject to change and evolve with time. Villages were the vessels of sustained and stable ecologies built around immobile agrarian production. Rural dwellers and nature were not in competition but in a mutual and harmonious relation. Mother earth took care of its people and villagers looked after the surroundings which sustained them. The symbiosis provided them quality abundant food, water, health, space, culture, community, security, and lesser dependence on a market based competitive world. The list of perks entwined with agrarian production is long. This case study of villages undergoing transformation studied people in their environments and listened closely to their views. Out of this record and analysis has emerged a damning indictment of recent urban 'development' in Lahore city. that the findings underscored the entangled nature of the social and material realms. It also demonstrated the effectiveness of ethnography to access complex social processes which may be unfolding at different stages within a limited geographical terrain. The research helps bring into focus the relationship of the city and peri-urban settlements which are centres of agricultural production. It made me appreciate the need for deeper, broader study of historical village ecologies which have evolved and continue to be defined

by the nature of agrarian production and allied livelihoods such as of livestock keeping even when the majority of the residents may not be engaged in these economic activities. These are the spaces now being rapidly erased by urban sprawl in cities of the global South. People have not only lost their land but has exchanged their freedom, a place to grow food for families and animals, they have lost access to good quality milk, now health is deteriorating, water is no longer fit for use and access to clean drinking water requires further investment. Relationships are severing, respect and reverence is now according to the economic position, independent and share based productive livelihoods in agriculture and livestock have disappeared for wage labour in the urban economy or commercial enterprises mostly petty and informal. New work brings money but has undermined security. The presence of new neighbours, migrant workers and rich home owners of the elite housing, increased traffic and loss of community oversight has eroded the security experienced by females in the past. Even those who got substantial cash compensation to afford houses in the elite suburb are not free of insecurity especially females. Cash has enhanced their lifestyle but taken away their security and carefree living. Women, regardless of age are experiencing modern-style captivity due to insecurity and greater dependence on chaperones or security guards. Inside the homes experience of loneliness and increase in diseases such as hypertension, diabetes, obesity, joint pain was reported. \They expressed nostalgia for the independence to roam around freely in the village, sitting under trees or catching up with mates near the cool environs of the tube-wells or irrigation channels. The contemporary villager society was still characterised by a moral economy and many tangibles and intangible assets were not commodities till the coming flush of cash that came with the complete sale of agricultural land. The villagers had not just exchanged land for money but sold a way of life which was not entirely based on market relations.

The COVID-19 pandemic laid bare the inadequacies of urban living, underscoring the vitality of rural ecosystems and the bonds of community support. The villages studied by the author reported no case of the disease. While it has not been investigated the villagers attributed it to low population densities, access to fresh food and social support. Overall, the villages of peri-urban Lahore invite further investigation of the socio-ecological efficacy of settlements with land-based production and associated social life. These villages are weak in face of influx of big capital investment facilitated and abetted by the state committed to neo-liberal urbanisation. This development imposes and hardens the shackles of the cash-nexus. The

study shows that the monetary compensation disrupts and degrades the long sustained social and natural world of historical villages.

It also raises further questions about the impact of these developments for the metropolitan space and society. As we reckon with the consequences of unchecked urbanisation, it is imperative that we heed the voices of those most affected. The dissertation strives to underscore that the dichotomy between rural and urban, far from being an abstract concept, reflects the lived experiences of millions grappling with the fallout of development.

Appendix A³⁴

Place	Land type	Status	Communities	Land Taken	Facts
Burj	GL	V	Arayi	—	Since 1912; 250-300 houses
Chughalpura	GL	V	Mehar, Sakkay, Rajput, Christians, Arayi	Land has been up for sale illegally	Old; Name changed to Habibabad in 2000; 50+ houses; Electricity came in late 90s, no gas, no government school. Mela at Baba Shah Noor's at Ashiyana Qaid in Bhadun
Jindri	GL	V	—	—	Old; Noor Shah Wali's Shrine, annual <i>Urs</i>
Rakh Padri	GL	V	—	—	Wastepit (LSE used to dump there, it is no longer there)
Padhana	GL	V	Mostly Malik Awaan and Jatt; also, Arayi, Meo, Christians	—	Old, Border Village
Pathanke	GL	V	All Mewati	—	Old, Border Village
Sarja Marja	GL	V	Arayi, Jatt, Malik-many migrated to Durgpura		Old, Border Village
Jahman	Empty to PO	V	Rajput Bhatti, Meo; Artisanal castes are here in majority such as ironsmith, weaver, carpenter, lumberman etc. However, four major castes are Arayi, teli (involved in oil pressing), Rahmani and Mughal.		Old, border village, with the population around 12,000. People migrated from the other side of the border and inhabited the place as majority was into livestock and agriculture. When people came here, none if it belonged to the state. Later they made a system called, 'Joray ki Zameen (land for the pair)', according to which 15 acres was allotted to one pair. The leftover land was allotted to retired army officials. During Ayub's regime in 1958, he gave border land to army personnel, later they hired contractual farmers to cultivate land.

³⁴ Land Type: Military/Govt./Stamped/*Sarkaari* = GL; Ownership/Private/Registered/*Maalki* = PL

Status: Village = V

Walled off/Ghettoized/ Pocketed = P

Erased/Removed = E

Soon-to-be erased/removed = SE

Gated Communities (GC); Urbanised locality (UL)

Communities: Christians = C; Muslims = M

Facts: Villages before partition = Old; Post Partition = New

Amenities: Electricity available = Yes = E (Y); Electricity unavailable = No = E (N); Gas available = Yes = G (Y); Gas unavailable = No = G (N)

Border villages have no canal waster, these village use tube-wells for irrigation, similarly Shamlat are only present in privately owned area but not on governmental lands.

Place	Land type	Status	Communities	Land Taken	Facts
					Famous for red chili production.
Pathanwala	PO	E	Meo, Rajput, Pathan	2013	DHA dealt directly as there were 10 houses; Baba Jand Peer shrine with graveyard
Heera Singh	PO	E	Meo & Gakkhar	—	Infamous for selling graves; shrunken graveyard is still present. Famous for producing high quality carrot
Jalal abad	—	E	—	1996	Graveyard sold
Sangatpura	—	E	—	—	Graveyard sold
Gobindpura	—	E	Arayi	—	
Haveliyan	PO	E	Mostly Arayi		
Chak Dhira	PO	SE	Jatt, Lohar, Bhatti, Faqeer		Old, DHA provided electricity but no gas, wastewater pond
Jhallaran	PO	SE	C & M	2002	Settlement area is still in squabble with DHA
Jindra Kalan	GL (primarily)	Some of it is taken over by DHA	Arayi		It is walled off from one end but has the entrance to the village from within DHA phase, rest of it is connected to Jindri
Natha Singh (Fateh Jang Singh)	PO	SE, one house standing	Majority Punjabi, a couple of Mewati houses, but Meo and then Jatt were major landholders; others were Saqqay, Jolahay, Taili, Malik	2006/7	Old, the last Meo family had taken stay over land for the past 10 years, waste water pond still under family's possession. Graves were sold (especially by the poor communities) and shifted
Chak Bhart	PO	P	Rajput (Khokhar)	2003, built-up in 2007/8	Old
Lehna Singh	PO	P	Meo, few Punjabi and majority Arayi, 10 Christian households	2001/2, by 2006 all agricultural land was sold	Old; 200 houses before DHA came and migration started. More than half of the households are in real estate. Main govt. routes were sold too. Legal case due to electricity
Dahoorwala	PO	P	Rajput	2009/10	Old; Brick kilns active
Kohriyan	PO	DHA has not entered yet, however, people themselves are buying land there			Mobile Tower
Harpalke	PO	P	Rajput, Meo, Malik, and others such as cobblers, sweepers (changar), ironsmith	2004/5	Old; It has a shrine where annual festival happens on 22 nd of <i>Haar</i> (8 th June-8 th July). They have electricity but no gas as DHA did not let that happen
Kalasmari	PO	P	Rajput, Jatt	2002	Old; a part of the graveyard is buried under Green City Mall. People fought to save whatever they could.
Bhangali	GL	P	Shia & Sunni	2007/8	Old; Mobile Tower

Place	Land type	Status	Communities	Land Taken	Facts
			Qureshi, Awaan,		
Chachuwali	PO	P	Mewati; Rajput Meo	2006/7	New; Gas, electricity available. It will be removed in future as master plan shows its name only written on road grid
Tibba	PO	P	—	—	
Mananwala	PO	Urbanised Locality (UL)	—	—	Arable land was taken over by DHA; Urban settlement
Roranwala	PO	P	—	—	A part of it was consumed to develop Shuhada Town. The Settlement surrounded by Askari, DHA 9
Liddharh	PO	P	Rajput, Arayi, Mewati	2002	Old; Big Settlement
Gohawa	PO	Settlement	C & M	2006	1000s houses in 15 years, located on Bedian Road
Mandianwala	PO	Settlement	Majority of Mehar Arayi, a couple of Butt and potters' households		16k houses; now all landless. However, there were no big landholders, neither any migrants from the outside. Most of the land was bought by the Paragon (gated community) Waste pit was in the village, now no longer operational. Famous for tobacco and potato production.
Haer	PO	Hub for Farm houses of the elite	—	Since 2000/2001, market in land took pace	Most of the Farm houses of known beings are also in Haer
Mota Singh	PO	V	—	—	Old; Lies close to DHA phase 9 - Shuhada Town Known for selling graves
Durgpura	PO	Walled off from one side + on the main Barki Road	C & M; Potter, Sakkay, Malik, Ghauri, Bhatti, Rehmani, Gill (Jatt Gill)	2006	Old; Disputed Christian's community graveyard
Charrar	PO	P-SLUM	Malik, Rahmani, Christians	1977	Old and the first village from where acquisition began. Also known for abundant chickpea production.
Saduwala & Ghawindi (At one time these both villages were	PO	P; Saduwala is the settlement only, whereas Ghawindi is still a proper village on Barki Road, closer to the border	Jatt, Rajput, Saqqay Entire area of a village (51 ha=5 Murabba) was owned by a Pathan who lived in Lahore, he	2012	Old; Sikh dominated; its former name was Ghawindi Khush-haal Singh. Annual festival on 31st May (<i>Bisakh-Jeth</i>), however as open land is no longer available, therefore festival is shifted to another village, Ghawandi.

Place	Land type	Status	Communities	Land Taken	Facts
twins, later villages separated			distributed land to people on contract for cultivation. Later he sold agricultural land to DHA.		
Kamahan	PO	P	—	—	It is a settlement of the lower-income group. It is known for scandalous dispossession without compensations
Loharpura	PO	E	—	—	E
Hadiara	Mixed; PO predominantly and the land towards border is GL.	V	—	—	Old; largest village in Lahore district with the population of 40 K in 2016 (which must have increased by now)
Phuller Wan	PO	Settlement is left, but the arable land has been completely sold out			It is situated on Barki Road, surrounded by imperial garden, Paragon and DHA phase 8. It also had a waste dump which is no longer functional
Haveliyan- Karbath	PO	V	Mostly Mewati		Old; Nearby Dera Chahal
Guldast town	PO	GC	—	—	Upscale gated community; locality for the middle-class
Paragon	PO	GC	—	—	Upscale living, people from villages also migrated to Paragon who have better sources of income or children are all educated and into jobs
New Abadi Barki (NAB)	PO	GC	—	—	Low-income group, usually wage labourers or people with very small landholdings sold land to DHA, built houses in this new area
Punjab Co-operative Housing Society	PO	GC	Mix of Jatt, Meo and plots bought by army persons also in the area		For the middle-class. People migrated from villages such as Lehna Singh to this locality; with better businesses and once had big landholdings.
Barki	PO	Settlement. Agricultural land has been sold	Mostly Rahmani (potter-caste)	Around 2011/12	In the year 2021, a fight happened between young lads of the village who were protecting the main entrance and the investors. Barki's population was around 2400-2500 which spiked to 5000 within one-and-a-half year (in 2016) as people from Sangatpura and Haveliyan shifted to Barki

Appendix B

Table to enlist interviews over the period

Interviewees	Location	Number of participants	Date	Codes
FWO employee	Roranwala	1	2014	FWO/E
DHA employee	Telephonic	1	2014	DHA/E
Lawyer + DHA investor	Telephonic	1	01-10-2021	
Big landlord	Natha Singh	1	14-04-2021	W-Natha Singh
Wife of a wage labourer		1		
Service staff at uni.	Saduwala	1	08-03-2021	
	Kohriyan	1		
		Gohawa	1	09-03-2021
Old Woman	Heera Singh	1	28-09-2016	
26 yrs. man	Chachuwali + tele.	1	2021 onwards	
Small shop owner	Durgpura stop	1	02-04-2021	
Old teacher	Chachuwali	1	05-04-2021	
Old man	Dera Chahal	1	2016	
Lawyer	Durgpura	1	2016, 2021 onwards	L-Durgpura
Broker	Pathanwala*	1	2014	
Rental shop owner	Written excerpt	1	2014	
Hen slaughter station	Dera Chahal ***	1	2014	
Hairdresser	Charrar	1	25-09-2016	
		1	2021	
Farmer	Burj	1	04-07-2022	
Old resident	Durgpura	1	20-06-2016	
Home-maker	New Abadi Barki (NAB)	1	09-05-2016	
Businessman	Barki	1	19-07-2016	
Big landholder cum realtor	Lehna Singh	1	21-07-2016	FM-Lehna Singh
		1	12-08-2018	
Tenant woman in Quarters		1		
Flour shop-owner (Kalasmari)	Barki Road	1	2021	
Maid (Sheik)	Charrar	1	25-09-2016	
Street-seller (home-made toys)		1		
Blacksmith	Loharpura	1	18-07-2018	
Resident	Jahman	1	26-01-2019	
Cattleman	Bhangali	1	07-04-2021	
Corn-seller woman (originally from Harbanspura)	Barki Road	1	31-03-2021	CS
Established greengrocer/meat seller		1		
Potter (Bauwala)		1		
Works in a Nursery		1		
Construction supervisor	Chachuwali	1	27-05-2021	
Young teacher		1		
DHA security guard		1		
100-year-old man		1	24-05-2021	
		1	22-05-2021	
Old woman		1	05-04-2021	M-Chachuwali
Old Teacher		1		
Wadera	Jhallaran	1	20-03-2021	Wd-Jhallaran
Historian	Khoj Garh	1	25-05-2021	H-Khoj Garh
Man (originally from Kasur)		1		Khoj Garh
Owner of food corner in a village	Jhallaran	1	06-06-2022	Jhallaran, 2022
Old Christian man		1		C-Jhallaran, 2022
Rich agriculturist	Chak Bhart	1	25-07-2022	Chak Bhart, 2022
Jatt	Chak Dhira	1	19-03-2022	Chak Dhira, 2022
Poet	Kalasmari	1	12-06-2022	Poet-Kalasmari, 2022
House help (Mehar Town)	Migrated from Mananwala	1	16-04-2022	
Christian woman	Jhallaran*	1	2021	
Resident	Tibba *	1	20-05-2021	
Young man	Chachuwali**	1	Late 2021	
DHA construction site supervisor	DHA (written)	1	2021	DHA/S, DHA- 2021

One-on-one interviews = 56

Focus Group Discussions (F)

Interviewees	Location	Number of participants	Date	Codes
Men	Haer	3	24-07-2016	FM
Women	Bhangali	2	28-06-2022	FW
Men	Revenue office	2	22-06-2021	FM
Women	Chachuwali	3	20-05-2021	FW/1
Mixed	Chachuwali	2	22-05-2021	Fi
Men	Chachuwali	5	15-03-2022	Gujjar-Chachuwali, 2022
Men	Chak Dhira	2	06-06-2022	FM
Women	Dera Chahal	6	14-04-2021	FW
Women	Dahoorwala	10	28-05-2021	FW
Men (Gardner and lawyer)		2		FM
Mixed	Durgpura	3	27-06-2022	Fi/22
Mixed (Rehmani)	Durgpura	10	20-07-2022	Fi/R
Men	Durgpura	10	17-03-2021	FM
Mixed		2		Fi/21
Mixed	Guldasht town	8	21-10-2016	Fi
Women	Haveliyan	4	19-03-2022	FW
Men	Kalasmari	2	12-06-2022	FM
Men	Kohriyan	5	30-04-2016	FM
Women (Kalasmari)	Paragon	3	18-07-2022	FW
Men	Patwarkhana	5	23-11-2016	FM
Mixed (host's family)	Sarja Marja	7	23-03-2021	Fi*1-Sarja Marja
Mixed (haveli)		4		Fi*2
Women (neighbors)		5		FW*N- Sarja Marja
Women		3		FW-Sarja Marja
Mixed	Pathanwala	3	21-07-2018	Fi
Mixed	Chachuwali	2	19-05-2021	Fi
Men (rental place as restaurant)	Barki Road	2		FM
Men	Dahoorwala	2	28-05-2021	FM
Men	Kalasmari	5	18-07-2018	FM
Mixed	Habibabad	10	04-07-2022	Fi
Women	Durgpura	10	20-06-2016	FW
Mixed	New Abadi Barki (NAB)	4	09-05-2016	Fi
Men	Rakh Padri	8	04-05-2016	FM
Women		4		FW
Mixed	Kohriyan	5	30-04-2016	Fi
Women		4		FW
Men (Soil group)		5		FM
Women	Dahoorwala	5	2018	FW
Couple	Rental fruit stall, Charrar	2	25-09-2016	Fi
Women (landholders, farming)	Heera Singh	3	28-09-2016	FW
Men	Mandianwala	5	05-10-2016	FM
Men	Harpalke	5	30-04-2018	FM
Mixed	Burj	4	01-08-2018	Fi
Women (Gohawa, Durgpura)	LSE	2	10-03-2021	FW-LSE
Men (LSE drivers; Hadiara, Bhangali, Chak Bhart, Barqa Qalan)		4	March 2021	FM-LSE
Men (farming)	Jindri	5	March 2021	FM-Jindri
Men	LDA's officials	4	2021	FM-LDA
Men (Sardar, patwari)	Padhana, Pathanke, Sarja Marja	4	27-06-2021	FM-Border Villages
Men (Old Lumberdar and group)	Pathanke	4		FM-Pathanke
Middle aged men	Jindra Kalan	2	09-05-2022	FM-Jindra Kalan
Aged woman		1		W1-Jindra Kalan
Middle aged woman		1		W2-Jindra Kalan
Old Men	Jindri	3	16-05-2022	FM-Jindri, 2022
Women	Chachuwali	8	2021	FW/2
Women (calf's birth)	Written notes	6	2021	FW/3
Men (DHA-Land providers)	Telephonic	2	14-03-2024	FM-Land Providers, 2024

Focus group discussions = 56

Total number of interviews = 112

Codes

Focus group discussion = F; Women = W; Men = M; Mixed = i

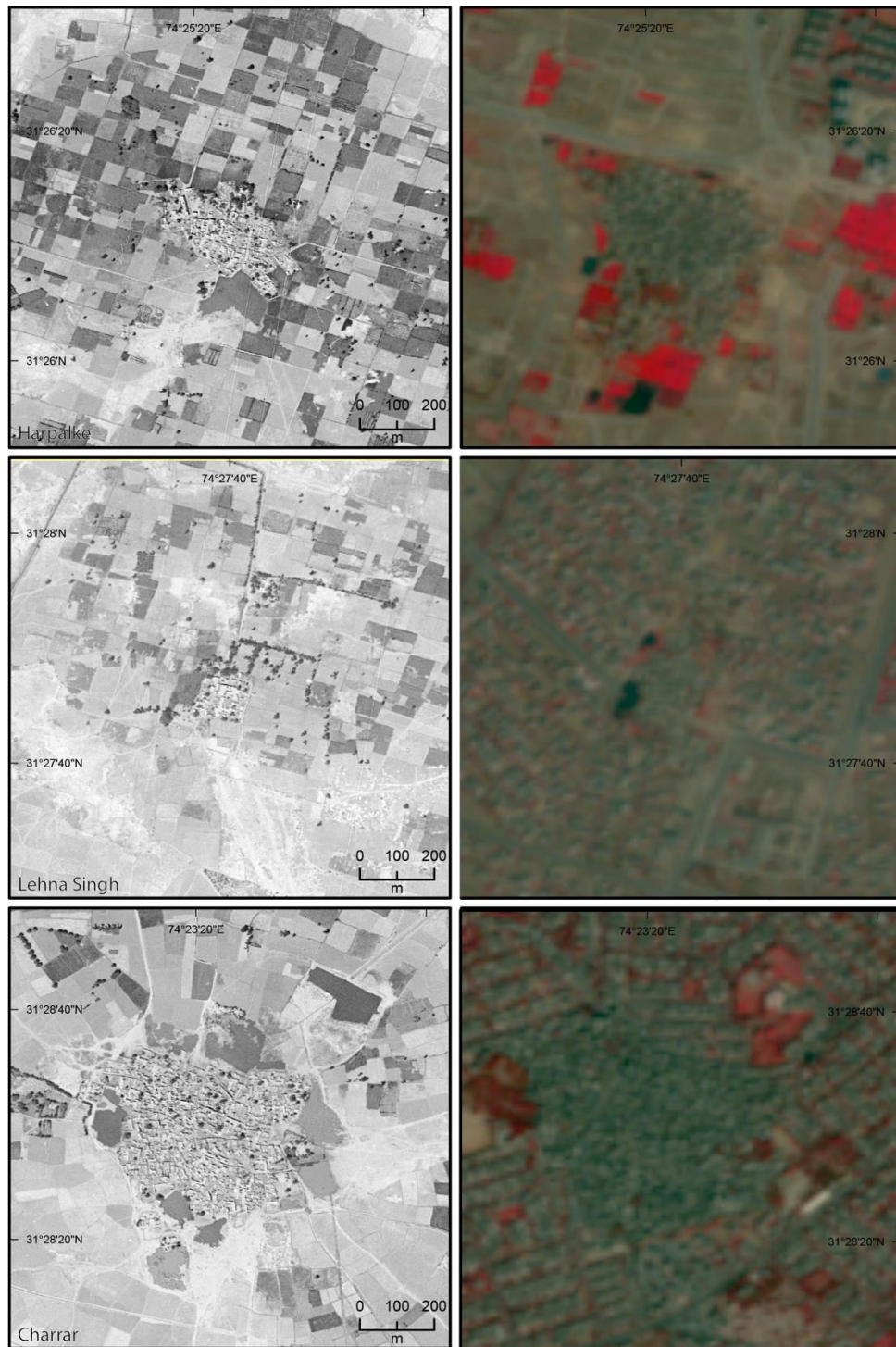
Appendix C

Punjabi Months	English Month	Farmer's Seasons
Bisakh	End thirteenth month to 21 st April	Summer harvest and planting
Jeth	22 nd April-7 th June	
Har	8 th June-8 th July	Leisure, marriages
Sawan	9 th July-14 th August	Monsoon rains
Bhadun	15 th August-14 th September	Waiting
Asuj	15 th September-30 th November	Autumn harvest and planting
Katak		
Maghar	1 st December-28 th February	Winter, marriages
Poh		
Magh		
Phagan	March 1 st -31 st	Spring planting
Chet	Thirteenth month	

(Eglar & Chowdhry, 2010)

Appendix D

The following satellite images³⁵ are used as examples for showing villages at different stages of development:



Pocketed: Harpalke (top), Lehna Singh (middle), Charrar (bottom)

³⁵ Corona Images from 1965 on the left-hand side and Sentinel-2 on the right-hand side from 2023



Remnants: Jhallaran (top), Chak Dhira (middle), Mota Singh (bottom)³⁶

³⁶ Mota Singh/Mota Singhwala village is classified as main Mota Singh or Mota Singhwala and Chota Mota Singh. A part of the former village was once taken for the Shuhada Town construction, yet it exists. It is getting sandwiched between DHA sectors, Pakistan Kidney and Liver Institute (PKLI), farmhouses etc, located on either side of Bedian road.



Still rural in character: Chughalpura (top), Jindra kalan (middle), Padri (bottom)



Removed: Jalal abad (top), Heera Singhwala /Heera Singh (middle), Gobindpura (bottom)

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NATURWISSENSCHAFTLICH-MATHEMATISCHE
GESAMTFAKULTÄT

COMBINED FACULTY OF NATURAL SCIENCES AND
MATHEMATICS

RUPRECHT-KARLS-
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