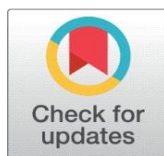
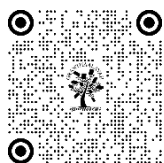


SEX AND THE CITY: OBSERVATIONS ON HOMOSEXUAL MEN'S CRUISING SPACE IN A PUBLIC PARK OF DELHI

Kiran Bhairannavar ¹ 

¹Department of Geography, University of Delhi



Corresponding Author

Kiran Bhairannavar,
ashakiranakash@gmail.com

DOI
[10.29121/shodhkosh.v3.i1.2022.5222](https://doi.org/10.29121/shodhkosh.v3.i1.2022.5222)

Funding: This research received no specific grant from any funding agency in the public, commercial, or not-for-profit sectors.

Copyright: © 2022 The Author(s). This work is licensed under a [Creative Commons Attribution 4.0 International License](https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/).

With the license CC-BY, authors retain the copyright, allowing anyone to download, reuse, re-print, modify, distribute, and/or copy their contribution. The work must be properly attributed to its author.



ABSTRACT

In recent years, cruising sites have increasingly become deserted owing to factors such as the popularisation of Internet-based dating and urban redevelopment projects, among others. The paper focuses on male homosexual cruising in a public park of Delhi. It aims to throw light on a once popular cruising site- now closed, focusing on the performative aspects of cruising and the ways in which men produced a queer space against the dominant spatial coding of the city. Using ethnographic methods of participant observation and conversational interviews with 18 men the study notes that the space of the park was central to the realisation of queer men's life worlds. Men used various tactics to attract attention of other men and find sexual companionship, even as they tactically navigated the park space in reaction to the hostile heteronormative world around.

Keywords: Cruising, Delhi, Queer Men, Public Park

1. INTRODUCTION

In recent years, with the onset of application-based online dating sites, male homosexual cruising is a dying art. Before the Internet and other ICTs became popular, cruising was one of the key methods for homosexual men in Delhi to find and connect to each other. There existed multiple cruising areas in the city where homosexual men congregated to make connections, how so ever transitory. These spaces were more than just for cruising for sex. These were community spaces of friendship and romance. However, today these spaces have increasingly become deserted with the popularization of application-based online dating sites (Bhairannavar, 2016). In addition, these spaces have also been the target of urban local bodies to be reclaimed, redeveloped or destroyed on account of security, urban beautification and "public nuisance". Many of these sites are sanitized and transformed into re-developed and regulated areas thus robbing the homosexual community iconic places that once hosted hundreds of men looking for connections, sex and socialisation. The paper provides an ethnographic snapshot of a cruising area in Delhi based on the data generated between 2006 and 2012 and aims to provide an insight into the performative aspects of cruising by homosexual men in

a park of Delhi. The site later was redeveloped by the New Delhi Municipal Council (NDMC) and closed for everyday public use in 2016 thus erasing an iconic space where men's queer lives once unfolded. The study was conducted in a context where the Indian state criminalized sex between consenting adults, the public attitude towards homosexuals was that of complete non-acceptance and silence, religions condemned them as immoral and the mainstream media caricatured them to mockery. The city in its dominant spatial coding was not only unaccommodative, but also heteronormatively hostile. As such the critical infrastructure comprising the State, the society, the capital and the media that define the 'Representations of Space' (Lefebvre, 1991) through discursive and material practices produced a heterosexist and a homophobic geography all around, marginalizing and invisibilising other forms of sexualities. In such a socio-spatial context cruising sites became central to homosexual life-worlds. The paper aims to provide an ethnographic snapshot of the once existing world of homosexual/non-heterosexual men in public park in Delhi where I focus on two broad aspects: First, how does a site become central to homosexual cruising and performance of homosexual lifeworlds? And second, in what ways did men constantly strategize and negotiate with the 'mainstream' heterosexual society and the state, the homosexual world, and themselves in the city space by re-working and subverting the dominant spatial codings of the city in performing their queer lives.

2. METHODS

The paper draws data from the ethnographic study conducted in Delhi between 2006-2012. For this paper, I largely focus on the observations and interviews conducted between 2006-2008 and complement with data generated for a larger study on sexual geographies of Delhi subsequently until 2012. The study was conducted in a park in the Connaught Place- an upmarket shopping and entertainment district in the centre of New Delhi. The area hosts upmarket restaurants, retail outlets and street vendors and is a busy place throughout the day. Connaught Place has long been a host to queer men's groupsⁱ. Participant observation and conversational interviews were the main methods employed in the study. The study commenced in January 2006 by mere observations at first in a street adjoining the Central Park and then in the park which I later discovered. Initially I spent time from 5 to 10 pm in the evening to ascertain the timings of my subjects of study. Once it became clear my visits to the cruising area were from 6 pm to 11 pm at least four times a week for the next few months. I also made regular visits between 7 am and 5 pm to ascertain what use the park was put to during different times of the day. Initially, I was new to the place and the culture of cruising, observation meant an appropriate method to start with. Later I moved on to converse with the cruising men which did not work, so I decided to participate in the act of cruising and blend into the landscape. I negotiated my strategy from being an observer to that of a participant by participating in the act of cruising which provided me a chance to learn the dynamics of cruising, connecting with men, experiencing their fears and faith in the place and also take them into confidence to request them to participate in my research (Bhairannavar, 2021). Given the status of homosexuality in the society many would not respond if one was not interested in sex or if I did not fit into their preferences (height, looks, class, gender role, age etc). Thus, I had to blend in the landscape before moving to ask for participation in the study. The data was generated by mid-2008 using these three methods: Observation, Observant Participation and Conversational interviews. By then I had access to many men of whom 18 men (between ages of 19 to 55) had agreed to conversational interviews. Mostly, though not exclusively, men who could not or did not prefer to access other homosexual spaces-parties, pubs and cyber chat rooms, visited the park. The observations were documented as thick descriptions and field notes mainly written at home though I did write down some facts which had high chance of flying off my memory e.g. number of visitors on particular time and day of the week. Similarly, the conversational interviews were noted down on paper. The subsequent period of study was conducted as part of my doctoral research on sexual geographies of Delhi until 2012ⁱⁱ. The data generated on the park during this time is used as occasionally to make larger observations.

3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

3.1. ETHNOGRAPHIC SNAPSHOT AND THE SETTING: QUEERING SPACE

Every day as the evening descends on the streets of the Connaught Place, Delhi, several individual men gather in particular park. The stage is set: less crowds, clear streets, a darkening sky and a dying noise. Men come sashaying with roving eyes, turning heads around, glancing into eyes of others for signs of willingness for the night. The body speaks the language: the twisting palms, the sashaying walk, the flamboyant clothes and the enquiring glances.

They appear like glow worms in the faint neon light and raise their gaze at a slant angle, only to withdraw it at the next moment waiting for a reciprocation from the others, even as men stand there along the railings with eyes filled with a sort of lust and enquiry, scanning and gazing the passer-by from toe to head. Some hoot, others hum, while still others ask, "what is the time?" to attract the walking man's attention.

When gazes meet a several times, on and off, and the visual scanning done and over, with brighter prospects for a further conversation, they smile and shake hands and talk, after which some move out in pairs, others part, yet others finish it all there and the rest wait.

As the evening progresses into the night, they leave themselves behind and return to their respective 'homes'. But Sunday evenings are different. The cruising area transforms itself into something more: a meeting place for male sexual dissidents, a popular gay hangout who gather here to meet old friends and have a nice time- well dressed, smelling sweet, looking strange, most at their bitchy best- move in groups- commenting, discussing, gazing, mocking, and pitying others- walking the street to attract attention- to establish their sexual empires.

This goes on until 10 pm and then they all move out one by one, and get lost into the city. And the world moves on.

But then there are several men who come here regularly like:

Mehraji (53) and Sameer (23): fast friends, who together make other friends. Pranav (25) who talks to none but picks most of his guys from here.

Jiten (28) who disappeared some months ago.

An old man who keeps inviting younger boys to his home but nobody cares.

The middle-aged men, some with pot bellies, who day after day keep waiting for men to respond but return empty handed many a times.

The 'Made-for-each-other-couple' 45 year old Michael and 26 year old Shyam, who kiss and greet each other and have written a romantic epic in this place.

And then there is 'the heroine' (22) who every evening walks the street in style putting it on fire, and takes rounds in the park, lighting every man's imagination. But talks to none.

Two policemen come at least once every evening and check if everything is fine, questioning suspicious men, sometimes exhorting money and moving away.

(Collated from Field notes, The Connaught Place, New Delhi, Nov 2006)

Hollister (1999) concludes that sexual behaviour is not just a repertory of techniques and 'cannot be separated from locations where it takes place' (c.f. Kitchen and Lysaght, 2002, p.10). To understand the centrality of place and the queering of it, one needs to understand the locale within which a particular behaviour takes place. The space of park is central to the performance of cruising. The park is a bit isolated by its location, even though is located in the city centre. Being on a raised platform, one has to make a conscious choice of climbing the stairs and entering the park. The park gives a distinct view of the surroundings from inside but obscures the happenings in the park from outside at the ground level. It has lavishly laid out lawns and iron benches all around with two gates on either side opening towards a huge market on the one side and a bus terminal, the Delhi Metrorail station and the street in question on the other. A path is laid out within the park connecting the four gates which then form a rectangular walk-way (embanked with steel railings). The very location of the park gives it an advantage of being a cruising area as it is isolated yet characterised by constant circulation of anonymous people-mainly men, crisscrossing through the park from either side. The park is a popular place for people to rest in the day, for busy shoppers to stop by, for workers to have lunch and rest in the afternoon between shifts, and families to spend time. As the evening falls, the place, lit by neon lights, is occupied by some heterosexual couples, passers-by (mainly men) and pre-dominantly by men seeking sex with other men. Most of the shops close down by 8 pm when many people withdraw to their homes thus increasing the prospects for a potential pick up. The bus terminal and the Delhi Metrorail service ensured handy transport to various parts of the city, even as they brought crowds to the city center. As such men converged here during late evenings exchanging gazes, conversing, picking other men and many a times, having sex. On any given week day evenings there were 20 to 25 men present of

whom many were regulars, but on Saturdays the number of visitors would be larger around 50. On Sundays their numbers ranged between 60 to 100 and more.

Such a congregation isn't a surprise. Research on homosexuality shows its intricate relationship with the city (Castells and Murphy, 1982; Chauncey, 1994; Whittle, 1994; Bell and Valentine, 1995; Knopp, 1995; Weston, 1995; Bech, 1997; Seabrook, 1999; Shahani, 2008; Hubbard, 2012). For Bech, the city is the social world proper of the homosexual, his life space...a place where homosexual can be... the city, with its crowds of mutual strangers, is a place where homosexual can come together with others; at the same time and for the same reasons...In the city the homosexual makes contact.....The city is not merely a stage on which a pre-existing, pre-constructed sexuality is displayed and acted out; it is also a space where sexuality is generated.....the crowd generates feelings of supply and possibilities....(Bech 1997, pp 118-119) Yet such chances of cruising only become possible in certain spaces of the city like the above park which provide certain ambiguity between crowds and isolation, darkness and light, rest and movement. The street and the pathways in the park are transformed into a sort of ramp where men walk and let themselves be watched by other men. The use of gaze '*glancing into eyes of others for signs*' is very important instrument in making contact in the crowd. It 'is a composition of smaller gazes'. 'A known gaze', as Bech calls it, between two men is just enough to make a contact. According to Bech, '...there is something democratic about the gaze insofar as it ensures certain equality, independence and free choice. It neither compels nor commits the other one to any counter performance. It is ruthless yet gentle' 'It avoids the countless risks of error and repulsion that may arise' (Bech, 1997, pp 104-108). The clothes, the gait, the speech and the gaze speak as signifiers for their holder in making a successful bid for courtship. Couples then move and make out in specific public places like the nearby public toilet or darker corners of the park, shop backyards or at their chosen places- hotel rooms, homes etc.

Beyond cruising this place was also a meeting place for same sex lovers, friends and lower class male sexual dissidents especially on Sunday evenings. The former spent their time with each other in the park or its vicinity while the latter roamed in gangs discussing and "bitching" around loudly in full flamboyance, never caring for the others even as they tried attracting attention. While such acts were totally a personal choice, they were acts of resistance to and transgression of the heterosexual 'Representations of Space' and normative 'Spatial Practices' (Lefebvre, 1991) that the city strongly adhered to through legal, social and moral discourses, mediated images and organisation of space. As such these men produced their own 'lived space' (Lefebvre, 1991) through their actions within the power geometries of the larger society.

Moreover, in the middle of the city such acts constituted an appropriation and territorialisation of queer spaces how so ever temporary and small, challenging the heterocentric character of public spaces. The dressing styles, the gait, the speech, the gaze, the acts of cruising and having sex subverted the boundaries of the heterosexual spatial coding even as they actively destabilised the gender, sexual, and public- private binaries (Leap 1999). But such an appropriation and queering was never complete nor defined, as it was continuously breached and contested by the heterosexual state and society, *Eg Presence of families in the park, dogs mating on the street, a girl and boy engaged in acts of intimacy, police visits to keep the order of space*, (as observed in the field) thus making both the worlds to exist in a continuous state of flux and tension temporally and spatially, and at the same time making them fluid and over lapping. Nevertheless, in Delhi where gay institutional and formal spaces were yet in stages of infancy then, and given the social, cultural and legal non acceptance, streets and parks still played an important role in constructing the queer life worlds. And it is through these spatial practices that they redefined the space and provided an alternative reading to the city.

3.2. QUEER TACTICS OF CRUISING

Men's visit to the park for cruising was neither direct nor easy. Men constantly negotiated and strategised while occupying these spaces at scales of the self, the queer space and the city, given the social attitudes towards homosexuality. This section throws light on the tactics men used while they navigated the space of the park and their own queerness.

Almost all men who visited the park had alternative names, so as not to let their real names out. Neither did anybody disclose their identity of profession, caste, sometimes religion and residence. Many preferred not to talk to anyone and everyone, but remained discreet and used "silent" communication methods- signifiers, to contact men of their preference. When approached by an unwanted person, they just walked away signifying unwillingness which was accepted with dignity by the other party. Almost all the participants in the study informed they would not recognize

someone whom they had seen, met, conversed or had sex with, if they ever happened to meet the person elsewhere other than the park. The interview excerpts of Ganpat and Pranav below provide useful insights:

I don't even look at them if I happen to meet them in other places...once a guy happened to pass by when I was conversing with my uncle right in front of his [uncle's] house. The guy greeted me as he passed by. My uncle wanted to know who was this butterfly [sic] and how did he know me? I responded in the same surprised tone, "I thought he greeted you and was thinking of asking you the same question". (Ganpat, 52)

I live far away and till date haven't met any of them. If I do, I better look the other way. (Pranav, 25)

Men questioned any label put on them by others because of the public nature of the place- anyone could access this place and so need not be gay. Many strategised in such a way as not to be labelled or found to be "out of place". This can be seen from the observation on the field below.

Pranav walks in front of the café, buys himself a cup of coffee and sipping it examines the books from the book vendor on the street even as his eyes scan the field for potential partners. He walks ahead and returns again after ten minutes, this time looking at the posters being sold along the street even as he is careful enough to keep himself alert of who is passing by and if there is a potential person of interest in sight. (Field diary, 17th July 2007, 6.35 pm)

Men always carefully studied a person before approaching him to avoid picking the wrong one which could invite unwanted hassles. The looks, gait, dressing, gaze and the time they paused, stayed, walked away or repetitively made their presence in the park, each of it was examined to identify the person. In words of Ganpat,

That man (pointing out to Michael, 45) once picked a guy to penetrate [sic] him...u know what I mean...but instead got himself penetrated which was a great shame...the old man (pointing out to Mehraji, 53) standing there, got beaten up when he approached a straight guy for sex. I always study a person carefully before approaching to talk to him. (Ganpat, 52)

Many refused to sit with effeminate men because they were the ones most vulnerable to be questioned by the police due to their appearance and comportment. When the police visited, most effeminate men transformed into straight-acting men. Effeminate men in fact restructured their gait in the presence of police. Heroine who walked the paths of the park regularly suggests,

Walk like a bull and not a butterfly in front of the police. (Heroine, 26)

Men also made it a point not to interact with those men who moved in groups because then the whole group would identify them and "haunt them for life". Those groups were believed to be that of professional prostitutes.

They can be a hell, identify you in public, visit your home and make it known to all the neighbourhood that you belong to their line. They can be a public embarrassment. (Jagat, 33)

Not all but considerable number of men avoided sitting on the railings to avoid being labelled gay and getting questioned by the police. They preferred to walk in the park or occupy the benches. Men high on alcohol were also avoided.

Don't sit on those railings. The police always target them. Best be away from drunks because they are the once who create a scene. They force you to get into a conversation and then create a drama attracting everyone's attention. (Heroine, 26)

Generally, men resided in places which were at a considerable distance from the city centre. For example, Vasant Vihar (12 Kms), Trans Yamuna (10 kms) and Dwarka (22 kms), Naraina (13 kms), Govindpuri (15 kms). The park, centrally located was enroute between their work and home. Those who lived nearby had not much of a choice but made it sure that none of their known faces were around. Furthermore, the acquaintances whom they found here were treated with one agreement: 'Don't ask, don't tell'. It was an unwritten, unvoiced understanding of keeping their "other" life under the blanket.

Everyone knows what the other person comes here for. Then why create the ruckus by destroying someone's reputation. It is about having fun, meeting others like you. So better keep quiet, enjoy and move on. (Somesh, 44)

Yet the dangers of the street were always present. Being from a socially unacceptable, legally questionable and politically "wrong" side of the world, they were even more vulnerable of being robbed, cheated, raped and at times, beaten up.

I picked a guy from here three months ago and took him home. After having sex, I proceeded to wash in the bathroom. He locked me inside, took away my wallet, cell phone, watch, money and expensive branded clothes. I couldn't even lodge a complaint. Who do I approach? Who do I tell? In turn, I will be exposed. (Joseph, 27)

I introduced my friend to a guy I got to know from here. But two days later my friend complained that the guy visited him the other day, had applied certain sedative on his lips and chest which he [the friend] licked while having sex, and fell unconscious. The guy robbed him. (Mohan, 23)

I fixed a Manipuri boy for Rs 800. As we were moving towards the darker part over there [pointing to another less crowded park] I saw a group of Manipuri men, possibly his friends, following us. I sensed the danger and refused to go further...in fact had to shoo them away as they got near to me and flee from there. (Ganpat, 52)

Such incidents made it difficult for men to trust anyone and take them to their place. So, most of the sexual acts were consummated nearby in public spaces itself. For many the question of Place always came in between and was one of the biggest factors that intervened for a sexual union not to take place. Moreover, incidents like violence and robbery brought to the forefront the homosexual life in Connaught Place in full media glare and increased the surveillance from time to time. Incidents in the city in particular and the country in general had serious implications on gatherings of men here. Any likelihood of danger and harassment were always perceived such that men avoided this place altogether. When Pushkin Chandraⁱⁱⁱ was murdered, it is said, the whole park was deserted and phone numbers instantly changed overnight. Men never stepped out into the alternative sexual city for a long time. When the bombs shook Hyderabad and Ajmer^{iv}, men again avoided this place as it was perceived that police security would be tight in the city with the park under heavy surveillance.

3.3. SPACE OF JUXTAPOSITION

For men who accessed the park for the purpose of cruising and meeting their queer friends and lovers, their world revolved around it. For them this place signified liberation and freedom. Elsewhere they were not at home in spaces of "home", workplace and other public spaces. However, the social discourses of deviance and perversion and "inappropriate behaviour" were so ingrained that they constantly strategized, self-regulated and self-censored their behaviour by internalising the gaze of the powerful (heteronormative) and employing 'techniques of self' (Foucault, 1985) to avoid any hassles from formal and informal agencies- of the state and the society, and bringing into design what Scott (1990) calls 'hidden transcripts'.

It is also evident from the above two sections, that the hazards of open streets/ public spaces and the fear of harm were also felt from the queer 'community' itself, largely internalized, which were feared to manifest publicly – through

getting identified and known, getting harassed; and privately through stigmatization, marginalization and social ostracism. The very strategy of not talking not everyone confirms the fear of the “own”. Concealing real identities, constructing alternative names, residential addresses and information shows the real self was never completely lived nor performed. It was only the closeted fantasized sexual self that was on the forefront of performance (Butler 1990, 1993) while other identities went into the closet (Brown, 2000). Thus, the culture of pretension, performance and concealment was followed here as much as it is present in the everyday heterosexual space.

The space meant different things to different individuals. While some found this place fake, pretentious, hot bed of gossips, and banks for fetching ill reputation, for others it was the only place where they could be. There wasn't much of a choice and a significant part of their homosexual life was spent here. For them the park was not just a space to cruise for sex but also an important hangout place where acts of bitching, gossiping and gazing- central to queer lifeworlds, could be performed and realised. It was an enabling place where the voyeuristic pleasure of looking at and being looked at could be realized without any dire consequences. Moreover, the park provided a place to be. This was the only place where Mehraji and Sameer could spend time chatting and meeting other guys. For the 'Made-for-each-other' couple this was the only place where they could greet each other by kissing and hugging and sit for hours intimately. For the heroine, it was the only place where his *Ada* [play] and *Nakhara* [tantrum] were at their best. For Pranav it was the only place where he could be anonymous and still satisfy himself. As such this space was central on which queer lives are performed and lived even as the characteristics of space itself underwent diurnal change. Thus, the study confirms the argument that sexuality depends on particular spaces for its construction and in turn produces and reproduces these spaces on which sexuality can be and (is) forged (Valentine, 2001). Spaces like the park were landscapes of seduction and erotic pleasures as well as for forging friendships and bonds beyond having sex and associated pleasures, actively produced by investing emotions, time and the sexual self-contesting and resisting the heterosexual city space. However, there was a complex juxtaposition of liberation and entrapment, of revealing and concealing, of anonymity and knowledge, of being oneself and not being oneself, and of freedom and control of self. The cruising space was an icon of liberation, a haven for being oneself and at the same time something to be careful of so as not to get identified, not to be taken home, not to attract unwanted attention yet getting the required attention from the wanted.

4. CONCLUSION

Queer men reworked and diverted public space to create an alternative meaning of space that had its own morality, rhythms and rituals which were often invisible to the larger heterosexual public (Hubbard, 1999). The dominant meanings of space were contested and subverted through their everyday performances even as they negotiated and strategised in realising their sexual selves. Private fantasies were played out and performed and lived yet never revealed to the hostile public world (Brickell, 2007). The redevelopment and closure of this park in 2016 meant a loss of community space for queer men and an increasing trend towards maintaining the heterosexual order of space. While the Internet has withdrawn men into digital spaces deserting cruising areas (Bhairannavar, 2016), the re-development plans of city development agencies have only erased them. And a culture where 'once upon-a-time', 'not-so-long-ago' right in the centre of the crowded city of Delhi, non-heterosexual men emerged out of the closet, performed their queer selves, made contacts, lived their fantasies only to disappear into the city crowd again, remains as a farfetched queer public memory today.

CONFLICT OF INTERESTS

None.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

None.

REFERENCES

- Bech, H. (1997). *When Men Meet: Homosexuality and Modernity*. University of Chicago Press.
 Bell, D., and Valentine, G. (Eds.). (1995). *Mapping Desire: Geographies of sexualities*. Routledge.

- Bhairannavar, K. (2016). 'More-than-closet' Geographies: Exploring Queered Spaces through Sexual Lives of Men in Delhi, National University of Singapore.
- Bhairannavar, K. (2021). Ethics in Geographical Research: Studying Male Homosexual Cruising Sites. *International Journal of English Literature and Social Sciences*, 6(2), 142-46.
- Brickell, C. (2007). 'Parallel Worlds?: Queered Spaces and the Art of Camouflage'. In *Queer Space: Centres and Peripheries, Proceedings of Conference 2007*. http://www.dab.uts.edu.au/conferences/queer_space/proceedings/index.html
- Brown, M. P. (2000). *Closet Space: Geographies of metaphor from the body to the globe*, Routledge.
- Butler, J. (1990). *Gender trouble: Feminism and the Subversion of Identity*. Routledge.
- Butler, J. (1993). *Bodies that Matter: On discursive Limits of "Sex"*. Routledge.
- Castells, M., & Murphy, K. (1982). Cultural Identity and Urban Structure: The spatial organization of San Francisco's Gay community. In N. Feinstein and s. Feinstein (Eds.) *Urban Policy under Capitalism*, Beverly Hills (pp. 237-259). Sage.
- Chauncey, G. (1994). *Gay New York: Gender, Urban Culture and the making of the Gay male World, 1890-1994*. Basic Books.
- Foucault, M. (1988). Technologies of the Self. In L. h. Martin, H. Gutman, & P.H. Hutton (Eds.) *Technologies of the Self: A seminar with Michel Foucault* (pp 16-14). Cambridge, MA: University of Massachusetts Press.
- Hollister J. (1999). A Highway Rest Area as a socially reproducible Site. In W.L. Leap (Ed.), *Gay Space/ Public Space* (pp 55-70). Columbia University Press.
- Hubbard, P. (1999). *Sex and the City: Geographies of Prostitution in urban West*, Ashgate.
- Hubbard, P. (2012). *Cities and Sexualities*, Routledge.
- Kitchin, R., and Lysaght, K. (2002). Queering Belfast: Some Thoughts on Sexing Space (Working paper series No. 19). NIRSA. <https://mural.maynoothuniversity.ie/id/eprint/1175/>
- Knopp, L. (1995). Sexuality and Urban space: a framework for analysis. In D.Bell and G.Valentine (Eds.), *Mapping Desire: Geographies of Sexualities* (pp 149-161). Routledge.
- Leap W. L. (Ed.). (1999). *Public Sex/gay space*. Columbia University Press.
- Lefebvre, H. (1991). *The Production of Space* (D. Nicholson-Smith, Trans.). Blackwell. (Original work published 1974).
- Scott, J. (1990) *Domination and the Arts of Resistance*. Yale University Press.
- Seabrook, J. (1999) *Love in a different Climate: Men who have Sex with Men in India*. Verso.
- Shahani, P. (2008). *Gay Bombay: Globalisation, Love and Belonging in Contemporary India*. Sage.
- Valentine, G. (2001). *Social Geographies: Space and Society*. Pearson Education Limited.
- Weston, K. (1995). Get thee to a big city: Sexual imaginary and the great gay migration. *GLQ: A journal of lesbian and gay studies*, 2(3). 253-277.
- Whittle, S. (Ed.). (1994). *The Margins of the City: Gay Men's Urban Lives*. Arena

ⁱ The Central Park in Connaught Place was once a big cruising and meeting spot hosting as much as 200 men every Sunday evening. Some of it spilled over to the street and part of the Inner Circle across. However, it is said, with the Information Communication Technology revolution in post 1990s the numbers decreased and in 2002 for the park was dug for construction of the Delhi Metrorail station thus destroying the cruising spot. Nevertheless, the adjoining spill over the Inner Circle continued to exist. With time, an adjoining park (the one the study is based on) became the new hub of activities while the Central Park was redone as a well-lit middle class "public" park over the Rajiv Chowk Metro Station.

ⁱⁱ See Bhairannavar (2016)

ⁱⁱⁱ On August 14, 2004 Pushkin Chandra was found stabbed to death in the bathroom of his house in Delhi along with a man (Pushkin's partner) in his 20s. Media highlighted it as a Gay crime. Reports also spoke about the capital's "gay culture" — the pick-up spots, the chatrooms, the lingo, the orgies.... thus, bringing them in full public view. *Source: The Telegraph, Calcutta India, 24th August 2004.*

^{iv} Blasts occurred in Hyderabad, Andhra Pradesh (then) on 25th August 2007 and Ajmer, Rajasthan, in October 2007.