

## *"Just Doing Dashing"* in Uncertain Places

How do constructions of political persona intersect with urban uncertainty and precarity in and around Indian cities to produce political possibilities of what Shiv Sena women call dashing? Here I will reflect on how the linguistic use of the term dashing by Shiv Sena women translates into collective and personal subjectivities and political practice. Arguably, dashing and its political possibilities are important to gendered forms of political mediation and are key to the life of the state and to political mobilization on the margins of the city. Indeed, the codes through which the discourses of dashing and daring become shared technologies of political effectiveness and subjectivity for Shiv Sena women are also shaped by changes in the urban and urbanizing spaces and places around these women and their constituents.

### *"Just Doing Dashing": The Collective Politics of Action*

I spent a great deal of time with Shiv Sena women connected to a party branch office in the Mumbai suburb of Kandivili. Four of the most active, appointed party workers in this area were women in their early fifties who had lived in their conjugal homes in the area for several decades. All of them recalled a time when the Kandivili area had wide open spaces and was very quiet until the bustling city of Mumbai expanded northward and crept up on all of them. They lived in adjacent blocks of a lower middle-class housing development. Until the late 1990s this had been the only three-story building in the area. By the mid-2000s, they were surrounded on all sides by luxury "towers,"<sup>1</sup> a shopping mall, a multiplex movie theater, and a large supermarket. Together these women had spent much of the last decade lobbying against the private developers who they

claimed were encroaching on their land, taking away their water and electricity lines, and forcing the agricultural economies in the area out of business. One afternoon we were gathered at the home of one of these women who simply goes by the name of Prabhakar. This is the last name of her Maharashtrian<sup>2</sup> husband, though she herself is a practicing Roman Catholic from Goa. In private, Prabhakar told me that she prefers not to use her “Christian” name since she feels that this would unnecessarily separate her from her constituents who are mostly Hindu. So for everyone she was just “Prabhakar,” and throughout the time I spent with her, no one ever seemed to care.

All four women had been low-level, self-appointed party workers for over twenty-five years and all of them claimed that it was they who had first introduced women in the area to Shiv Sena’s work: “There was no party [Shiv Sena] influence here before we started working here.” All four also admitted to me in private that they felt that they deserved “official” posts in the party because of all the work that they had been doing. All were somewhat bitter about not being recognized enough by party leadership; but they all wanted to keep working for the party at the local level in the hope that the notoriety they have accumulated amongst constituents and other urban stakeholders, like real estate developers and low-level municipal officers, would ultimately lead to nominations for electoral tickets to Mumbai’s civic body. It was the monsoon season. During the monsoons getting to the local party branch office required women to jump over several ditches created by the rampant construction in the area; this, exacerbated by the wet slush created by the Mumbai monsoons, meant that the party office, at least for women, had been moved for the time being to Prabhakar’s one-room home. A group of women from the surrounding areas had brought a complaint about a particular builder’s malfeasance with regard to encroachments on their land. They had already filed a formal complaint with the elected official in their area from another political party, but admitted angrily that they had heard nothing for several months.

Prabhakar and her companions chided the women for not coming to them first. They proceeded to tell the women a story. The story went as follows with each of the women narrating a piece of it.

1: I’ll tell you a story about Shiv Sena’s ladies doing. Two taxi drivers got into a fight on the highway and caused a big traffic jam.

2: A Congress<sup>3</sup> party worker saw the *jhamela* [chaos] and came to see what had happened. He tried to talk to the angry drivers but could not make them see sense so he went away.

1: Then came along a *Rashtrawadi*<sup>4</sup> party worker. He also tried to talk to them but they only got more angry. Then came a Shiv Sainik, a *mahila* [woman].

3: All she did was hit both taxi drivers on their ears and they immediately moved out of the way and the traffic jam was solved before you could count one, two, three, four. In the Sena there is no talking, there is just doing. And Sena ladies mostly, are just doing and dashing.

Arguably, in this actionist context of "just doing and dashing" these Shiv Sena women see dashing as part of a collective political personality: it constitutes both the political party and the individual persona. But they also reflect something more significant, namely that "dashing" is very much part of their "possible lives" (Bruner 2004). These are lived and "made possible" by the broader presence of a political party that has since its founding rewarded and encouraged public disorder, performative aggression, and a local brokerage-style political agenda that connects people to the material and affective resources of urban life. Low-level women politicians like Prabhakar see themselves as vital to the making of these urban networks. They are also vital to the ways in which these shared narratives become ways for women in a political party, where they are structurally subordinated, to collectively reclaim a transgressive form of female comportment and behavior (Butler 1993; Harcourt 2009).

The use of the English term "dashing" is significant here. Throughout my research, I found that several of the performative and nonconformist aspects of self-description were expressed in English. I initially thought that the use of English was for my benefit, but I later realized that Shiv Sena women would use the same English words when talking to each other, as well as in speeches to their constituents. It is not unusual in India for vernaculars to be regularly inflected with English (Bhatt 2001; Jeffrey 2010). However, for Shiv Sena women, this language of dashing *acts* and performs significant emotive and political work. Arguably, for many who engage in public, violent politics, the vernacular is often incapable of describing political personas and political performances that are

seen as gender nonconformist. The use of non-vernacular communicative forms within the context of the “making” of vernacular social and political subjects and in guiding social action has been increasingly noted by scholarship on changing identities of class and gender in globalizing India (Jeffrey 2010). In the case Shiv Sena women the deliberate and performative use of English self-descriptors such as dashing for nonconformist and transgressive behavior is similarly socially and politically meaningful (Ahearn 2001; Bhatt 2001). It becomes part of a modern, gendered political discourse as much as it crafts new political selves for women through its very public ramifications.

The language of dashing and all of the practices that surround it is a vital communicative strategy through which women construct political personas as they carve out political spaces for themselves both in and outside the formal state. As we see from Prabhakar and her party colleagues, Shiv Sena women, through this performative language of dashing are very “present” within various emergent networks of influence, illicit, extra-legal, and brutally violent forms of political mobilization. This “presence” contests a lot of the emerging feminist literature on the “natural” femininities of non-Western women (for example, on home births and “return to nature” movements in North America) which reestablishes stereotypes about the apolitical and nonmaterialist engagement of Eastern women with their bodies and their communities (Canty 2004; Ruhl 2000; Teman 2003). The women here are deeply engaged with the material realities of their urbanizing environments, with the emotional and material demands of their constituents, and with the ways in which their very present bodies are important to their dashing and daring (Harcourt and Escobar 2005). Within the contexts of changing spaces and places around them and around their constituents, these are women who are aware of how to mobilize and constitute political networks and political relationships around urban degradation and change, and everyday frustrations that emerge in local environments.

### Speaking Political Persona in Being

Dashing means to do things without fear. Why should you be in fear of anyone? Dashing is to be unafraid. Daring means to do work without fear. And dashing means to show what is true, to fight untruth; but not just to fight, but to show the truth to the world. To show what is real in front of everyone. Daring means to work without fear.

Why should you be afraid? You need to tell the truth. I tell a lot of truth. I tell it in front of everyone, for everyone to see. In fact I am sometimes too truthful and the result can sometimes not be that good [laughs]. That is my problem, I tell the truth too much. I am too dashing and they do not like ladies to be like that.

—Vidusha, Shiv Sena party worker in Pune

Bakhtin reminds us that words and speaking are never neutral (Bakhtin 1981). "All words have the 'taste' of a profession, a genre, a tendency, a party, a particular work, a particular person, a generation, an age group, the day and hour. Each word tastes of the context and contexts in which it has lived its socially charged life" (Bakhtin 1981, 293). Dashing, often used with the word daring as speech and practice is so embedded in the political lives and political personas of Shiv Sena women that they have become in Bakhtin's terms inseparable as "context" from the people who use them in speaking. Both are widely used self-identifiers by Shiv Sena women even when speaking in the vernacular. The terms are so widely used now that they have become entirely part of the vernacular. I would argue here that, despite a very rich vernacular, women simply do not see the vernacular as an adequate source for referents that do the same performative work as "dashing and "daring." So terms like dashing and daring circulate as a very particular kind of language or, in Laura Ahearn's terms, function as "social action" (Ahearn 2001). Through this dialogical approach to agentive action and meaning Ahearn provides a valuable definition of agency as the "socio-culturally mediated capacity to act (Ahearn 2001, 112). This is a useful lens through which to examine Shiv Sena women's capacity to "act" both individually and collectively. Action and indeed collective agency are mediated through the dialogical meanings that "dashing" and "daring" conjure up and make available. These dialogical processes are particularly evocative tools of mobilization and of autonomous selves. Arguably this is because the fashioning of political agency produced through dashing is enacted in urban spaces that are marginal both to the center of formal politics and government as well as to the normative confines of respectability for Hindu women.

Dashing and daring arguably describe a broad spectrum of political action. Some used dashing and daring interchangeably, while others tried to distinguish between the terms, although only when explicitly asked to do so. As Satam in Mumbai said to me: "Dashing means that I am outside the house a lot; but it can also mean that I am brave in my home; it can

also mean that I am very dangerous, *tikhat* (spicy); See someone who is dashing is someone who is always 'doing.' Daring means someone who is brave; brave against the police, brave against lies. So dashing and daring means someone who is doing brave things all the time. Usually ladies are not doing these things all the time. But that is what *our* (Shiv Sena) ladies are doing. That's what makes Shiv Sena ladies different—they are doing brave things, they are dashing and daring.” To take Satam's suggestion a little further, I might add that while the “doing” is critical, the political subject is finally consolidated through the dialogical act of speaking and narrating the acts of dashing and daring. In J. L. Austin's terms, the utterance is not simply a speech act, it also signifies the “doing” of something (Austin 1975). In the case of Shiv Sena, dashing, both the performance of it and its narration, is doing both political and personal work; for most women, the performance of dashing becomes inseparable from the persona (Bruner 2004). As Jerome Bruner points out, narratives are in fact important forms of world-making, where “[n]arrative imitates life, life imitates narrative” (Bruner 2004, 292). Both the dialogical narrative exercise and the performance remain critical to the consolidation of political community, political campaigns, and local brokerage. They also remain critical in producing political agents. However, in a departure from other feminist literature on political agency that theorizes all feminist agency as exclusively oppositional or “resistant” (Abu-Lughod 1990) the possibilities for agency that “dashing” produces here are not always oppositional or resistant to male structures of power even if they often critique the latter. Instead, the women here move between opposition, co-option of male language, and strategies to produce inventive political networks that often exceed those of men in the party. In this sense political agency and subjectivity lie in the possibilities for action that dashing signifies.

### Dashing as Performance and as Narrative

The ways in which dashing is both enacted (performed) and then circulated (narrated) as a persona for women within the party is important to interrogate. The analytical paradigm that has come to be known as “performance” owes much of its intellectual debt to the “dramaturgical” approach that grew out of symbolic anthropology and the sociology of organizational communication (Goffman 1959). Using the metaphor of the dramatic performance that includes both “on-stage” and “off-stage” personas, Goffman explores the ways in which individuals in everyday

life present themselves and their activities to others and the ways in which individuals guide and control the impression others form of them (Goffman 1959, 1963). While Goffman's approach is self-professedly a theory of social interaction and social systems he also provokes an approach for the theorization of personality, social interaction, and society as they are constituted through performance. Therefore to *be* a kind of person is "not simply to possess the required attributes but to also sustain all those standards of conduct and appearance that one's grouping attaches thereto" (Goffman 1959, 75). The communicative and strategic work that dashing and daring do are vital expressions of a Goffmanesque "face" as much as they are of a Goffmanesque "working consensus" for women in Shiv Sena (Goffman 1959, 9–10). However, Goffman's approach to consensus assumes a unified public audience. For Shiv Sena women, performances of dashing are expressed across and to a wide range of publics. Therefore, what makes a dashing persona is often unstable. However, the body as the place "closest in" (Harcourt and Escobar 2005) is always the site through which these differential audiences are addressed. When it comes to the performative acts of gender, Judith Butler's notion of gender acts or gender performativity inverts many assumptions about gender performance (Butler 1990a; 1990b). For Butler, "Gender is not, cannot be pre-cultural" (Butler 1990a, 25–26). However, Butler's notion of performativity is most concerned with the individual, embodied gendered experience and the performative moment with far less attention paid to the collectively constituted categories of gender. There is a substantial collective dimension to the performances of gender and femininity in dashing. They are driven by individual women, but then they are collectively imagined, performed, and reproduced via narrative and narration.

Speaking specifically about life narratives, Bruner suggests that "One important way of characterizing a culture is by the narrative models it makes available for describing the course of a life. And the tool kit of any culture is replete not only with a stock of canonical life narratives (heroes, Marthas, tricksters, etc.), but with combinable formal constituents from which its members can construct their own life narratives: canonical stances and circumstances, as it were" (Bruner 2004, 294). The political party and the broader urban environment make dashing behavior a possibility, a hallmark for entry into the political arena for Shiv Sena women—though each of them implement that dashing in multiple, creative ways.

What is critical to the subject produced out of dashing and daring is the necessity for some form of audience, and it is in this recognition of the reality of audience and the production of face (Goffman 1959, 1981)

before this audience that both political subjectivity and personal agency are located. Shiv Sena women work very hard to cultivate a very particular kind of face, through both accoutrement and through behavior. I found, through the many conversations I had with women in the party, as well as with their husbands and families, that the discourses of both dashing and daring, while generally originating in a public, performative dimension deeply tied to party action, were also frames through which women looked at themselves and were looked at as somewhat unconventional in their everyday, domestic lives.

It is however important to recognize that while dashing is an embodied descriptor of unconventional behavior and an enabler of spatial transgression, it is also expressed in spatial sites of uncertainty and change. For many women dashing is therefore the affective register through which anger and discontent comes out of the body (the place “closest in”) and the body comes out of the house in order to take on multiple forms of dislocation and space/place based politics.

### Urban Uncertainty and the Politics of Urban Brokerage

In 2007, at a large outdoor meeting called the *gata-pramukh medava*, a meeting for the lowest level party workers in Mumbai, about four hundred *gata pramukhs* or neighborhood-level party organizers assembled to listen to speeches from some of the party’s top leaders. It was an election year for Mumbai’s civic body. The party had recently faced unsettling defections at the highest levels of the party. There had been rumblings that the party cadre were beginning to feel alienated from the top party leadership and a little at sea about how to keep expanding their political base. It was being reported that the base was turning to the new populist party, the *Maharashtra Navnirman Sena* (Maharashtra’s Revitalized Army; hereby, MNS) founded by Raj Thackeray, former Shiv Sainik and nephew of Bal Thackeray. Hardikar, a male Shiv Sainik who had been an appointed leader in the party for over ten years and well-respected by men and women alike, took the microphone. He forcefully urged the party cadre to work as hard as they could to build liaisons with people outside the poor settlements of the city. “Build support among people in ‘buildings’ and housing societies. Soon everyone will be in *pucca* (permanent) housing and then we will have to appeal to their needs. So start now.” In the context of widespread discussions about slum rehabilitation in Mumbai and the changes to the everyday needs of the populations who live there, this



proclamation by Hardikar is important. It suggested that sites of urban uncertainty and urban change are key to the ways in which grassroots political leaders emerge; and indeed these are the very sites that are also the sources of continued political innovation.

Therefore, within the context of urban spatial and demographic shifts it is important to look at Sena's politics from the locus of the urban, the spatial, and the regional rather than exclusively as Hindu nationalist. This is largely because the local, the urban, and the spatial are the primary registers through which Shiv Sainiks make sense of their lives. The liminality of the peri-urban spaces in and around Western Indian cities like Pune and Nashik and within more densely populated urban slums on the peripheries of Mumbai are both sites in which this book locates itself. It finds that these are the very sites at which democratic politics get negotiated and fought over most violently in India; and it is also at these sites that mediators and brokers of all kinds emerge through their affiliations with political parties. This is why mediators like Prabhakar and her Shiv Sena colleagues have emerged as important and notorious brokers here. Despite the fact that none of them had contested a formal election in Mumbai, these brokers start out to address pragmatic issues of livelihood and degradation; and in the process they are trying to gain entry into the "formal" political sphere through the lower levels of India's democratic system. The reasons for this are many. One of the most important is that the rapidly changing Indian economy unfailingly leaves a deep imprint on the landscape of cities and their peri-urban regions (Dupont 2007; Holston 2009). It also leaves an imprint on their politics.

Shiv Sena has been deeply embedded in the urban dislocations in the state of Maharashtra ever since its founding in 1966. It was founded against the backdrop of enormous dislocations waged by Bombay's deindustrialization and the decline of the city's textile industry. This led to deep and enduring structural changes in the city's economy (Katzenstein 1973, 1979). This rapid and painful deindustrialization had deep social and cultural consequences, particularly to livelihoods and to notions of existing community. It has been argued that during this time the claims of Bombay's Maharashtrian working classes to the civic life of the city were fast diminishing as were the sources of community that had been built around the working-class neighborhoods in the city (D'Monte 2005 [2002]; Menon and Adarkar 2004). As this social organization began to dismantle, Shiv Sena with its alternative visions of urban, Maharashtrian community, its active neighborhood presence, and its spectacular, performative displays of violence against entrenched interests managed to strike

a chord with many unemployed and disenfranchised workers (Heuze-Brigant 1999).

An interrogation of economic disjuncture in the urban economy has a new valence in the context of India's globalizing present. While the post-colonial Indian economy was a planned and protected economy, by the 1990s the Indian state formalized a policy commonly known as economic "liberalization." Broadly, liberalization instigated monetary and industrial reforms aimed at jumpstarting growth through attracting foreign investment and opening up consumer markets (Corbridge and Harriss 2000; Harriss-White 2003). Economic liberalization shifted the relationships between capital, labor, and the state (Chatterjee 2008; Varshney 1964). It has also changed the ways in which the state and other urban actors have reconfigured their relationships to the city and urbanizing space. Urbanizing regions of India are now managed and experienced through new economic formations and strategies. Notions of urban space, urban presence and indeed governance are increasingly defined by transnational visions (Mahadevia 2008) This has opened up a host of new arenas for a politics of locality and regionalism that seeks to reassign and often resist the rationalized conceptions of urban life that transnational visions are attempting to press. It has also opened up new forums for the politically ambitious in local, neglected communities to carve out spheres of influence for themselves (Weinstein 2014b).

The increasing import of the rationalization of urban space within a neoliberal global moment means that access to the infrastructures of urbanizing life: housing, livelihoods, healthcare, schools, hospitals, water, and legal redress all require new kinds of negotiations and mediators between people and their states. In James Holston's terms, urban peripheries are sites of both degradation and innovation (Holston 2009). These are the sites where self-styled brokers and urban caretakers emerge. These brokers have the capacity to build relationships of both fear and trust through often overlapping networks of support and organization across neighborhoods and communities (Johnson and Soeters 2008; Webb 2012). These networks and webs of social relationships in urban environments are critical in promoting the capacity of poor, marginalized, often lower-caste urban residents to gain access to various material and instrumental resources through urban, political entrepreneurs and fixers (Simone 2013). These fixers themselves become political forces to contend with because they are relatively more conversant with state practices, are deeply embedded in the everyday life of the community, are known and trusted by many, and behave both as the face of the state and as its adversary.

As urban scholars and historians have observed, the discourses of development, empowerment and urban governance make several assumptions about development and governance as ethical, moral projects (Halperin 1998; Hobsbawm 1959). These observations are remarkably prescient for politics in cities in the developing world more broadly. In fact, as urban scholars of the contemporary, global South point out, for the most part marginalized populations (the poor, women, lower castes), depend on ways of associating and moving that are often not conducive to the production of "moral" subjects or of citizens that are needed by states and supervisory bodies engaged in rational projects (Auyero 2007; Comaroff and Comaroff 2006; Simone 2004a, 2004b). Shiv Sena women are deeply embedded in these often irrational, non-liberal, violent ways of associating and moving within urban spaces that the formal state finds difficult to penetrate. While Blee and Creasap distinguish between right-wing "movements" and "parties" in the developed West, outside the West, in the case of Shiv Sena women, this distinction is not particularly relevant. This is because Shiv Sena is a political party that contests elections and is actually involved in governance even though it often functions and is structured as a movement (Gupta 1982). At the level of the party worker, despite the fact that many Shiv Sainiks participate in formal electoral and legislative politics, when elected to power, they see themselves more as maverick movement leaders and extra-legal brokers, rather than as legislators. The public and their constituents mostly see them this way too.

Indeed, Shiv Sena women manifest their physicality and presence as militant protestors, "social-workers," and negotiators, as counselors, adjudicators, and outlaws, as political campaigners and candidates and finally, though not of lesser importance, as local caretakers of changing neighborhoods. This presence is key to the cultivation of the everyday brokerage. And most of all, presence is an important sign of the ways in which the "political" in postcolonial democracies actually functions, where politics is viscerally experienced, and always within reach of the physical touch, rather than upheld as an abstract sphere governed by the rational politics of the law (Chatterjee 2011; Hansen and Stepputat 2001).

The "irrationality" of urban transformations profoundly influences the ways in which politics are expressed and opens up new possibilities for a host of new political actors and political practices. Arguably, this is because in-between states of urban growth and incorporation inevitably throw matters of everyday life into acute relief. Women are relatively "new" politicians and leaders so some have argued that they may be closer to the grassroots, to the ordinary citizen, to the everyday (Kudva

and Misra 2008). This view is admittedly essentializing. However, it does point to the realization both among scholars and among political parties in India that women's presence affects both the content and the quality of politics and the styles of political leadership that emerge outside the most obvious logics of the ballot box (Kudva and Misra 2008; Oskar-Lindgren, et al. 2009). In the case of Shiv Sena women here, brokerage and the transactive politics of matronage straddle both the everyday as well as electoral politics.

### Politics, Political Mobilization, and Materiality in Unstable Places

It has become impossible to ignore the reality that political mobilization and the political subject in urban India has become acutely concerned with the material, with urban things—in other words with materiality. Those who are able to embed themselves in this materiality through non-material claims on history, wisdom, knowledge, and experience emerge as the most effective of political leaders. Therefore, the spatial, the material infrastructure, material destruction, and material construction have become the most prominent elements of public discourse at all levels of urban life. Because this has become so much a part of public discourse it has allowed a multitude of actors to mobilize and make claims for themselves, for their political parties, and for their localities (Rao 2012; Sundaram 2012). It is through the negotiations over these claims that brokerage, patronage, and what this book calls matronage relationships emerge most often in contemporary India.

Given that public discourse in urbanizing India has been inflected in this manner, it is surprising that more attention has not been paid to the ways in which female foot-soldiers of political parties are implicated as mediators in this politics of change. More importantly, attention needs to be paid to this implication of women not as ideologues but as pragmatic political subjects and as dynamic political patrons and brokers. Spectacular representations of power generally focus on central leaders and (male) patrons. However, as women like Prabhakar illustrate, there are all kinds of mundane, routinized performances of governance and mediation that actually get things done. Therefore, what are at stake here are very different kinds of political logics. They are to be distinguished from those provided by political machines. This form of brokerage is far more unstable than that of political machines; and since it is built

on local networks of trust and wisdom it must be continuously "performed" and negotiated in order to retain its power. It is often performed aggressively and violently. These performances of aggressive personality (and often overt violence) must also be distinguished from "strategic violence." Violence and aggression are hallmarks of all right-wing movements and Shiv Sena is no exception. "Strategic violence" is targeted at enemy groups. Performative violence on the other hand serves the function of group cohesion. It binds a group's practitioners in a common identity. For example, in the United States this is seen when white-power skinheads enact bloody clashes with other skinheads and with each other (Blee 2002; Blee and Creasap 2010). Shiv Sena women's participation in brutal, anti-Muslim violence falls into the category of "strategic violence." However, their everyday consolidation of power in unstable urban spaces is characterized by "performative" violence and aggression. Here I am mostly concerned with the latter.

The reality is that women most often bear the brunt of urban degradation, class and caste anxieties, sexual vulnerability, and the accompanying burdens of policed mobility on the urban margins (Bell 1991). This is particularly true as villages expand their borders into nearby cities, and as agricultural economies are transformed. So my initial trepidation about venturing out of what I had thought to be appropriately "urban" in my study of "urban politics" was dangerously skirting what would have been an intellectual laziness. It is becoming increasingly necessary for urban anthropologists to pay close attention to the logics of what is being termed "peri-urban" and its interconnectedness with urban centers (Dupont 2007; Hannerz 1980; Menning 1999). In India the need for this attention is particularly amplified because as Veronique Dupont (Benei and Fuller 2000) points out, the urban peripheries of Indian cities are very specific sites with diverse and often conflicting stakes. These conflicts provide the background for several emergent forms of politics and political navigations as vacuums of power emerge and are filled. Close attention to these conflicts allows explorations of politics to be sensitive to the material and emotional realities of migration into urban spaces that are the least served by the state and public services but where citizens assert their rights to these very services. Finally, it allows us to take seriously in a study of postcolonial urban politics, the political negotiations and oppositions among all the agents of speculative development discourse; this is a discourse seeking to transform the infrastructure and shape of urban environments across in India, and indeed, across Asia (Anjaria and McFarlane 2011; Chandavarkar 2009; Roy and Ong 2011). The female

foot-soldiers of Shiv Sena have been most effective in these very urban spaces where conflicting agendas of urban life are most rampant.

As I illustrate in the case of Prabhakar and her party workers in the shifting environment of Kandivili at very beginning of this chapter, dashing has significant spatial registers because it is always performed somewhere in urban space. Throughout this book, I continue to come back to these particular and local urban spaces, their material realities, and the political possibilities that they enable for those who navigate these spaces best (Hansen and Verkaaik 2009; Nelson 2002; Singerman 1995).