

***'Ghar Mein Kām Hai'* (There is Work in the House): When Female Factory Workers become Domestic Labour**

Thomas Chambers¹

Ayesha Ansari²

Abstract

This article examines the utilization of female Muslim factory workers, in a north Indian woodworking industry, as domestic labour in the homes of their employers. The ethnography illustrates the importance of considering hidden forms of domestic-sector employment where workers are coopted into domestic tasks. The illumination of 'coopted domestic labour' has implications for understanding the breadth and scope of the sector and contributes to debates around its regulation, definition, growth, and feminization. Female Muslim factory workers did not see 'coopted domestic labour' as a livelihood 'choice' but as a stark form of exploitation enabled through employers' tactics, such as the use of advance payments, and through structural continuity across domestic and industrial contexts which situated women at the bottom of the labour hierarchy. It also involved complex negotiations around reputation, character and practices of *purdah* (veiling) which, whilst already an issue for those working in factories, became intensified when entering the homes of others. The contribution of this paper is to place these processes of cooption into a specifically gendered context and to bring discussions of the role of advance payments into debates on paid domestic labour and Muslim women's labour force participation.

Keywords

Paid Domestic Labour, Muslim Women, India, Purdah, Bonded Labour

Corresponding Author:

Thomas Chambers, Department of Anthropology, Oxford Brookes University, Oxford, OX3 0BP
Email: tchambers@brookes.ac.uk

Introduction

Abdul Malik's³ woodworking factory was located on the outskirts of Saharanpur, a city in north-western Uttar Pradesh. From the roadside, where one could often see a parked lorry hauling a shipping container, it looked modest. A large set of metal gates divided a length of rough brick wall that ran along the verge for 50 meters. Once past the *chaukidār* (gatekeeper/watchman), however, the scale of the factory became apparent. Manufacturing was organized along a production line arranged around various stages. The first stage dealt with raw wood which would be cut using a large bandsaw, a risky procedure and very much a male pursuit. This was followed by spaces for *ārī* (small fret saw) machine operators, wood carvers, turners and carpenters, again all male roles. Only in the later stages of the line did women become involved.

In a separate room, away from the dust of the factory floor, a dozen Muslim and *Chamār* (Hindu sweeper caste) women finished wood items: sanding, touching up, polishing and painting. At the other end of the room, around fifteen women, along with some older men, packed completed pieces to be transferred to the container lorry for global distribution. The packing and finishing room was segregated from the rest of the factory, partly for practical reasons – wood dust and dirt could spoil the polish and paint – but this was also symbolic of a labour force divided along gender lines, with packing and finishing work seen as the lowest, and worst paid, stratum of production.

Chambers had been working in the factory for about a month in various stages of manufacturing. Chambers' positionality had initially confined him to male dominated spaces of the factory floor but with time access to areas where women were primarily employed, such as packing and finishing, started to open-up. Chambers was working with some of the

female packers during a slack period, when they were approached by Abdul Malik, the owner, with whom a good relationship had developed. He acknowledged Chambers with a grin, before turning to Farida, a young woman in her mid-twenties, stating '*ghar mein kām hai, āj wahā jāo!*' [...there is work in the house, go there today!]. Farida nodded, replying '*hā jī*' (yes sir), before bundling up her possessions and leaving. As she set off the others giggled. Later, upon enquiring about the amusement, Noor, one of the older female workers explained '*Abdul hameshā us-se apne ghar bhejhte hai*' [Abdul always sends her to his house]. There was a questioning tone in her voice and a smirk that indicated a further insinuation.

The incident was but one in a long period of fieldwork that examined labour, migration, sociality and urban space (see: Chambers, 2015; 2018; forthcoming), in Saharanpur's woodworking industry. As time rolled on, however, it became clear that Farida's case was not isolated. Whilst only mentioned occasionally, other female factory workers also discussed being coopted as domestic labour in employers' homes. Whilst *Chamār* women worked in the factories, Muslim employers marked them out as relatively distinct, and many ideas around untouchability carried through into the Muslim community which situated *Chamār* women as potentially polluting to the employer's household. Thus, it tended to be Muslim female employees who, as with Farida, were removed from the factory and coopted into domestic labour. Additionally, a large portion of the narratives detailed in this article are from women who had found themselves engaged in factory work after becoming widowed or divorced and thus having to source an income to support their households.

The contribution of this article is developed by bringing together debates on 'neo-bondage', paid domestic labour and Muslim women's labour force participation. For many Muslim women, factory work required the negotiation of *purdah* (veiling), reputation, character,

respectability, piety, and concerns with how one is viewed by others. These areas were often bound up within the vernacular of *chāl-chalan* (behavior/persona/demeanor), which articulated a complex assemblage of gendered moral and ethical circulations that regulated women's sexualities, bodies and subjectivities. Running counter to much research on domestic sector employment, in this context working in the homes of factory owners raised greater anxiety than manufacturing work in terms of upholding one's *chāl-chalan* and retaining a sense of agency in an already limited context. 'Co-opted domestic labour' was not just enabled via appeals to gendered subjectivities but operated in a structural context which created degrees of immobility within the employment relations experienced by Muslim factory workers. Central to the process was the utilization of advance payments by employers to create degrees of 'neo-bondage' which interplayed with gender ideology and women's positioning at the bottom of the labour hierarchy to enable the domestic labour cooption of women contracted (albeit informally) to undertake factory work. Moreover, the presence of 'co-opted domestic labour' as a category of employment redefines existing categorizations of paid domestic work which remain limited to contexts where domestic service is the primary or only contractual arrangement (e.g. Ray & Quayam, 2009; Anderson, 2000).

This is not to strip women of agency entirely, however. As this ethnography illustrates, at times, women contested coercion and even opted to withdraw their labour from the factory (and thus co-opted domestic work), a 'weapon of the weak' that involved self-sacrifice in terms of lost incomes and livelihoods (Scott, 2008). Throughout this article, then, we remain conscious of complex intersections around gendered work and attend to the structural, symbolic and everyday levels at which this plays out (Mills, 2003). Whilst primarily providing an ethnographic and empirical contribution, we also draw in connections between gendered norms and processes of capitalist accumulation which activate (or reconstitute) constructions

of gender to drive down wages and stymie labour organization. Here, labour markets are seen as combining both old and new configurations of power and fragmented supply chains, along with gendered, racialized and culturally embedded inequalities to facilitate production processes (Tsing, 2009).

‘Coopted Domestic Labour’: Gender, ‘Neo-bondage’ & the Factory

Research on paid domestic labour illustrates how it can become a livelihood ‘choice’, not through free will but within the context of hegemonic gender/class ideologies of both ‘modern’ and ‘feudal’ origin (Ray & Qayum, 2009; Sharma, this Special Issue). Often, this interplays with conceptions that the skills and spaces involved in domestic labour are ‘naturally’ gendered (Elson & Pearson, 1981; Lutz, 2002; Morokvasic, 2015; Hierofani, 2016). These contributions represent examples of a long genealogy of research which situates gender as culturally constructed, learned or performative (e.g. Butler, 1990; Cornwall & Lindisfarne 1994) leading to complex interplays between notions of femininity and masculinity within the domestic labour market. Morokvasic (2015), for example, illustrates the ways in which gender is negotiated by men seeking jobs in the domestic sector, where:

‘...being capable of “working like a woman”, is a strong argument in negotiating employment. With time in the job, [however, workers...] reinvest their present role of a male domestic worker with “naturally male” attributes putting them forward as their competitive advantage: for instance, physical strength’ (p. 60)

Whether referring to female or male domestic workers, the literature clarifies the constructed association of domestic labour with ideas of femininity, a point often contrasted with ‘masculine’ spaces of labour such as factory floors or manufacturing sites. Against this background, Muslim women have often been represented as tied to the ‘domestic’ or

'private' realm. Engagements with other spaces, such as factories, are seen as running against ideas of the 'ideal Muslim woman', although such norms are much negotiated (Kabeer, 2000). In India, this has led to a focus on Muslim women's 'low labour force participation' (e.g. Das, 2005; Mistry, 1998; Raju, 1999, Dubey et al, 2017) and tendencies towards 'self-employment' or 'homework' (Hasan & Menon, 2004; Scrase, 2003; Wilkinson-Weber, 1999; Bhatti, 1987; Boeri, 2018), although paid domestic labour, particularly in the context of Gulf migration, also features (e.g. Leonard, 2002). For some authors, connecting labour market engagements with notions of seclusion and domestic space, as with homebased manufacturing, is seen as a 'choice', through which women can balance the need to earn with the requirements of *purdah* (Bhatti, 1987). Others, however, situate homework within *purdah* orientated contexts as a restrictive practice resulting from a lack of mobility and low status that invisibilizes women's labour within global supply chains (Balakrishnan, 2002) and renders women particularly susceptible to exploitation and poor wages (Mezzadri, 2016).

Whilst *purdah* formed an important consideration in understanding both work within factories and the coopted domestic context, it interplays with other factors and should not, as is the case in some research on Muslim women's labour force engagement, be reified as always being of primary concern. Alongside the positioning of women at the bottom of the labour hierarchy, advance payments – ranging from a few hundred to several thousand rupees – also played a key role in enabling the cooption of Farida and others into domestic work. Mezzadri (2016) discusses various complexities of women's engagements with global production networks, including the emergence of strategies by employers to ensure greater control over the labour. Here, Mezzadri focuses on the utilization of advance payments at the time of hiring, therefore ensuring a 'permanent condition of debt towards employers' (p. 1889). The practice of giving (or pushing) and taking advance payments is commonplace

across poorly paid sectors in India (Guérin et al, 2015) including rural migrant labour (Mosse et al, 2002), garment industries (Carswell & De Neve, 2013; Mezzadri, 2016) and construction (Srivastava, 2005).

In some contexts, however, workers may be able to escape forms of bondage by, for example, utilizing migration as a means of exit (Picherit, 2012) or simply moving work location before the advance is repaid (De Neve, 1999). Yet, these counter-tactics often proved difficult for women in Saharanpur's wood industry due to gendered norms and expectations of behavior, which acted to stymie mobility. Here, then, advance payments and degrees of labour bondage played out in very particular ways within the local supply chain. Research on other contexts in India has shown how such practices can become reconfigured within contemporary labour markets. Carswell & De Neve (2013), for example, discuss the decline of 'bonded' labour in agriculture and its re-emergence in areas such as power-loom work. Whilst the configurations of bondage and neo-bondage are complex, the use of advance payments within India is not historically new (Gupta, 2005). Neither are advance payments exceptional to the South Asian context, with ethnographic work detailing their utilization in productions networks in South East Asia, the Middle East and Europe (e.g. Platt et al, 2017; White, 2004; Strauss, 2013).

The implications of advance payment practices, however, feed into long running discussions amongst South Asianists, primarily those grounded in Marxist critique, around 'free' and 'unfree' labour. Unfree labour, bonded labour and forms of 'neo-bondage' are central facets of an Indian development model characterized by a highly flexible, low paid workforce, engaged primarily in labour intensive industries, with this being particularly prominent in the so called 'informal sector' as a central facet of neoliberal forms of capitalist development (Breman, 1996; Srivastava, 2009; Carswell & De Neve, 2013). However, there is uncertainty

around the broader structural implications this implies. Brass's (1999; 2003) debates with Rao (1999) and Banaji (2003), for example, have focused on the nature of unfree labour under late capitalism. For Brass (1999) unfree labour, facilitated through debt bondage and advance payments, is central to modern capitalism in India and should be understood as a contemporary phenomenon.

In contrast, Rao (1999) argues that truly unfree or bonded labour is a relic of pre-capitalist relations and thus not present within realms of contemporary capitalist modes of production. Ostensibly, unfree labour is, in fact, free as workers are able to leave when the advance is cleared, or contract concluded (Lerche, 2007). Banaji (2003) concurs at the generalized level of capital accumulation but acknowledges the presence of degrees of unfree labour at the individual level (Lerche, 2007). Throughout these contributions, however, advance payments are conceptualized as acting to undermine labour power and as stymieing of class consciousness. Thus, these practices are often seen as a de-proletarianizing force (Brass, 1990; Lerche, 2007; Frantz 2013; Carswell & De Neve, 2013) and as enabling wealth extraction before employment has even started by effectively charging workers to enter the labour force (Mezzadri, 2016). However, there remains much ambiguity as to the degree to which this creates truly unfree forms of labour (Lerche, 2007).

Acknowledging this, we follow recent contributions which view systems of advance payments and bondage not in fixed terms as a free/unfree dichotomy but as a continuum formed through 'varying degrees of coercion' (Lerche, 2007/2011; Rogaly, 2008; Frantz, 2013; Phillips, 2013; Guérin, 2013), and as embroiled a broader context where '...poverty and discrimination remain primary 'push' factors [but also where], variable levels of economic and social exclusion and a diversity of labourers' constraints, rationale, motivations and forms of

resistance [...] also matter' (Guérin, 2013: 407). In the context of this Special Issue we emphasize the implications of these practices for debates on paid domestic labour, as opposed to configuring the paper primarily around debt and labour bondage. However, the utilization of advance payments feeds into this broader context which Carswell & De Neve (2013) argue contributes to 'continued marginalization in the lowest levels of Indian society [and...] the depressing of wage levels' (p. 431).

In the context of Saharanpur's wood industry, then, woodworkers found themselves enmeshed within this continuum, with advances providing a key tactic of coercion enabling female workers to be removed from the factory floor and coopted into private domestic labour. As mentioned previously, the contribution of this paper is to place these processes of cooption into a specifically gendered context and to bring discussions of the role of advance payments into debates on paid domestic labour and Muslim women's labour force participation. The article also illuminates interlocking between the paid domestic and non-domestic 'informal' sector, expanding on other literature which has made links between, for example, paid domestic labour and urban space (Dicky, 2000) or informal settlements (Coelho et al, 2013) and deepening our understanding of what, in the context of labour contractors, Mezzadri (2016) refers to as the 'continuum of informal relations' (p. 127).

Finally, there are implications here for the broader construction of 'paid domestic labour' as a category of employment. Ray & Quayam (2009), for example, lay out four categories of domestic labour: those retained by specific families over long (even generational) duration; full time live-in domestic workers; daytime domestic labour who live separately but work for a single household; and part time workers employed in multiple households, this latter being the largest and fastest growing category. Additionally, Vasanthi (2011) identifies a variety of

frameworks in the literature for the definition of paid domestic work and, rightly, problematizes those based on dichotomies of public/private or productive/unproductive. Vasanthi also argues that any definition must not exclude forms of servitude or slavery which persist despite attempts to regulate the sector and indicates the shifting trends in countries such as the US toward separating policy definitions of paid domestic and care work (see also: Duffy, 2005).

This ethnography, however, illustrates the importance of considering more hidden forms of 'paid' domestic labour where workers ostensibly employed (within the continuum of free/unfree labour) to work outside the domestic context are coopted into domestic tasks. The illumination of the category of 'coopted domestic labour' has implications for the amplification of statistics showing growth and increasing feminization of the domestic labour sector in India (Neetha, 2008/2013)⁴, figures that run counter to women's labour force participation more generally at the national level where the pattern has been of gradual decline (see: Naidu, 2016; Dubey, 2017; Klasen & Pieters, 2015). Additionally, the article throws up challenges for those calling for better regulation of domestic employment in India (Neetha, 2008/2013; Vasanthi, 2011) and elsewhere (Anderson, 2000; ILO, 2011; Albin & Mantouvalou, 2012; Poblete, 2018) by rendering visible a previously undiscussed area of, what is already, a sector which has proven difficult to chart.

The main fieldwork for this article was conducted over 1½ years from 2011 to 2013 (see: Chambers, 2015), with some material drawn from more recent trips. Research involved extensive participant observation within factories and smaller workshops (Chambers, 2015), within the wider urban context (Chambers, forthcoming), and during migration within India and to the Gulf (Chambers, 2018). Whilst much of the broader research was conducted by

Chambers, access to women in the wood industry proved problematic. Therefore, we opted to collaborate on investigating the position of women in Saharanpur's craft cluster. In this context we conducted a series 80 interviews, led by Ansari, with women in the city focusing on areas including skill acquisition, personal and structural transformation, work spaces and working arrangements, supply chains, recruitment, religion, resistance, organization, and gendered aspects of work. Several of these interviews were later followed up by both authors in more depth. Whilst the issue of coopted domestic labour was only discussed in some of these cases it emerged as a particularly interesting theme within the broader scope of the research. There are, however, limits to our ethnographic engagement, not least that we were unable to follow female factory workers into employers' homes. Nevertheless, we present both a specific empirical case and a broader contribution to the emerging literature on paid domestic labour.

The article has four sections. The first provides the reader with context by engaging with the story of Gulshan, an informant with whom a close relationship was forged, and a series of interviews conducted. Through Gulshan's story, we illustrate the everyday context of factory and domestic work. Whilst we later supplement this with the narratives of other women in the city, we follow recent methodological insights which posit life stories not as constituting a loss of complexity (Comaroff & Comaroff, 2001) but as enabling attention to agency and selfhood (Arnold & Blackburn, 2004; Parry, 2004). This leads into three discussion sections which draw in additional literature and further ethnographic material to expand on points illustrated in Gulshan's story. The first deals with the blurring of boundaries between domestic and factory work. The second explores concerns around *purdah* and *chāl-chalan* that are negotiated by workers both in factories and when being coopted into domestic labour. The final section focuses on the forms of authority and leverage that factory owners

use to transfer female workers from the factory floor to employers' homes, particularly the previously discussed utilization of advance payments.

Setting the Scene: Gulshan's Story

Saharanpur's woodworking *mohallās* (neighbourhoods) were spatially structured around tightly woven *galīs* (alleys/lanes). Gulshan lived in one such *galī*. Her house was rented, and she shared the living space, consisting of a small room and open *sehan* (courtyard), with her children and two buffalos belonging to the landlord. The house was crumbling and permeated with the odor of the animals. Gulshan had been living in rented property ever since her divorce a few years before. As with many women in the industry, Gulshan did finishing work such as filling, sanding, polishing and lining of boxes and ornaments, many of which would eventually be exported across the world. A small woman in her late 30s with a twitchy air of busyness, Gulshan hurried to prepare *chai* (sweet milky tea) for her new guests. Gulshan took a seat next to Chambers declaring 'I can sit by him, he is like my brother', a strategic use of a language trick which disarmed gendered norms of the male stranger and signified increased familiarity. Once we were settled she began:

'I have been in woodwork since childhood as my father's family were poor. When I was small I would go into a factory to get wood for the fire. I saw some *ladies* working. I watched them carefully and learnt that way. Later the owner would give me a rupee for some work. In my heart, I felt some greediness for money and so I started work. My brother got angry and said that I should not go. But when my brother went to work I would go silently in the factory. I would come back before lunchtime. It was my trick and through this I learnt the work.

When I started in the factory [after my divorce] the owner gave us work via a servant. He was the only one allowed into the room where *ladies* worked. There was no problem for us as we could sit comfortably. [In another factory] there was an owner who was very clever. He always gave an *advance*⁶ and often paid late so that workers could not go elsewhere. [That owner] always said that ‘this is an urgent order, so you should work late’, but I refused and only agreed to work until evening as I had children. Also, society would think I was a *lady* of poor *chāl-chalan* if I worked late in the factory as I have no husband. Society can’t understand that I have no money; they always think that I am doing some wrong work if I’m in the factory late.

There is an owner named Afsar who is very clever. He always gives *advance* money and often does not pay in full, so the worker cannot go to another place. He knows that if he gives the *advance* then a worker cannot go to any other factories [...] He has a bad habit he always says to workers that they can take their children in the factory and he treats our children like slaves and gets them to fan him, bring his water or give him a massage. Due to this, when I took an *advance* I borrowed money from someone else and gave it back. If there is no work in the factory like polishing or coloring, then he takes all the *ladies* in his house where we must do work like washing pots and clothes.

Due to this there are many problems. If some *lady* goes alone to the house, then perhaps others will think that there is some affair going on or that she is of poor character. If we go as a group, it is better, but it should not be our job to work like a servant in his house. In the house the owner’s wife and relatives gave bad

treatment and ordered us to do all kinds of cleaning work. If we say that we will not go, then perhaps the owner will tell us to leave the factory and find another job. Due to all this we should not take *advance* money as we become like a slave.

Gulshan's story, then, provides a single person narrative which draws together the areas of focus laid out in the introduction. In the following section we begin deepening this engagement by further unpacking the entanglement of spatial contexts of home and factory.

Entangled Spheres: Homes, Factories & Other Spaces

For women working in Saharanpur's wood factories, 'domestic' and 'industrial' spaces of production were deeply intertwined. Many women moved between work in their own home and the factory space. Whilst the factory offered a marginally better income, working at home was less problematic for one's *chāl-chalan*. In either case, though, earnings were meagre, generally ranging from ₹50-100⁷ per day for homework to ₹100-150 for factory work⁸. For some this income supplemented household income, generating a little extra money for children or to go towards a daughter's or their own dowry. However, around 60 percent of the home workers and factory workers we interviewed were either widowed or divorced. Thus, they were seeking to support a household and children on earnings that were often below subsistence levels.

Being divorced or widowed regularly forced women into employment and, with homeworking earnings low, pushed many to seek work outside the home. Widows and divorcees also experienced high vulnerability in terms of securing a livelihood and income, factors that have been discussed in other contemporary (Ramanamma & Bambawale, 1987; Mukherjee & Ray, 2014) and historical (Sen, 1999) research. Indeed, quantitative material indicates that divorced and widowed women in India, along with poor unmarried mothers and those

married to impoverished men, are particularly present in lower levels of the Indian labour market (Ramanamma & Bambawale, 1987; Afridi et al, 2016). Analysis of NSSO survey data, for example, shows marginally more widows under 60 engaged in paid labour in India than married women (Chen 1998, Afridi et al, 2016) and substantially more separated women (Afridi et al, 2016).

Yet, simultaneously, women in these situations often suffer from low bargaining power, issues of literacy, and little opportunity for self-employment, leaving them particularly vulnerable to poverty and to being trapped in lowly and precarious forms of work (Chen, 1998). Whilst not examined quantitatively in this ethnography, other research on South Asia also suggests that widows and divorcees are often vulnerable to sexual harassment and other forms of violence because they lack the 'protection' of a husband and need to seek employment beyond the home in a context where patriarchal ideology and victim-blaming attitudes are prevalent (e.g. Sabri et al, 2015).

In Saharanpur, then, divorced and widowed women often found themselves having to engage in everyday activities in spaces seen as predominantly male. They also had no male income to fall back on if they lost a job or left a factory and had to survive on earnings seen as merely supplementary for women living in families with a male breadwinner. The realities of everyday precarity around labour and the supply of outsourced orders meant that many working lives entailed circulatory movements between homework and factory work. Thus, Zahoor, a 65-year-old widow who had been in and out of various factories explained:

'We cannot do anything and have no other option. If there is no work coming to our home, then either I go to the factory or become a beggar. What is better, a

beggar's life or a worker's life? I choose the worker's. Allah has given us hands, so we should use them'.

In a later interview, Sabra, a 35-year-old divorcee, commented:

'In the factories there are many women working but the work is not regular, and we often have to change factories or take in work at home. When the order is finished then our work also ends in the factory'.

Coopting of women from the factory floor into domestic labour is, then, part of a broader landscape where women's labour flows across spatial contexts and is associated with forms of work seen as 'low skill' and 'low-status'. The spatial blurring of women's work has been a feature of studies focusing on paid domestic labour. Anderson (2000), for example, critiques definitions of paid domestic labour deployed by international bodies such as the International Labour Organization (ILO). Drawing on accounts of Sri Lankan domestic workers in Athens, she points out that what is often termed as 'paid domestic work' involved many tasks beyond the 'housework' context (see also: Vasanthi, 2011).

Anderson details how workers found themselves involved in jobs as diverse as animal care, care for children or the elderly, gardening and even cleaning employers' workplaces. Anderson's contribution illustrates how the lived reality of domestic work is not bound to the domestic spatial context. Rather, it blurs into various forms of labour in the public sphere and may even cross into workplaces such as offices and factories. Ethnographic and other studies have also explored the utilization of women in 'domestic' roles within factories and offices. Ogasawara (1998), for example, deals with Japanese corporations and the positioning of female employees as 'naturally' suited to jobs such as making tea, typing and serving the needs to male colleagues.

Whilst these contributions blur boundaries, research has given little attention to cases where women are removed from non-domestic labour and coopted in the homes of employers. Men in the wood industry could be sent on errands during slack periods or requested to engage in other kinds of work on the factory floor, however, the utilization of women for domestic work intersected with assumptions regarding 'natural' feminine skills and roles. The low status of women within the labour hierarchy of the factory also made them particularly easy to exploit in work beyond that for which they had been recruited. Writing on Filipino migrant domestic workers in Taiwan, Lan (2003) argues for 'structural continuities across the public/private divide [...] to describe the feminization of domestic labor as multiple forms of labor done by women in both the public and private spheres' (p. 118). Following Lan, we also propose structural continuity but extend this to 'domestic' and 'non-domestic' types of paid labour that are facilitated through forms of neo-bondage and coercion.

Previous research has attended to this to some degree, albeit in different ways. The substantial literature on labour force feminization, for example, details how the feminization of work (both in paid arrangements and in the context of unpaid domestic labour) acts to marginalize women within the labour force (Harriss-White & Guptu, 2001; Drori, 2000; Kabeer, 2000; Wolf, 1992; Ong, 1987; Gordon, 1987) by 'justifying' the suppression of wages and the utilization of gendered notions around 'physical attributes' to situate women as 'naturally' suited to, for example, textile stitching (Elson and Pearson, 1981), loom operation (Gordon, 1987) or keyboard work (Glover & Guerrier, 2010). In turn, the skills involved in these roles are often constructed as 'low', further justifying a gendered wage-gap in the workplace. These trends are equally present in Indian craft industries with, for example, feminization of *zardosi* (embroidery) work in Lucknow (Wilkinson-Weber, 1999) and Bareilly (Mezzadri, 2016) tied with declining wages and occupational status. Specifically, in the

context of paid domestic labour and care work, Gutiérrez-Rodríguez (2013) align patterns of feminization with increasing precarity (and heteronormative constructs of family) in Europe.

The vulnerability created by the precarity of work was particularly potent for those who were widowed, divorced or had sick/unemployment husbands, fathers or other male family members. With their labour providing the sole household income, bargaining power was heavily curtailed, a pattern which stood in contrast to many male workers who were more able to withdraw their labour and move elsewhere. Men were at times asked to do jobs beyond their contracted roles, but when I asked Gulshan how often this was the case she laughed and explained that during slack periods in the factory it was more often women were coopted while men *'sirph gap-shap karte te aur bīdī pīte te'* (just gossiped and smoked *bīdīs* [cheap cigarettes]). This justified sense of being amongst the most exploited extended to other areas of factory work, as Zahoor, a 35-year-old divorced mother of three, reflected:

The work amount is the same, but we get much less money. Even if we do lots of work, so we get less. Men always get more money compared to us whether he works or not. [Angrily] If the *lady* does a lot of work and is a fine artisan then she finds less money. There is no value and respect of *ladies* in the factory.

Other aspects of Anderson's (2000) research are also relevant in emphasizing important moments of intersectionality, not least regarding class. Here, Anderson explores how well-off households avoided conflicts around a gendered division of labour between husband and wife by employing domestic workers. This has been contrasted to the Indian context where the employment of domestic labour is often seen as being more about the construction of a middle-class identity among employers than about resolving tensions around gendered divisions of labour in the home (Ray & Qayum, 2009). In either case, for women entering a

factory owner's home in Saharanpur, the process involved engagements with the women of the household, and class consequently became a significant component of this relationship. Women of the house often became the prime decision-makers about the work which coopted factory workers should undertake and the kinds of treatment they should receive.

Earlier, Gulshan had also worked as a maid in the house of a wealthy family across town. Yet it was notable that she raised few concerns, beyond low pay and a general sense of servitude, regarding her treatment by the household. She saw being coopted, however, as involving a loss of agency and control, in a context where this was already limited and described how she often received rough treatment from female members of the household. Additionally, it rendered her more vulnerable to harassment from men in the house whose authoritative position combined with the privacy of the domestic context potentially facilitated several kinds of sexual harassment, encapsulated by Gulshan and others in the vernacular *chhednā*⁹.

Having been unable to follow women into employers' homes, we could not obtain specific details about what this harassment involved beyond the general context. Sexual harassment, however, was not confined to domestic labour but was also a concern for women on the factory floor. Whilst we were attempting to negotiate access to one factory, for example, the owner described all female workers as *characterless*, saying that 'they don't come here for work but only for sexual pleasure'. His remark, whilst not the view of all factory owners, reflected questions of character and morality that hung over many female factory workers in the city. Shazia, a 35-year-old widow remarked: 'In the factory, the owners, male workers or contractors are often rude to us and make comments about us saying that we are like a loose woman or they may say some sexual things to us'. Another, Faiza, a 50-year-old married woman, described 'for the younger girls, the factory can be very bad as the owner or some

other man sometimes try to touch them or to start some affair. Her character will be ruined, and people will say that she is dirty (*gandā*), then maybe it will be hard for her to marry and people will laugh at her'. In both domestic and factory contexts of paid labour, then, women's character and reputation were called into question when harassment occurred. Male perpetrators, however, faced no such judgement.

Whilst not all women saw factory work or domestic work as characterized by forms of sexual harassment, these examples emphasize a degree of continuity in experiences across spaces of factory and domestic labour. The isolation of lone domestic work, however, created the highest degree of anxiety, with women expressing concerns that simply going to an owner's house may raise questions of one's character, even if there was no impropriety. This was reinforced by rumors of affairs between favored workers and factory owners, not all of them entirely unfounded, although the degree to which such rumors were the subject of speculation depended, as suggested by Faiza's comment, on the youthfulness of the woman concerned. Stage of life, then, made the factories and coopted domestic work less problematic for older women (at least in terms of sexual harassment or impacts on their respectability – but not necessarily in terms of lost agency or control of one's labour), a consideration echoed in work on *purdah* which shows that restrictions on mobility and visibility often ease with age (Das Gupta, 1995; Ussher et al, 2015). The following section turns to concerns with character as well as intersections with *purdah* practices and notions of *chāl-chalan*.

Beyond 'Purdah': *Chāl-chalan*, Character & Reputation

Gulshan's account revealed a variety of anxieties about being coopted for domestic work. One, emphasized by Gulshan and others, was the concern over what this may do to one's

chāl-chalan. Many factories offered (or imposed) a degree of gender segregation. When absent, this caused concern, for some women at least. Thus, Bano, a 42-year-old former factory worker, who had later shifted to homework, described:

‘The last factory where I worked had no partition between men and *ladies*, so there is no value of the veil. It was *be-kār* (useless/worthless). Due to this I left. Those who do not wear the *burqa* (garment covering head and body) or believe in *pardah*, they are comfortable in the factories. But for women who give this importance the factories are not good. This work is *be-kār* for Muslim *ladies*. Our *burqa* and veil are destroyed in the factory, so we should not go. Only in [owner’s name] factory did we find some separate room for work.’

Bano’s focus on *pardah* was part of the broader context of *chāl-chalan*. As with Gulshan and Bano, others also expressed their fear that being coopted as domestic labour undermined one’s *chāl-chalan*. Amna, a 31-year-old widow explained:

‘Yes, the owners sometimes send us to the house for work, it is bad for us. Maybe there are some boys or men there and it is not possible to keep the veil. In the house, they make us do different work. It is the women, like the owner’s wife or mother, who tell us what to do but sometimes there may be a man and he may harass us there also. We should wear the veil and not work in front of men in the house. It is not good.’

To begin unpacking these issues, we turn to the question of *pardah* in the context of domestic labour. We are careful not to reify *pardah*, however, and instead utilize the articulation of *chāl-chalan* to think more broadly about ideas of character and respectability that highlight concerns around agency, servitude, class and ‘choice’ as much as they reflect *pardah* practice.

The application of *purdah* varies from region to region and according to caste and social status, with its practice more prevalent in the north of India than the south (Hasan & Menon, 2004). It is, however, important to emphasize that this is not exclusive to Muslims (Jeffery, 1979). Indeed, it is often high caste Hindus who enforce *purdah* most rigorously, particularly in rural areas (Das, 2005; Sen, 1999) and its practice is often associated with social position, status (Chen, 1995) and life-cycle (Das Gupta, 1995; Ussher et al, 2015). There is also a body of older material attending to the agentive aspects of *purdah* practice which, at times, enables women to utilize it as a means of withdrawing from undesirable and low-paid labour (Lateef, 1990; Baden, 1992), illustrates how *purdah* is continuously negotiated in the context of personal desires and household needs as well as the broader moral context (Sharma, 1990), and examines how it can provide access certain resources and networks (Mahmood, 2011) or create spaces of female sociality from which women can exercise degrees of power over both the domestic and broader socio-economic context (Jeffery, 1979).

The ability to practice *purdah* was closely bound up with class position, and poorer women often found themselves having to engage in both waged and unwaged forms of work outside the home (see also: Carswell et al, forthcoming). Whilst the ability to observe *purdah* was very much an issue regarding both work in factories and domestic labour in factory owners' homes, it would be a misrepresentation to suggest that it was the only or even the central issue in the minds of coopted domestic workers. As Hasan and Menon (2004) point out, for many Muslim women, *purdah* is neither a primary nor secondary consideration when it comes to decisions around work and forms of labour market engagement (see also Das, 2005). Additionally, such considerations are intersected by broader processes of economic and social change that differ across geographical space and cultural context (Kabeer, 2001).

For Muslim women in paid domestic work, *purdah* represents a more complex terrain than merely generating suspicion about the 'character' of the worker. Gamburd's (2000) research on Sri Lankan domestic workers in the Gulf, for example, has shown how being Muslim, within the economy of Gulf households, provides more opportunities for employment than those available to Hindu or Christian Sri Lankan women. This has resulted in some Sinhalese women taking on a Muslim identity to obtain work or preferential positions within the labour hierarchy of a specific household. This temporary 'conversion' requires not only a new name and forms of religiosity but the adoption of *purdah* practice (Gamburd, 2000). For Muslim men, too, access jobs in areas such as construction can be easier than for those of other faiths (Ali, 2007) and even some migration brokers have been recorded to fain an Islamic identity to access Muslim social networks and thus boost their position within the migration industry (Fernandez, 2010).

For Muslim domestic workers, too, migration to the Gulf could involve forms of personal transformation in terms of *purdah* practice. In the Gulf, workers encountered women wearing the *abāyah* (body-covering loose-fitted cloak), a garment they often adopted themselves. Even before departure many learned a degree of 'Arabization' from interactions with returnees. Yet they tended not to see such forms of *purdah* practice as stifling or restrictive (Siriwardane, 2014). Instead, adopting practices and dress equated with *purdah* 'possessed an agency of its own; an agency that women hoped they could sustain or replicate upon returning home' (Siriwardane, 2014, p. 18). In the Gulf, too, becoming more pious enabled some female domestic workers to legitimize time away from their employer's home to attend religious gatherings, escape isolated working conditions and connect with other women engaged in the domestic sector (Johnson et al. 2010).

In light of this, and regarding our own empirical data, we acknowledge the role of *purdah* in shaping women's ideas around being coopted from factory to domestic work but shift the focus away from seeing *purdah* as their only or central worry. As mentioned before, Gulshan described how she had previously been employed as a maid, a position that raised few issues around *purdah* practice but that she left due to low pay (₹300 per month). For others engaged in woodwork within factories or in their own homes, a shift into domestic work could be aspirational, or at least preferable to their current arrangements. Susheela, a 25-year-old married mother of four explains:

'The owners become richer, but we have no union, no one listens. My mother works as a maid and will help me find work as a maid. Working as a maid will be better as it is clean work and I will not be so tired. We have no future in this industry. The *gents* are also getting tired of this work. After some years, no one will want to do this work. Generation to generation our condition becomes worse. My husband told me that he was doing this work from his childhood with no improvement'.

This narrative of decline was prominent in the industry and featured in the stories of both men and women, a reflection of the inherent precarity of everyday work and a reality that persisted despite general growth in wood production (see: Chambers, 2015). As with Susheela, in a separate interview, Sabina a 40-year-old widow supporting her six children through various forms of work described a similar experience:

'When there is no work for one to two months I feel so bad and I have to search for other work in Saharanpur. My husband is dead, and I always need money for

food. When there is no work then I am working as a servant or maid. It is no different. Both bring only small money’.

Amna, whose account came earlier in this section, had been clear in her reflection on *pardah* as a primary concern. Others, however, articulated their worries about being coopted into domestic labour within the broader category of *chāl-chalan*. The term encompasses several meanings and has been variously translated as referring to one’s behaviour (Ramnarain, 2015), public persona (Gadihoke, 2011), mode of moving about (Jeffrey, 2010), embodied customs/norms (Pigg, 1995) and/or one’s demeanour (Jeffery et al. 2005) reflected in speech, dress and mien (Jeffrey et al. 2005). *Purdah* practice is an element in all these, but it was not only the move from a relatively public space (the factory) to the private space of another family that fundamentally shaped women’s concerns and reflected negatively on their *chāl-chalan*. Rather, there were additional factors such as the specific circumstances under which this move took place.

For Gulshan and others, being in the factory had already involved a negotiation of both *pardah* and *chāl-chalan*. Being coopted into domestic work, however, evoked a loss of control over one’s working conditions and a sense of *majbūrī* (helplessness) that created just as strong a sense of discomfort as did questions of *pardah*. In this context, then, it was not only workers’ public persona that was affected but control over their ‘mode of moving about’ (Jeffrey, 2010). Women already occupied positions in the factory seen to be lowly and low paid, and it was this sense of lost agency that became a central issue in their minds. Most felt, however, that they had little choice but to comply with the wishes of the factory owner. In part this reflected the position of women in the labour hierarchy, but also involved the use of specific tools and tactics by employers.

Leveraging Domestic Labour from the Factory Floor: Advances, Authority & Gender

In this final section, we attend to the use of advance payments by factory owners to create a space within which forms of coopting could be enforced. Advance payments were not explicitly geared towards enabling transfers of labour from the factory to the domestic realm but were part of a broader context of subordination and, albeit limited, degrees of everyday resistance (Scott, 2008; Guérin, 2013). Advance payments took on a gendered quality that intersected with the spatial mobility and social position of women, a coalescence that rendered women particularly vulnerable to forms of leverage. Common throughout the industry, advance payments were sought, asked for, given, encouraged and pushed in the case of male and female workers alike. As discussed in the instruction of this paper, the system acted as a form of 'neo-bondage' (De Neve, 1999) within a continuum of free/unfree labour (Lerche, 2007/2011; Rogaly, 2008; Frantz, 2013; Phillips, 2013; Guérin, 2013) which enabled owners to retain staff in a labour market characterized by high degrees of worker movement between workshops and factories and, for men, beyond the city.

Although employers utilized the system to retain labour, and workers often complained about dubious calculation of repayments, this was not a one-sided system. Both male and female workers actively sought advances to bridge times of financial difficulty and to help fund purchases or marriages. Indeed, some of the women we interviewed complained when advances were not offered as it made these periods more treacherous and forced the seeking of other forms of credit:

'...Nowadays it is getting harder to take an advance from the factory. This area is poor, so we cannot take money on a loan from a neighbour as all are poor. We must take on loan only the interest money [from a Punjabi money lender]. All the

ladies in the area are earning just for their *roti* (bread) so the financial condition is the same, the owner never wants to give us advance money’.

Shazia, a 35-year-old factory worker

Whilst some employers had become hesitant in offering advances, the practice remained commonplace. The amount workers took on advance varied significantly. Advances offered at the time of recruitment tended to be higher with some female informants mentioning figures of ₹5000-10000. However, advances were not restricted to the initial recruitment process and were often offered or taken throughout employment and ranged from small amounts of ₹100-1000 to pay a school bill or purchase food, to larger payments in the tens of thousands for weddings or other events. With the industry, including factory ownership, dominated by Muslims, these advance payments, as per Islamic principles, were not interest bearing in the way that a loan from a Punjabi money lender, mentioned by Shazia, would be. However, there were forms of shrouded interest present, particularly in the working of more hours than the advance equated to in order to repay, a calculation that was often difficult for workers to keep track of.

Advances, then, were about more than simple bondage and played out in complex and nuanced ways (De Neve, 1999; Guérin, 2013). There were specific intersections with gender, however, that made the experience of giving and taking advance payments different for men and women. Male workers, for example, used their mobility to evade repaying advances. Abdul, a 39-year-old intermediate-size manufacturer explained:

‘It is difficult to keep and find labour. Workers leave and don't come back even if they have an advance. They just go away and don't repay. They think about

themselves and not the employer. There are plenty of orders, but I cannot fulfil them because of lack of labour’.

The geographical mobility that male workers used to navigate the advance payment system was rarely an option available to women. Male workers could be pressured to undertake additional overtime or remain employed in the factory until the advance was cleared, but it was always possible that the employer would lose both the worker and the advance. A woman who had taken an advance, however, had little ability to take the gamble or even deploy a threat to leave the city to avoid being chased up by the employer’s *goonda* (strong-arm-man) who could be sent to their house to pressure them to return to work. Mushtari, a 29-year-old divorced mother of two, explained:

If we take advance money, then we cannot change or leave the factory. We cannot take any leave, not even on *Jumma* (Friday holiday). Even if we have some emergency. If we do not come, the owner will send his man to our gate and he will tell us that we must come as we have taken an advance.

Farah, a 35-year-old widow and mother of four, also discussed advances in these terms:

If we take advance money, then we must work late nights. If we take advance money, then we are always in pressure. It is a *be-kār* (useless/worthless) system. Sometimes when my children were small I had to take an advance. I took ₹500-1000. I gave back a bit every week, like ₹100. The owner would offer more, like ₹5000-10000. I never liked to take that much as I do not want any loan on my head. If we take the advance, then we are under pressure. We must work late and cannot refuse. The owner can send us for any work he likes. We cannot look after our children, so the owner tells us to bring them to the factory. This is good

for the owner because then he can treat them as a slave also and make them fan him or do some other chores. We are *majbūr* [helpless]. Only when I gave the advance money back did I become free again.

The degree to which taking an advance may bind women in the workplace is illustrated not only through Farah's own loss of a degree of agency, but also the creation of a situation in which even her children fall under the factory owner's authority. Advances, then, intersected with gendered positionalities to create an environment in which refusal became increasingly difficult. As described by Mushtari and Farah, *zor* (pressure) could be applied to push women and men into working late or to work on Friday, thus increasing the flexibility of the labour force to meet the demand of supply chains within neoliberal notions of global production (see also: Mezzadri, 2016; Carswell & De Neve, 2013).

Advances, however, were not the only form of leverage present in the coopting of women into domestic labour, with differing arrangements around payment of wages also being a factor. In some parts of the production line, women were primarily employed on a salary basis. Packing, for example, can be difficult to gauge on piece-rates and therefore women were often paid per day. Finishing work, however, is more often paid by piece. Piece-rate workers had less stable incomes but tended to have more control over their time and were therefore difficult to coopt into other forms of work. Farida, with whom this article opened, was on a salary and thus under the obligation to perform whatever tasks the owner wished during working hours. Both Gulshan and Farah, however, worked on piece-rates. In our discussions, Gulshan was clear that the possibility of being coopted into domestic work arose for piece-rate workers only after taking an advance. Once in receipt of an advance, the position of a piece-rate worker was transformed as they lost control over their time. This

applied to men and women alike. Men could be seconded to another area of the factory floor or engaged in menial labour below their skill level, but only women were at times utilized in domestic work roles. Thus, during slack periods, a female piece-rate worker who had taken an advance could be sent to the house, with the value of her labour deducted (although not always accurately) from the money she owed.

Whilst there was a distinction in terms of being coopted during working-hours between salaried and piece-rate workers, giving advances enabled factory owners to apply leverage during busy periods to extract overtime and fulfil orders. This leverage was deployed alongside less coercive methods, such as offering overtime pay to salaried workers and the general encouragement of piece-rate workers to labour longer and thus increase their earnings. We did not find specific cases of women being coopted outside of working hours, primarily because coopting women for domestic work was usually done during slacker times on the production line. Nevertheless, in principal, owners could summon salaried and piece-rate women who owed advances for domestic labour outside standard working hours. There was, however, ambiguity about whether domestic labour constituted a piece-rate or salaried arrangement. As Farah explained: ‘...they tell us to start some job [in the house] but then may not let us leave until finished, even if it is getting late’.

This exploration of advance payments as a part of the coopting process further nuances the intersectional quality of women’s engagements with both factory and domestic labour in the city. Advances are part of working-life for various sections of the labour force. For women, however, the power and authority embodied in giving and taking advances intersected with a highly-gendered working environment and normative ideas about women’s skills and position. This created a passage to domestic work that many women saw as a form of

servitude and a stripping away of the limited degrees of agency they experienced on the factory floor. Gender ideologies clearly played a part in the coopting of women from the factory floor into domestic work. Yet women themselves saw domestic work neither as something natural nor as a preference, but rather as a coercive process which reflected forms of power and domination and which was enabled through employer's tactics based on salary arrangements and advance payments.

Conclusion

This article has explored an engagement with paid domestic labour distinct from many accounts which situate domestic work as a livelihood 'choice', albeit within the context of structural, economic and social constraints. Instead, we have focused on a setting where women find themselves coopted into domestic work. Much research on domestic labour has focused either on the blurring of non-waged and waged forms of domestic work or on the utilization of women within non-domestic workplaces in roles associated with domesticity. We have instead illuminated how women already employed in factory work find themselves coopted into domestic labour, a reflection of the structural continuity of male employers' power over female workers across spaces still often presented as distinct or detached. In so doing, we have introduced an additional category of paid domestic labour to those previously deployed, that of the 'coopted domestic worker'.

Following other contributions in the literature, we have not limited our exploration Muslim women's engagements with labour markets to concerns with *purdah* alone. For those coopted from the factory floor *purdah* did matter, but so too did questions of agency, coercion and control of one's labour and body. The gendered structuring of the labour force and ideas about women's 'natural' skills or social position played crucial roles in creating a

situation where women could be coopted. This was reinforced, however, using specific tactics which enabled factory owners to exert their authority and extend their control over women's time and spatial positioning. Thus, the material presented in this article further nuances our understanding of paid domestic labour and provides an empirical case which has not been previously explored. In so doing we have developed an original contribution by bringing together debates on 'neo-bondage', paid domestic labour and Muslim women's labour force participation to illustrate how 'coopted domestic labour' functions within a local context and intersects with broader processes associated with the gendering of work and the maintenance of global production networks.

Bibliography

Afridi, F., Dinkelman, T., & Mahajan, K. (2016). Why are fewer married women joining the work force in india? A decomposition analysis over two decades. *IZA Discussion Paper No. 9722*. Viewed at: https://papers.ssrn.com/sol3/papers.cfm?abstract_id=2731985 [accessed 02/02/18]

Albin, E., & Mantouvalou, V. (2012). The ILO convention on domestic workers: From the shadows to the light. *Industrial law journal*, 41(1), 67-78.

Ali, S. (2007). 'Go west young man': the culture of migration among Muslims in Hyderabad, India. *Journal of ethnic and migration studies*, 33(1), 37-58.

Anderson, B. (2000). *Doing the dirty work? The global politics of domestic labour*. London: Palgrave Macmillan.

Arnold, D., & Blackburn, S. (Eds) (2004). *Telling lives in India: Biography, autobiography, and life history*. Indiana: Indiana University Press.

- Baden, S. (1992). The position of women in Islamic countries: possibilities, constraints and strategies for change. *BRIDGE Development-Gender Report no. 4* (Prepared for the Special Programme WID, Netherlands Ministry of Foreign Affairs -DGIS). Viewed at: http://www.gewamed.net/share/img_documents/15_rep_so1.pdf [Accessed 01/04/2017]
- Balakrishnan, R. (Ed.). (2002). *The hidden assembly line: gender dynamics of subcontracted work in a global economy*. West Hartford; Kumarian
- Banaji, J. (2003). The fictions of free labour: Contract, coercion, and so-called unfree labour. *Historical Materialism*, 11(3), 69-95.
- Bhatty, Z. (1987). Economic contribution of women in the household budget: A case study of the Bengal jute industry'. In A. Singh and A. Kelles-Viitanen (Eds) *Invisible hands: Women in home based production* (pp. 35-50). New Delhi: Sage
- Boeri, N. (2018). Challenging the Gendered Entrepreneurial Subject: Gender, Development, and the Informal Economy in India. *Gender & Society*, 0891243217750119. Viewed at: <https://doi.org/10.1177/0891243217750119> [Accessed 02/02/2018]
- Brass, T. (1999). *Towards a comparative political economy of unfree labour: Case studies and debates*. London: Psychology Press.
- Brass, T. (2003). Why unfree labour is not 'so-called': The fictions of Jairus Banaji. *Journal of Peasant Studies*, 31(1), 101-136.
- Breman, J. (1996). *Footloose labour: working in India's informal economy*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Butler, J. (1990)[2011]. *Gender trouble: Feminism and the subversion of identity*. New York: Routledge.

Carswell, G., Chambers, T., & De Neve, G. (forthcoming) Time, Waiting and Gender:

Everyday encounters with the state in contemporary India. *Environment and Planning C: Politics and Space*.

Carswell, G., & De Neve, G. (2013). From field to factory: tracing transformations in bonded labour in the Tiruppur region, Tamil Nadu. *Economy and Society*, 42(3), 430-454.

Chambers, T. (2015). *'Carving out niches': informality, work and migration in a Muslim craft community of North India*, Doctoral dissertation: University of Sussex

Chambers, T (2018) Continuity in Mind: Imagination & Migration in India & The Gulf.

Modern Asian Studies. Published online at <http://dx.doi.org/10.1017/S0026749X1700049X>

Chambers, T. (forthcoming). 'Performed Conviviality': Space, Bordering & Silence in the City *Modern Asian Studies*.

Chen, M. (1995). A matter of survival: Women's right to employment in India and Bangladesh. In M. Nussbaum and J. Glover (Eds), *Women, culture & development* (pp. 37-57). Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Chen, M. A. (Ed.). (1998). *Widows in India: Social neglect and public action*. New Delhi: Sage Publications.

Coelho, K., Venkat, T., & Chandrika, R. (2013). Housing, homes and domestic work. *Economic & Political Weekly*, 48(43), 39-49.

Comaroff, J., & Comaroff, J. (2001). Revelations upon revelation: After shocks, afterthoughts. *Interventions*, 3(1), 101-127.

- Cornwall, A., & Lindisfarne, N. (Eds) (1994). *Dislocating masculinity: Comparative ethnographies*. Abingdon: Taylor & Francis
- Das Gupta, M. (1995). Life course perspectives on women's autonomy and health outcomes. *American Anthropologist*, 97(3), 481-491.
- Das, M.B. (2005). Self employed or unemployed: Muslim women's low labour force participation in India. In Z. Hasan & R. Menon (Eds) *The diversity of women's lives in India* (189-221). London: Rutgers University Press.
- De Neve, G. (1999). Asking for and giving baki: Neo-bondage, or the interplay of bondage and resistance in the Tamilnadu power-loom industry. *Contributions to Indian Sociology*, 33(1-2), 379-406.
- Desai, S., & Temsah, G. (2014). Muslim and Hindu women's public and private behaviours: Gender, family, and communalized politics in India. *Demography*, 51(6), 2307-2332.
- Dickey, S. (2000). Permeable homes: Domestic service, household space, and the vulnerability of class boundaries in urban India. *American Ethnologist*, 27(2), 462-489.
- Drori, I. (2000). *The seam line: Arab workers and Jewish managers in the Israeli textile industry*. Stanford: Stanford University Press.
- Dubey, A., Olsen, W., & Sen, K. (2017). The Decline in the Labour Force Participation of Rural Women in India: Taking a Long-Run View. *The Indian Journal of Labour Economics*, 1-24.
- Duffy, M. (2005). Reproducing labor inequalities: Challenges for feminists conceptualizing care at the intersections of gender, race, and class. *Gender & Society*, 19(1), 66-82.

Elson, D., & Pearson, R. (1981). "Nimble fingers make cheap workers": an analysis of women's employment in Third World export manufacturing. *Feminist Review*, (7), 87-107.

Fernandez, B. (2010). Cheap and disposable? The impact of the global economic crisis on the migration of Ethiopian women domestic workers to the Gulf. *Gender & Development*, 18(2), 249-262.

Frantz, E. (2013). Jordan's unfree workforce: state-sponsored bonded labour in the Arab region. *The Journal of Development Studies*, 49(8), 1072-1087.

Gadihoke, S. (2011). Sensational love scandals and their after-lives: The epic tale of Nanavati. *BioScope: South Asian Screen Studies*, 2(2), 103-218.

Gamburd, M. R. (2000). *The kitchen spoon's handle: Transnationalism and Sri Lanka's migrant housemaids*. New York: Cornell University Press.

Gandhi, A. (2015). The postcolonial street: Patterns, Modes & Forms. In C. Bates and M. Mio (Eds), *Cities in South Asia* (pp. 265-286). Abingdon: Routledge.

Glover, J., & Guerrier, Y. (2010). Women in hybrid roles in IT employment: A return to 'nimble fingers'? *Journal of technology management & innovation*, 5(1), 85-94.

Gordon, E. (1987). Women, work and collective action: Dundee jute workers 1870-1906. *Journal of Social History*, 21(1), 27-47.

Guérin, I. (2013). Bonded labour, agrarian changes and capitalism: emerging patterns in South India. *Journal of Agrarian Change*, 13(3), 405-423.

Guérin, I., Venkatasubramanian, G., & Kumar, S. (2015). Debt bondage and the tricks of capital. *Economic and Political Weekly*, 50(26-27), 11-18

Gupta, R. D. (1992). Plantation labour in colonial India. *The Journal of Peasant Studies*, 19(3-4), 173-198.

Harriss-White, B., & Gooptu, N. (2009). Mapping India's world of unorganized labour. *Socialist Register*, 37(37). 89-118

Hasan, Z., & Menon, R. (Eds) (2004). *Unequal citizens: A study of Muslim women in India*. Oxford: Oxford UP

Hierofani, P. Y. (2016). "How dare you talk back?!" *Spatialised power practices in the case of Indonesian domestic workers in Malaysia* (Doctoral dissertation, Department of Social and Economic Geography, Uppsala University).

International Labour Organization (2011) *Domestic Workers Convention (no.189)*. Viewed at: http://www.ilo.org/dyn/normlex/en/f?p=NORMLEXPUB:12100:0::NO::P12100_ILO_CODE:C189 [accessed: 29/01/2018]

Jeffery, P. (1979). *Frogs in a well: Indian women in purdah*. London: Zed Press.

Jeffery, P., Jeffery, R., & Jeffrey, C. (2005). The mother's lap and the civilizing mission (pp. 91-134). In Z. Hasan and R. Menon (Eds) *The diversity of Muslim women's lives in India*. New Jersey: Rutgers University Press.

Jeffrey, C. (2010). *Timepass: Youth, class, and the politics of waiting in India*. Stanford: Stanford University Press.

Jeffrey, C., Jeffery, P., & Jeffery, R. (2005). When schooling fails: Young men, education and low-caste politics in rural north India. *Contributions to Indian Sociology*, 39(1), 1-38.

Johnson, M., Liebelt, C., McKay, D., Pingol, A., & Werbner, P. (2010). Sacred journeys, diasporic lives: Sociality and the religious imagination among Filipinos in the Middle East (pp. 217-222). In K. Knott & S. McLoughlin (Eds) *Diasporas: Concepts, Identities, Intersections*. New York: Zed Books.

Kabeer, N. (2000). *The power to choose: Bangladeshi garment workers in London and Dhaka*. London: Verso.

Klasen, S., & Pieters, J. (2015). What explains the stagnation of female labor force participation in urban India?. *The World Bank Economic Review*, 29(3), 449-478.

Lan, P. C. (2003). Maid or madam? Filipina migrant workers and the continuity of domestic labor'. *Gender & Society*, 17(2), 187-208.

Lateef, S. (1990). *Muslim women in India: Political & private realities: 1890s-1980s*. London: Zed Books.

Leonard, K. (2002). South Asian women in the Gulf: Families and futures reconfigured. In C. Petievich (ed.) *Trans-status subjects: Gender in the globalization of South and Southeast Asia* (pp. 213-231). Delhi: Manohar.

Lerche, J. (2007). A Global Alliance against Forced Labour? Unfree labour, neo-Liberal globalization and the international labour organization. *Journal of Agrarian Change*, 7(4), 425-452.

Lerche, J. (2011). The unfree labour category and unfree labour estimates: A continuum within low-end labour relations. Viewed at:

http://eprints.soas.ac.uk/14855/1/Lerche_unfree_working_paper_2011.pdf [accessed:

01/02/2018]

Lutz, H. (2002). At your service madam! The globalization of domestic service. *Feminist Review*, 70(1), 89-104.

Mahmood, S. (2011). *Politics of piety: The Islamic revival and the feminist subject*. Princeton: Princeton University Press.

Mezzadri, A. (2016). Class, gender and the sweatshop: on the nexus between labour commodification and exploitation. *Third World Quarterly*, 37(10), 1877-1900.

Mills, M. B. (2003). Gender and inequality in the global labor force. *Annual Review of Anthropology*, 32(1), 41-62.

Mistry, M. (1998). Muslims in India: A demographic and socio-economic profile, *Journal of Muslim Minority Affairs*, 25(3), 399-422.

Morokvasic, M. (2015). Migration and gender. In A. Triandafyllidou (Ed) *Routledge Handbook of Immigration and Refugee Studies, Vol. 54* (pp. 54-63). Abingdon: Routledge.

Mosse, D., Gupta, S., & Shah, V. (2005). On the margins in the city: Adivasi seasonal labour migration in western India. *Economic and Political Weekly*, 40(28), 3025-3038.

Mosse, D., Gupta, S., Mehta, M., Shah, V., Rees, J. F., & Team, K. P. (2002). Brokered livelihoods: Debt, labour migration and development in tribal western India. *Journal of Development Studies*, 38(5), 59-88.

Mukherjee, N., & Ray, J. (2014). Are Female Headed Households in Distress? Recent Evidence from Indian Labour Market. Viewed at: https://mpra.ub.uni-muenchen.de/64490/1/MPPA_paper_64490.pdf [accessed 21/07/17].

- Naidu, S. C. (2016). Domestic labour and female labour force participation. *Economic and Political Weekly*. 51(44-45), 101-107.
- Neetha, N. (2008). Regulating domestic work. *Economic and Political Weekly*, 43(37), 26-28.
- Neetha, N. (2013). Paid domestic work: Making sense of the jigsaw puzzle. *Economic and Political Weekly*, 48(43), 35-38
- Ogasawara, Y. (1998). *Office ladies and salaried men: Power, gender, and work in Japanese companies*. California: University of California Press.
- Ong, A. (1988). The production of possession: spirits and the multinational corporation in Malaysia. *American Ethnologist*, 15(1), 28-42.
- Papanek, H. (1989). Family status-production work: Women's contribution to social mobility and class differentiation. In M. Krishnaraj and K. Chanana (Eds) *Gender and the household domain: Social and cultural dimensions* (pp. 97-116). New Delhi: Sage.
- Parry, J. (2004). The marital history of "a thumb-impression man". In D. Arnold and S. Blackburn (Eds), *Telling lives in India: Biography, autobiography and life history* (pp. 281-318). Bloomington: Indiana University Press.
- Phillips, N. (2013). Unfree labour and adverse incorporation in the global economy: Comparative perspectives on Brazil and India. *Economy and Society*, 42(2), 171-196.
- Picherit, D. (2012). Migrant Labourers' Struggles Between Village and Urban Migration Sites: Labour Standards, Rural Development and Politics in South India. *Global labour journal*, 3(1).
- Pigg, S. L. (1995). The social symbolism of healing in Nepal. *Ethnology*, 34(1), 17-36.

- Platt, M., Baey, G., Yeoh, B. S., Khoo, C. Y., & Lam, T. (2017). Debt, precarity and gender: male and female temporary labour migrants in Singapore. *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies*, 43(1), 119-136.
- Raju, S. (1999). Introduction. In S. Raju and D. Bagchi (Eds), *Women & work in South Asia* (pp. 1-38). Routledge; London.
- Ramanamma, A., & Bambawale, U. (1987) *Women in Indian industry*. Delhi: Mittal Publications.
- Ramnarain, S. (2015). Universalized categories, dissonant realities: gendering postconflict reconstruction in Nepal. *Gender, Place & Culture*, 22(9), 1305-1322.
- Ramnarain, S. (2016). Unpacking widow headship and agency in post-conflict Nepal. *Feminist Economics*, 22(1), 80-105.
- Rao, J. M. (1999). Agrarian power and unfree labour. *The Journal of Peasant Studies*, 26(2-3), 242-262.
- Ray, R. (2000). Masculinity, femininity and servitude: Domestic workers in Calcutta in the Late Twentieth Century. *Feminist Studies*, 26(3), 1-35.
- Ray, R., & Qayum, S. (2009). *Cultures of servitude: Modernity, domesticity, and class in India*. California: Stanford University Press.
- Scott, J. C. (2008). *Weapons of the weak: Everyday forms of peasant resistance*. New York: Yale University Press.
- Scrase, T. (2003). Precarious production: Globalisation and artisan labour in the third world. *Third World Quarterly*, 24(3), 449-461.

Sen, S. (1999). *Women and labour in late colonial India: The Bengal jute industry*.

Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Sharma, U. (1990) Public employment and private relations: women and work in India. In S.

Stichter & J. L. Parpart (Eds) *Women, Employment and the Family in the International*

Division of Labour. (pp. 229-246) London: Palgrave Macmillan

Siriwardane, R. (2014). *War, migration and modernity: The micro-politics of the Hijab in*

Northeastern Sri Lanka (No. 127). ZEF Working Paper Series. Viewed at:

https://www.researchgate.net/publication/266079906_War_Migration_and_Modernity_The_Micro-politics_of_the_Hijab_in_Northeastern_Sri_Lanka [viewed 14/04/2017]

[e Micro-politics of the Hijab in Northeastern Sri Lanka](https://www.researchgate.net/publication/266079906_War_Migration_and_Modernity_The_Micro-politics_of_the_Hijab_in_Northeastern_Sri_Lanka) [viewed 14/04/2017]

Srivastava R.S. (2009). Conceptualizing Continuity and Change in Emerging Forms of Labour

Bondage in India. In Breman, J. Guérin, I. and Prakash, A. (eds), *India's Unfree Workforce: Of*

Bondage Old and New. New Delhi: Oxford University Press.

Ussher, J. M., Perz, J., & Parton, C. (2015). Menopause and sexuality: resisting

representations of the abject asexual woman. In *The Wrong Prescription for Women: How*

Medicine and Media Create a "Need" for Treatments, Drugs, and Surgery, pp.123-146.

Wilkinson-Weber, C. (1999). *Embroidering lives: Women's work and skill in the Lucknow*

embroidery industry. New York: State University of New York.

Wolf, D. (1992). *Factory daughters: Gender, household, and rural industrialisation in Java*.

California: University of California Press.

Acknowledgements:

Many thanks to Professors Geert De Neve and Filippo Osella for their supervision and support throughout doctoral research. Also, sincere thanks to the co-editors Professor Patricia Jeffery

and Dr Shalini Grover for seeing the value of this material, encouraging the writing and for their comments and feedback during the process. Original fieldwork was completed through an ESRC Doctoral Scholarship (1+3) ES/I900934/1 held at the University of Sussex.

Author Biographies:

Thomas Chambers is a Lecturer in Anthropology at Oxford Brookes University, U.K and has a PhD in Social Anthropology from the University of Sussex. His research focuses on labour, migration, craftwork and Muslims in India.

Ayesha Ansari acted as a researcher on areas of the doctoral research. She is unaffiliated to any institution.

Notes

¹ Lecturer in Social/Cultural Anthropology, Oxford Brookes University, United Kingdom

² Researcher, Unaffiliated

³ Pseudonyms used throughout.

⁴ Neetha's figures are based on National Sample Survey Organization (NSSO) of India, 2005.

⁵ Informants often used 'ladies'.

⁶ English was commonly used in the vernacular.

⁷ Around \$0.75-\$1.50

⁸ Around \$1.50 to \$2.30

⁹ *Chhednā* can refer various activities, including flirting, teasing, and banter among friends (e.g. Gandhi, 2015), as well as sexual harassment. It also encompasses pestering perpetrated by men or boys in public spaces, such as catcalling and the following or touching of women, commonly referred to in public discourse as 'eve teasing'.