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SPACE, COMMUNICATION AND SPATIAL VIOLENCE: SITUATING THE MECHANISM OF SPATIAL EXCLUSION AND INCLUSION

Abstract: This paper uses Henri Lefebvre's (1991) spatial triad model in arguing how principles employed in the development of abstract spaces in developing societies are in disagreement with lived spaces, thereby causing social turbulence seen in the form of conflict, violence, social resentment, and social divide. The paper argues that it is crucial to investigate the communication flows of any given spatial order to discover the 'exclusionary logics' embedded in the development of socio-spatial structures. The paper posits the concept of spatial violence, which helps understand how both space and communication are central to social (in)stability, and that spatial development of a social landscape may not necessarily mean development. It emphasizes that communication is inherent to space and spatial flows or patterns, and that it is a decisive force in formulating the subtle and nuanced effects of spatial (re)structuring of a given social order. In arguing that lack of democratic dialogue and participation in the planning and execution of spatial development forms a monopolised geography of communication, the paper concludes that it is imperative to consider the relationship between social, spatial, and communicational flows to ensure maximum participatory measures in spatial restructuring, in order to minimise harm to the social fabric.

Key words: spatial violence, geography of communication, spatial triad model, abstract spaces, development in India

1. Introduction

A great deal of literature from culturalists, globalists, and cultural geographers argue for increased consideration of human space relationships. With myriad forces, experiences, and practices influencing spatial knowledge, space is not seen as a mere landscape devoid of character, but as a powerful feature that dominates nearly everything that is human and living. Factors deeply entwined with spaces deserve significant deliberation, especially in developing countries, where spatial dynamics have a profound impact on communities. Many academics are of the view that developing nation states, which are undergoing rapid socio-cultural and socio-economic transition, require further academic deliberation on changes that are rapid, inherent, and responsible for altering the social fabric. This paper primarily deals with two key issues: first, social conflict occurring as a result of spatial flows and practices, which I engage with using Lefebvre's (1991) spatial triad model; and second, relative communication flows and practices that emerge out of spatial practices and abet social conflicts.

Conflict is 'inevitably spatial and space often leads to conflict' (Peturel 2009). Strategic use of space for manipulation, subjugation, and exploitation of the weaker sections in developing societies is widely rampant and often responsible for social tensions and conflicts. A great number of social conflicts, protests, and demonstrations in India, against the backdrop of globalisation and more so in the last decade, are weaved around spatial factors. The conflict around the Formula 1 race track, with bureaucracy and business groups on one side and farmers on the other, had spatial factors as being central to it. The xenophobia in the states of Assam and Maharashtra, which flares up time to time, also has space central to it, among other things. The rural-urban conflict, as a result of the urban swell in rapidly 'developing' India, can be traced to the power struggle over spatial factors. Development, more particularly spatial development, in India is often seen as eroding social sentiments and fuelling social rifts. This is because spatial developments are planned along 'exclusionary logics' (Hill 2010) through the 'process of dislocation', which is deeply embedded in the 'liberal economic policies and urban redevelopment agendas...' that are considered the cornerstones of economic development (Athique and Hill 2007, p. 116). But this poses several ontological and empirical questions: What does space mean to various communities? How are the ideas of spatial development chalked out by administrators of spaces, such as bureaucrats, architects, engineers, and town planners, in conflict with the ideas of the users of those development units? How can multiple meanings of spaces held by different quarters of the society be in accord

with each other? Can there be a framework for more participatory planning and usage of space that is all inclusive in nature? How can conflicts arising out of spatial development and restructuring be avoided to minimise harm to the social fabric? This paper primarily focuses on conflicts arising out of socio-spatial developments, as a society delves deeper into all-encompassing industrial and capitalist forms of development with affluence and power in sight. Against the backdrop of rapid spatial restructuring on the pretext of development, it examines the relationship between social conflicts and tensions, and the relative communicational flows that abet it. The discussion in this paper, as noted earlier, finds guidance in Lefebvre's spatial triad thesis, more specifically in relation to abstract spaces and lived spaces, and in Jansson's (2005) geography of communication.

The two broad interrelated arguments central to this paper are the following. First, I argue that when socio-spatial development assumes exclusionary principles of participation, it becomes a breeding ground for conflict. At the heart of such conflicts are the non-participatory measures adopted in the appropriation, planning, design, and allocation measures adopted by the 'experts' of the abstract spaces. This is compounded by non-consideration of the principles of 'lived spaces', which leads to a full-blown conflict between the creator and the users of the socio-spatial developments, as the principles of abstract spaces are not in accord with those of lived spaces. Abstract space, according to Lefebvre, is the space of instrumental rationality, fragmentation, homogenization, and, most important, commodification. It is the use of space by capitalist and state actors who are interested in the abstract qualities of space, including size, width, area, location, and profit, while social spaces or lived spaces are the 'space of everyday lived experience, an environment as a place to live and to call home' (Lefebvre 1996 as quoted in Gotham et al. 2001). The second line of argument concerns spatial communication flows. The domination of space is often coupled with the domination of discourse due to the adoption of exclusionary principles and on the pretext of expert versus lay opinion. The geography of communication within the concerned territorial space lacks the inflow of alternative voices, which results in the emergence of an authoritative realm of communication, as the realm of expert knowledge is often bereft of any participatory discourses and, hence, comes into direct conflict with lay knowledge. Such a controlled geography of communication can be evident in the development of spaces that lack participatory approaches in planning, production, and usage. Thus, experts in abstract spaces enjoy unchecked authority in manipulating and dominating discourses relating to the space in

question, given the weight allocated to their voices and expert opinions. I reflect more on this in the latter part of this paper.

2. Spatial triad model and abstract space

There is much advocacy for using space as a sociological tool of analysis in various academic fields and researchers have pursued this call with great enthusiasm. Academia is increasingly recognising the dynamics and complexities of space, as it is considered central to not just cultural studies but also to migration, communication, collective memories, identities, organizational studies, power, and politics (Escobar 2001, Curtin 2003, Cosgrove 2004, Hernes 2004, Jansson 2005, Watkins 2005). A sporadic yet consistent body of academic work emerging primarily out of the West has used space as a methodical tool for the purpose of social investigation (Soja 1968, Athique and Hill 2007, Zhang 2006, Curtin 2008, Jansson 2005, Massey 1997, Cosgrove 2004, Jessop 2004). Cosgrove (2004), for example, examines the concept of *landscape* to discuss 'contemporary ways of thinking about space and reconnecting geographical study to current humanities concerns with culture, identity, and meaning' (p. 57). For Cosgrove, space depends on the specific 'objects and processes' that give it meaning and context in a social setup (p. 58). The first detailed analysis of space was carried out by Henri Lefebvre in his seminal work, 'The Production of Space', which has been a guiding treatise for several inter-disciplinary scholars over decades. Space, for Lefebvre, is a process of production but not a product, and a site of social interactions that is shaped and reshaped as a result of the spatial practices of a society. Lefebvre (1991) posits that space is central to our everyday lived experiences, which are governed by three interrelated aspects of space that he calls the spatial triad and can be used as an analytical tool for understanding society. His spatial triad model is formed of *spatial practices* (perceived space), *representations of space* (conceived space), and *representational space* (lived space). *Spatial practice* (perceived space), according to Lefebvre, 'embraces production and reproduction, and the particular locations and spatial sets characteristics of each social formation'. In that, every society produces its own space by means of everyday activities that 'secrete' it for the collective usage through a 'dialectical interaction' process. *Representations of space* (conceived space) are the spaces 'tied to the relations of production and to the 'order' which those relations impose, and, hence, to knowledge, to signs, to codes, and to 'frontal' relations'. It is more specifically the 'conceptualized spaces' dictated by the rules and order imposed by the 'experts', such as the scientists, planners, architects, engineers, urbanists, government, and a type of artist with a specific bent. *Representational spaces* (lived space), he posits,

are spaces 'directly lived through its associated images and symbols, and hence the space of "inhabitants" and "users"' (pp. 33, 39). It is the space formed as a result of symbolic usage and imagination, such as the notion of the collective, and is 'passively experienced'. This paper engages more closely with Lefebvre's concept of abstract spaces, as it proves to be an appropriate tool for analysis of socio-spatial conflicts, which concerns the first argument in this paper. For Lefebvre, abstract space is,

a space of quantification and of growing homogeneity, a merchandised space where all the elements are exchangeable and thus interchangeable; a police space in which the state tolerates no resistance and no obstacles. Economic space and political space thus converge towards an elimination of all differences (1991, p. 293)

The very notion of abstract space is imposing and unaccommodating of a participatory approach, as it nullifies any existence of the same at the outset. It signifies the conflict arising out of a dictated realm of the 'expert' view, which is non-accommodative of opinions that are significant to the lived experiences of the spaces, restricts the non-conformist opinions arising out of different quarters, and formulates a dominant discourse on the pretext of expert knowledge. Hence, the abstract space is not only formed on the geographical space but on the perspectival spaces too, which informs the imagination and perception of the space in question. This is not to say that abstract space breeds conflict; rather, it negates any possibility of a conflict by means of a prior confirmation, as 'it implies a tacit agreement, a non-aggression pact, a contract, as it were, of non-violence' (p. 56).

3. Abstract spaces and mechanisms of exclusion and inclusion

Abstract spaces demonstrate two interrelated vital features that are central to their existence, function, and wider acceptance. First, the abstract spaces are coupled with a strategically laid out realm of communication, which institutes, endorses, and elevates it to a level of collective consensus. This realm of communication can be regarded as the geography of communication (Jansson 2005), which helps us understand '*how space produces communication and communication produces space*' (ibid. p. 1, italics in original). The geography of communications can help understand and operationalise communication within abstract spaces, its inflow and outflow, and can offer an insight into how communication helps drive abstract spaces into the socio-cultural realm of spatial order. The second feature, stemming from the first, concerns the use of communication within the

given space to practice an exclusionary approach through strategically formulated communication tools – technical and otherwise – imparting a sense of order and authority. As Lefebvre (1991) notes, knowledge is one of the means by which the ruling class seeks to maintain its hegemony (p. 10), and communication within and about abstract space is key to ‘knowledge’ that defines the spatial order. It embodies the ‘representation of spaces’ in the form of signs, codes, and symbols connoting certain rules meant to reinforce the importance, authority, and identity of these spaces. An elitist view of a public space will always differ from that of a working class view of the same and both would use their own communicative practices to justify their understanding of space; hence, non-participatory knowledge can be exclusionary. The knowledge of abstract spaces, on the one hand, justifies the authority of space, and on the other hand, signifies the principles of inclusion and exclusion. Athique and Hill (2007), in their analysis of urban redevelopment in India, make an interesting case on how multiplexes in rapidly urbanising India are spatially segregating, for they are seen as ‘...accommodating (and thus spatialising) colonial and caste elites, a protonationalist public, urban mass migrants, subaltern agitators and, in the form of the multiplex, a wilfully segregated “consuming class”’ (p. 116). Multiplexes in India represent a ‘mechanism’ that underscores ‘spatial segregation’ in the rapidly developing Indian landscape, driven by ‘ideological forces and social conditions’ (ibid. 118). Structures like multiplexes, shopping malls, golf courses, and country clubs are classic cases of abstract space designed to be more exclusively than inclusively shaped, with a predefined idea of its economic principles, participants, and its means and functions – a projection of affluent, future-oriented, new-age, state-of-the-art, world-class lifestyle zones in the form of global cosmopolitan sites driving the global economic landscape. As Athique and Hill (2007) note,

The multiplex is demonstrably an intrinsic component of this emerging network of residential complexes, flyovers, shopping malls and country clubs, providing a new generation of facilities targeted not at the mass public but specifically at the ‘creamy layer’ of a politically assertive middle class. (ibid. 117)

Spatial segregation entails ‘exclusionary logics’ articulated in the form of discursive practice that inform the latent meanings and messages. Space specific knowledge, implicit and symbolic enforce and reinforce segregation through a set of lexicons and establish the principles of exclusion and inclusion. Included are those who fall within the realm of the dominant ideological praxis, which the superstructure espouses. Those who conform to its economic and aesthetic conventions represent

the socio-economic and political well-being of the society, and are committed patrons with willingness to subscribe to and embrace cosmopolitan values, a mainstreamed lot that corresponds to the market and media logics of production and consumption (cf. Mishra 2012).

Communication, in that sense, produces and reproduces space while defining its character, which, though unwritten, tends to exist in the form of an unspoken mutual pact between the creators of the abstract spaces and its users. Social terminologies such as 'decent crowd' (Athique and Hill 2007), 'posh areas', and 'hep people' reinforce these segregations, hierarchies, and social divisions which create a monopolised spatial communication biased to the dominant ideology of spatial 'development'. The developmental strategies of exclusion and inclusion are not only reflected along economic lines but also through its carefully devised glossary, which is aimed at certain sections who have 'generally been the perceived beneficiaries of policies and planning decisions designed to re-order India's urban environments' (Athique and Hill 2007).

The abstract formulations of space are often experienced on a perspectival plane in answering questions relating to what it is (the space), what it can become, and for whom. These questions are, more often, answered against the monetary backdrop and deliberations, and aim to push the sophisticated vision of the modernising urban, a step ahead of the existing, and exclude more in the process by default. The example of rural India rapidly submitting to urbanist policies and ideologies is the case in point here. The rural is often seen as a space-in-waiting to be subsumed by the urban, notwithstanding the fact that rural as a space presents itself as adequate yet unexplored, embodying a distinct character and identity of its own. This is in contrast to the urban space, which is explored but inadequate, with its identity in a constant state of flux. In this sense, communication biases that are operational within urban spaces present urban as a cornerstone of socio-economic development, despite its anomalies and inner conflicts. This is not to argue that an anti-urban discourse must develop akin to the works of American thinkers like Thomas Jefferson, Edgar Allan Poe, and Henry David Thoreau, among others, the avid critics of urbanisation in America and whose works, in the words of Slater (2002), 'left America with a "powerful tradition of anti-urbanism", a legacy of distrust, suspicion and prejudice towards urban areas...' (ibid, p. 137). From the purview of communications, however, the pro-rural writings with recurrent reference to the necessity of rural spaces vis-à-vis the urban can counterbalance the communicational biases that urban spaces enjoy. Urban spaces are chiefly formed of abstract spaces,

as they together represent an ahistorical, commodified, and bureaucratised space central to the creation of different spaces and spaces of difference, actively creating and recreating ephemeral identities along the modes of production and consumption rather than social relations (cf. McCann 1999). Consequently, the development paradigm driven by abstract spaces forms a breeding ground for spatial violence as rural is deemed unnecessary and unfit through a dichotomous relationship operating within the strategically devised realm of communication. As a result urban usurps rural and everything it represents, including traditional values and practices, communal living, collective memories, the socio-cultural fabric, and its 'unprofitable' existence.

Communication within a given space operates as a whole only with the help of the inputs from the relative communication spaces that together form the geography of communication. A few attempts in establishing relations between communication and space have been made in the past by some scholars in gauging and explaining human interactions in various settings. Lie (2003), for instance, presents 'communication space' as a conceptual tool in assessing the spaces of intercultural communication and argues that spaces, 'through (inter)action and communication', become *spaces of intercultural communication*, which contain both 'symbolic and interpretive' meanings (p. 4). Communication space as a concept, according to Healey et al. (2007), 'addresses the differences in interpersonal "closeness" or mutual involvement that are a constitutive feature of human interaction'. In assessing the interpersonal connectedness of individuals in an online community, communication space is characterized by the 'differences in the nearness and farness...' of participants interacting in a given setting (ibid. p. 174). While Lie (2003) and Healey et al. (2007) do not use the term space in the Lefebvre's sense, they do engage with the physical properties of space and place as well as their interchangeable nature both on geographical and perspectival spaces. Spatial communication flows, as discussed in this paper, represents communication practices in the form of signs, symbols, and messages, both explicit and implicit, that constitute spaces either lived or abstract. The symbolic and interpretative meanings define the contours of abstract spaces, delineating the norms of participation and relative action, and of non-participation and non-action. If the geography of communication is the sum total of communication emanating out of a given space, then communication flows represent discursive actions within the multiple smaller pockets that are both fluid and concrete in nature. The fluid communication spaces are formed of human interactions, their interpersonal

connections and interactions with their parallel spaces, while the concrete communication flows represent rigid and non-negotiable communication patterns that provide function to the space, such as policy decisions, rules, and regulations.

4. Formula 1 project as an abstract space and its geography of communication

The controversial Formula 1 project in the suburbs of Delhi serves as a best case in point regarding abstract spaces and the geography of communication. The \$400-million F1 track sits on 4,000 hectares of farmland that officials acquired from 10 villages in the Gautam Budh Nagar district of Western Uttar Pradesh, approximately 40 miles from central Delhi. The 3.2-mile circuit, built with an aim to register India's presence on the international sporting circuit, has hosted three international grand prix events since its inception in 2011. The private sector stakeholders and the government argued that farmers were compensated adequately for their land—a claim rejected by the farmers—but the modus operandi of their eviction to make way for the giant superstructure resonated widely in the international media. According to some reports, the government acquired the land for less than 0.5 per cent of the market rates, triggering widespread protests among the farmers, but the event remained largely ignored in the Indian media. The communities still live in their villages located in and around half a mile of the F1 track. They remain mere spectators to the theatrics put up by the superstructure for the rich and famous who descend once a year from different parts of the world to celebrate an event that maintains its exclusivity based on the numbers it can exclude. The F1 project is consistent with the principles of abstract space in that it is homogenising and yet accentuates difference through exclusion. It remains a commodified, bureaucratised, ahistorical, and merchandised urban space, a police space in which the state tolerates no resistance and no obstacles, an act of spatial violence. And, its geography of communication comprises of sum total of communication in the form of government policy decisions, public relation campaigns, media blitzkrieg, rules and regulations, protests of the farming community, controversies, and the critics of the project.

Abstract space 'must be a space from which previous histories have been erased' (Gregory 1994 in McCann 1999, 169). The history of a space forms a narrative that can prove to be a battleground of conflict, especially when a lived space is transformed into an abstract space. The methodically designed communication about the F1 project both in government policy documents and the media has worked

systematically to erase the history of the space by glorifying the project in the backdrop of an elitist perspective on development, thereby instituting a fresh narrative that eliminates conflict and imparts an impression of social consensus. The adjacent lived spaces, however, still carry the dominant narrative of the past, embedded in the surrounding rural spaces, underscoring the spatial confrontation evident in plain sight.

5. Space and violence

Violence manifests in various forms—explicit and implicit. It also escalates and drives conflict which, according to Miessen (2007), is a ‘condition of antagonism or state of opposition between two or more groups of people’ (p. 4). With respect to spatial restructuring, Miessen argues that ‘any form of participation is a form of conflict’. Miessen uses the term ‘violence’ to explain the ‘violence of participation’, and ‘concept of conflict’ as an ‘enabler of a productive environment’ for violence. A similar reference to spatial violence has been made with reference to spatial restructuring and allocation in the context of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict and land disputes over illegal settlements (ibid. p. 52).

Space being a contested territory is often prone to violence. Spatial violence is an illegitimate tool used to legitimize the official version of spatial development. While direct and explicit forms of land grabbing, confiscation, and appropriation by the rich and powerful are commonplace, several implicit and subtle methods of spatial violence systematically employed by the official machinery on the pretext of development without adequate compensation is too a usual practice. Discourse on spatial practices, which forms the geography of communication, is one of the central factors in provoking conflict in spatial restructuring and development, inasmuch space is mired in the communication bias employed to define the very nature of spatial development through a series of jargon, technical nomenclatures, complex policy statements, and media discourse in endorsing and elevating the urban. For instance, the very premise of differentiation between cityscapes and villagescapes is that of linguistic dichotomy, which subtly obliterates the identity of the villagescape, thus making it susceptible to urban expansionist policies. In that sense, the spatial violence does not imply the mere annexation of land for commercial profiteering but a mechanism of systematic deployment of communication bias and discrimination in defining what does and does not constitute development, more specifically presented in the backdrop of urban and rural discourse. Socio-economic development too is seen through the lens of spatial restructuring of land designed

along various inequitable principles, which can be equally observed in communication as much as on land. Communication flows devised using dedicated terminologies, jargons, crafty terms and cryptic lingual codes to define development are subservient to the commercial principles entrenched in the creation of spaces. Space, as many scholars note, is an objective entity that undergoes restructuring, for capitalist reasons or otherwise, not only on the geographical but also on a discursive plane in the process of becoming a place. The urban has been rapidly annexing the rural to turn 'unproductive' spaces into 'economically viable and productive' zones. The series of urban housing projects in the 'rapidly developing' Delhi-NCR region and several cities in India, with names such as La Casablanca, Lake City, Bellmonte, Golf Park Apartments, Oh My God, Supertech Romano, Horizon Orizzonte, and Glamour City are the superstructures symbolic of exclusionary social practices, similar to the case of multiplexes, that on one hand promise a uber-urban living experience, on the other hand, annihilate the prevalent modes of production and associations of a given socio-spatial order in both their meaning and consumption. For Athique and Hill (2007), it's the 'spatial streamlining of communicative and commercial practices deemed requisite for the achievement of an urban aesthetic that is considered truly 'modern' by the elite and upper-middle classes...' (ibid.109). The same, however, can qualify as a 'linguistic weapon' (Barnette, 2013) accentuating the process of gentrification, shaking up demographic alignments along capitalist and elitist principles. While it may appear to be a matter of nomenclature, its actual effects are felt on a rather intangible and elusive plane, when the association of communities with their lived spaces are severed to make way for the abstract spaces resulting in what can be regarded as spatial violence. Space, in this sense, is produced and reproduced as not only an economic commodity but also a commodity with its associated actions, interactions, and embedded meanings in constructing a geography of communication by the 'act of consumption and interpretation' that can be both 'geographical and physical, as well as non-physical and non-geographical' (Lie 2003, p. 4). For Lefebvre (1991),

It's a space which 'produces a "world of commodity", its "logic" and its worldwide strategies, as well as the power of money and that of the political state.' (ibid p. 53)

As the rural spaces turn into urban and the urban into uber-urban, offering extraordinary lifestyle to the 'included', the collective desire of planners of the 'spaces-with-difference' in achieving a superior degree

of urbanity often leaves behind the concerns of lived spaces. Spatial violence, hence, is the appropriation and subjugation of lived and perceived spaces, and the creation of abstract spaces resulting in the obliteration of cultural, social, and historical ties of a community to its respective space, thereby causing permanent loss to its collective identity and spatial ecology. The upshots of spatial violence generally manifest in the form of permanent reconfiguration of social order, homogenisation, loss of collective history and collective memory, loss of collective identity, disruption of social and cultural order, displacement, widespread social discontent, and the rich-poor divide.

6. Conclusion

Building on Lefebvre's acclaimed works on spatial discourse, along with Jansson's geography of communication, this paper has critically analysed the role of spatial development in instigating social tension. While it is widely claimed that space is central to social conflict, it remains a generic statement unless its nuances are investigated. Citing some examples of landscape transformations in India, the paper underscored how space is a site of conflict between various groups and stakeholders, and its use for the purpose of subjugation and suppression of weaker sections of the society is rampant. Space, the paper argued, serves as a capitalistic tool of violence and segregation in redefining the socio-cultural demography of a society.

Furthermore, the paper argued that it is imperative to consider the geography of communication of socio-cultural spaces to establish the alternative explanation of the relative conflicts from the purview of communications, as space cannot be devoid of communication; hence, it cannot be studied without assessing communication. In studying abstract spaces, the geography of communication helps understand the socio-cultural issues arising out of the spatial restructuring and its relative communication strategies. Abstract space, as posited by Lefebvre, is a space of fragmentation, homogenisation, and commodification. This is in contrast to lived spaces that are formed as a result of everyday lived experience. From this point of departure, the paper underscored that abstract spaces secrete out of a strategically placed communication structure, which defines its contours and reinforces its opposition to lived spaces. The underlying argument is that abstract spaces are also positioned on a discursive plane with institutionalized communication, a benefit which lived spaces do not enjoy. Such a positioning of abstract vis-à-vis lived is central to the social turbulences in the developing societies and is evident in the form of social conflicts, class differences, the rural-urban divide, gentrification, loss of identity, and waning collective memory.

The paper further elaborated on the role of communication flows in reinforcing exclusionary logic with systematic use of lingual codes and symbols within abstract spaces, resulting in socio-spatial demarcations. The adoption of exclusionary logic in developing abstract spaces is not a default process; rather, it is a well-thought-out process that works as a result of systematically crafted communication aimed at legitimizing the abstract spaces. Analysis of the geography of communication of a given abstract space also demonstrates how inclusionary and exclusionary principles are exercised and practiced on the spatial and communicational planes. Abstract space is a quintessential feature of socio-spatial restructuring, which, due to its salient features, is seen as catering to the affluent sections that are central to its production and consumption. While abstract spaces are considered essential in the spatial streamlining of urban locales, its aesthetic appeal is elevated as an archetype of beauty and grandeur, either to be widely implemented or surpassed and exceeded, resulting in a quest that pushes urban spaces towards uber-urbanity, which too builds on the principles of exclusionary logics. Thus, this quest renders rural spaces as irrelevant and unproductive, waiting to be usurped by the urban.

The discussion in this paper presented two interrelated issues that contribute to the growth and escalation of spatial violence and conflict in developing societies. On the one hand, it concerned spatial development in the positioning of abstract spaces vis-à-vis lived spaces in terms of its tangible features; on the other hand, it focused on the relative geography of communication, which entails exclusionary logics employed in the formation of abstract spaces and systematic use of communication for its social elevation and uncritical acceptance. The careful analysis of its geography of communication also presents us with the fact that discourse on spatial practices employs a methodical communication bias in differentiating spaces such as the urban against the rural on the geographical and perspectival levels. While the paper makes a critical case for spatial violence in developing societies, there is a pressing need to develop a methodical framework in examining spatial flows in conjunction with the geography of communication that can contribute in understanding and resolving socio-cultural issues in the process of spatial restructuring.

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