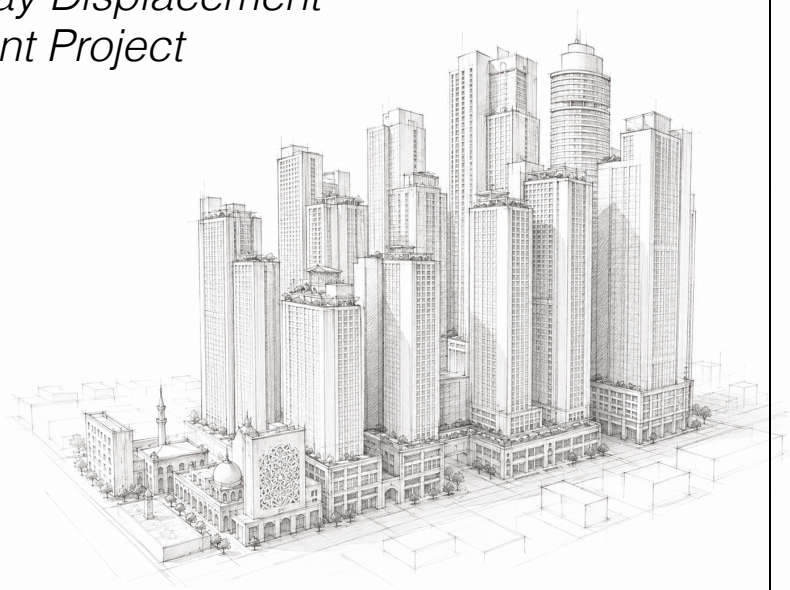
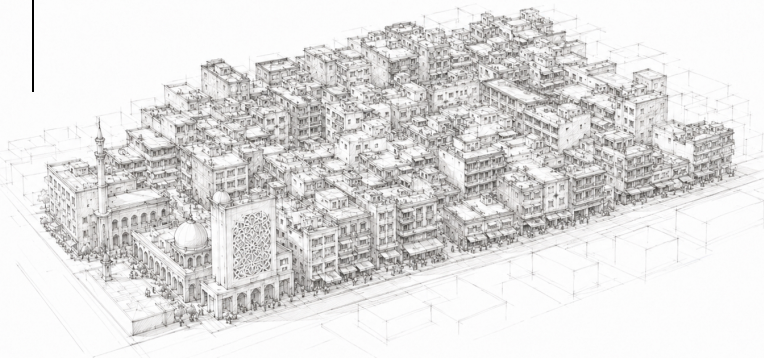


Industrial Development and Informal Urban Transformation: Revalorisation and Displacement in Mumbai

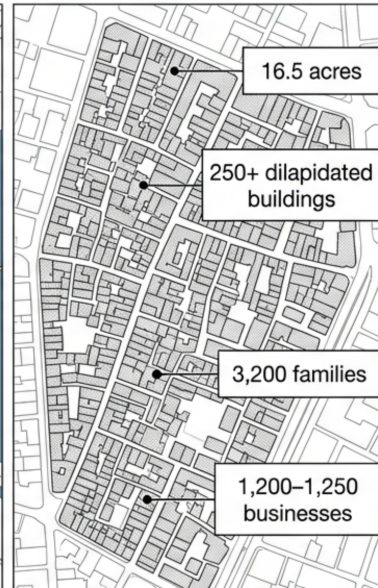
Selective Formalisation and Everyday Displacement in the Bhendi Bazaar Redevelopment Project

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A compact case to examine how redevelopment makes informal urban life governable, marketable and spatially legible.



Dense residential, commercial, and religious fabric

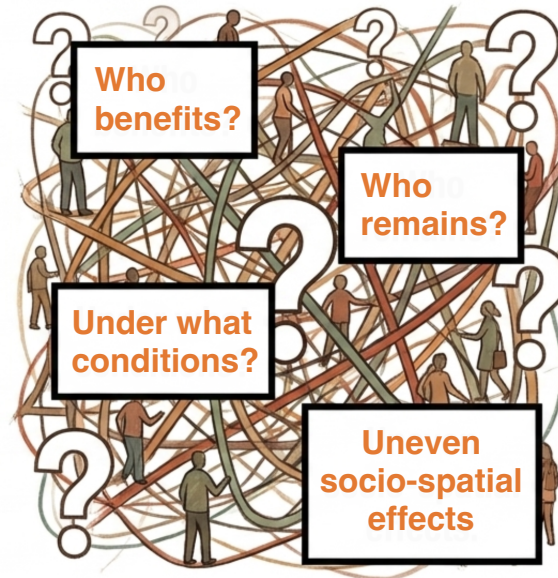
Bhendi Bazaar is not a peripheral resettlement site or a conventional industrial zone. It is a dense inner-city neighbourhood where housing, commerce, religion, and street life historically overlap. Its compact scale—16.5 acres affecting thousands of lives—makes it a rich case to examine how redevelopment reorganises urban informality.

Redevelopment may solve real material problems, but it also produces new spatial, social and economic conditions.

OFFICIAL RATIONALE

- Safety
- Rehabilitation
- Modernization
- Infrastructure improvement
- Competitiveness

CRITICAL QUESTION



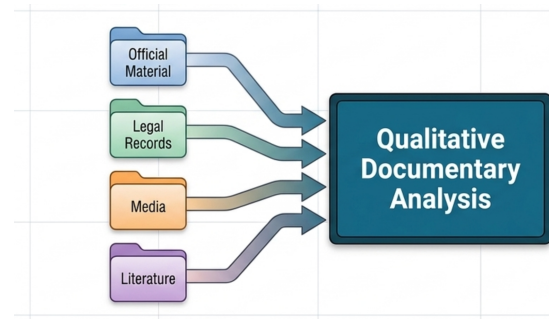
My point is not to deny the material problems that redevelopment addresses—many lived in overcrowded buildings with shared sanitation. The critical question is what happens when physical improvement is inextricably tied to land revalorisation, commercial reordering, and new spatial regulation.

An exploratory analysis of how redevelopment reorganises informality and displacement.

RESEARCH QUESTION

- How does redevelopment selectively formalise informal urban life while producing new forms of revalorisation and displacement?

METHODOLOGY



This is not a final impact assessment or an ethnographic account. It is an exploratory case study that identifies the mechanisms through which redevelopment, informality and displacement intersect.

A dense inner-city fabric where housing, commerce, religion and street life were closely interwoven.

Aerial view of the 16.5-acre area selected for redevelopment in Bhendi Bazaar



Bhendi Bazaar was not simply a residential area. It was a mixed-use urban fabric of chawls, cessed buildings, narrow lanes, street-level shops, workshops, food markets and mosques. Its density generated serious material problems, but also sustained everyday networks of proximity, livelihood and community life.

The Bhendi Bazaar Redevelopment Project combines community-led upliftment, state-enabled cluster redevelopment and market-financed urban revalorisation.

community-led upliftment

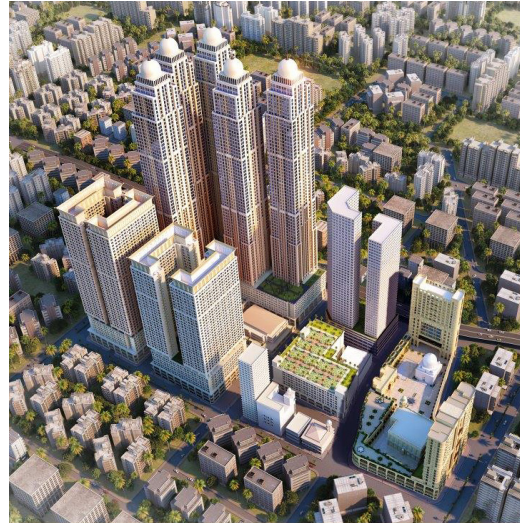
Led by a Bohra charitable trust and framed as a project of social and community improvement.

state-enabled cluster redevelopment

Made possible through DCR 33(9), planning approvals and coordination with public authorities.

market-financed urban revalorisation

Sustained through free-sale components, cross-subsidy and the unlocking of land value.



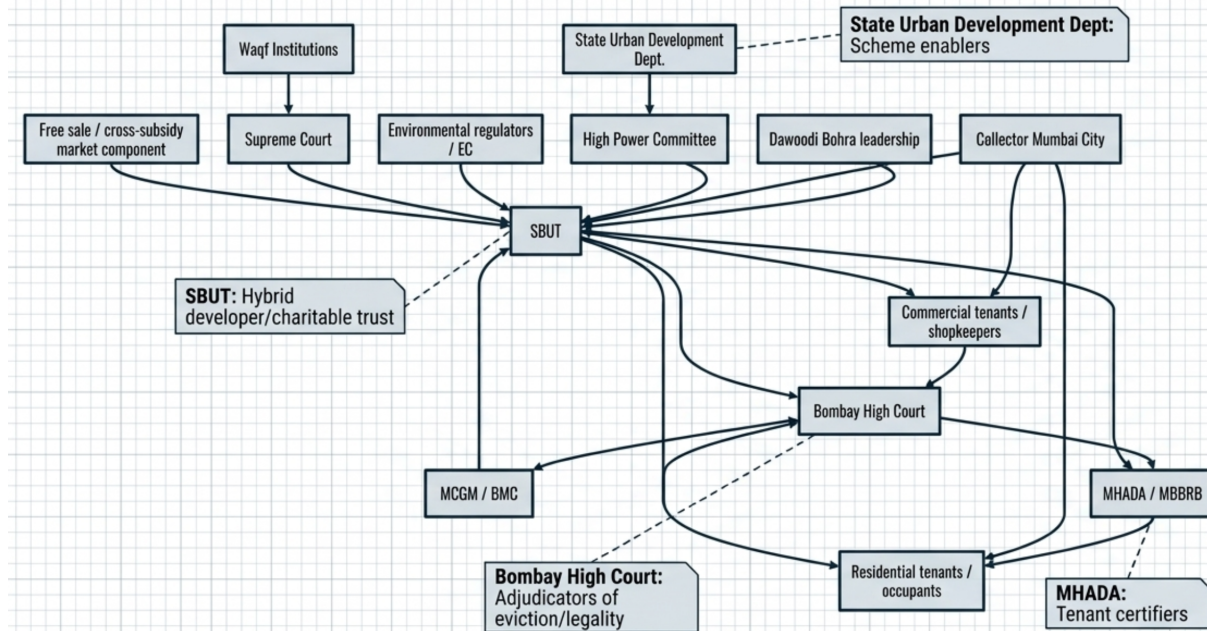
The Saifee Burhani Upliftment Trust (SBUT) was established in 2009 by Syedna Mohamuddin, the 52nd Da'i al-Mutlaq and then spiritual leader of the Dawoodi Bohra community. After his death in 2014, the project continued under the guidance of his son and successor, Syedna Mufaddal Saifuddin, the 53rd Da'i al-Mutlaq.

SBUT presents the project as holistic upliftment: safer housing, ownership, wider roads, modern infrastructure, open spaces and commercial renewal. Analytically, however, the project is also **a large-scale mechanism of land revalorisation**, spatial regulation and formalisation of everyday urban life.

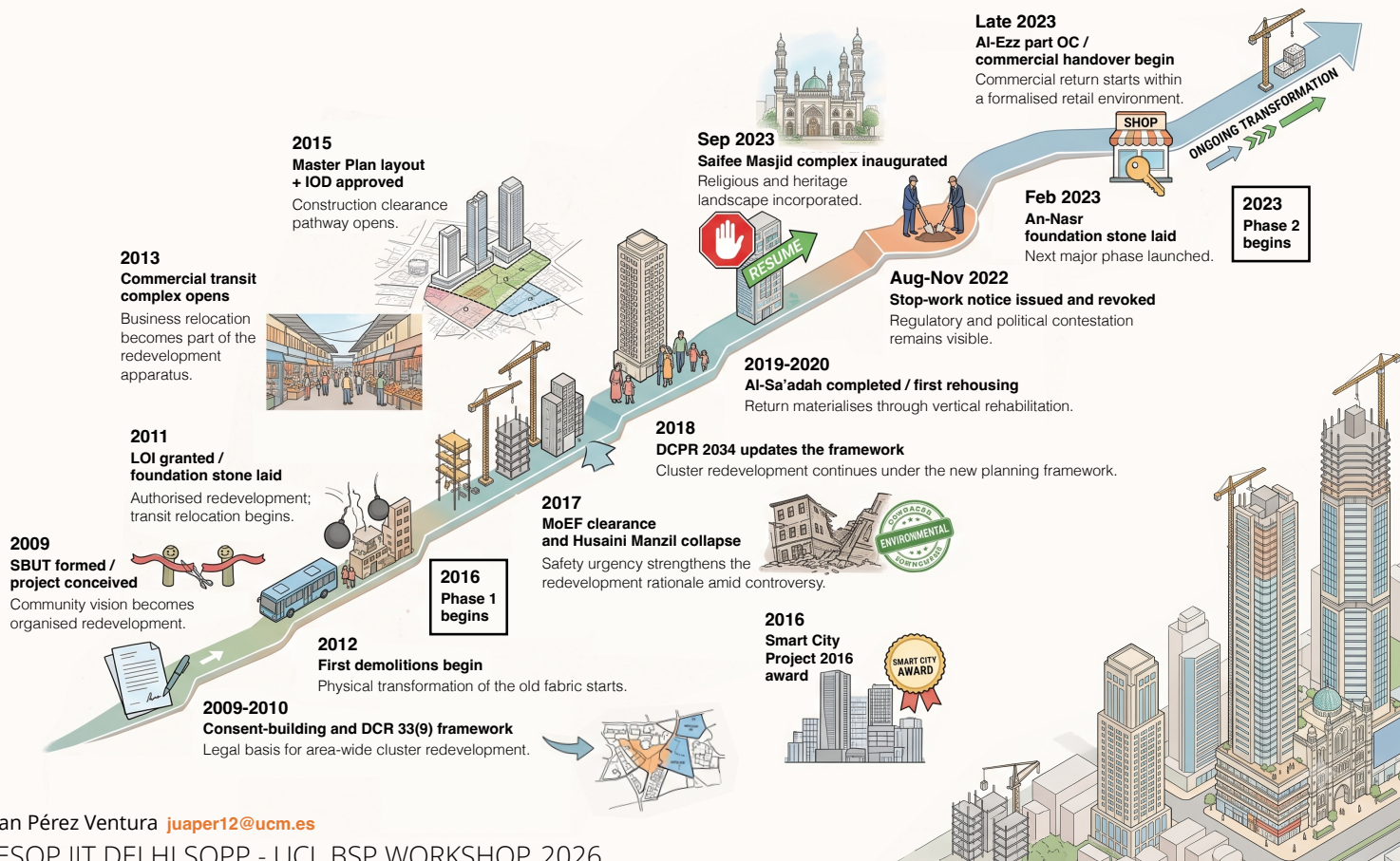


SAIFEE BURHANI
Upliftment Trust

Bhendi Bazaar operates through a hybrid redevelopment apparatus: community authority, state regulation, legal certification, judicial stabilisation and redevelopment finance.



Consent and welfare are backed by statutory and judicial mechanisms. Courts have helped stabilise the interaction between DCR 33(9), HPC approval, MHADA/MBRRB powers and Section 95A procedures. This legal framework allows redevelopment to proceed once eligibility, consent, transit accommodation and redevelopment permissions are deemed satisfied.



05 The redevelopment apparatus



Formal return may coexist
with transformed conditions of staying.

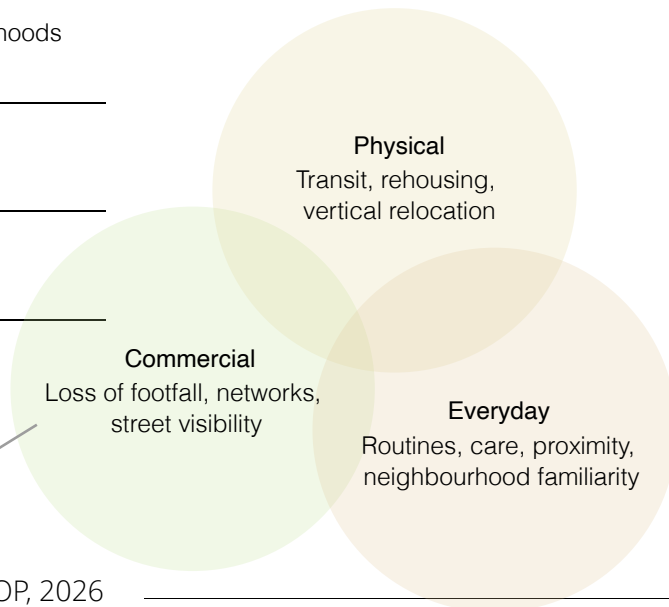
Formal inclusion	Transformed condition
Residents are rehoused	Housing becomes vertical and regulated
Traders are relocated	Street-based livelihoods are reorganised
Heritage is preserved	Authenticity is curated
Community remains	Everyday relations are restructured

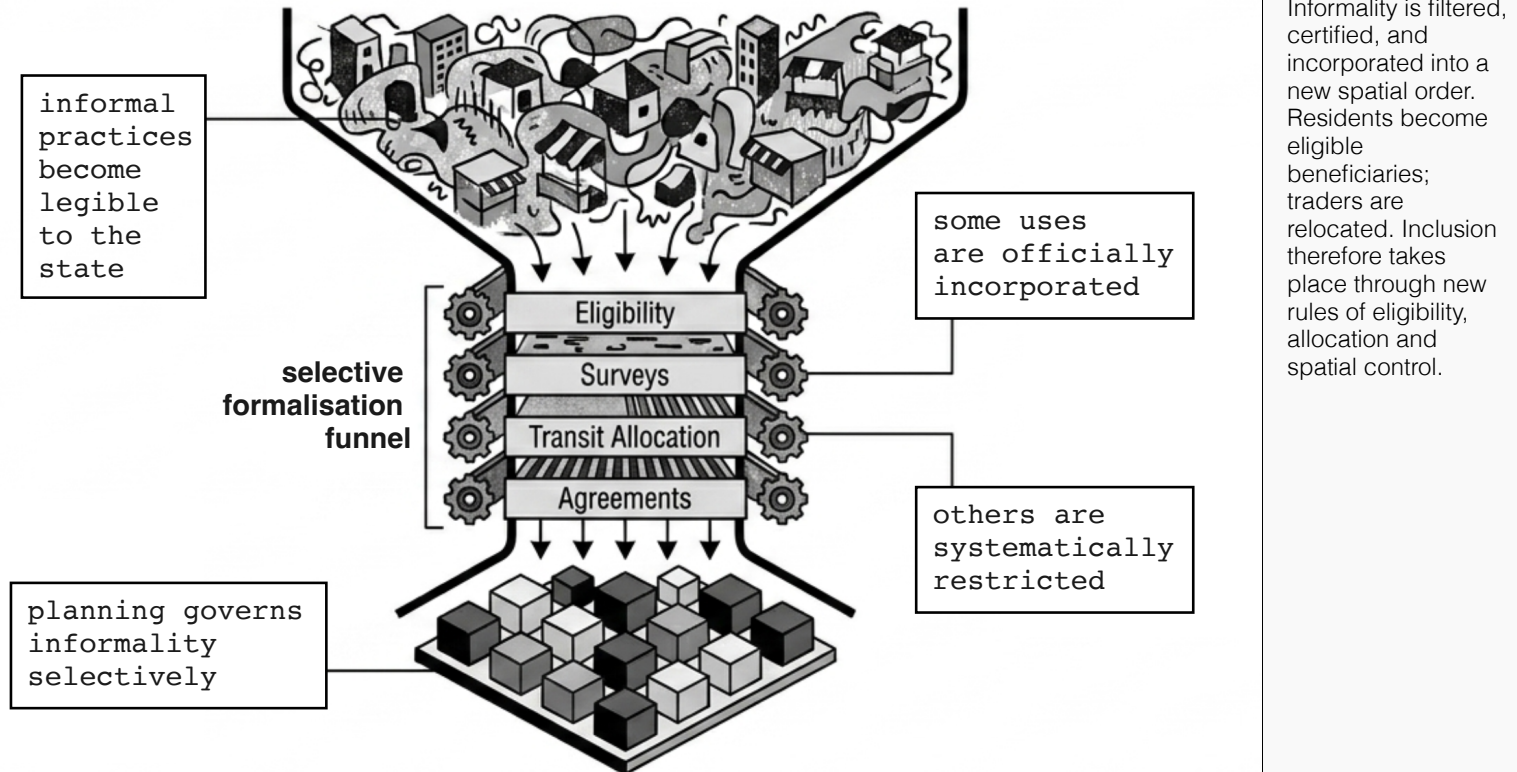
**The right $\neq$ the right
to return to stay**

*residents may formally return.
businesses may be relocated.
heritage may be preserved.
but the everyday conditions of staying
are transformed.*

Bhendi Bazaar cannot be understood simply as eviction, because return is formally promised. But it cannot be read simply as benevolent rehabilitation either. The key question is not only whether residents and traders return, but under what conditions, and to what kind of neighbourhood, they return.

*Three registers
of displacement*







BEFORE: chawls

- Small, over-crowded units
- Shared, common toilets
- Dense proximity
- Street-connected living
- Street-based social life



AFTER: high-rise towers

- Self-contained 1BHK units
- Minimum 350 sq ft homes
- Private bathrooms / services
- Formal ownership
- Lifts / vertical circulation
- Managed common spaces



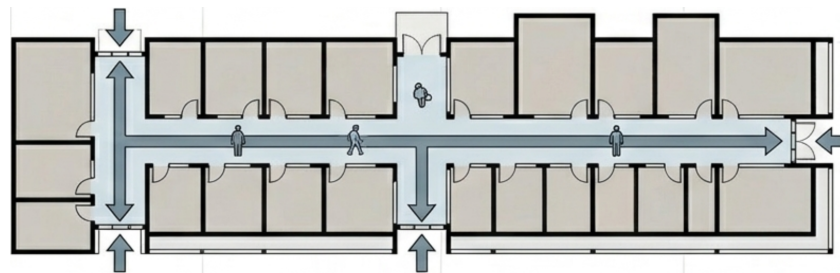
Vertical rehousing addresses severe material deficits, but chawls and cessed buildings also sustained dense socio-spatial relations of care, credit and sociability. Towers improve housing standards, but they reorganise the relationship between home, street and market.

Old bazaar ecology



- street visibility
- high unstructured footfall
- flexible storage
- proximity-based supplier networks

Planned retail environment



- commercial transit
- assigned units
- facility management
- regulated circulation rules

Bhendi Bazaar is a functioning ecology of small-scale informal labour. Traders may remain formally included when moved into transit retail spaces or planned retail environments, but the spatial conditions of livelihood are transformed: street visibility, footfall, storage practices and proximity-based networks are fundamentally altered.

The bazaar is not simply preserved; it is redesigned as a legible and marketable urban experience. Its density, religious identity and everyday atmosphere are selectively translated into heritage aesthetics, planned retail and symbolic value.

■ the lived bazaar



- Street-level commerce
- Dense pedestrian life
- Informal visibility
- Food, religion and everyday routines

■ the designed bazaar



- Curated heritage aesthetic
- Planned commercial environment
- Managed circulation
- Marketable community identity

The old bazaar is not only framed as disorder or decay; its religious identity, density and commercial atmosphere are also selectively mobilised as “heritage”. However, this heritage is not preserved as an open-ended urban ecology, but redesigned as a legible and marketable representation of bazaar life.

Bhendi Bazaar meets the three core dimensions of gentrification, though not through a classic displacement pathway.



The case cannot be reduced to simple eviction, but it also cannot be read as neutral rehabilitation. Economic revalorisation, socio-residential restructuring and functional-symbolic reconfiguration are all present, although mediated by promises of return and community upliftment.

The case points beyond classical gentrification: informality is not erased, but incorporated into a new regime of urban value.

Informal gentrification is not the replacement of informality by formality. It is the selective incorporation of informal urban life into a new regime of urban value. In Bhendi Bazaar, inclusion itself becomes a mechanism of transformation.

These **four mechanisms** show how informality is incorporated into urban revalorisation rather than simply being erased.



Selective formalisation

makes informality legible, certifiable and governable



Housing transformation

reorganises residential life through vertical, regulated rehousing



Commercial reordering

moves bazaar livelihoods into planned retail and managed circulation



Curated authenticity

translates bazaar atmosphere and community identity into symbolic value

The mechanisms connect the empirical case to the concept: informality is filtered, verticalised, commercially reorganised and symbolically mobilised. Residents, traders and heritage may remain formally included, while the everyday, commercial and symbolic conditions of permanence are transformed.

Does “informal gentrification” help capture something that existing concepts of redevelopment, displacement or urban renewal do not fully explain? ■

How can displacement be analysed when residents, traders and heritage are formally included, but the conditions of permanence are transformed? ■

What additional sources or methods would best capture the everyday effects of transit, vertical rehousing and commercial relocation? ■

Can Bhendi Bazaar help rethink gentrification in other Global South contexts where informality is not erased, but selectively formalised and revalorised? ■

This research is still in progress. Feedback is especially welcome on the conceptual scope of “informal gentrification”, the measurement of displacement beyond eviction, and the comparative relevance of Bhendi Bazaar for broader debates on urban restructuring in the Global South.

THANK YOU FOR YOUR ATTENTION