

In Search of Home explores a new yet less explored space of urban poverty – rehabilitation housing for the displaced poor, which increasingly dots the peripheries of Indian cities. This longitudinal ethnography examines these new liminal zones suspended between a slum and the legal city, producing ‘citizenship in-limbo’ and relegating the poor to perpetual dependence on the state albeit legal residence. It examines how the flexible governance of such housing produces illegalities, and how state institutions and actors stand to gain through systemic corruption that co-opts urban poor groups, pre-empting radical resistance. This book makes central the gendered nature of such politics, detailing the everyday political work of women, vital to the development of poor neighbourhoods and political struggles for housing. This analysis of rehabilitation housing policies and their implementation, chronicles the myriad strategies employed by the urban poor, from documenting to political performances, in their struggles for a home.

Kaveri Haritas is Associate Professor at the Jindal School of Government and Public Policy, at the OP Jindal Global University, Haryana. Her research focuses on urban poverty; housing, land and property rights; gender; and law and citizenship in India. She is an anthropologist and draws inspiration from legal and political anthropology. Her past research has included solidarity economy practices of women in India and technology and its impacts on employment in India. She has been a north–south mobility fellow at the Institute for Research on Development, Paris.

Endorsements:

“*In Search of Home* sensitively unpacks the politics of the urban poor, offering a critical insight into the emerging landscape of ‘rehabilitation housing’ in the peripheries of India’s silicon city, Bangalore. Resisting the euphemism of class-based explanations, the book boldly engages with the idiom of caste and gender to illuminate a socio-political world of facilitators and mediators fraught with a messiness that might not be so easily radical. Its ‘evocative ethnography’ chronicling ‘affective’ stories from the field signals a departure in classic legal anthropology where the prism of citizenship and law is not about studying court decisions, plaintiffs, judicial proceedings or similar politico-legal documents, but about paying attention to the performative nature of political work. A refreshing candid narrative that goes beyond the usual kind of essentialist inquiry!”

Professor (Dr.) Pushpa Arabindoo, Department of Geography, University College London

“*In Search of Home* is a fascinating account of the everyday struggles in the new ghettos of urban poverty, providing an alternative story of the high-tech globalizing city of Bangalore. Neither a miserabilist portrait of slum dwellers rehabilitated on the city outskirts, nor a glorification of their resistance, it provides a nuanced understanding of the politics of the urban poor for full citizenship in their search of a secure home, brilliantly demonstrating how a longitudinal and reflexive micro-level ethnography can illuminate city-wide processes and enrich theoretical debates on the practices of citizenship, informality and law, corruption and patronage, resistance and power, and much more.”

Professor (Dr.) Véronique Dupont, IRD – The French National Research Institute for Sustainable Development

“Kaveri Haritas provides us with a superb analysis of how claims to rights transgress their limited legal origin to take on a prefigurative dimension. In this incisive ethnographic observation of diverse transgressions of existing law by people in slum rehabilitation camps, Haritas shows how enactments and performances of rights that do not (yet) exist incrementally transform political relations. Haritas thus provides us with a nuanced position on the possibilities for change that enriches and differentiates our understanding of the modern state and law.”

Julia Eckert, Professor and Chair for Political Anthropology, University of Bern, Switzerland