

## ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

The ideas that animate this book developed slowly over time—in conjunction with my own deepening ethnographic engagement with Bombay over the past decade or so. The idea to actually rope all my friends and colleagues into this somewhat-unwieldy project, however, came more recently and suddenly, during a particularly fantastic dinner in Bombay with Maura Finklestein, sometime in January 2017. As our dinner conversation turned to stories of the remarkable creativity and skillfulness of people we encountered in our research, I began to think about the generative possibilities of bringing such stories together in an unusual kind of book.

That lively Bombay dinner conversation came on the heels of a research workshop that I co-organized with Nellie Chu at the University of Göttingen—titled “The Entrepreneur and the Broker: Mediating Transnational Flow, Scale, and Belonging.” The energetic discussions and engagements during that two-day workshop inspired me to further exploration on these themes; I am grateful to Anderson Blanton, Noelle Brigden, Nellie Chu, Heidi Østbø Haugen, Gerda Heck, Sabine Hess, Deborah James, Ahmed Kanna, Elizabeth Krause, Michael Levien, Johan Lindquist, Saikat Maitra,

Taylor Nelms, Léonie Newhouse, Madeleine Reeves, Srirupa Roy, and Llerena G. Searle for such a fun and fabulous few days together in Göttingen.

Between 2017 and 2019, we convened in various cities around the globe for a series of *Bombay Brokers* authors' workshops, during which we read and reflected on early drafts of the profiles. I wish to thank both authors and noncontributing interlocutors of these workshops, seminars, and conferences. I presented an early version of the project in June 2017 at a two-day conference on "Governing Urbanizing India: Citizenship, Policy, and Politics," organized by Niraja Gopal Jayal, Olle Törnquist, and Kenneth Bo Nielsen in Oslo; the book's conceptualization and organization benefited tremendously from the feedback so generously offered by the Oslo workshop participants. Thank you to Achin Chakraborty, Geir Heierstad, Vinoj Abraham, Praveen Priyadarshi, Heidi Bergsli, Annika Wetlesen, Alf Gunvald Nilsen, Neera Chandhoke, Radhika Chatterjee, Subhanil Chowdhury, Srirupa Roy, Henrik Berglund, Nikita Sud, and especially John Harriss—who not only offered advice and encouragement, but also allowed me more than my fair share of those tiny Norwegian shrimps.

Later that same summer, this project received wonderfully insightful feedback from participants in a workshop on "Building the Dreamworld: Space, Place, and the (Re)Making of 'New India,' 1947–2017," organized by contributing author Lalit Vachani at University of Göttingen. I am grateful to Avijit Mukul Kishore, Rohan Shivkumar, Ajay Gandhi, Sumeet Mhaskar, Srirupa Roy, and Nathaniel Roberts for their incisive comments and interventions. At the fall 2017 Association of American Geographers annual meeting in Boston, Chitra Venkataramani, Ateya Khorakiwala, and Sai Balakrishnan offered invaluable suggestions. In Leiden, I am grateful to David Ehrhardt, Ward Berenschot, Joris Tieleman, Retna Hanani, Prio Sambodho, Flávio Eiro de Oliveira, Sarthak Bagchi, Ajay Gandhi, and Michael Collins for a lively debate about the concept of "brokerage" and for offering their interventions and reflections during a December 2017 meeting. Thank you to Natascha van der Zwan for graciously hosting me in Holland; our conversations pushed the book's conceptualization of value, while your local expertise deepened my love for cheese.

Our largest authors' get-together took place in January 2018 in Bombay, where contributing author Rohan Shivkumar graciously hosted us at the Kamla Raheja Vidyanidhi Institute for Architecture and Environmental Studies. I wish to thank University of Louisville for contributing financial support, and VK Phatak, Rohan Shivkumar, Srimati Basu, Bhushan Korgaonkar, Rachel Sturman, Savitri Medhatul, Lalitha Kamat, Lubaina Rangwala, Aneri

Taskar, Prasad Khanolkar, Namrata Kapoor, Vrushti Mawani, and especially Thomas Blom Hansen for their generous engagements during the workshop. Thomas read an early version of the manuscript in its entirety, and I am deeply grateful for his insights and feedback, from which the book benefited tremendously.

In October 2019, material from the book's second chapter—"Property"—was presented at a full-day symposium titled "From Space into Property: Urban South Asia Symposium," organized by Eric Beverley, Nikhil Rao, and Rachel Sturman in conjunction with the Annual Conference on South Asia in Madison. I wish to thank the participants of that symposium for their enthusiastic engagements with the project more generally, and for pushing the arguments in the chapter on "Property." Thank you to Eric Beverley, Nikhil Rao, Rachel Sturman, Svati Shah, Anant Maringanti, Mircea Rainau, Divya Subramanian, Anish Vanaik, Faiza Moatasim, Curt Gambetta, Sai Balakrishna, Namita Dharia, Michael Sugarman, John Harriss, and Jonathan Spencer. I am especially grateful to Jonathan Spencer for his support and unflagging encouragement throughout the process of bringing this book into being.

The project benefited greatly from the insights offered by participants at a spring 2019 conference on "Emergent Urban Transformations: Explorations of State, Society, and Politics in India," organized by Sanjeev Routray, Gavin Shatkin, Liza Weinstein, and Neil Brenner at Northeastern University. My deep thanks to Asher Ghertner, Jonathan Anjaria, Sai Balakrishnan, Llerena Searle, Swarnabh Ghosh, Sanjeev Routray, Gavin Shatkin, Liza Weinstein, and Neil Brenner for such a sparkling conversation. I am particularly grateful to Llerena and Sai for the delightful walk-and-talk on our way to the restaurant following the meeting, and to Sai for hosting me, and for the long and lovely morning walk over from Cambridge (I also wish to thank the good-humored Uber driver who rescued us from the potential embarrassment of having wildly underestimating how much time that walk would take).

The book's introduction has profited from insights offered by friends and colleagues who both talked with me through various ideas, and generously offered to read and provide feedback. For their generous engagements with the book's introduction, I am especially grateful to Joel Revill, Deborah James, Johan Lindquist, Laura Lieto, Nikhil Rao, Lisa Mitchell, Tarini Bedi, Sudev Sheth, Llerena Searle, William Mazarrella, and especially Rachel Sturman—whose unshakable confidence in this project kept me on track during moments of doubt, and whose formidable intellect is matched only

by her generosity of spirit. Rachel's unwavering support and good humor has taught me the meaning of true collegiality and intellectual companionship. Thank you.

At Duke University Press I wish to thank Miriam Angress, whose enthusiasm and confidence in this project has been unwavering. The two reviewers that Miriam recruited to read the manuscript provided wonderfully valuable feedback. Thanks to Susan Albury, our project editor at Duke University Press, who provided guidance through copyediting, design, and production. Thank you to Chitra Venkataramani for the beautiful illustrations in Lubaina Rangwala's chapter, Ranjit Kandalgaonkar for designing the brilliant graphic map in Gautam Pemmaraju's piece, and Anand Prahlad for the lovely drawing in Shailaja Paik's chapter as well as for penning the city maps on which the names of places mentioned throughout the book are indicated. Thanks to Celia Brave for preparing the index and to the Max Planck Institute for Social Anthropology in Halle for their support.

Reading through the final *Bombay Brokers* page proofs in the bleak days of December 2020, I find that, in the face of the dark news filling my inbox each morning, the ethnographic accounts in this book nonetheless fill me with hope: these stories suggest that perhaps too much attention is being paid to conventional and empowered ways of reading and narrating the present. By contrast, the stories that populate these pages shine light through the cracks and contradictions that inhere in those empowered discourses and framings, revealing a world so remarkably full of creativity that it seems anything could happen.