




RESEARCH ARTICLE

Sovereign dreams and bureaucratic strategies in princely Jaipur, c. 1750–1950

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Abstract

This article focuses on Jaipur city, capital of the Kachhawa Rajput state of Jaipur in the Rajputana region of north-western India (present-day Rajasthan). It seeks to braid the narrative of modernity in Jaipur with the tripartite networks of capital, knowledge and infrastructure that were contemporaneous to different phases of the city's transformation. Through a genealogical analysis of Jaipur's modernity from the eighteenth century to the mid-twentieth century, the article will present three distinct periods of its urbanization.

Introduction

Colonial metropolises have been the dominant templates of Indian urbanity since the nineteenth century. Scholarship on these cities focuses on colonial disciplining of spaces and bodies through interconnected discourses of health, hygiene and improvement.¹ Colonial cities emerged as both 'spaces of social control' and 'spaces of autonomy',² leading to contestations between the governors and the governed.³ The colonial city came to be seen as the site of emergence of the nationalist subject and a conduit of capital.⁴ In these dominant historiographies of urban India, princely cities received scant attention. Their contextual histories, spatial practice and social-political dynamics remained unexplored. The presumed 'traditionalism' associated with princely cities has marked their absence from dominant narratives

¹For detailed discussion on literature on colonial cities, see D. Haynes and N. Rao, 'Beyond the colonial city: re-evaluating the urban history of India, ca. 1920–1970', *South Asia: Journal of South Asian Studies*, 36 (2013), 317–35; E. Beverley, 'Colonial urbanism and South Asian cities', *Social History*, 36 (2011), 482–97; P. Kidambi, 'South Asia', in P. Clark (ed.), *Oxford Handbook of Cities in World History* (Oxford, 2013), 561–80.

²Beverley, 'Colonial urbanism', 483.

³*Ibid.*, 484.

⁴See, for instance, R. Chandavarkar, *The Origins of Industrial Capitalism in India: Business Strategies and the Working Class in Bombay, 1900–1940* (Cambridge, 1994); S. Kaviraj, 'Filth and public sphere: concepts and practices about space in Calcutta', *Public Culture*, 10 (1997), 83–113; P. Kidambi, *The Making of an Indian Metropolis: Colonial Governance and Public Culture in Bombay, 1890–1920* (London, 2007); D. Haynes, *Rhetoric and Ritual in Colonial India: The Shaping of Public Culture in Surat City, 1852–1928* (Berkeley and Los Angeles, 1991), among others.

of modernity in the subcontinent. An exploration of these multiple and often intersecting trajectories of modernity that were shaped in the crucibles of princely domains may complicate our understanding of modernity and its attendant urban form in South Asia.

Within the existing scholarly literature, princely cities have been examined from the lens of political economy and are characterized as spaces of competition between the landed nobility and the mobile mercantile class.⁵ Merchants became central to the growth and modern development of princely cities. The princely sovereign and his modernized bureaucratic apparatus also enabled the growth of new elite in these cities. This modernity, however, was very much ensconced within anachronistic structures of power. Janaki Nair argues that modernity in princely territories was a historically contingent process produced through practices of sovereignty that created a unique ‘monarchical modern’.⁶ One can add a political economic layer to Nair’s argument in the context of Rajputana, where the sovereign spectacle of modernity in cities was marked by the consolidation of the nationalist bourgeois and Marwari mercantile community at the expense of older ‘feudal’ groups. The monarch’s power was thus reinscribed within the twin regimes of property and democratic public sphere.

The contradictions of modernity in princely cities is also brought out by Eric Beverley who contends that Hyderabad’s urbanity was an amalgam of ‘technical developmentalism’ and ‘ethical patrimonialism’.⁷ This urbanity was mediated with the advent of expert bureaucrats in princely cities. In this context, M. Visvesvaraya, Mirza Ismail and V.T. Krishnamachari emerged as significant administrators who circulated through several princely states like Mysore, Hyderabad and Baroda in the early and mid-twentieth century. They shaped urban spaces and social and administrative structures that manifested the ‘modernizing’ desire of sovereign monarchs and anticipated a postcolonial future.⁸

This article focuses on Jaipur city, capital of the Kachhawa Rajput state of Jaipur in the Rajputana region of north-western India (present-day Rajasthan). It seeks to braid the narrative of modernity in Jaipur with the tripartite networks of capital, knowledge and infrastructure that were contemporaneous to different phases of the city’s transformation. Through a genealogical analysis of Jaipur’s modernity from the eighteenth century to the mid-twentieth century, the article will present three distinct periods of its urbanization. To begin with, modernity in eighteenth-century Jaipur could be discerned in the cosmopolitan and scientific exchanges with regard to astronomical knowledge under Jai Singh II. One also finds traces of Bhakti tradition in *Vaishnava* cults of the city, which drew connections to distant

⁵H. Spodek, ‘Urban politics in the local kingdoms of India: a view from the princely capitals of Saurashtra under British rule’, *Modern Asian Studies*, 7 (1973), 253–75.

⁶J. Nair, *Mysore Modern: Rethinking the Region under Princely Rule* (Minneapolis, 2011), 2.

⁷E. Beverley, *Hyderabad, British India, and the World: Muslim Networks and Minor Sovereignty, c. 1850–1950* (Cambridge, 2015), 223.

⁸For a discussion on the figure of the ‘modernizing’ prince, see B. Ramusack, *The Indian Princes and Their States* (Cambridge, 2004); M. Bhagavan, ‘Demystifying the “ideal progressive”: resistance through mimicked modernity in princely Baroda, 1900–1913’, *Modern Asian Studies*, 35 (2001), 385–409; and B. Pati and W. Ernst (eds.), *India’s Princely States: People, Princes and Colonialism* (London, 2007), among other works.

places like Vrindavan and Bengal. A more paradigmatic ‘modern’ turn emerged with the colonial mediation in the nineteenth century, resulting in the development of a new visual apparatus such as exhibitions, grand vistas in cities and Indo-Saracenic architecture. The British Arts and Crafts movement of this period was reflected in forms of knowledge and craftsmanship that developed in the city around the same time.⁹ Figures such as Sawai Ram Singh II, Swinton Jacob and Thomas Holbein Hendley were pivotal to this form of modernity. The last dominant phase of ‘princely’ modernity was a product of the reign of English-educated Maharaja Man Singh II and his wife, Maharani Gayatri Devi. The royal couple, along with Prime Minister Mirza Ismail, set the tone for the postcolonial capital city that Jaipur became in 1949. This was also a period marked by the nationalist space that opened up in the city through constitutional reforms and Praja Mandal politics. Each of these periods also marks a discrete congealment of the forces of capital, knowledge and infrastructure, which in turn shaped Jaipur’s urbanity.

The celestial and the astronomical

Jaipur’s foundation in the eighteenth century by Sawai Jai Singh II was a grand spectacle. The Kachhawa clan descended from the hill-fort of Amber to the barren plains of Dhoondar. Envisioned around the garden palace of Jainivas, the city stretched out to the south of the Aravallis. V.S. Bhatnagar writes that the site was chosen to ‘connect it with the Amber fort by the range of Kali Khoh, at the apex of whose re-entering angle he built Sudarshangarh [Nahargarh], which commanded this new capital’.¹⁰ It straddled major trade routes of that period.¹¹ Traders from Persia, Sindh, Delhi and Agra made it a flourishing centre of crafts and business.¹² Unlike many contemporary cities, Jaipur’s spatial configuration reflects a grid-like pattern, comprising nine squares or *chowkris*. It is supposedly inspired by the *mandala* design. *Mandala* is defined as a grid plan in the traditions of *Vastu Shastra*. It is a principle of division of space and may be composed of any number of squares. Each *mandala* has a deity to whom it is devoted and is also inhabited by particular occupational and caste groups. Temples and the Palace are also integral parts of *mandala* architecture.¹³ In Jaipur, three parallel arterial roads intersect the east–west route in the middle, forming the squares or *chaupars*. The markets or the bazaars are situated on these main roads, while the inner streets are meant for residential quarters, traditionally designed with one or multiple courtyards, known as *havelis*. A thick wall, having seven gates, encloses the entire city. The nineteenth-century topographical accounts of the city mention the presence of wells and reservoirs here, which could supply water to the city through a network of underground and overground canals.¹⁴ Monica Horstmann, in her

⁹For more on the Arts and Crafts movement’s origins in Britain, see A. Dutta, *The Bureaucracy of Beauty: Design in the Age of Its Global Reproducibility* (New York, 2006).

¹⁰V.S. Bhatnagar, *Life and Times of Sawai Jai Singh II, 1688–1743* (Delhi, 1974), 331.

¹¹A.K. Roy, *History of Jaipur City* (Delhi, 1978), 61–2.

¹²L. Babb, *Emerald City: The Birth and Evolution of Indian Gemstone Industry* (New Delhi, 2013), 49–84.

¹³See V. Sachdev and G. Tillotson, *Building Jaipur: The Making of an Indian City* (London, 2002), 15–16.

¹⁴R. Bhatnagar, ‘Town planning and domestic architecture of Jaipur city AD 1727–1835’, Rajasthan University Ph.D. thesis, 1989.



Figure 1. Walled city of Jaipur with all its *chowkris* and gates. Source: Survey of India, 1971.

account of kingship in Jaipur, links this layout of the city to kingly rituals. She notes that kingship was ‘constituted in public space and public space is constituted by and for the sake of articulation of governance’.¹⁵ The city became a representation, as it were, of kingship and sovereignty (Figure 1).

The foundational geometric design of eighteenth-century Jaipur city has been cited as an example of early modern urban planning.¹⁶ Jawaharlal Nehru saw it as a reflection of the founder’s ‘scientific approach’.¹⁷ Nehru wrote:

Jai Singh would have been a remarkable man anywhere and at any time. The fact that he rose and functioned as a scientist in the typically feudal milieu of Rajputana and during one of the darkest periods of Indian history, when disruption and war tumults filled the scene, is very significant. It shows that the spirit of scientific inquiry was not dead in India.¹⁸

¹⁵M. Horstmann, *In Favour of Govind Devji: Historical Documents relating to a Deity of Vrindavan and Eastern Rajasthan* (Delhi, 1999), 4.

¹⁶For more on Jaipur’s eighteenth-century plan, see Sachdev and Tillotson, *Building Jaipur*; and B.V. Doshi, ‘Vidyadhar Nagar: continuity and new opportunities for the future of Jaipur’, *Ekistics*, 61 (1994), 276–97.

¹⁷J. Nehru, *Discovery of India* (Delhi, 2008), 282–3.

¹⁸See *Jaipur: Its History, Rulers and Facts upto the Year 1948*, issued on the occasion of the 55th Session of the Indian National Congress in Jaipur, presented by the Maharaja of Jaipur, 1948 (reprint edn, Delhi, 2002).

M.F. Soonawala's study (1948), sponsored by the National Institute of Sciences, would go on to further strengthen this assessment.¹⁹ This study of the five Jantar Mantar observatories of Jai Singh II situated him as the harbinger of 'science' in medieval India. Jai Singh II became a celebrated figure of nationalist modernity, scientific temper and the Nehruvian narrative of development.²⁰

However, running counter to these modernist interpretations of Jaipur's design, epics from the royal court present a fabled blending of Jai Singh's sovereign will and divine geography in Jaipur's urban space. They contextualize his urban vision in the circulatory regimes of religious power, capital and knowledge in the eighteenth century. Girdhari's *Bhojansara* (AD 1739) and Krishna Dutt's *Ishwarvilas Mahakavya* (AD 1749) represent this imagination of Jaipur. In *Bhojansara*, Jai Singh's city came across as a space where mundane life of the market merged with mythical landscapes of the garden enclave through sovereign mediation. There is significant tension between the intensive and extensive, measured and eternal qualities of the places described in the verses. Describing Jainivas, the seed of the city yet to come, Girdhari wrote:

There were Mukatmahal, Rajamaharal, Badalmahal, three doored verandahs, bathrooms and kitchens in that palace. Big canals were running. There were many reservoirs of water and tanks...Behold! Here are new trees, new leaves, new branches, new flowers and fruits, new beautiful parrots sit on them. New bees are humming and birds are singing...Sawai Jaisaha Maharaj Mukatmani has his Jainivas garden with a perennial spring reigning therein.²¹

This image of Jainivas is replete with expressions of newness, plenty and heavenly beauty. Simultaneously, it speaks of the 'perennial' spring in the garden of the king – indicating the enduring dispensation of his sovereignty. Idyllic gardens are integral to the divine topography of Hinduism. In similar terms, Jaipur here is conjured as a fabulous celestial space. These romantic descriptions are interspersed with more mundane life of the city and its infrastructural components. Girdhari attributed the plan of Jaipur to the will of Jai Singh II when he wrote: 'He laid out many streets, and thus enhanced the joy of heart. He said to Vidyadhara that a city should be founded here. Jainivas should come within this city, and this is my wish. There should be many cross roads with shops on them. The backyards of houses should meet together.'²² The city becomes an extension of the sovereign space, beyond the garden of Jainivas. There is a community envisaged with connected backyards. However, there are complex detours away from this intimate

¹⁹M.F. Soonawala, *Maharaja Sawai Jai Singh II of Jaipur and His Observatories* (Jaipur, 1952).

²⁰A prime example of Nehru's urban imagination is the city of Chandigarh, which came up in the 1950s. R. Kalia, *Chandigarh: The Making of an Indian City* (London, 1987). The mining and steel towns of Durgapur, Bhilai, Bokaro and Dhanbad also extended this urban form. These became cradles of the early postcolonial middle class, comprising engineers, managers, etc. See J. Parry, *Classes of Labour: Work and Life in a Central Indian Steel Town* (London, 2020).

²¹P.K. Gode, 'Jaipur: two contemporary tributes to Minister Vidyadhara, the Bengali architect of Jaipur at the court of Sevai Jaising of Amber (A.D. 1699–1743)', in *Dr. C. Kunhan Raja Presentation Volume: A Volume of Indological Studies* (Madras, 1946).

²²*Ibid.*

sphere of garden, streets and homes and back towards the imaginations of urban enterprise. The city turns into a big market place, with commodities from diverse lands and merchants engaged in transactions. Girdhari described it thus:

There are many cross roads with shops on them and thousands of *hats* where merchants of different countries are plying their trades...Many elephants, Arab horses and camels from Kutch come here. Embroidered cloth and plain cloth and jewelled ornaments are brought to Jaipur for sale from different parts of the World...The Europeans also live here...They are very wise and intelligent...Hundis of lacs and crores are current here.²³

The city is represented here as a global marketplace, with commodities and merchants and significant sums of money coming from faraway places. This suggests that Jaipur was ensconced within vast trade networks and had exposure to European merchants. Apart from this, the city is also exhibited as a site of Hindu religiosity: 'There are many temples here such as those of Govind deva, Gopinath, Siva, Ganesha and Sun...The Brahmans engage themselves in Yajnas from early dawn...in every house Katha is being performed. They all sing the 18 Puranas.'²⁴

Girdhari recreates divine landscapes similar to Jainivas, filled with temples, gardens, overflowing streams and lakes. *Ishwarvilas Mahakavya* also dwells on the religious life of the city. A hagiographic account of Maharaja Ishwari Singh, this work details the *Asvamedha Yajna* (horse sacrifice) conducted by Jai Singh before founding Jaipur and the grants given to priests.²⁵ Many of these priestly clans became important administrators in the court and their lineage remained influential until the late nineteenth century. Vidyadhar, the founding planner of Jaipur, was one such figure, as per several historical accounts.²⁶ Early twentieth-century scholars have traced Vidyadhar's genealogy back to his Bengali ancestors, who had arrived in Amer following Man Singh's (1573–1614) exploits in Bengal in the seventeenth century.²⁷ He rose to the rank of *desh diwan* in 1729 AD and received a *sirpao* (royal gift) for his assistance in the construction of the city of Jaipur.²⁸ In *Bhojansara*, Jai Singh instructs him to build Jaipur, alluding to precise measurements: 'It [Jaipur] should be populated in one year and should be *twelve kosas* in extent. Merchants from different places should be called to stay here...there are shrubs, sand-dunes, gullies all over. These should be *levelled up* and then the *havelis* should be constructed...I have got immense treasure. Take what you want and use it.'²⁹ Here, the plan of Jaipur represents a violent, modernist, urban imagination, where nature is conquered by infrastructure. It also introduces the quintessential

²³Gode, 'Jaipur'.

²⁴*Ibid.*

²⁵P.K. Gode, 'The Asvamedha performed by Sevai Jaysing of Amer (1699–1743)', *Poona Orientalist*, republished from *Mimamsa Prakash*, vol. II (Poona, 1937).

²⁶Gode, 'Jaipur'; Roy, *Jaipur City*; J. Sarkar, *A History of Jaipur, c. 1503–1938* (Delhi, 2009).

²⁷B. Deb, 'Vidyadhara', *Annals of the Bhandarkar Oriental Research Institute*, 28 (1947), 212–18. This is also quoted in Roy, *Jaipur City*, 43.

²⁸Bhatnagar, 'Town planning'.

²⁹*Ibid.* My italics.

feature of the eighteenth-century walled city-*havelis* (courtyard houses). Later, these turned into workshops for gem-cutters, polishers and jewellery manufacturers.³⁰ The *haveli* represented both the intimate life of its residents and the world of commodities, bringing together the two strands that pull at each other in Jaipur.

Eighteenth-century Jaipur was therefore an amalgam of contradictory idioms: the sublime space represented in the verses of Girdhari and Krishna Bhatt were counterpoised to the astronomical and mathematical imaginations of Jai Singh II and his European conversations. Several Jesuit Missions had visited Jaipur during Jai Singh's reign from the French colony of Chandernagore. Blake Smith reads this connection between French Jesuit astronomers and Jai Singh in 1734 as the king's attempt to underline his political and cultural reach.³¹ Dhruv Raina has argued that Jai Singh's experiments reflected the distinct 'cosmopolitanism' of early modernity that ranged from the mid-fifteenth to the mid-eighteenth century.³² He was well versed with Persianate astronomy originating in the treatise of Ulugh Beg of Samarkand and sought to revise it in his Persian work *Zij-i-Mohammad Shahi*, perhaps to assert his sovereignty through knowledge production.³³

Astronomical knowledge was therefore a significant site of political contestation in the eighteenth century. Jai Singh constructed his observatories at the heart of the Mughal Empire, in five cities, some of which were not even under his direct patronage. This has also fuelled the interpretation of his astronomical works as 'Hindu' and inspired by *Jyotisha Shastra* by Chandradhar Sharma 'Guleri'³⁴ alongside a similarly religious understanding of his urban planning.³⁵ The knowledge of celestial bodies and astrological predictions gave rise to a speculative regime for governing one's future. Jaipur city was perhaps an astrological device embodying Jai Singh's political aspirations. These were the times when local governors of the Mughal Empire were gaining political influence. Jaipur's astrological geography and Jai Singh's *Asvamedha Yajna* may represent similar ambitions.³⁶ It may be confusing for a reader of his urban plan to accommodate these two images – a 'scientific' king and harbinger of the so-called Indian Renaissance – who is also simultaneously seen as a figure of 'Hindu resurrection' in Mughal India. This was also evident in his engagement with Bengal Vaishnavism.

At the moment of its foundation, the discourses of infrastructure, capital and knowledge were mapped onto two different registers in eighteenth-century

³⁰Babb, *Emerald City*.

³¹B. Smith, 'Madras Observatory: from Jesuit cooperation to British rule', *Aeon*, 11 Oct. 2017.

³²D. Raina, 'French Jesuit scientists in India: historical astronomy in the discourse on India, 1670–1770', *Economic and Political Weekly*, 34 (1999), 30–8. See also D. Raina, 'Circulation and cosmopolitanism in 18th century Jaipur: the workshop of Jyotishis, Nujumi and Jesuit astronomers', *Éditions de l'École des hautes études en sciences sociales* (2015), 307–29.

³³There is another interpretation of the writing of *Zij-i-Mohammad Shahi* by Jai Singh, placing this in his efforts to 'secularize' the calendar for purposes of administration of state. See A. Rehman, *Maharaja Jai Singh II and Indian Renaissance* (Delhi, 1987), 14–15.

³⁴British Library (BL), India Office Records (IOR), Chandradhar Sharma 'Guleri' papers, MSS Photo Eur 77.

³⁵Sachdev and Tillotson, *Building Jaipur*, 56–7.

³⁶Roy, *Jaipur City*.

Table 1. The celestial and the material in eighteenth-century Jaipur

Discourses↓	Registers→	Celestial Register	Material Register
Infrastructure		Temple–garden–palace	Markets–streets– <i>havelis</i>
Capital		Royal treasures	<i>Hundis</i> /market exchanges
Knowledge		<i>Jyotisha</i> /astrology	Geometry and astronomy

Jaipur: ‘celestial’ and ‘material’.³⁷ While the former symbolized the sovereign’s relation to the divine or otherworldly, the latter put the city at the centre of commerce, trade and calculative rationality. Infrastructure was represented in terms of ‘temple–garden–palace’ and ‘markets–streets–*havelis*’. Capital was in the form of ‘royal treasures’ and ‘*hundis*/market exchanges’. Finally, knowledge was envisaged in terms of ‘*jyotisha*/astrology’ and ‘geometry and astronomy’ (see Table 1). The city was a staging ground for the dialectics of an eternal ritual space on the one hand and wheels of commerce on the other. Friction between these contradictory regimes of modernity continued for the next two centuries, first in the nineteenth-century ‘modernization’ under Ram Singh II and then in the mid-twentieth-century developmental paradigm initiated by Mirza Ismail.

Visual complex

The late nineteenth century in princely states saw the advent of a new visual regime, mediated by the colonial paramount and the ‘modernizing’ prince, which also had implications for urban space in Jaipur. The figure of the ‘modernizing prince’ has drawn much attention in historiographical narratives of the Indian subcontinent during the British imperialism.³⁸ This figure was typically educated in the mores of the English, well travelled and enlightened enough to keep his subjects at par with those residing in British India – his state replete with the latest infrastructure in the field of health, education, arts and politics. In Jaipur, too, Ram Singh II (1830–51) was the harbinger of these changes. Ram Singh was well ensconced within the colonial pedagogy and was trained in English mores by his private tutor from Agra. He was also an amateur photographer³⁹ and patron of arts and Parsi theatre in the city. During his reign, a Public Works Department and a municipality were established in Jaipur in 1860 and 1869 respectively.⁴⁰ Different kinds of public infrastructure were built, such as public lavatories and a garbage train (*kachra* rail) that collected waste from the walled city and dumped it near its southern periphery. Open boulevards and stately vistas marked urban space outside the walled enclave⁴¹ and Jaipur became a centre of industrial arts and crafts.

³⁷See J. Duncan, *The City as Text: The Politics of Landscape Interpretation in the Kandyan Kingdom* (Cambridge, 1990), for an analysis of Buddhist cosmology in the royal city of Kandy.

³⁸For more on the modernizing prince, see R. Stern, *The Cat and the Lion: Jaipur State in the British Raj* (Leiden, 1988); Nair, *Mysore Modern*; Ramusack, *Indian Princes*; Pati and Ernst (eds.), *India’s Princely States*.

³⁹Y. Sahai, *Maharaja Sawai Ram Singh II of Jaipur: The Photographer Prince* (Jaipur, 1996).

⁴⁰*Jaipur Gazetteer*, Directorate of District Gazetteers, Government of Rajasthan, 1987.

⁴¹Colonial conceptions of hygiene and sanitation had also impacted the urban form in many ways. See I. Banga (ed.), *City in Indian History: Urban Demography, Society and Politics* (Delhi, 1994).

Just like Jainivas garden was the imaginary seed of Jai Singh's new capital city, the tripartite discourse of capital, infrastructure and knowledge came together in architectural developments that took place in the city during the nineteenth century, along with the advent of new technologies such as street illumination, a proscenium stage theatre and photography. Ram Singh II was known to be a photography enthusiast and established a 'Foto ka Karkhana' in the City Palace, which comprised 2,700 collodion glass plate negatives, 7,000 albumen prints, several photo albums, cameras, printing boxes, lenses and photo frames.⁴² A clock tower was also constructed in Ram Singh's period, whose temporal rhythms regulated the city around it. As in mid-nineteenth-century Europe, the clock tower represented an 'omnipresent public eye'.⁴³ The new public parks such as the Ramniwas Garden generated a vista of openness outside of the walled city, which was modelled on the European cities of the time.⁴⁴ It is noteworthy, too, that during the nineteenth century urban planners in Europe were preoccupied with congestion and prescribed open green spaces in the form of public gardens and parks.⁴⁵

A central aspect of the colonial visual complex of the nineteenth century was the exhibitions in Europe, which displayed the 'Orient'.⁴⁶ Spectacle was everywhere: in new machines, street façades in the cities and railways. The exhibitions also created a 'façade' of the Orient for everyone to see.⁴⁷ However, the 'exhibitionary complex' spilled beyond Europe with the institutionalization of arts and crafts in the colonies too. The Department of Science and Arts, opened in 1857 under the Board of Trade in Britain, standardized art pedagogy in colonial and princely India.⁴⁸ The founding of the 'Jeypore School of Art' was part of this project and the artists trained here famously assisted British 'experts'. Two figures, in particular, brought their expertise and pedagogic concerns to Jaipur. The first was Swinton Jacob, chief engineer of the newly founded Public Works Department (PWD). He produced seven volumes of *Jeypore Portfolio of Architectural Details* from 1890 to 1913. It was envisaged as a design template for artisans, who may have wanted to embellish buildings with ornamentation. Art School teachers such as Lala Ram Baksh played an important role in the compilation of the portfolio, by training the draftsmen-students.⁴⁹ Under Jacob, Jaipur PWD garnered a reputation for its beautification and architectural works.⁵⁰ It often came into conflict with *Raj Imarat*, a royal department patronized by the Jaipur ruler for additions to the palace structure and other royal buildings. Lala Chiman Lal, a local master-craftsman, was the head of *Raj Imarat* from 1886. He famously designed Mubarak Mahal, a two-storeyed

⁴²Sahai, *Maharaja Sawai Ram Singh II of Jaipur*.

⁴³C. Otter, *The Victorian Eye: A Political History of Light and Vision in Britain, 1800–1910* (Chicago, 2008), 72.

⁴⁴R. Sennett, *Flesh and Stone: The Body and the City in Western Civilization* (London, 1996).

⁴⁵*Ibid.*

⁴⁶T. Mitchell, 'The world as exhibition', *Comparative Studies in Society and History*, 31 (1989), 217–36; S. Mathur, *India by Design: Colonial History and Cultural Display* (Berkeley, 2007).

⁴⁷Mitchell, 'Exhibition', 218.

⁴⁸Dutta, *Bureaucracy of Beauty*.

⁴⁹S. Jacob, *Jeypore Portfolio* (London, 1894).

⁵⁰He is also believed to be the mind behind the pink colour on Jaipur's walls. For more, see G. Dhabhai, 'Visible histories, invisible contestations: narratives of "pink" in Jaipur', *Pakistan Journal of Historical Studies*, 2 (2017), 24–42.

guesthouse in the City Palace to host European visitors.⁵¹ Rambagh Guest House in the suburbs came next, with a dining room, billiards hall, reception hall and verandahs. After serving as the residence of Man Singh II, the last ruler of Jaipur, it was turned into a luxury hotel.⁵² Thomas Metcalf argues that the architecture of *Raj Imarat* under Madho Singh was specific to the ‘constructed traditions’ of the colonial state, which required rulers to receive British guests in their palace. ‘The Indo-Saracenic palace provided them [rulers] the stage on which to enact their fantasies of “Oriental rulership”.’⁵³

The second British official crucial to the aesthetic fashioning of Jaipur was Thomas Holbein Hendley, the resident-surgeon of Jaipur. He was a connoisseur of local brassware, *koft gari* (gold or silver inlays in iron weaponry), blue pottery, textiles, wood carving, stone carving and other industrial arts produced in the Art School. He transformed the newly constructed Albert Hall into a museum, which exhibited a vast array of local industrial arts, frescos and specimens of minerals, rocks and fossils. In his address on the opening of Albert Hall Museum in 1887, Hendley expressed his interest in educating the public of Jaipur through this exhibit, noting that ‘it is desirable that the artists and inhabitants of Jeypore should have opportunities of seeing what is recognized by all nations as art work of the highest type’.⁵⁴ The permanent museum was preceded by a series of exhibitions in the city that showcased the arts of Jaipur to tourists, general public and buyers. The 1866 Indo-Colonial Exhibition in London devoted two courts to Jaipur’s art and catapulted the city to international fame.⁵⁵ A *Raj Imarat* building – *Naya Mahal* in the outer courtyard of the City Palace – was the site for the ‘Jeypore Exhibition’ (1883) curated by Hendley. In his memorials patronized by the Jaipur court, Hendley annotated chromo-lithographs of the displayed wares in four volumes reminiscent of Jacob’s *Portfolio*.⁵⁶

The exhibitions informed a physical and material arrangement of urban space, ordering a specific kind of ‘public’ in its wake. The opening of the museum saw an increase in the number of tourists to the city. Interest in arts intensified among the locals who visited the exhibitions and the museum in numbers.⁵⁷ These exhibitions and the museum not only curated the colonized people and their life as ‘exotic’, but also re-valued their objects as ‘artifacts’ arranging them in a particular logic and regulating the flow of visitors.⁵⁸ The executive committee of the Jeypore Exhibition had included Pandit Opendranath Sen, the principal of Jaipur School of Art, and Babu Kanti Chander Mukherjee, the prime minister of Jaipur. Both came from Bengal and were part of the English-educated elite of the city.

The social and political ascent of the Bengali gentry, who collaborated with British officials, signalled a reconfiguration of relations between the Jaipur court

⁵¹G. Tillotson, *Jaipurnama: Tales from the Pink City* (Delhi, 2006), 166.

⁵²T. Metcalf, *An Imperial Vision: Indian Architecture and Britain’s Raj* (Berkeley, 1989), 139.

⁵³*Ibid.*, 140.

⁵⁴Rajasthan State Archives, Jaipur, general (old) files, no. G-12-02, T.H. Hendley, ‘Statement to be read at the opening of the Albert Hall and Museum Jeypore’.

⁵⁵Tillotson, *Jaipurnama*, 149.

⁵⁶T.H. Hendley, *Memorials of the Jeypore Exhibition*, vol. I: *Industrial Arts* (Jaipur, 1893).

⁵⁷Tillotson, *Jaipurnama*, 158.

⁵⁸T. Bennett, ‘The exhibitionary complex’, *New Formations*, 4 (1988); Mitchell, ‘Exhibition’.

and the nobility since the nineteenth century. Power was increasingly centralized in the court, resulting in a growth of bureaucratic influence. Since the late nineteenth century, most bureaucrats in the Jaipur court were from outside the state. At first, they were drawn from the Rajput elite; later, they were mostly of upper-caste Bengali descent.⁵⁹ An ascent within the ranks of state administration meant an augmentation of status and wealth, which led to a competition between different bureaucratic groups in the state.⁶⁰ The rise of a Bengali elite in Jaipur progressively marginalized the Rajput nobles' power within the state. This is reflected in the ceremonial position given to a Rajput noble in the Executive Committee of the Exhibition, a gesture designed simply to appease the royal lenders of artifacts.⁶¹

The 'global market' of Jai Singh's imagination had materialized in Jaipur by this time and capital was diversified through growth in tourism and trade. The exhibitionary complex produced through building, beautification and museumization reordered urban space and its vision. British experts and English-educated Bengali administrators mediated this sovereign spectacle. The princely figure was thus refashioned under indirect rule to resemble an *Oriental* monarch with modernizing aspirations that contended and collaborated with paramount power. The site of such contention was the 'spectacular city'.

Mirza *tod-fod* and 'radical distributive modernity'

In Jaipur state, the tenure of Mirza Ismail as prime minister under the reign of Man Singh II brought a surge of transformations. This period can be interpreted through the lens of what one might term 'radical distributive modernity'. His policies enabled the folding back of capital from the colonial entrepôts to small-scale inland urban centres such as Jaipur. This generated a new set of political and economic negotiations between the sovereign, his kinsmen and his bourgeois subjects. Mirza Ismail introduced a new language of urban 'improvement' partly attributable to European urban planning and partly to nascent ideals of nationalist development. New institutions of politics, finance and governance marked Jaipur's twentieth-century urbanity. There was reconfiguration of revenue administration and commencement of economic planning.⁶² The English-educated bureaucratic elite, circulating through princely states along with a set of developmental and governance practices, replaced the Bengali bureaucrat of the nineteenth century in Jaipur state.

In 1942, Sawai Man Singh II appointed Mirza Ismail as the Diwan (prime minister) of the state. Loved and hated in equal measure in his brief four-year term, Ismail was an accelerant in the city's life. Previously, he had been the Diwan of Mysore and later became the prime minister of Hyderabad. As a 'serial Diwan',⁶³

⁵⁹L. Rudolph and S. Rudolph, 'Bureaucratic lineage in princely India: elite formation and conflict in a patrimonial system', *Journal of Asian Studies*, 34 (1975), 719.

⁶⁰*Ibid.*, 727–30.

⁶¹Tillotson, *Jaipurnama*, 147.

⁶²*Jaipur: Its History, Rulers and Facts*.

⁶³This term is used by Narayani Gupta in her analysis of Mirza Ismail's developmental programme in different princely states. See N. Gupta, 'Mirza Ismail the "serial Diwan" who made industrial Bangalore beautiful, painted Jaipur', *The Print*, 5 Jan. 2020.

his ideas were formed in Mysore and pursued in other states. He also brought several professional administrators from Mysore with him to Jaipur. S. Hiramiah, from among them, became chairman of Jaipur Constitutional Reforms Committee (CRC);⁶⁴ Mr Rollo became the special education officer.⁶⁵ Circulation of personnel and policies among princely states created the necessary infrastructure in these territories, which eased their merger with postcolonial India.

The administrative refurbishing of Jaipur state under Mirza Ismail's guidance furthered the formation of a bourgeois democratic sphere in the city. The setting up of CRC, the Legislative Assembly, the Board of Industries and Commerce⁶⁶ and a partly elected Municipal Board acted as its institutional pillars. A memorandum submitted to the Capital Enquiry Committee in 1949 by prominent city-based businessmen and nationalist politicians hailed Ismail's 'modernist' approach to urban development.⁶⁷ His proximity to these groups was instrumental in shaping the post-integration urban politics in Jaipur.⁶⁸ Many members of this urban bourgeoisie were also part of the Congress-affiliated Praja Mandal in the state.⁶⁹ Some of them also got elected to the Legislative Assembly and the Municipal Board and took forward Ismail's urban vision. For instance, Devishankar Tiwari, a Praja Mandal member, went on to play a central role as chairman of the Urban Improvement Trust in the 1950s. Ismail's appointment gratified the Jaipur Praja Mandal, which had long demanded an 'Indian' prime minister.⁷⁰ But it also angered many others, who criticized the 'progressive' government of Jaipur for appointing an 'outsider' as the prime minister. This refreshed bureaucratic competition in Jaipur that had been in vogue since the eighteenth century, when Rajput nobility and mercantile elite had to contest for courtly power with Bengali ministers

⁶⁴The Praja Mandal criticized the constitutional reforms of the early 1940s for falling short of granting political rights to the citizens, especially the right to vote. See Nehru Memorial Museum and Library (NMML), Hiralal Shastri papers (HSP), press clippings, 'Democratic rule for Jaipur', *Statesman*, 1 Jan. 1944.

⁶⁵C.V. Rao, *New Jaipur: A Collection of Tributes and Appreciations* (Jaipur: Aug. 1946), 23.

⁶⁶The Board of Industries and Commerce looked after the rejuvenation of craftsmen and artisans from the state and had prominent industrialists as members, including Seth Sundar Lal Tholia, a famous jeweller; Seth Sohan Mal Golcha, who owned various businesses and talkies in the city; D.G. Sodhani, cotton merchant; and Lakshmi Narain Fatehpuria and B.G. Mehta of Jaipur Metal Works. See NMML, HSP, no. 365, 'Correspondences between Mirza Ismail and G.D. Birla'.

⁶⁷Private collection of Mr Siyasharan Lashkari, 'Memorandum submitted to the Capital Enquiry Committee for Capital and High Court of Rajasthan', *Jaipur Rajdhani Samiti* (Jaipur, 1949), 4. The Capital Enquiry Committee was set up under the Ministry of States, Government of India in 1949 to compare Jaipur, Jodhpur and Ajmer for suggesting an appropriate capital city for the Greater Rajasthan Union formed in 1949. It was chaired by Sh. B.R. Patel and examined administrative convenience, climate, buildings, water and electricity supply and other factors to determine the choice.

⁶⁸K.L. Kamal and R. Stern, 'Jaipur's freedom struggle and the bourgeois revolution', *Journal of Commonwealth Political Studies*, 11 (1973), 231–50. Jaipur state also played an important role in the process of integration, thus making its ruler Man Singh II as the first Rajpramukh of the state. For more on this, see V.P. Menon, *The Story of the Integration of the Indian States* (Delhi, 1956).

⁶⁹Praja Mandals were Congress-affiliated organizations in the princely states since the early twentieth century. They worked under the All India States' People's Conference, founded by Jawaharlal Nehru in 1927.

⁷⁰NMML, HSP, press clippings, 'Responsible government in Jaipur: wanted an Indian prime minister', *Hindustan Times*, 31 Aug. 1939. The anti-British sentiment had intensified in the princely states too, in tandem with the Quit India movement in British Indian provinces. One may also speculate on the impact of World War II in catalysing this sentiment.

like Vidyadhar or Kanti Chander Mukherjee. The *Rajasthan Times*, founded in 1941, popularized the slogan 'Jaipur Jaipuriyon ke liye' (literally, 'Jaipur for the Jaipuris') in a bid to resist Ismail's appointment. It was banned from 1944 to 1947.⁷¹

The conflict over Ismail's appointment was reflected in his policies towards urban improvement in Jaipur as well. They were informed by two disparate idioms: one was the modernist template of Western urbanism and the other was the city envisioned by Jai Singh II. A *New York Times* article from 1942 compared Ismail's work in Jaipur to that of Robert Moses, who is known as the planner of twentieth-century New York City.⁷² Moses is infamous for his inorganic and violent imagination of urban landscape.⁷³ His urban imagination involved demolitions and accelerated gentrification of areas inhabited by the urban poor. In a similar way, Ismail's improvements in Jaipur also energized the urban land market through a series of institutional and material changes. Land was extracted from older networks of patronage and kinship and became alienable 'private property'.⁷⁴ By the 1940s, all saleable land was annually assessed for revenue to be paid by the owner/buyer.⁷⁵ Hereditary ownership of land grants reduced considerably, decimating the priestly class and Rajput nobility, which had gained power over the last two centuries. Old *havelis* were demolished to build new markets within the walled city as well. Agarwal Bazar and Dhamani Market in the walled city were built on old plots of demolished *havelis*.⁷⁶ Many of these were eventually turned into godowns and commercial hubs.

Ismail's modernism was strategically interspersed with his invocation of princely past of Jaipur through beautification measures. He oversaw the earliest revitalization effort for the walled city – new coats of pink paint, renovation of verandahs and slum removal.⁷⁷ A tribute to him noted: 'It occurs to me as though Maharaja Jai Singh, suddenly remembering that his work had been left unfinished, must have appeared in a dream to the present ruler and insisted on completion of his work. It is however inconceivable that any but Sir Mirza of all persons in India today could have undertaken such a task.'⁷⁸ Not all were as generous with their praise for Ismail. Many from Jaipur of his times remember him as 'Mirza *tod-fod*' (Mirza, the destroyer) suggesting the extent of demolitions he undertook to materialize his vision.⁷⁹ Many accounts remember the cutting down of trees during Ismail's period.⁸⁰

Ismail's period in Jaipur was replete with tales of support and resistance. Ismail was instrumental in instilling confidence among the business elite. He is attributed

⁷¹M. Madhup, *Jaipur ki Patra Patrikaon ka Swadhinta Andolan mein Yogdan* (Jaipur, 1970).

⁷²Rao, *New Jaipur*.

⁷³M. Berman, *Modernism in the Streets: A Life and Times in Essays* (New York, 2017).

⁷⁴For comparative analysis of rise of property in land in a colonial city, see A. Vanaik, *Possessing the City: Property and Politics in Delhi, 1911–1947* (Oxford, 2019).

⁷⁵*Jaipur: Its History, Rulers and Facts*, 93.

⁷⁶V.C. Pathak, *Rajasthan ki Vibhuti: Devishankar Tiwari* (Jaipur, 1993).

⁷⁷Rao, *New Jaipur*.

⁷⁸*Ibid.*, 7.

⁷⁹Personal interview, A.F. Usmani (a scholar of Urdu and Persian and ex-resident of the walled city), 22 Dec. 2016.

⁸⁰Pathak, *Devishankar Tiwari*.

with establishing Jaipur as the new capital city of postcolonial Rajasthan. Ghanshyam Das Birla, the Calcutta-based Marwari businessman and a close associate of Gandhi, personally congratulated Ismail on his arrival to Jaipur.⁸¹ On the other hand, local merchants, who were heavily invested in the walled city's infrastructure, resisted Ismail's policies. One Shyamlal Verma, editor of *Jaipur Samachar* and a member of the Hindu Mahasabha, resisted Ismail owing to his identity as a member of the Urdu-speaking elite.⁸² The Hindu Mahasabha and other fringe Hindu groups had shown their disdain towards Ismail's policies. Their main problem was the destruction of Hindu temples and street shrines.⁸³ In 1943, members of Hindu Sabha also led a fast in support of Hindi as the court language.⁸⁴ By 1947, they got together with walled city merchants against the policy of refugee rehabilitation, which had been initiated by Ismail.

The Hindu Sabha, under the leadership of Seth Sohanmull Golcha, a local businessman, met the home secretary of Jaipur in 1947 to discuss the 'worsening communal situation' in the city.⁸⁵ The Hindu Sabha was also concerned with 'pollution' in the city caused by the presence of refugees and advocated their rehabilitation away from the urban core. New markets were being created in the walled city by the late 1940s for refugee rehabilitation. The arrival of these new trading groups from Sindh had generated insecurities among Hindu *baniya* and Jain merchants in the city. Seth Sohanmull Golcha was not just a member of several civic associations, mineral development syndicates and patron of several public events, but also the founder of the first fully air-conditioned cinema hall in the walled city, Prem Prakash Talkies.⁸⁶ It was located in Chaura Rasta, at the cusp of the old and new markets of the walled city. The rooted economic and social power of such influential figures in the walled city was threatened by the arrival of refugee entrepreneurs.⁸⁷

The economic interests of local mercantile groups assumed a communal form and became a movement against the 'external' elements in the state. However, the Praja Mandal mitigated this conflict to some extent when they sided with Ismail against the landed nobility. Newspapers such as *Lokvaani* (edited by Devishankar Tiwari) and *Jaidhwani* (edited by Suryanarayan Chatruvedi and Ladlinarayan Goyal) were significant voices of support.⁸⁸ They were cognizant of Ismail's role in providing an impetus to industries in the state. These newspapers also participated in the modernist discourse on health, hygiene, public morality

⁸¹Kamal and Stern, 'Freedom struggle'; Tillotson, *Jaipurnama*, 241.

⁸²Madhup, *Patra Patrikaon*.

⁸³BL, IOR, Jaipur Affairs, file no. C/6-13, letter from H.M. Poulton to Gillian, 30 Jan. 1943. See also Tillotson, *Jaipurnama*, 240.

⁸⁴BL, IOR, Jaipur Affairs, letter to Kenneth Fitze, secretary to the crown representative, from the political agent, 26 Feb. 1943.

⁸⁵Rajasthan State Archives, Bikaner (RSAB), Mahkama Khas Records (MKR), pamphlet by Shri Hindu Sabha, 18 Jun. 1947. The contention was between the Hindu Sindhi refugees from Pakistan and local Hindu and Jain merchants, in addition to the Hindu-Muslim tensions in the city during the 1940s. For more on this, see G. Dhabhai, 'The *Purusharthi* refugee: Sindhi migrants in Jaipur's walled city', *Economic and Political Weekly*, 53 (2018), 66–72.

⁸⁶See *Pictorial Jaipur Directory: Silver Jubilee Book* (Jaipur: Silver Jubilee Publications, 1948–49).

⁸⁷Dhabhai, 'Purusharthi refugee'.

⁸⁸Madhup, *Patra Patrikaon*.

and municipal government. Similar views were also recorded in the meetings of the Jaipur Municipal Board, which had had representatives from the Praja Mandal since the late 1930s.⁸⁹ Activities such as soap-making, manufacture of leather, dyeing and tanning, which were targeted in the meetings and in the newspapers run by city's business elite or Praja Mandarists, were specific to Muslim and lower-caste groups. The exclusion of these groups from urban politics and space made politics in Jaipur akin to a 'bourgeois democracy'.⁹⁰ The following section focuses on the reorganization of power in Jaipur state and the uneasy alliance between the monarchical government (durbar) and the Praja Mandal.

Return of capital

The nationalist bourgeoisie of Jaipur and the durbar had enjoyed cordial relations since the 1930s, when Man Singh II attained full powers after a phase of minority administration under British tutelage. On this occasion, two prominent figures from among the city's mercantile community – Jawaharlal Jain and Kesharlal Ajmera – published the 'Jaipur Album' (1935). Intended as a directory with a compilation on various aspects of the city, the Album's organizers were explicit in their loyalty to the young Maharaja.⁹¹ Both Ajmera and Jain were also close to the Praja Mandal leadership. By the 1940s, the demands raised by Jaipur's business community for fiscal, political and infrastructural support had come to fruition.⁹² There was a return of expatriate Marwari capital to the city and the establishment of several key industries by Birlas and Poddars. Jaipur Metal Industries, Jaipur Glass and Potteries Work, Jaipur Engineering and Construction Corporation, Jaipur Spinning and Weaving Mills Ltd and National Ball Bearings Corporation were some of the prominent firms.⁹³ In 1931, Maharaja Man Singh II began inviting businessmen from Shekhawati to invest in Jaipur city. He was partly successful with the establishment of a cotton mill in 1932.⁹⁴ It would take another decade for the expatriate Marwari capital to settle in the city. Conditions within and outside the state in the early 1940s saw a cascading entry of Marwari industrial capital and philanthropic establishments in Jaipur.

The 1940s were conducive for the ascendancy of industrial capital in Jaipur owing to several factors. First, Ismail's revenue policy and fiscal assessment of urban property made land available for industries. A number of *jagirdaris* (nobles' estates) in the state changed hands, passing from the Rajput nobility to the industrial elite and the newly emerging, educated 'middle class' in Jaipur.⁹⁵ The nobility considered this as an onslaught on the 'ancient aristocracy' of Rajputana, of which the ruler himself was a part. They believed land grants to be 'inalienable' and bound

⁸⁹RSAB, MKR, municipality records 1928–42, file nos. 2 and 169 I.

⁹⁰For more on their disenfranchisement, see Kamal and Stern, 'Freedom struggle'.

⁹¹Tillotson, *Jaipurnama*, 225–6.

⁹²Its early expression was in the form of a pamphlet. See G.N. Somany, 'Mein Jaipuri Kya Chahta Hun: needs and demands of a Jaipuri' (Jaipur, 1922).

⁹³*Jaipur: Its History, Rulers and Facts*, 123–5.

⁹⁴Tillotson, *Jaipurnama*, 221.

⁹⁵Pathak, *Devishankar Tiwari*. For more on the debate on the middle class in mid-twentieth-century India, see Haynes and Rao, 'Colonial city', 325–6.

by kinship to the ruling clan.⁹⁶ This disdain for the nobility engendered an unlikely alliance between them and the British officials in Jaipur against Ismail's policies.

The British also interpreted Ismail's urban improvements as extravagance at the cost of public interest during wartime.⁹⁷ In the 1930s, the British themselves had established the supremacy of the durbar over the landed nobility through the C.U. Wills Report.⁹⁸ However, in the 1940s, they changed their stance towards the landowners because of the growing nationalist presence in Jaipur state. Several big nobles (Thakurs) and small estate holders (Bhomias) sought British mediation against these forces too. A letter from the Political Department testifies to this:

Everybody including these Thakurs [Rajput landowners], talks about grants of cash and land made to Hiralal Shastri for his Banasthali School by Sir Mirza Ismail... The three Thakurs who visited are very bitter in their criticism of the Jaipur Government's policy that does nothing to encourage the loyal backbone of the state whose territories provide the most of the many soldiers serving with his Majesty's forces, while it actively propitiates and actually rewards the Praja Mandal that is the declared enemy of the Paramount Power.⁹⁹

Secondly, the lands of nobility in the rural areas were being reassessed and tenancy was regulated. Revenue payments were commuted to cash. In some cases, lands were granted to Praja Mandal leaders like Shastri and to industrialists such as G.D. Birla for setting up educational institutions there.¹⁰⁰ Pilani emerged as a hub of engineering education in the postcolonial period.

Finally, the constitutional reforms in Jaipur under Ismail completed the political process of 're-allocating' status from the nobility to the 'professional bourgeoisie'.¹⁰¹ The Praja Mandalists had outnumbered the members of Sardar Sabha, a body of Rajput nobility in the Constitutional Reforms Committee.¹⁰²

By the early 1940s, the war had impeded the growth of overseas trade and forced merchant interests to move inland as 'industrial capital'.¹⁰³ It also paved the way for a nationalist paradigm of industrialization expressed in the initial planning regime. There was also a shift in investment from commodity trade to industry. The inhospitable political environment in Bengal could have triggered the flight of Marwari capital from its bastion.¹⁰⁴ Anti-Marwari sentiment among Bengalis heightened

⁹⁶BL, IOR, Jaipur Affairs, file no. C/6-13, resolution of the Sardar Sabha, 17 Jan. 1943.

⁹⁷M. Ismail, *My Public Life: Recollections and Reflections* (London, 1954).

⁹⁸See Kamal and Stern, 'Freedom struggle'.

⁹⁹BL, IOR, Jaipur Affairs, letter from Political Agent H.M. Poulton to Resident Gillian, Jaipur, 8/12 Jan. 1943.

¹⁰⁰BL, IOR, Jaipur Affairs, letter from Mirza Ismail to H.M. Poulton, 17 Feb. 1943.

¹⁰¹Kamal and Stern, 'Freedom struggle', 235.

¹⁰²BL, IOR, Jaipur Affairs, letter from Political Agent H.M. Poulton to Resident Gillian, Jaipur, 8/12 Jan. 1943.

¹⁰³Perhaps the war-induced need to relocate economic activity in hitherto untapped terrain was also a reason for the industrialists' support for Ismail and his appointment.

¹⁰⁴A confidential report of 1942 mentioned the return of Seths from Calcutta and Burma to Shekhawati with large amounts of gold and silver. They also attended a Praja Mandal meeting. BL, IOR, Jaipur Affairs, fortnightly report ending on 15 Jan. 1942.

during the cloth famine of 1940s.¹⁰⁵ A booklet from 1945 expressed this antagonism laced with an ethnic undertone: ‘These quota holders and wholesalers own the cloth of all Bengalis. Most of them are Marwaris; Kolkata’s Burrabazaar is their main fort and Marwari Chamber of Commerce their main patron.’¹⁰⁶

Eventually, many Marwari business houses moved from trade in cloth and money lending to cement plants or metallurgical operations. This shift was helped along by the developmentalist aspiration of the indigenous bourgeoisie, anticipating the impending postcolonial moment. The Bombay Plan of 1944, which was authored by significant nationalist businessmen, reflected this aspiration.¹⁰⁷ Princely cities emerged as the new site for this developmental paradigm since World War II.¹⁰⁸ The career of Jaipur Metal Industry may be a case in point. It started in Calcutta, then shifted to Mehsana (Baroda state) and finally arrived at Jaipur in 1943.¹⁰⁹

The industrial ‘mode of production’ in Jaipur did not necessarily lead to corresponding ‘relations of production’, where the structure of class antagonism impeding the growth of capital. Cheap labour was available, but not organized enough to resist the industrial elite. This was in contrast to the colonial cities, where the long presence of capital had turned them into sites of sharpening class contradictions and resultant militant trade unionism.¹¹⁰ Most factory workers in Jaipur were landless rural migrants or Hindu refugees from Sindh who had settled in Jaipur post-1947.¹¹¹ The latter were termed ‘frozen man power’,¹¹² which also shaped their self-perception as ‘purusharthis’.¹¹³ This fed into the larger narrative of refugee labour for developmental works in postcolonial India, primarily in Bengal and Punjab.¹¹⁴

The increasing significance of Jaipur city in post-integration Rajasthan 1949 was premised on the dominance of the urban-educated elite in Praja Mandal politics. This educated, ‘professional bourgeoisie’ in the Constitutional Reforms Committee cultivated ‘personal, familial and political ties’ with the members of industrial elite, comprising local merchants and Marwari expatriates from colonial

¹⁰⁵S. Lahiri, *Kapor Chai*, 1st edn, July 1945 (Kolkata, 2009), 31. I thank Himadri Chatterjee for this reference.

¹⁰⁶*Ibid.*, 40. Translated from the original Bengali by the author.

¹⁰⁷M. Kudaysia, ‘“The promise of partnership”: Indian business, the state and the Bombay Plan of 1944’, *Business History Review*, 88 (2014), 97–131, at 98–9.

¹⁰⁸Beverly, *Hyderabad*.

¹⁰⁹*Jaipur: Its History, Rulers and Facts*, 123.

¹¹⁰Chandavarkar, *Working Class*.

¹¹¹M.V. Mathur, D.L. Gupta *et al.*, *Economic Survey of Jaipur City* (Jaipur, 1965), 36–9; this volume was published for the Planning Commission.

¹¹²*Jaipur: Its History, Rulers and Facts*, 126.

¹¹³Dhabhai, ‘Purusharthis refugee’.

¹¹⁴In Bengal, this was accompanied by the ‘de-peasantization’ of East Bengali refugees. See H. Chatterjee, ‘Partitioned urbanity: a refugee village bordering Kolkata’, *Economic and Political Weekly*, 53 (2018), 93–100. In Punjab, the narrative of refugee labour is linked to the postcolonial ethic of work. See J. Loveridge, ‘Between hunger and growth: pursuing rural development in partition’s aftermath’, *Contemporary South Asia*, 25 (2017), 56–69.

centres such as Bombay and Calcutta.¹¹⁵ These bonds of trust or ‘fraternal’ networks were conducive to industrial investments in Jaipur.¹¹⁶

The urban elite also co-opted other regional political forces and made the city into a centre of industry and development by the 1970s. One such alliance was between the Praja Mandal and Jat peasantry of Shekhawati in their struggle against the nobility. In 1938, the prominent leader of the Praja Mandal, founder of Bajaj industries and treasurer of the All India Congress Committee, Seth Jammalal Bajaj, co-opted the Jat Kisan Sabha leader Harlal Singh. In 1939, another Marwari businessman and then Calcutta mayor, Seth Anandilal Poddar, attended a Kisan Sabha meeting in Sikar.¹¹⁷ The uneasy alliance of ‘co-belligerents’¹¹⁸ – Praja Mandal and Jat peasants – defined the character of Rajasthani politics for decades. Muslims, untouchable castes and small Rajput landowners (the *bhumias*) lost out in political competition.¹¹⁹ None of these groups, including the Jat peasantry, got enfranchised through the 1944 Jaipur Act. However, the infrastructural changes in Jaipur enabled the sustenance of a newly emergent professional middle class. Ismail’s urban improvements in the 1940s and activities of the Urban Improvement Trust under Devishankar Tiwari in the 1950s were decisive factors in this regard.

The Urban Improvement Trust and the rise of the middle class

The ‘radical distributive modernity’ manifested in Ismail’s urban improvements had empowered a section of the educated middle class in Jaipur. This class grew with the expansion of industries, banking institutions, education and so on. The Urban Improvement Trust (UIT) of Jaipur, formed in the mid-1950s, continued to strengthen the middle class in the city. The 1941 census registered a major growth in Jaipur’s population.¹²⁰ New housing schemes were launched to absorb this growth. In these schemes, plots were sold at nominal prices to the residents, many of whom were part of the business elite and burgeoning professional class. Jaipur became a cultural and educational hub as well, a destination for All India Conferences of writers, scholars and political parties. This accelerated land development in the city. For instance, the site of the Congress session of 1948 was turned into three residential colonies: Gandhi Nagar, Bapu Nagar and Bajaj Nagar. The houses in these colonies belonged to the new class of government employees, small traders and urban professionals.

The UIT initiated many housing schemes under the chairmanship of Praja Mandal leader, Devishankar Tiwari, from 1958 to 1962. There were special schemes for employees of the Auditor General Office, Khadi workers and journalists.¹²¹ In

¹¹⁵R. Stern and K.L. Kamal, ‘Class, status and party in Rajasthan’, *Journal of Commonwealth and Comparative Politics*, 12 (1974), 276–96.

¹¹⁶For discussion on forms of capital in other non-metropolitan contexts, see D. Haynes, *Small Town Capitalism in Western India: Artisans, Merchants and the Making of the Informal Economy 1870–1960* (Cambridge, 2012); and S. Chari, *Fraternal Capital: Peasant-Workers, Self Made Men and Globalization in Provincial India* (Stanford, 2004).

¹¹⁷Girijashankar, *Marwari Vyapari* (Bikaner, 2017), 137.

¹¹⁸A term used by Kamal and Stern, ‘Freedom struggle’.

¹¹⁹*Ibid.*

¹²⁰Mathur, Gupta *et al.*, *Economic Survey*.

¹²¹Pathak, *Devishankar Tiwari*.

1957, three 'classes' of plots for different income groups came up in the Moti Doongri area, just outside the walled city. At the same time, nobles' estates, like Uniara Bagh, Chomu House and Hathroi Scheme, became residential colonies at the behest of the Urban Improvement Trust.¹²² Another major spate of housing colonies in this period came up for refugee rehabilitation in and beyond the walled city. The Punjabi and Sindhi refugees were provided *thurries* (tenements) in the main bazaar streets of the walled city. Owing to the resistance of local *baniya* traders and shop owners, they were later accommodated in newly founded Bapu Bazar, Nehru Bazar (1959), Aatish Market and Indira Bazar (1977).¹²³ They were also provided land for houses in areas such as Raja Park and Adarsh Nagar.

These colonies changed urban life, food cultures, consumption patterns and reoriented Jaipur's development beyond the walled city. There were further transformations in urban space with the advent of private co-operative societies and the Housing Board in 1970.¹²⁴ Plots were then sold to the highest bidder, leading to a housing crunch for urban poor and lower middle classes. This encouraged illegal co-operatives in many parts of Jaipur, leading to 'unplanned' urban development that became a characteristic of cities of the Global South in the late twentieth century.¹²⁵ Ismail's urban improvements entailed a re-spatialization beyond the walled enclave, which became sites for new colleges, a university, schools, residential colonies and government offices. This trend continued in the postcolonial period as well, shaping Jaipur's space as the future capital city of Rajasthan.

Conclusion

This article has narrated the history of Jaipur through the conceptual prism of modernity, resting on the triad of capital, infrastructure and knowledge. Originating in the sovereign will of Sawai Jai Singh II, Jaipur's modernity was premised on the contestation between divinity and science. The city in the eighteenth century was ensconced within networks of astronomical knowledge, Vaishnavism and mercantile capital. The visual apparatus mediated by British officials informed Jaipur's nineteenth-century modernity. English became the *lingua franca* of administration. This saw the decimation of the kinship-based power of the Rajput nobility. The sovereignty of the ruler was centralized *vis-à-vis* his kinsmen; yet it was held together by legal and administrative machinery. The idioms of law and reform transformed social relations, economic structure and political power. The charismatic figure of royalty gave way to a monarch, circumscribed within the new political economic order. As royal treasures depleted and land was unshackled from older networks of sacrality and blood, the city became a centre of the aspirational elite. The discourse of democracy and freedom replaced the lore of inherited loyalties. The largely Hindu upper-caste bourgeoisie and upcoming middle class settled on the erstwhile estates of the Rajput nobility. The last monarch, Man Singh II, diversified into the fields of military and sports in a bid to reinsert the royalty

¹²²*Ibid.*, 149–51.

¹²³See Dhabhai, 'Purusharthi refugee'.

¹²⁴S.B. Upadhyay, *Urban Planning* (Jaipur, 1992), 14–15.

¹²⁵For more on this, see A. Roy, 'Why India cannot plan its cities: informality, insurgence and the idiom of urbanization', *Geography, Urban Studies and Planning*, 8 (2009), 76–87.

within new regimes of cosmopolitanism and capital. Once a part of an 'ancient aristocracy', the sovereign ruler became a property owner and reverted to litigation to claim land in his own city. Past acts of sovereignty were reinterpreted in the new lexicon of urban land ownership and developmental imperatives of postcolonial urbanism. Several court cases and civic disputes between the state departments and the royal family point towards this conflict. Jaipur's contemporary urbanity continues to remain enmeshed in the play of sovereign spectacle and the developmental exigencies of the postcolonial state.