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Abstract
The public sector plays an important role in responding to the rights of citizens and evolving norms of social interest (Qu 2015). Qu argues that the nature of public enterprise is never final and there is a constant negotiation between the private and the public emergence of life and rights. One such space where the tension between the private and the public manifests itself is the public sector township or the residential colony in India. The sociality of hierarchy in public sector organizations manifest itself in the public sector township and may nurture everyday aspirations, angsts and divides. The officer lives in a bigger hone, in a bungalow, and the clerk lives in a smaller home, many times with a larger family. [*excerpt*]

Keywords
democracy, gossip, friendship, leisure

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Introduction

The public sector plays an important role in responding to the rights of citizens and evolving norms of social interest (Qu 2015). Qu argues that the nature of public enterprise is never final and there is a constant negotiation between the private and the public in the emergence of life and rights. One such space where the tension between the private and the public manifests itself is the public sector township or the residential colony in India. The sociality of hierarchy in public sector organisations manifests itself in the public sector township and may nurture everyday aspirations, angsts and divides. The officer lives in a bigger home, in a bungalow, and the clerk lives in a smaller home, many times with a larger family.

The officer's club in the public sector township is another space of divide, conveying a politics of access, exclusion and elitism. The elite of the public sector township consume culture and leisure in the officer's club marking it out as a space of entitlement in the midst of inequality. Do the public sector elite feel a sense of discomfort about consuming the entitlement while others reside in markers of material inequality? There are often interactions and mobilities in the way elites interact with the working class in the public sector township. In this study, I investigate how the public sector township in India, suffused with inequality, class divides and hierarchy emerges as a site where democratic hope and intellectual culture is kept alive.

Sood (2015) examines industrial townships in India which provision public goods, municipal facilities and infrastructure for communities through the lens of corporate urbanism. Sood argues that the provisioning of goods in these townships affects the access to public goods and the possibility of political transformation in the wider regional space. She contends that townships embody the politics of non-elected governmentality and it becomes difficult to enforce democratic accountability on township administrations. I argue that while public sector townships may embody bureaucratisation, non-elected norms of administration, inequality and hierarchy, they still offer the opportunity for democratic conversations. They embody the imagination of democratic hope in terms of opening up fluid futures where current inequalities can be reversed.

These fluid futures and democratic hope are different from the futurity that Lagerkvist (2010) articulates as the natural tradition of mobility. Lagerkvist contends that futurity is a form of mythology about place that is nurture by the media. The media creates a sense of a place as embodying an improved quality of life in the future where material imaginaries of progress will be enacted. Lagerkvist describes these media generated fantasies as the possession of the future where the promise of modernisation stitches together space as a dispenser of progress and quality. Instead, I argue that public sector townships in India for a long period of time were immersed in a melancholia that was aware of the limits of fantasy.

Public sector townships in India were immersed in the melancholia of democratisation as people living in these townships were aware of the inequalities they inhabited. Lee (2005) argues that public sector enterprises do not share an organic relationship with equality and their effect on equality is mediated by the quality of democratic relationships. When the quality of democratic processes is strong, and multiple institutions work towards improving the efficacy

of democracy, public sector enterprises are responsive towards the demands of vulnerable stakeholders. In the absence of strong democratic processes, public sector enterprises can merely cater to the interests of elites and contribute to the status quo or higher forms of inequality. In the context of public sector townships, I focus on how people react to the need for enacting democracy to sustain communitarian modes of life that are responsive to deliberation.

I argue that democratic conversations take the form of melancholia inside public sector townships where there is an awareness about existing inequalities. Melancholia describes a reflective act where subjects are able to think about themselves in critical ways and discover a sense of conscience urging them to rework their actions (Butler 1998). The sense of melancholia and conscience is embedded in the desires of subjects. I explore whether these desires in public sector townships relied on opportunities of inhabiting modern urban spaces to be initiated into intellectual cultures. Butler contends that we are dependent on discourses for the initiation and reproduction of our agency.

In this study, I rely on narratives of the children of public sector workers who have lived in a township to understand how their agencies have been shaped by their experiences of township. I inquire how interactions within the public sector township which draw on notions of community, solidarity, gossip and sociality enabled the children of public sector workers to grow as citizens. The sense of reflective time inside the public sector township enables people to think of a life outside the velocity of modernity. The slowness of time and the conviviality of gossip ensures that people are able to reflect on their collective self-formations. Melancholia may enable subjects to overcome the sense of self-mortification that makes them give consent to existing inequalities (Butler 1998).

Inside the public sector township, other forms of self-mortification that are important for the craft of citizenship may become important. These self-mortifications may necessitate cultures of discussion, accessing public libraries, forming opinions and debating them. At the same time, life in public sector townships in India in contemporary times is under strain. Two recent trends have initiated an assault against the ethics of the public sector township. The first is the colonisation of children's times by a schooling system that individualises them to a great extent and leaves very little time for reading. The second is a de-intellectualisation of mass media which again limits the ability of children to be initiated into intellectual cultures.

By engaging with memories of the children of public sector workers from a township in Bengaluru, I argue that intellectual cultures require public spaces for conversation and reflection. Without these intellectual cultures, the very possibility of democracy is threatened as citizens become deprived of collective vocabularies of critique, questioning and dissensus. Subjects engage with tropes of power as they negotiate the politics and functions of life (Butler 1998). The decline of intellectual cultures in public sector townships leads to tropes of consumerism and tropes of melancholia and debate may recede.

Township Cultures: Melancholia, Intellectual Cultures, Threats

The difference between a public sector township and other private forms of residence in India could be the different velocities of life. In private forms of residence, the sense of security about the employment relationship and other insecurities could lead to enhanced subjectivities of sovereignty. People could be anxious of engaging in a variety of actions to protect their futures. The sense of anticipating multiples genres of future could be immediate for several

people living in private enactments of home. The relative sense of security that the public sector advances has implications for social relations of equality (Hermann 2016).

Hermann (2016) contends that there are tradeoffs between efficiency and equality and that the recent discourse on public sector reforms has been ignoring considerations of equality. While the neoliberal turn has argued for privatisation of services and advocated public sector retrenchments as a measure for increasing efficiency, the consequences of these measures for equality have been ignored. I argue that decline of the public sector also leads to a decline of the ethos of citizenship where it becomes difficult to deliberate and reflect on larger processes of life. Butler (1998) argues that the normative expectation that subjects will respond to the authority of the state is a part of the imagination of citizenship. I argue that such a response of citizen to the process of authority could be punctured by the temporality of melancholia.

Melancholia embodies processes of resisting normalities embedded in capitalist ideological frames such as happiness and satisfaction (Wilson 2008). In the midst of several anxieties and fears about inequality and a general sense of despair, melancholia offers reflective opportunities of immersion in the world around us. In the absence of collective deliberations for reversing inequality, melancholia offers the opportunity for escaping sovereignty based social formations (Butler 1998). The need to contest sovereignty is a pre-condition for inaugurating the political moment that can create the basis of recasting social relations. The public sector in India offered the possibility of melancholia in terms of relatively stable employment relationships offering a sense of collective solidarity.

The stability of employment relationship reversed the velocity of instantaneous contracts. Livelihood was not contingent on the need to align with sovereign forms of authority and accept inert forms of political existence. While immediate contestation of sovereign modes of life did not occur, the need to affiliate one's desires with destines ordained by sovereign authority was also not strong. Within the township itself, cultures of gossip implied that authority and hierarchy would not be normalised. Hallett et al. (2009) argue that the imagination of authority affects gossip as people are more indirect while gossiping about authority figures.

Hallett et al. (2009) define gossip as evaluative talk about figures who are not present in the immediate setting. Gossip is non-sanctioned talk and can raise important questions about the normality of everyday life and occurrences. Hallett suggests that the structure of gossip generally does not allow for challenges to negative evaluations and these evaluations keep proliferating over a period of time. Gossip as a part of public sector melancholia keeps the ability to critique and disassociate oneself from power structures alive. It enables the evolution of an intellectual culture of critiquing power structures and holding them accountable for effective democratic functionality.

Butler (1998) describes how power operates as a condition of abusing political vulnerabilities that may be inherent in our lives. While subjects may give consent to their subordination, the public sector township offers the possibility of a melancholia where this consent can be subjected to a slow gaze of time. The slow gaze of time ensures that there are opportunities to consider several aspects to reality even while acknowledging their dominance. The ability to critique and see through the nature of dominance is an important part of the melancholic gaze that turns towards power. The melancholic gaze ensures that the crucial velocity of power remains an incomplete project.

There are changes which are occurring in contemporary life which may threaten the melancholic disengagement of public sector townships from the operation of power. The changes that are taking place in the schooling system are affecting the ways in which time moves. The ability of households to flow into each other's times is being severely constrained by the human capital imagination of the schooling system (Kimball 2011). The child's time is no longer being looked upon as a cultural space that needs to be respected and cherished. Instead, the child's time is being looked upon as an investment that requires returns.

Campbell-Barr and Nygard (2014) contend that the human capital imagination constructs the child in extremely narrow terms. The human capital imagination is also linked to the crumbling of the stability of the family and employment contracts. When the child's time becomes a resource that will yield returns in the future, the resulting privatisation of time instrumentalises interactions. While human capital imaginations have always been present in public sector townships, in recent times, they have intensified with a decline in broader cultures of reading. In India, the school itself has been replaced by coaching classes as primary centres of learning.

The velocity of coaching classes is that of a constant wave of exams (Sancho 2017). The child is constantly preparing for exams and the gaze of evaluation draws the child into a robotic field of existence. It becomes necessary for parents and families to adjust to this constant velocity of exams to support the child in her endeavours. Many coaching classes discourage children from cultivating wider reading habits as they feel that these readings are an unproductive use of time. As education privileges engineering, medical and management turns, the orientation towards liberal arts, literature and politics is in decline.

Lytle (2016) contends that school is a space that prepares children for participating in the workforce. Since work has become an intensive extraction of labour, children need to be prepared for exerting such labour. When they are unable to exert themselves, they become inefficient workers. Such an imagination of a child's time ensures that the child is only being trained to become a worker, and not a citizen. The privatisation of a child's time leads to the erosion of the craft of the citizen whose melancholic gaze towards the state and the market contain important imperatives for democratisation and justice.

The public sector township offered an opportunity for accessing public libraries connected with public sector organisations (Das 2015). While these libraries might have been constructed for the leisure of the officer-class, the working class also had access to these libraries. Children from the working class could be initiated into broader cultures of reading and inhabit multiple worlds of imagination, society and politics. With the change in the way schools are structured and the psychosis of entrance exams becoming very important, these broader cultures of reading have declined. Broader cultures of reading might not become associated with identities of privilege.

Franzak (2006) argues that marginalised adolescent readers are products not only of their individualised abilities to read, but also of theoretical and policy concerns. These concerns shape the way adolescent readers are constructed. If readers are constructed in individualised ways, and the politics connecting the readers is only the neoliberal imagination of time, it is difficult to situate imaginations of broader cultural immersions. People from marginalised backgrounds will be forced to focus on texts which help them do well in examinations. They cannot afford to read anything else as the premise of class mobility is based on how well they do in exams.

Only those with privilege can afford to read as their economic conditions are not as insecure as marginalised subjects (Nenga 2011). The contractualisation of the workforce and neoliberal policies have ensured a general decline of the public sector township in India. The economic conditions of precarity have increased significantly with fewer permanent workers being recruited than before. The prestige and the lustre of the public sector township itself has declined in contrast to other urban spaces. Even those with privilege may not have access to liberating literatures which can enhance their sense of social responsibility in contemporary times.

The role of the news media has dramatically changed in contemporary times in India. Till the 1990s, news media was structured in terms of television news offered by Doordarshan and All India Radio, who were official state broadcasters (Rao 1999). The state broadcasters hardly offered any news which was critical and liberating in nature. However, the gaze of melancholia suffused official news as people were not actively seduced by the images which were offered by state broadcasters. They melancholically imagined what was being concealed and were never fully drawn into the partisan form of news coverage shown on television.

The official broadcasters also offered a variety of cultural programs that were more progressive in nature (Chakrabarty and Sengupta 2004). In consonance with the melancholia of public imagination, they offered slow narratives that showed social inequalities, aspirations and comic tropes of people. In the 1990s, after liberalisation, the nature of Indian media changed dramatically. Private news channels transformed news into a form of entertainment and titillation. The quality of television programming declined considerably as the melancholic gaze towards society was replaced by the velocity of reality shows, shallow soap operas and regressive formulations of family and gender. The changing nature of the media also altered the nature of conversations in the public sector township.

Chadha (2017) notes that the Indian news media is increasingly controlled by a small set of politicians and industrialists. This has significant challenges for the quality of journalism as the immersion of journalistic output in forms of propaganda has become profound. The ability of people to extricate themselves from propaganda has become limited as the need to identity with majoritarian cultures has become stronger. This has strong implications for intellectual crafts emerging from public sector townships. The ability of the subject in the public sector township to draw from cultures of gossip, initiation into broader cultures of reading and discussion has become limited.

The privatisation of time and the changing nature of the media has meant that public sector townships may no longer be conducive spaces for generating the craft of citizenship. Butler (1998) contends that for our survival, we are drawn into forms of attachment over which we have little initial choice. Over a period of time, we begin to dissociate ourselves from these attachments and dependencies and question the roles of different actors. The public sector township offered these opportunities for disassociating from the dominant ethos of family, religion, caste and the state. People could emerge as citizens who could question the dominant norms of life and attempt to re-craft civic polities that were more fully anchored around questions of justice.

Over a period of time, this capacity of subjects to dissociate themselves from their attachments has deteriorated significantly. They are entangled in too many attachments as the increasing precarity structured by the political economy elongates their dependencies (De Peuter 2011).

At the same time, the velocity of life leaves very little time for reflection and melancholia. Melancholia is being displaced by an everyday sense of crisis. The family is in crisis, jobs are in crisis and the sense of life itself is in crisis.

Methods

In order to understand how the public sector township informs the intellectual craft of the citizen, I rely on accessing narratives of people who lived as children in these townships. Later, they crafted their own careers and while some of them found jobs in public sector enterprises, others moved to jobs in the private sector. I rely on their memories to construct accounts of what the sociality of life in the public sector township was. Poulos (2016) argues that memories have a lyrical vagueness about them which helps people remember important events in emotionally significant ways. I relied on memories to understand how the atmosphere of living in the public sector township shaped the lives of people.

I engaged in unstructured conversations with twenty two respondents who had lived in a public sector township in Bengaluru. The public sector township belongs to an Indian public sector unit that plays a strategic role for the defence sector. I knew several people in this township as I had friends and had been deeply connected to them. I had followed what had happened to their lives over a period of time. I gained access to them through a strategy of opening up shared memories of life in the township and explaining to them the objectives of my study.

Pettica-Harris et al. (2016) argue that access is not merely an administrative hurdle after which the real process of research can begin. Instead, access is a process of establishing emotional connections that can reveal themselves in interesting ways over a period of time. While establishing access, I recalled several poignant and comic moments that we had experienced when I used to visit the public sector township many years ago. These emotional connections helped us to recover several implicit aspects of life in the township which we had never openly discussed earlier. The township had grown with us, and we had never fully grown out of the township.

I explained the objectives of the study to all my informants and promised them confidentiality. I have anonymised their identities in this study. Sixteen of my participants were men and six of them were women. All participants were above forty years of age and none of them lived in the township in which they had grown as children and young adults. All participants were formally employed and married. While I had kept in touch with some of them by attending various events in their lives such as marriage or birthdays of children, I had lost touch with several of them.

I established contact with people whom I was not in touch through mutual references. Once I established contact with them, I opened up a range of informal conversations with them about schooling, reading, gossip, career, work, media and society. I asked them to recollect the role that school had played in their lives. I also reflected on the nature of gossip that they had participated in and experienced while living in the township. Our conversations also focused on the changing nature of school, media, employment contracts and the role of the public sector in Indian society.

Thirteen participants were working with the government or the public sector. While they were living in other public sector townships in Bengaluru, they provided important insights about the changing nature of life in the public sector township. They indicated how the school life of

their children was different from their own school lives. They also provided insights about interactions between neighbours and the emerging sociality of the public sector. Our unstructured conversations were immersed in an atmosphere of nostalgia and the possible loss of a way of life.

van Enk (2009) points out that conversational interviews are filled with the presence of the researcher and it is important to understand how shared forms of subjectivity inform the research process. My own subjectivity as a person who believes in worker's rights and the shape that my work has taken over the years influenced our conversations. My informants were aware of my academic work and understood my output to some extent. I did not record the conversations I was having with my informants. I have not produced the conversations I had with them verbatim but have taken care to reproduce the spirit and content of those conversations.

In order to be sure about the contents of the conversation, I showed the field notes and quotes to participants. I made corrections wherever participants felt that I had missed out some nuances of what they had said. I wrote field notes immediately after the conversation on the same day. I had at least two to three conversations with each of my participants as one conversation was usually not enough to discuss the range of issues we were discussing. Each of the conversations lasted for more than an hour.

I do not believe we can access complete truths about phenomena and feel that phenomena comprise a variety of ruptures, breaks and surprises. In this study, I am providing a partial account of how the public sector township has been experienced through the narratives of my participants. These partial accounts are immersed in the politics of making the state and markets accountable to claims of justice and the need for critiquing neoliberal velocities of life. I analysed my interviews by writing extensive memos to understand how the politics and culture of public sector townships was remembered. The aim of memos was to reflect on the imaginations and subjectivities that were infused in the narratives of my participants.

Thomas (2006) suggests that the process of inductive analysis entails a dialogical engagement with the data to understand implicit insights that are present in the data. Through my memos, I explored various memories that participants cherished and what they felt as the erosion of the culture of the township which sustained an intellectual craft of citizenship. I focused on understanding how the velocities of experiences were related to practices of reaching out to the community. The instrumental nature of experiences could be linked to erosion of the sense of community and the privatisation of life. I wanted to explore how the private was beginning to invade a greater part of social life even as the imagination of the public began to recede.

Findings: Narratives of Community, Friendship and Citizenship

The public sector township opportunity offered several opportunities to our participants to establish deep ties of friendship with each other. In contemporary times, social relations of friendship are on the decline as the velocity of life has increased significantly. Individualisation of life leads to instrumental modes of exchange where the ability to form melancholic friendships is significantly eroded. The township becomes a site where people keep returning even when their parents have retired. Their memories of the township keep drawing them back as they are able to renew warm engagements with people whom they knew deeply.

Friendship, Leisure, Melancholia

The craft of citizenship is contingent on the ability to spend long periods of time with each other without anxieties of drawing instrumental returns. When people spend long periods of time with each other, they discover melancholia as a form of life. Shared melancholias enable people to understand time as the craft of establishing deep forms of bonds with each other. Time is not understood as a linear advance from one milestone to another. Instead, time is understood as the sustenance of a sense of community where people with diverse identities and experiences feel that they have space to express themselves.

Mohammed, a 32 year old man, who used to live in the township earlier, said,

> I used to live in the township earlier. My school was in the township itself. I did not have to travel long to reach school. There was a lot of pressure in school. There used to be a lot of homework. But I used to look forward to the end of school.

> All of my friends used to live in the township. We used to go to the same school. We enjoyed a great deal playing after school was over. Our bonds became deeper. After my father retired, I moved out of the township. Even now, I frequently go to the township.

> I get together with all my friends and we play cricket in the township. It is a huge amount of relief from the stress that I face in corporate life.

Playing cricket with friends becomes a part of melancholia where there are no instrumental outcomes in sight. It is a renewal of the craft of community and leisure. It provides an imagination of friendship as the ability to spend long periods of time together discussing a variety of issues. Cricket is a form of renewal of the sense of community where meaning making processes are premised on togetherness. Cherishing togetherness is an important part of the craft of citizenship as it sublimates other differences emerging from identity based realities.

While cricket appears to be a male centred imagination of bonding and leisure, the lack of instrumentality and the absence of any utilitarian returns embeds cricket within a spirit of melancholia. The co-existence of living space and school initiates children into a sense of camaraderie where they can engage in a lot of small talk about school, home and society. Importantly, the times of these children are not privatised as they spend a lot of time playing with each other. They are able to discover a public sense of time where they are immersed in collective times with other people. They yearn for this sense of collective time as they keep coming back to the township to renew their memories of bonding and leisure.

Rajni, a 48 year old woman, spoke about the sense of community,

> I have been fortunate to live in the township community surrounded by good friends and neighbours since my childhood. For sure, living in a community is extremely fascinating! Loving smiles in the morning, sharing niceties, bumping into close friends at the slightest pretext - all these have been my joys since the past 25-30 years.

Rajni describes how the sense of community outlines an experience of being fortunate. She is grateful for the friends and neighbours she has been able to find in the township. Her sense of community is the temporality of bumping into her friends repeatedly. Spaces and barriers between people have not increased and they do not see conversations with each other as intrusions. The imagination of immersion in times of community constructs interactions as accidental moments of pleasure and joy.

When there are several moments of joy and pleasure in engaging with others, then the sense of anxieties becoming privatised becomes minimal. People can fall on each other for solidarity and care, and they do not feel alone in engaging with any struggles they may come up with. The ability to relate to each other at the level of community and friendship emerges from a shared melancholia about life, work and society. While the sense of community can also be created in other private townships, many people caught in the web of private employment are immersed in the velocity of constantly emerging actions. The space to step back and reflect on the cultural and political consequences of their actions may be fairly limited.

Madhavi, a 46 year old woman described how the sense of secularism was important in building the craft of community,

> All festivals used to be celebrated with gaiety and pomp in our community. I still remember and cherish the tasty sweets that were sent to us across by our neighbours during festivals like Pongal, Diwali, Ugadi etc. and when it was Christmas, it was our turn to spread the message of joy and distribute sweets.
>
> In times of medical emergencies, my neighbours were ever so ready to lend us a helping hand in all possible ways. What more, even cooking gas cylinders used to be exchanged when someone was in need of it.
>
> I grew up as a child in a community and later, I turned out to be an employee in the same organisation. At that time, my colleagues were also living beside me. Common topics like politics, sports, implementation of pay commissions, official rules used to be the talk of the Community. Such discussions were very beneficial in my career life too.
>
> To sum up, community life has always been fascinating and if given a chance, I would always opt to live in a community all my life than living in nuclear and isolated groups.

Madhavi contrasts life in the township community with the isolation of living in contemporary society, where people are broken up into nuclear homes. Life in nuclear homes leads to sentiments of maximising private notions of wealth where people are unable to understand shared concerns. In several urban homes, people are not even aware of their neighbours and there is very little scope for understanding each other's concerns. While public sector enterprises are also increasingly drawn into webs of profit, the relatively stronger form of job security ensures that concerns of privatisation of life are not primary. Madhavi indicates the joy of growing up as a child in the township community and later returning to it as a resident and outlines the easy conversations that take place in the community.

Madhavi outlines that growing up in the township affords opportunities for understanding the secular craft of citizenship as all festivals are celebrated in the township. Indeed, festivals may be celebrated in urban homes outside the township as well. Further, friendships may also be possible in homes outside the township. Yet, there are few collective conversations that are likely to take place about work, politics and society outside townships. The lack of intimacy about work limits conversations about the interests and aspirations of actors, and inhibits expansive forms of gossip from occurring.

Exclusions, Tensions, Aspirations

Public sector townships also comprise realities of hierarchy and exclusion. What differentiates the hierarchies within public sector townships is the sense of slow gaze of melancholia that these hierarchies are subject to. While these hierarchies are resented, the gaze of melancholia implies that the behaviours of different actors are remembered. For children growing up in the township, the memories of hierarchy and exclusion sit together with their memories of gossip.

Gossip turns exclusions into both aspirations and tensions as actors may imbibe the need to demonstrate mobility to overcome the exclusions they have experienced.

Sudarshan, a 41 year old man, described the nature of gossip that prevailed in the township,

> Everybody knows who is corrupt in the township. People immediately come to know about the pettiness of others. There is a senior scientist who packs his dinner from the canteen and does not pay anything. Using research grants, he has purchased expensive mobile phones. This person also makes use of his office staff to do his personal work. Whenever any relatives come to visit him, he asks his staff to coordinate their visit and take them around the city. Once people began gossiping, some of his staff also mustered the courage to complain against him. This put some sort of an end to his misuse and corruption.

Sudarshan outlines how gossip helps in building courage among people and builds resilience among them for standing up for their rights. The fact that the gossip occurs in the space of the community constructs reputations as an artefact of the township community. Gossip is now not merely localised in the bureaucratic and hierarchical space of the public sector organisation, but enters the space of the community. Workers and their families are able to discuss their opinions about powerful figures more freely in the space of the community. They are able to draw courage from the discursive resources of the community, and while they may not be able to completely reverse the abuse of power, they are able to counteract wrongdoing to some extent. While township communities may be able to use gossip to censure the powerful, they may still be unable to undo class based inequalities in the township.

Kumar, a 58 year old man, described the exclusions his daughter was facing while growing up in a township,

> I was staying in the township quarters in 1990s. I was very much impressed with the safety and security measures provided by the township. I was fortunate to live there with my family. I was residing in the apartment for scientists in the township. Although I was not a scientist, I was looking after the guest house, an important activity. Hence I was provided accommodation in the scientist apartment. One major concern of residing in the scientist apartment was that kids of scientists did not include my daughter Bharati while playing. Kids of scientists used to play only with other scientist's kids. So she used to feel very sad about it. Since I was working as an assistant in administration, scientists would have told their kids to play with only their community (scientist's) kids.

While growing up, Bharati saw how exclusions operate on the ground in the public sector township. Class inequalities and limiting the sense of community to those who are perceives as equal are a part of the experiences of growing up in the public sector. The gaze of melancholia implies that Bharati experiences these exclusions through a slow accumulation of memories. These exclusions outline a variety of experiences where other children may want to relate to Bharati, but may have been socialised by their parents into recognizing class. Bharati may develop aspirations to become a scientist and exhibit the same behaviours that other scientists are deploying.

While Bharati exhibiting the same kind of behaviours may result in a process of individualisation, this is not an immediate process of individualisation. It is a slow process of individualisation where multiple possibilities exist about how life is going to evolve. This is different from the process of individualisation induced by forms of insecurity and anxiety where people feel apprehensive about their immediate futures. Kumar and Bharati are immersed in thinking about distant futures, and are slowly using their experiences to decide about multiple futures that are possible. Bharati is not drawn into the immediate velocity of

human capital at school where the logic of investments and returns displaces other forms of existence.

Karuna, a 43 year old man, described how things were rapidly changing for children in contemporary times,

> My child today does not have the same amount of free time that I had. She takes her ipad to school and gets a lot of homework on her device. I wonder when she will be able to talk to her friends and discuss things with them. Then there are coaching classes and competitive exams. Really, there is no respite for children. Another disturbing trend is the media. All of us love our country. But the media has converted love for the nation into a business. In the name of love for the nation, they are spreading a lot of hatred. The media is no helping people to evolve as thinking citizens.

Karuna indicates how children's times are getting increasingly privatised as they hardly have time for engaging with each other as friends. Schools treat them as machines who are constantly being fed data and inputs. They want them to constantly work so that they succeed in the competitive world in which they find themselves. Competition transforms children into subjects who largely engage with each other as calculative subjects. They may not engage with each other as subjects who are deliberately calculating the returns they can obtain from each other.

Their inability to think beyond the next exam may prevent them from engaging in poetic and romantic conversations with each other. The human capital imagination of the school embeds them in an atmosphere where they have no time to read beyond texts which are only useful for exams. The turn of the media into an entertainment based endorsement of conservative forces again makes people think in narrow and instrumental terms. The media also endorses neoliberal politics and the call for the withdrawal of the public sector, structuring several anxieties for the future of the public sector. In the search for a place in competitive futures, children become subjects who are drawn into investment logics and lose the ability to evolve as citizens.

Discussion: Life in the Public Sector Township and the possibility of citizenship

Public policy is at the heart of initiating subjects into cultures of reading and literacy (Franzak 2006). We find that the public sector township offered a policy framework where people were able to engage with each other in deep and intimate ways. They were able to structure a sense of community with each other nurture memories which they cherished. They wanted to repeatedly come back to these memories and renew them to form bonds of community. In recent times, the engagements of school children have been transformed into high velocity imaginations of human capital which prevent them from forming bonds with each other.

People are able to develop their ability to reason based on what they read (Wolfe and Goldman 2005). The intellectual craft of citizenship is based on developing the capacity for public reason. When children are only able to read for the next examination and assert a sense of competitive existence with respect to each other, then their ability to evolve capacities for public reason may become limited. They may not be able to engage in creative dialogue with each other. Creative dialogue requires immersions in each other's lives to construct a sense of memory where various issues can be discussed in terms of inquiring into people's lives and their connections with social issues.

Kenny et al. (2011) argue that desire and politics are closely related to each other as our desires lead us to pursue different genres of politics. I find that in earlier times, it was possible for

children of public sector townships to pursue the politics of community and the desire of friendship. While school was still embedded in some sort of politics of mobility, it was not defined by the velocity of human capital where children become immersed in the logic of performing well in the next examination. Also, the nature of the media was in the form of an exploration of social events. People engaged with inequality with a sense of melancholia in order to indicate their disagreement with forms of exclusion that prevailed in the township.

I find that the melancholia of living in the public sector township provided a sense of ambivalence to subjects (Butler 1998). While subjects cherished their friendships with each other, they also felt uncomfortable about the presence of exclusion and hierarchy in the township. The ambivalence of subjects was in their negotiation of private and public imaginations in engaging with difficulties they were facing. In recent times, this ambivalence is giving way to a more profound fantasy. This is the fantasy of privatisation of existence and the pursuit of logics of returns on investments in human capital.

School constitutes the basis of equality and when children are able to engage with adults in a variety of settings, they are able to advance in their lives more effectively (Lytle 2016). I find that even when children aspired for mobility in the public sector township, it was within the premise of equality. It is true that they might have grown up and deployed a sense of hierarchy and exclusion in their lives later on. This was due to a broader lack of the politics and craft radical forms of radical democratic equality. In recent times, difficulties pertaining to the lack of a radical democratic imagination persist and are compounded by the ascendance of the politics of human capital.

The meaning making processes of spaces and the possibilities of their futures are embedded in a variety of fictions, realities and narratives of these spaces (Lagerkvist 2010). The fictions of the public sector township are related to romantic imaginations that people build in terms of their solidarity with each other. The cricket match and other forms of engagement are a part of fictional tropes where people construct a sense of community with each other. The cricket match draws energies of togetherness from the people and helps in renewing memories of childhood in the township. People cherish meeting each other and draw a great degree of joy from engaging with each other.

Hallett et al. (2009) indicate that gossip usually serves a negative purpose in terms of informal evaluations of people who are not present. I found that people approached gossip with a sense of melancholia as they need not activate tropes of bitterness. Instead, they looked at inequality with a sense of slow critique and reflection. They strengthened their relationships with each other and tried to craft a sense of community with each other. They escaped the inequality in the public sector township by normalising neither bitterness nor active consent for structures of exclusion.

Contemporary organisations focus on developing the ideal of self-managing employees who are supposed to pursue projects of organisational optimality (Case et al. 2011). The public sector township focused on mutual interdependencies where people could forge networks of solidarity with each other. The sense of interdependency ensured that people could relate to each other as having shared futures. The shared futures of people were premised on the efforts they exerted in reaching out to each other. The recent neoliberal turn threatens the camaraderie of the public sector as careers can become more vulnerable and insecure than they currently.

Conclusion

In this study, I focus on the meanings that the public sector township provided for a large number of employees in enabling the craft of citizenship. The craft of citizenship is premised on an intellectual melancholia where people embrace a slow form of life. They are willing to give each other support and do not yield to high velocity forms of individualisation. The relative lack of vulnerability provides people with the ability to engage in long discussions with each other. Cultures of gossip also ensure that the focus is on several events and these events are not simplified into simple forms of resentment.

I also outline how the changing nature of school education and the media offers new challenges for life in the public sector township. Schools are increasingly becoming human capital pathways where students have to focus on excelling in the next competitive exam. This individualises lives for students and their ability to form deep and passionate bonds becomes restricted. The changing nature of the media ensures that cultures of deep reflection are eroded. The media's contemporary role as a cheerleader of the state ensures that cultures of difference and disagreement are not allowed to prevail much.

The increasing insecurity for the public sector leads to the reproduction of the neoliberal turn where melancholia is being replaced by velocity. This can lead to the erosion of the intellectual craft of citizenship where the ability to preserve the secular fabric of the nation may be compromised. It becomes imperative to preserve the melancholia of the public sector township in order to preserve cultures of reflection and community. When people engage in deep bonds of friendship with each other, they become reflective beings. When people have little time to engage in conversations with each other, they are drawn into human capital velocities infused by highly individualised fantasies.

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