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Diagnosing Perceptions of Civilian Insecurity

The Domestic Construction of Civilian Demand for Small Arms in Delhi

DISSERTATION

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I

Abstract

Armed conflict and violence is not new to India, as it has occurred with regularity since Independence. The discourse of small arms in India largely continues to be addressed and relegated to national security concerns. In circumstances where the State is unable to control or stem the armed conflicts and the circulation of arms in the country, *what are civilian's options to ensure their personal security*? Taking the case of Delhi, this epistemological analysis makes evident that there is a growing demand for arms by civilians, and this study is a reflection on those realities. The objective is to look beyond the recognized and documented national problems (state centric) caused from unregulated arms availability. This paper makes the argument that the source of those demands stem from non-traditional facets which infringe upon the interpersonal (physical, emotional) safety of the individual, cultural traditions and social norms.

Table of Contents

Box, Figures and Tables
List of Abbreviations

Appendix
 A, B, C

Bibliography

Boxes, figures, and tables:

List of Abbreviations:

CAFI	Control Arms Foundation of India
DCP	Deputy Commissioner of Police
GoI	Government of India
IANSA	International Action Network on Small Arms
IAS	Indian Administrative Services
IOF	Indian Ordnance Factories
IPC	Indian Penal Code
IPS	Indian Police Service
JJ	jhuggi-jhopri (Hutment housing structure)
MP	Madhya Pradesh
NCR	National Capital Region
NCRB	National Crime Records Bureau
NCT	National Capital Territory
NGO	Non Government Organization
NRA	National Rifle Association
QUNO	Quaker United Nations Office
SALW	Small Arms and Light Weapons
UNGA	United Nations General Assembly
UP	Uttar Pradesh
VIP	Very Important Person

1. Introduction

Armed conflict and violence is not new to a country such as India, and it has occurred with regularity within the Indian State since Independence. There are armed conflicts in the state of Jammu and Kashmir, the North Eastern region, the Naxal violence, as well as additional forms of irredentist and caste conflicts which have resulted in making India part of a region which has abundant arms in circulation. These conflicts are fought with a majority of illicit arms and the crux of the problem has been identified as the availability of small arms which are out of state control and used to fuel the conflicts.[1] With the increased illicit manufacture and illegal trade, a surplus of unchecked arms and ammunition circulates within the country. Arms are transported from conflict to conflict, criminal syndicate to criminal syndicate spreading through to civilians. In consequence, Joseph states, "the presence of small arms and light weapons progressively undermines the very existence of the State, persistent armed violence limits the capacity of States to create responsive institutions that are critical to ensuring prosperity, safety, and social welfare for civilians."[2] To reverse this statement, and alternatively question that in such circumstances *what are civilian's options to ensure their personal security*?

To attempt to answer this question, the case of Delhi, the National Capital Territory (NCT) of India is taken to diagnose civilian perceptions of interpersonal security (which can be framed by direct and indirect threats, visible and invisible vulnerabilities, real and perceived insecurities). Then more importantly, an evaluation if there exists a demand for small arms and if so, then 'why', (i.e. for what reasons and purpose do people acquire/ hold weapons?, are small arms perceived as a source of human (in)security?) and 'who' acquires/ holds a weapon (individuals or certain communities, the types of owners) are analyzed. The research question underlying the study, *are firearms growing to become a part of civilian's perception of personal security in Delhi? Is this due to the prevalent criminal violence in the city or influenced by the surrounding armed conflicts in the country, and consequently civilians are arming themselves as a rationale response?*

The link with the armed conflicts in the country is that they create the supply of arms, but when they disperse into the wider populace, there should be a demand for those weapons. This paper argues that there exists a demand by civilians apart from those

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[1] Salma Mallika and Mallika Joseph, "*Small Arms: Endangering State and Human Security,*" 2005, p. 21 - 23
[2] *Idem*

conflict zones, for instance in urban areas. The source of those demands stem from non-traditional[3] facets which infringe upon the interpersonal (physical, emotional) safety of the individual, cultural traditions and social norms. This study is approached from a human security dimension, which is "the freedom from want and fear by removing the threat of violence from social, political and economic lives of civilians".[4] The objective is to look beyond the recognized and documented national problems (state centric) caused from unregulated arms availability. I intend to conduct an epistemological broadening at a micro level to identify civilian narratives which map the interrelations between their personal-security perceptions and other factors which influence a demand for small arms.

Numerous studies have concentrated on armed conflicts occurring in parts of India, yet an understudied aspect is the increased demand of firearms by civilians in relatively peaceful situations.[5] This study's research is based on the hypothesis that there has been a rise in the gun related criminal acts of the city[6], even though the rates of such violence in India are well below to those of Rio de Janeiro, Johannesburg, Latin America and South Africa's figures which are plagued by statistics on crime, drug trafficking, and gangs.[7] In the case of Delhi, I make the argument that there is a discrepancy in the national reported crime rates versus public perceptions of security, and its reasons are discussed ahead in detail. Past statistics on Indian urban violence have depended on other variables such as ethnic and communal violence. In a study by Varshney, he demonstrates that differences in ethnic violence between Indian cities have revealed peaks, i.e. brutal eruptions are followed by years of relative peace (for example, Mumbai after 1991–1992 riots and Ahmedabad after the 2002 riots).[8] However, Milbert advocates that the perceptions of

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[3] Non-traditional security issues are challenges to the survival and well-being of peoples that arise primarily out of non-military sources, such as resource scarcity, infectious diseases, lack of employment opportunities.

[4] Keith Krause, "Small Arms and Light Weapons: Towards Global Public Policy," *International Peace Academy,* Coping with Crisis: Working Paper Series, March 2007, p.2

[5] Based on the field work conducted in Delhi
See also, Rahul Tripathi, "Gun culture booming in trigger-happy Delhi," *The Times of India*, 2 July, 2008. http://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/city/delhi/Gun-culture-booming-in-trigger-happy Delhi/articleshow/5201490.cms (accessed 4 February, 2010)

[6] Rajeshree Sisodia, "Delhi lives in terror as gun crimes rise," *The National,* 23 July, 2008 http://www.thenational.ae/article/20080723/FOREIGN/546144558/1135 (accessed 6 February, 2010)

[7] Isabelle Milbert, "Policy Dimensions of Human Security and Vulnerability Challenges. The Case of Urban India," *Facing Global Environmental Change, Hexagon Series on Human and Environmental Security and Peace*, Vol. 4, 2009, p. 238

[8] Ashutosh Varshney, "Ethnic Conflict and Civic Life: Hindus and Muslims in India", *World Politics,* No. 53, 2001, p. 373

threat and vulnerabilities faced by civilians may be on the way to change in Indian metropolises where crime, delinquency have become crucial socio-political issues.[9]

The links between civilian interpersonal security and arms demand are diffuse and hence, difficult to disaggregate and demonstrate. Therefore a guiding theme of the study is that overemphasis on crime rates and statistics, while potentially significant, 'may distract from other, more fundamental areas of consideration, such as how individuals make choices concerning whether to own a weapon, or when to use a weapon…'.[10] In the case of India, where everyday vulnerability is varied, combined with the fusion of urban and rural settings, mixed age groups, differing wealth and education levels, this study analyzed a range of dimensions (cultural, political, social, physical) to diagnose civilian construction of 'demand'. Thus, fieldwork which allowed interaction with multiple stakeholders, to analyze civilian narrative(s) in Delhi was undertaken over a two month period to collect primary data.

This study is divided into four sections; beginning with the definitional concepts of small arms and its scope in India, followed by a discussion of the theoretical model adopted and the literature review on trigger factors of civilian demand. The final section is a contextualization of the case study, its analysis, and the conclusion.

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[9] Milbert, 2009, *op.cit.,* p. 235
[10] Derek Miller, "Demand, Stockpiles, and Social Controls: Small Arms in Yemen," *Small Arms Survey,* Occasional Paper No. 9, 2003, p. 55

2. Conceptual Definitions of Small Arms

The UNGA (1997) *Report of the Panel of Governmental Experts on Small Arms* approved the classification of small arms and light weapons (SALW) which define major sub-divisions of military-style weapons by the way they were designed for use. 'Small arms' were defined to include revolvers and self-loading pistols, rifles and carbines, sub-machine guns, assault rifles and light machine guns.[11] For purposes of this study, a narrower classification of the term 'small arms' is employed to encompass revolvers, handguns, rifles (sporting and assault), and country made firearms. This narrower classification is utilized to contextualize the type of firearms generally owned by civilians in the context of the case study.[12] The term 'small arms' and 'firearms' are used interchangeably.

Small arms are characterized by their wide availability, lethality, simplicity, durability (plentiful second-hand weapons which remain operational for many years, requiring little maintenance), portability and concealable nature. It is these features which make them practical, convenient tools and attractive options in urban and rural settings. There are other aspects related to small arm categories (stocks and flows, differentiation among types of small arms, transfers, etc.) which will not be discussed in this study due to its focus on civilians and their arms demand as a unit of analysis, but are important in their own right and legitimate to expend further research on.

2.1 Small Arms Distribution in India

In South Asia, the best estimate of the civilian scale of small arms ownership is 73 million.[13] India is home to approximately 48 million of those firearms (public and private), which are divided roughly between 7 million military, 0.6 million for the police and some 40 million civilian.[14]

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[11] The UN Panel's definition of light weapons defined are 'heavy machine-gun, hand- held under- barrel and mounted grenade launchers, portable anti-craft guns, portable anti-tank guns, recolliess rifles, portable launchers of anti-tank missile and rocket systems, portable launchers of anti-craft missile system, and mortars of less than 100mm'. Ammunition is combined with explosives in a separate category consisting of 'cartridges (rounds) for small arms, shells and missiles for light weapons, mobile containers with missiles or shells for single action and anti-craft and anti-tank systems and explosives' – UNGA, A/52/298, August 1997

[12] From interviews conducted in Delhi with retired army and police officials and licensed arms retail stores, in general the type of small arms that have been identified with civilians are mostly different types of revolvers, handguns and rifles (sporting)
See also, Singh B.P, 'Firearms Accidents in Northern India (1980 – 2000,)" *Medicine, Science and the law*, Vol. 46:1 , 2006, p. 69 - 75

[13] The estimate of 73 million civilian firearms in South Asia was publicized in a conference on small arms proliferation hosted by Network for Child Welfare, inaugurated by then Defence Minister George Fernandes , *The Hindustan*, 2000

[14] "Red Flags and Buicks: Global Firearm Stockpiles", *Small Arms Survey,* 2002, p. 101

In terms of small arms production, the government has maintained a monopoly over the India gun production sector. Civilians can purchase arms (after acquiring a license) from the Indian Ordnance Factories (IOF), which function under the Department of Defence Production of the Ministry of Defence.[15] The GoI does not allow private distributors to manufacture arms and ammunition for the Indian market. There has been growing noise against the quality, expensive and outdated gun types that can be purchased from the IOFs.[16]

Conversely, the black market gun production is flourishing in India, where in most states there exist cottage industries devoted to manufacture of hand held arms akin to pistols, commonly referred to as '*kattas*' in popular parlance. Other manufactured local firearms are *Sixers, 'English' weapon, Tamanchas, Dunaliyya* and *pen pistol*. Particularly within parts of western UP, which borders Delhi, the firearms manufacturing business has taken the shape of an organized industry.[17] Indigenous illegal firearms can cost anything from $5 - $550 depending upon the location of purchase, time period and arms choice.[18] Indigenous arms come at a cheaper price, and while their accuracy cannot be guaranteed, they are highly destructive and impossible to trace using ballistic fingerprinting.[19]

In terms of supply and demand of arms, in general, a supply centric focus has dominated the discourse of small arm discussions. More recently, attention to the demand side which addresses civilian and local possession is developing, as the demand approach considers the 'why' and in 'what' circumstances arms are acquired by civilians (individually and collectively). More importantly, the reason this study focused on the

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[15] GoI -Indian Ordnance Factories,
http://ofbindia.gov.in/index.php?wh=aboutus&lang=en
[16] In a newspaper article about government production, it reported, "India produces the shoddiest guns in the world and sells them at ridiculously high rates," says Swaran Singh, who owns an arms repair workshop in Jalandhar. "Every gun which comes out of the factories in Jammu or Bihar or the ordnance factories in Kolkata and Kanpur has a problem," he says.
Veenu Sandhu and Ravi Bajpai, "Gunning for Change," *Hindustan Times*, 22 July, 2007 http://www.hindustantimes.com/StoryPage/Print/237974.aspx (accessed 2 March, 2010)
Also, similar opinions were shared by gun holders among the respondents of this study
[17] Rahul Tripathi, "Kattas to Colts: Blame the spiralling crime graph on unlicensed arms," *The Times of India*, 2 July, 2008.
,http://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/Delhi/Kattas_to_Colts_Blame_the_spiralling_crime_graph_on_unlicensed_arms/articleshow/3186527.cms (accessed 31 March, 2010)
[18] Information gathered from different interviews conducted in New Delhi, but different books quote many prices
[19]Prashant Dikshit, "Weaponisation of Indian Society Through Illicit Arms Proliferation, Production and Trade," in *India and The Arms Trade Treaty*, Nepram, Binalakshmi (ed.), 2009, p. 34 - 36

demand aspect is because the dissemination of small arms as a symptom of civil society needs at local levels are better understood and answered from a demand optic.

Derek Miller in a study of arms demand in Yemen elucidates, "demand is not a function of supply but rather of use, it stands to reason that appreciation of demand factors require a greater appreciation for the different uses of weapons in communities. While weapons do serve some very practical functions (they can be used to kill more efficiently and more easily than other instruments of lower technology), in some places their function is far more communicative than practical. Of great significance in each case is what weapon ownership communicates to others about situated and central values in human life, such as self-reliance, masculinity (or femininity), justice, honour, pride, and a great many other properties of mind."[20] As an example of civilian demand in India, women in the district of dacoit infested Rewa (MP), shifted their identity from broomstick wielding women to being awarded gun licenses by the Superintendent of Police to empower them in their village, where guns were reckoned as a status symbol.[21] The demand optic is apt to identify the local dimensions which influence civilians to acquire arms and the status of weapons within a particular community which legitimate their use.

In order to study civilian demand in Delhi, a multi-disciplinary approach, encompassing human centric dimensions by Robert Muggah and Jurgen Brauer's theory on small arms demand was adopted as the theoretical framework for the study.

2.2 Theoretical Framework:
(a) "Completing the Circle: Building a Theory of Small Arms Demand"
According to Muggah and Brauer's theory, 'demand' is defined as a function of *motivation and means* variables, both of which can serve as inhibitors (lack of motivation, lack of means) or as stimulators. '*Motivations and Means*' can be substituted to 'willingness and ability' [22].

In general, motivations include social, cultural and politically constituted dynamic preferences for firearms. 'Though the small arms demand is ultimately expressed at the individual level, where a single person actually requires a firearm even if on behalf or at

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[20] Miller, 2003, *op.cit.,* p. 49

[21] "*Women empowered with guns in MP district*," *Sify News,* 27 May, 2008
http://sify.com/news/women-empowered-with-guns-in-mp-district-news-national-jegr9keeibj.html (accessed 4 March, 2010)

[22] Robert Muggah and Jurgen Brauer, "Completing the Circle: Building a Theory of Small Arms Demand," *Contemporary Security Policy*, Volume 27:1, 2006, p. 138 - 154

the direction of others, the motivation for acquisition is at least partly socially constructed and embedded in various social practices and cultural forms'.[23] Further, motivation can be assessed both qualitatively (motivation to be safe, to take revenge etc) and quantitatively (a weak versus strong drive), therefore for the purpose of this study, both quantitative and qualitative data was collected. Also, 'the complex of factors might be called "subjective" or "intrinsic" in as much as they are internal to a person's decision making, a process that may (or may not) lead to arms acquisition'.[24]

A similar flexible approach was applied to the 'means' dimension, which includes the prices, which can be assessed quantitatively. Resources include monetary and non-monetary items. The monetary sources could be credit, grants, earned income from work and other financial assets. 'Though prices directly influence an individual's purchasing power'[25], it should not be envisioned as limiting factor, since practices of renting and borrowing arms is common. The non-monetary sources refer to the availability and accessibility of arms for acquisition.

In consequence, the expression of 'civilian demand' of arms is governed by the interplay of 'motivation' and 'means' variables. However, in terms of weapon acquisition, proportionate requirement of both variables is not a necessary requirement. For instance, where the motive for purchase is prestige, which is often in the case of legal markets, price is a secondary consideration. Since in such circumstances arms bought for display might be a luxury type good and the high price is itself a source of pride.[26] In another case, a stronger motivation level would lead to a higher demand for the weapon, 'but the same is not true for resources: if one's resources are high, this may displace the demand for guns towards other, more onerous, means to fulfill the preference that has been expressed'.[27]

Muggah and Brauer's approach to analyze demand is useful as it best suits an epistemological type of study where emphasis lies at a local - micro level, focusing on the individual. In the context of this study, the motivation and means variables were applied in

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[23]Stéphanie Pézard, "The Demand for Small Arms", *Small Arms Survey*, unpublished paper, 2004 , in supplement to Robert Muggah and Jurgen Brauer's theoretical explanations.
Jacklyn Cock analyzes the demand for small arms through social violence through values, social practices, and institutions, has argued that the desire for guns in South Africa is a socially constructed concept that is embedded in culture and different social identities, and where the social categories are defined by power relations in their society.
 For further reference see, Jacklyn Cock, 'The Cultural and Social Challenge of Demilitarization', in Gavon Cawthra and Bjorn Moller (eds.), *Defensive Restructuring of the Armed Forces in Southern Africa*, 1997.
[24] Muggah and Brauer, 2006, *op.cit.*, p. 139 – 140
[25] *Idem*
[26] R. T Naylor, "The Rise of the Modern Arms Black Market and the Fall of Supply – Side Control", *TCP Series*, Volume 1, 1998, p. 110
[27] *Idem*

a novel fashion to diagnose civilian perceptions and trigger factors which led to a demand of arms. The theory's analytical logic of analyzing 'demand' was utilized in the survey questionnaire and applied in the fieldwork undertaken. Nonetheless, it is essential to first further problematize demand in itself, before applying it to the case study, Delhi.

(b) Problematizing Demand

As a point of definitional clarification when diagnosing "demand" of weapons, the acquisition, holding (rather than sell or give away) and use should be differentiated as concepts, but analyzed as complimentary categories as each factor can shed light on the other. In many settings a weapon can be bought by one person (such as a criminal gang leader), but for the use of a collectivity (its gang members).[28] Pézard states, 'acquisition and holding can therefore be either individual or collective acts, while the use is necessarily individual. This underlies the significance of determining where the locus of decision is. Knowing who determines the choice of preference and use of resources will be crucial to understanding whose demand is being answered'.

In analyzing the dynamics of demand, two interrelated elements require attention: the time period and context specificity. The time of an event's occurrence, which could be either planned (example: electoral cycles) or unplanned (example: a terrorist attack) could alter the dynamics, i.e. could bring about sudden peaks in the data. Such events should be considered anomalies from everyday engagements as they modify perceptions of civilian's interpersonal security and cause irregular motivations. Such circumstances are alluded to in Varshney's study, when an episode of violence is followed by periods of relative peace; individual security perceptions (perceived and real) alter the demand. Thus during 'normal circumstances' the demand aspect would be otherwise. For example, before election time in India, politically motivated activities such as 'arms selling rackets [become] active in North Dinajpur, thanks to political parties which want to be well-equipped before the elections acquire weapons through criminals who are on their payroll'.[29] In other instances, the police 'go easy on the surrender of firearms by civilians before elections as

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[28] This idea is borrowed from Stéphanie Pézard, 2004

[29] "Pre-poll sneak peak into arms bazaar - Blindfold ride throws up gun politics," *The Telegraph*, 24 April, 2009
http://www.telegraphindia.com/1090424/jsp/siliguri/story_10867414.jsp (accessed 11 March, 2010)

per guidelines of Election Commission.[30] It is necessary to note that the occurrence of such events could trigger factors which influence a civilian demand.

Another dimension to reflect on is the context specificity. In analyzing demand, an empirical question is: 'are there universal triggers or are the factors driving demand always linked to a particular setting/community?'[31] This is a tricky facet which requires careful analysis. The demand from individuals (which differs according to their gender, educational qualification, income levels) and spatial demographics of a location (for example: urban/peripheral, rural settings) require attention. During a small arms demand workshop organized by QUNO on Southeast Asia (2002), it was concluded that most of the factors governing demand: poverty, inequality, gun culture, political marginalization, police and judicial inefficiency, appeared to cut across cultural and geographical settings. Also, "while the broad repertoire of demand factors may be generalized across many situations, each geographic area exhibits the factors in different proportions. Each specific area affected by perceived insecurity and the related gun violence must be approached and understood on its own terms."

Figure 1: Theoretical Model
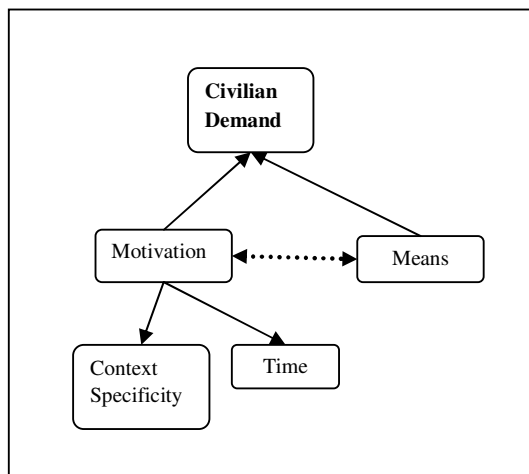
Thus both dimensions: time and context must be proportionately evaluated to appreciate the social norms, structural and spatial demographics of the context which influence the domestic construction of civilian demand. An equally significant aspect to observe is why certain people acquire arms, as those that choose not to. Hence, 'demand' must be

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[30] Anupam Chakravartty, "Police relax disarmament rules in sensitive areas ahead of polls," *Express India*, 8 April, 2010
http://www.expressindia.com/latest-news/police-relax-disarmament-rules-in-sensitive-areas-ahead-of-polls/444388/ (accessed 10 March, 2010)
[31] Pézard, 2004, *op.cit.*

analyzed as being neither static, nor uniform and prone to change. The next section shifts focus to the existing literature on trigger factors of civilian demand in India, and delves into the context of Delhi, the case study.

3. Literature Review on Trigger Factors of Civilian Demand in India

The literature review discusses the weaponisation of the Indian society, which addresses the trigger factors and contextual elements of civilian demand. The 'weaponisation' process is discussed by Prashant Dikshit, an ex-Air Commodore who pioneered the study of small arms and its implications on the security of diverse regions in India. He defines 'weaponisation' as the "backdrop of the processes which are set into motion by proliferating use of small arms in a vulnerable society."[32]

The burgeoning literature on small arms in India remains relegated to the discussion of armed conflicts, and almost exclusively about insurgency. Developing on the 'weaponisation' theme, Dikshit and other scholars discuss, beginning with the case of Jammu and Kashmir's simmering dispute set the tone for weaponisation amongst Indian masses. Since, India has fought several wars with Pakistan which has resulted in the infusion of arms into the country, siphoned via different Pakistani pipelines.[33] Shifting to the North-East region, Dikshit states that the region has been engulfed in protracted armed conflicts for more than half a century. This region remains geographically isolated from "mainland" India and economically underdeveloped. The third predominant armed conflict, the Naxal movement, is subversive and secessionist in nature and guided by a plan to wage a protracted people's war through armed struggle. The Naxals are known to own many mini gun manufacturing factories across the country.[34] The common problématique identified amongst the three conflicts, is the continued circulation of arms which are used to fuel the conflicts.[35] In the book, "Small Arms and the Security Debate in South Asia,' by Joseph and Malik, they advocate in the case of India, "a huge demand for weapons exists due to various insurgencies and armed conflicts in various degrees of intensity" and with huge quantities of weapons entering the region, it has become a case of supply creating demand.[36] Henceforth, the role of weapons has been identified to facilitate acts of terror, i.e. a militant's tool. The authors do introduce the theme of weapons causing

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[32] Dikshit, 2009, *op.cit.*, p. 18

[33] Most recently, a number of hideouts have been discovered and large cache of arms, ammunition and explosive materials in Reasi district of Jammu and Kashmir. Around 180 rounds of AK rifle, 207 rounds of Pika gun, 5 AK magazines and a wireless set were recovered, police sources said.
In " Arms, ammunition recovered from hideout in J&K", *Press Trust Of India*, 23 January, 2010
http://www.hindustantimes.com/News-Feed/jandk/Arms-ammunition-recovered-from-hideout-in-J-amp-K/Article1-500896.aspx (accessed 15 February, 2010)

[34] "Mini gun factories supplying firearms to naxalites unearthed in Bihar", *DNA – Read the World*, 2009.
http://www.dnaindia.com/india/report_mini-gun-factories-supplying-firearms-to-naxalites-unearthed-in-bihar_1322245 (accessed 11 March, 2010)

[35] Mallika and Joseph, 2005, *op.cit.*, p. 21 - 23

[36] *Ibid,* p. 44 – 51

a threat to both, the state and human security, since "arms are transported from conflict to conflict, criminal syndicate to criminal syndicate spreading through civil society", but again the discussion remains saturated within the armed conflicts discourse. This study while useful to understand the supply of arms in the Indian context, fails to address the demand aspects and other possible roles of arms. The discussion instead draws attention to the state's incapability to stem the armed conflicts, and it can be argued to an extent, the state thus contributes to rather than alleviates general citizen insecurity.

In assessing the effect of armed conflicts on civilians, Alisa Winton also reports that armed conflicts release a wealth of firearms into general circulation.[37] For example, the World Vision 2002 stated in El Salvador, 1.5 million weapons were believed to be in private hands, and this contributed to a phenomenon known as "mass production and consumption of violence".[38] It has also been reported by Marks Chabedi that in the case of South Africa, the violence has been compounded by the number of guns made available from neighboring Mozambique since the end of the conflict.[39] Based on the conclusions of these studies, one can deduce that arms supply diffuses from conflict areas to a wider populace, i.e. civilians. Further, what are the potential outcomes in an environment with small arms available? To answer this question, it is useful to refer to Michael Renner. He describes the potential outcomes for conflict in urban areas, and since the case study of Delhi falls within the category of an urban type, his analysis is pertinent.

Renner highlights the effects of small arms proliferation and links it with the potential for violence in the case of civilians.[40] He demonstrates an argument, highlighted earlier in the context of armed conflicts, "when the state fails to control such threats, ordinary citizens feel that the states fail to provide them with a sense of security, and such a situation provides a rational for them to arm themselves".[41] In terms of civilian demand, unlike Joseph and Malik who present small arms as tools solely utilized in acts of terror, which partly accurate, it overshadows the possibility of civilians acquiring arms for

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[37] Alisa Winton, "Urban violence: a guide to the literature," *Environment and Urbanization*, No. 16, 2004, p. 168

[38] Koonings K and Kurjit, D "*Societies of Fear: The Legacy of Civil War, Violence and Terror in Latin America*," 1999, p. 15

[39] Marks Chabedi, " State power, violence, crime and everyday life: a case study of Soweto in post-apartheid South Africa," *Social Identities*, Vol. 9: 4, p. 357 – 371, 2003

[40] Michael Renner, "Environmental and Social Stress Factors, Governance, and Small Arms Availability: The Potential for Conflict in Urban Areas," *Comparative Urban Studies Project,* Occasional Paper No. 15, 1998, p. 15 – 16

[41] *Idem*

purposes of self defence and other possible reasons. This results in a gap in the literature pertaining to small arms usage in India, where factors related the socio-economic inequalities, state incapacities and reluctance which feed into the perils of civil society remain largely ignored. To address this gap, a discussion of the case study, "Women as arm-bearers: Gendered caste-violence and the Indian state," by Björkert is relevant. This case explores the rise of Dalit[42] female militancy in rural Bihar between the 1990s and early 2000. It is useful as it analyses 'how' civilians interpret different personal security threats and their responses.

Caste conflicts refer to any opposition to break out of stipulated ideological structures. In the case of Bihar, in recent times a unique development of these conflicts is the chief arm bearer's role being adopted by Dalit women. In Bihar, caste conflicts have revolved around British created tenurial structures of the *zamindari* and *ryotwari* systems. In Independent India, the land reforms introduced aimed at bringing about structural changes have proved to be counterproductive, and instead created a rise of medium sized land owners – cultivators from the upper strata of Backward castes, hence turning cultivating castes into landowning castes. The 'development' land provision only added a new dimension of disadvantage to the already disadvantaged position of Dalits. In response, the "Dalit Sena" army created a women's wing and since 1994, approximately 8000 women in 500 villages in Bihar have been given the basic arms training, and since then there has been a marked drop in atrocities towards women. When examining this case, it is necessary to note that it is an extreme example of women being threatened on a regular basis during that time period, and its location, rural Bihar.

What factors compelled Dalit women to take to arms? Björkert argues, foremost, their economic survival. 'From the Dalit perspective, since most other avenues are absent, the agricultural sector provides the only economically gainful occupation. This is not in terms of adding assets, but to just ensure survival'.[43] Second, to guarantee access to material resources for livelihood, as often they are the only surviving members of their household (when their husbands and sons are killed in inter and intra-caste conflicts). In other cases, Dalit men move to the cities to become domestic helpers in middle class

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[42] Dalit means 'broken'. Dalits have also been referred as untouchables outcastes, and Scheduled Castes. Gandhi called the untouchables 'harijan,' 'children of god'. The practice of untouchability has a historical past and while there has been 'status fluidity' in the middle sections of lower castes, the untouchables still remain on the margin of lower castes. (Ursula Sharma, "*Caste*", Buckingham: Open University Press, 1999)
[43] Prakash Louis, "Shankarbigha revisited," *Economic and Political Weekly*, 12 February, 2000

homes or carry out other menial jobs. Third, as caste-conflicts are often negotiated on sexualized realms (pure/ impure) where social control and hegemonic masculinity of upper caste men is asserted and maintained through defilement and appropriation of lower caste Dalit women, it results in making them more vulnerable to rape, sexual harassment and threats of public violence.[44]

From Björkert's study two inferences can be drawn. One, the option of demanding arms did not automatically result in a situation of armed violence. Instead, a positive outcome where a category of individuals exploited within their ascribed caste identity, within another exploited layer by being women, by demanding arms allowed them to carve out a form of agency for themselves. As a result, they took responsibility for their own protection. Björkert states 'women with arms break through those spaces as is evident from them getting water from wells, that is in areas where their entry was previously restricted'[45] allowing them to carry out their daily routine activities. This raises an important observation that much of the literature of the small arms fails to address. Small arms gain legitimacy in environments where civilians have to fend for themselves and can create a sort of stabilizing culture where arms are accepted as the means via which they can live more peacefully. Contrarily, the state and public institutions, such as the police lose legitimacy and control over the situation. Björkert summarizes, 'the states unwillingness or inability to stop some of its citizens from oppressing others on a systematic basis can make it a witting partner to oppressions. The functionaries which represent the state, its politicians and police who are positioned as 'guarantors of rights to its citizens invariably emerge instead as the perpetrators of injustice'.[46] In addition, what is popularly known as the 'criminalization of politics' contributes to such circumstances in Bihar, and worsens situations in other states.

To further build on this point, a newspaper report by Emily Wax, "*With Indian Politics, the Bad Gets Worse: 'Shameful' Vote in Parliament Highlights Extent Government Corruption*", discusses that in the case of India, ample evidence exists against candidates who contest elections have criminal records and cases against them, and this

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[44] Suruchi Thapar Björkert, "Women as arm-bearers: Gendered caste-violence and the Indian state," *Women Studies International Forum*, No. 29, 2006, p.474 – 488
[45] *Idem*
[46] *Idem*

trend is discernible across all political parties.[47] For example, in 2008 a fourth of the 540 Indian Parliament members faced criminal charges of human trafficking, immigration rackets, embezzlement, rape and even murder.[48] The pursuit of power has become the raison d'être of most political parties and politicians seek police agency to cover their misdeeds. Kirpal Dhillon, who has written extensively on Indian police and politics, points that such a situation inevitably progresses towards the development of politicization of the police forces of the state.[49] Consequently the conditions created due to such contextual elements are not limited to rural settings, but take effect across the pan-Indian state in differing degrees. In a similar vein, a study related to urban political armed violence by Jütersonke, Krause and Muggah emphasizes that urban violence is often political as much as criminal in nature by taking case studies from Latin America, South Asia, and African cities. They advocate it can be part of larger armed conflicts and in non-war settings, such as in Colombia, where the line between political and criminal violence is often blurred.[50] Jütersonke, Krause and Muggah study is constructive as it identifies social stress factors which influence the security environment in which civilians reside. Where this study falls short is that depending upon the case being analyzed, the specific historical context of its political and public institutions requires attention.

For instance, G. P. Joshi's study on the Indian police discusses their evolution originated from the 1857 Sepoy Mutiny revolt which led to the formation of the 1861 Police Act,[51] and which presently governs most police forces in India. This Act was born during the period of fast-spreading national freedom movements and to tame Indian masses, a police system was raised on an authoritarian pattern to serve elite British rulers, while relations with the masses was forbidden. The advent of the independence changed the political system, but a quick acceptance of the colonially structured 1861 Police Act remained engrained. New legislations, such as the Bombay (1951), Karnataka (1963) and

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[47] Emily Wax, "With Indian Politics, the Bad Gets Worse - 'Shameful' Vote in Parliament Highlights Extent of Government Corruption," *Washington Post Foreign Service*, 24 July 2008.
http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2008/07/23/AR2008072303390.html (accessed 5 March, 2010)
Also see, Swaminathan Anklesaria Ayiar, "How to get criminals out of politics," *The Times of India*, 10 March, 2002
http://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/articleshow/3302056.cms (accessed 10 February, 2010)
[48] Chokkar group is an Association for Democratic Reforms, a New Delhi watchdog group that tracks criminality in India's Parliament
[49] Kirpal Dhillon, "Coping with Independence," in Police and Politics in India - Colonial Concepts Democratic Compulsions: Indian Police 1942 – 2002," 2005, p. 82
[50] *Ibid,* p. 173
[51] G. P. Joshi, "Police Accountability in India: Policing Contaminated by Politics", *Asian Human Rights Commission*, Vol. 15: 5, 2005, p.3

Kerala (1960) Police Acts have been enacted but all primarily patterned on the model of the 1861 legislation. In a assessment of the '*Police in India*', David Bayley states, 'of greater importance is the persistence of behavior patterns and philosophy…[Indian police] react to the threats to law and to government, but it does not seek to serve the peculiar needs of individual citizens'.[52] In consequence, Dhillon concludes that the Indian police remain structured on colonial concepts and handicapped by elite politicians use (instead of the British rulers) and continue to be received by a legacy of public distrust.[53] It is necessary to be aware of the specific evolutionary trajectory of a country's public institution to contextualize and appreciate its relationship with its civilians.

Turning to the context of Delhi, Utkarsh Rathore discusses the firearms proliferation situation in the city.[54] He assesses that firearms have become the "weapon of choice" for criminals committing murders and other crimes in Delhi. During 1999 – 2003, 20 – 24% of murder cases were committed with firearms, and 91 – 93% of these were committed with illegal firearms. From these figures, one can infer the increased proliferation of firearms in the city; though the source of weapons remains unknown. Rathore's study is partially useful as it provides quantitative analysis, however it is problematic due to its passive acceptance of the NCRB figures. It ignores the multiple problems with reporting procedures in India and reliability of the data. To make an assessment of the situation in Delhi purely on the reported statistics provides an incomplete and incorrect diagnosis. Also, its applicability in analyzing the effects on civilians security falls short, as Caroline Moser in a study on urban violence and civilian insecurity notes that quantitative methodologies fail to capture how people actually experience multiple forms of violence on a daily basis.[55]

Returning to Björkert's case study, which is set in rural settings, is an extreme example of civilian firearms demand. Rather what is of significance is her analysis of the civilian narratives and how they frame security and motives which influence demand. These aspects must be extrapolated and expanded to recognize their applicability across the pan-Indian state. While Delhi (according to the Population Census 2001), has the

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[52] David Bayley, "Police in India," 1971, p. 2287
[53] Dhillon, 2005, *op.cit,* p. 81
[54] Utkarsh Rathore, "Proliferation of Firearms and Explosives in the National Capital Region of Delhi and its Impact on Human Security," in *India and The Arms Trade Treaty*, Nepram, Binalakshmi (ed.), 2009, p 173
[55] Caroline Moser, "Urban Violence and Insecurity: An Introductory Roadmap," *Environment and Urbanization*, Vol. 16:2. October 2004

highest percentage of urban population in India.[56] The situation in cities is different as compared to the rural settings, with less clear forms of victimization, and Renner adds, 'class differences tend to be more visible and glaring in dense conglomerations than in rural settings'.[57] Taking from the orthodox debates of armed conflicts in India, civilians coping strategies which entail a 'demand' for arms requires attention. There is no simple or necessary causal link between the supply of arms and armed violence, and in certain circumstances it is an acceptable action. The civilian narratives which draw attention to their security concerns and motives which govern demand have yet to be analyzed. The next section is a discussion of Delhi's structural and spatial environment, which is necessary to address before delving into its civilian stakeholders and their narratives.

3.1 Contextualizing Delhi

Map of Delhi

Source : V. Dupont, «Delhi : dynamique démographique et spatiale d'une grande métropole», Mappemonde, n° 62, juin 2001.
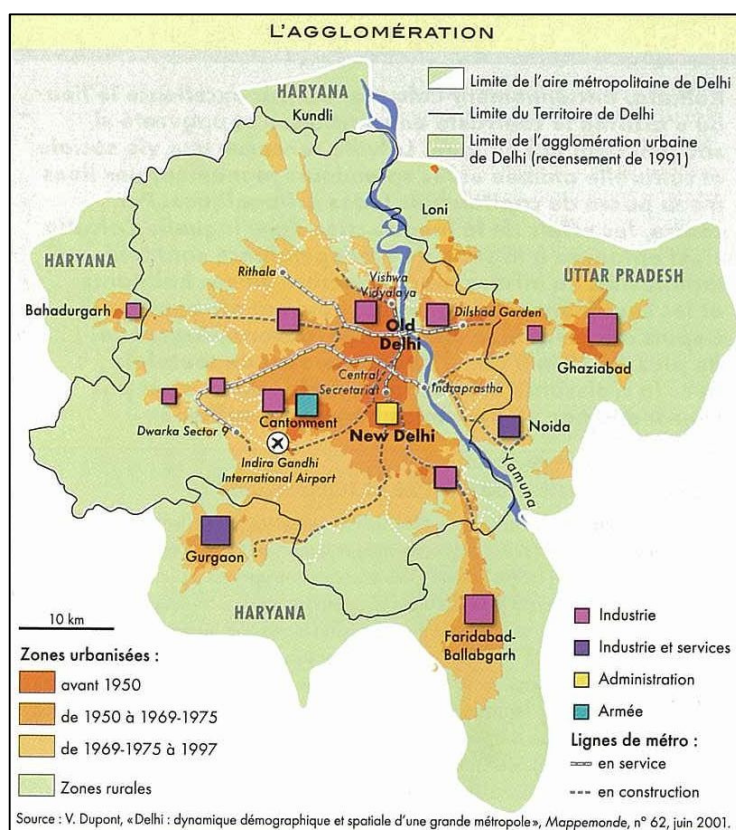
In a study by Véronique Dupont on Delhi's spatial and demographic growth, she states its demographic evolution was established when it became the capital city in 1911,[58] and then during the 1947 traumatic independence of the country. Delhi, the NCT is located within the National Capital Region (NCR) in Northern India. The NCR is a loose conglomerate of NCT and encompasses 14 districts from the states of Haryana, UP, and Rajasthan.[59]

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[56] Demographic Profile, Economic Survey Of Delhi, 2001-2002, p. 21 – 22
[57] Renner, 1998, *op.cit*, p. 3
[58] During the British Indian Empire time period
[59] Rathore, 2009, *op.cit*, p. 164

With an aim to decongest Delhi, the Delhi Developmental Authority[60] and private initiatives played a direct role in encouraging the development of peripheral zones, leading to the creation of satellite townships.[61] The less congested peripheral zones provided more affordable housing possibilities and accessible sites for squatting. However, the public housing policies failed to respond to the growing demands of the urban population, in particular the lower income groups and the poor had to resort to informal housing sectors, that are relegated to squatter settlement and precarious peripheries, known as *jhuggi – jhopri's* (JJ), which proliferate despite 'slum clearance' and resettlement programs.[62] Consequently, Delhi continues to contain rural and urban centers, though progressively more of the region is undergoing urbanization and this is evident in the 45% reduction in the number of villages from 1961 – 2001.[63] According to the Economic survey, Delhi has the highest percentage of urban population amongst the states of India. Philippe Cadène in his study, "Delhi's Place in India's Urban Structure," discusses the unique position of Delhi is built on two reasons. One, since it became the National Capital, and two, its emergence as a great international agglomeration.[64]

Delhi's demographic growth has favoured a multi-directional urban expansion.[65] Dupont contrasts Delhi's urban spatial dynamics to the centrifugal pattern of population growth, which conforms to a classical model of population density gradients characterized by high densities in the urban core and a decline towards the periphery. In response to the increased migrant flows over the past decade, the Development authorities encouraged the development of satellite towns surrounding Delhi. Therefore, amongst its neighboring states (Haryana, UP and Rajasthan), the satellite towns of Gurgaon, Noida, Ghaziabad and Faridabad have evolved and contribute to the development of the NCR region. Nonetheless, Delhi continues to stand out as the capital city among the NCR and Indian

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[60] The central administration in charge of the Master Plan and of land development
[61] Véronique Dupont, "Spatial and Demographic Growth of Delhi since 1947 and the Main Migration Flows," in *Delhi: Urban Space and Human Destinies*, Véronique Dupont *et al.* (eds.), 2000, p. 232 - 233
[62] *Idem,* Dupont adds, 'uncontrolled urbanization of the outskirts of Delhi is the effect of the residential strategies implemented not only by low – income groups, but also to some extent by high – income ones.' However in my study, all the semi educated members resided in temporary settlements, Jhuggi - Jhopris, and some lived in their employer's home
[63] Based on the GoI Economic Survey
[64] Since the emergence of a new system of capital accumulation which benefits major financial institutions and companies , Delhi is growing the recognition of an international city
Philippe Cadène, "Delhi's Place in India's Urban Structure," in Véronique Dupont *et al.* (eds.), 2000, p.241 - 242
[65] Dupont, 2000, *op.cit.,* p. 229

political and administrative system, as it is concentrated the totality of institutions, directly or indirectly connected to its function, the capital of India.[66] Table 1 illustrates the demographic facts of the State, and provides a schematic representation of the changing structural and demographic transformations over the years.

Table 1: Delhi State Facts[67]

	Rural	Urban	Total
Population	0.96 million	12.82 million	13.78 million
Area – 1991-(Sq. Kms.)	797.66 Sq. Kms.	685.34 Sq. Kms.	1483 Sq. Kms
Area – 2001-(Sq. Kms.)	591.91 Sq. Kms.	891.09 Sq. Kms.	1483 Sq. Kms
Literacy Rate	78.75	82.04	81.82
Sex Ratio	801	822	821
Districts in NCR	14	**Districts in NCT**	9
Neighboring States	Haryana	Uttar Pradesh	Rajasthan
Origin of Migration into Delhi			
1. Uttar Pradesh	50%	3. Bihar	11%
2. Haryana	12%	4. Rajasthan	6%
Percentage of Urban Population		93.01% (Highest in India)	
Population Density (Persons per Sq. Km.)	**Delhi**	**India**	
	9294	324	
Number of Villages (Urbanizing Process)	**Year: 1961**	**Year: 2001**	
	300	161	

Dupont advocates that the initial stress put on the development of townships had the effect of strengthening the attraction of the capital and encouraging intensified commuting within the metropolitan area.[68] With many travelling from satellite towns to Delhi on a regular basis for purposes of work, education and other reasons, the absence of a NCR central administrative entity has proved problematic.[69] Since "Delhi does not have any [administrative control and supervision] over the Delhi police, as it is controlled by the Central Government. Other constituents of the NCR are governed as per respective state laws and directives."[70] This prevents coordination of a uniform strategy to curb crime and track criminals or control migration between the porous NCR region.

The Economic Survey reports that in 2001, 50% of the migrants in Delhi originated from UP, 12 % from Haryana, 11% from Bihar, 6% from Rajasthan and the rest from other remaining states of the country. The rapid development of satellite towns and the spatial patterns of population dynamics have led to the city expansion and

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[66] *Ibid*, p. 242

[67] Demographic Profile, Economic Survey Of Delhi, 2001-2002, p. 21 – 22

[68] Dupont, 2000, *op.cit.,* p. 233

[69] Rathore, 2009, *op.cit.,* p. 165

[70] *Idem*

consequential demographic growth, which fall beyond the administrative boundaries of the NCT. In result, "the catchment area of the capital remains dominated by the neighboring states"[71] and arguably, the resulting environment in Delhi is not Delhi's alone.

An assumption followed in this study (which remains a hypothesis due to the lack of any credible data) is that a spillover effect of the migration has contributed to the inflow of firearms into Delhi. For example, Ghaziabad, its satellite, is directly influenced by UPs deplorable law and order situation. More worrying, within UP are located a number of illicit arms trade centers, such as Muzaffarnagar, Rampur, Shamli, Meerut, and the area near Loni on the Delhi – UP border. In a study by Dikshit on India's illicit manufacture of weapons, he states, 'the state city of Delhi is a significant recipient of these weapons as country-made pistols are easily available at intensely populated zones of Mangolpuri (Delhi), Sultanpuri (Delhi), Zaffrabad (UP), the Walled City (Old Delhi),'[72] i.e. the regions surrounding Delhi. As a result, one can assume that gun availability of weapons in Delhi becomes an easy option, if there is a demand. Related to the subject of gun accessibility, Table 2 provides the NCRB data on the crime rate and arms act rate in the Delhi State.

Table 2: Delhi State Crime Facts[73]

Crime Statistics(2007):	Delhi	Mumbai	Kolkata	Chennai	All India
Crime Rate	397.9	256.9	82.5	186.2	175.1
Arms Act Rate	46.9	1.3	0.5	0	6.5
Murder Rate	3.2	1.4	0.3	2.3	2.8
Firearms in Circulation (2003)		Licenced		Un-licenced	
		55,000		300,000	
Police Density per 100 Sq. Kms. (2008)		4075.8 (Highest in India)			

The national crime statistics report that the crime rate in Delhi has been consistently higher than the national average and other major metropolitan cities - Mumbai, Chennai and Kolkata. In 2007 the crime rate in Delhi was 397.9, followed by Mumbai's crime rate of 256.9, while the national average stood at 175.1.

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[71] Dupot, 2000, *op.cit,* p. 238

[72] Dikshit, 2009, *op.cit.,* p. 35

[73] Demographic Profile, Economic Survey Of Delhi, 2001-2002. Refer to Appendix A

In this case the latest crime statistics were taken from 2007 even though the 2008 was available as the Arms Act Rate in 2008 was substantially lower in Delhi than previous years. Upon asking the police to explain the data and trends from the NCRB reported data, no coherent or legal reason was provided

Figure 2: Rate of Total Cognizable Crime: Crime Rate[74]
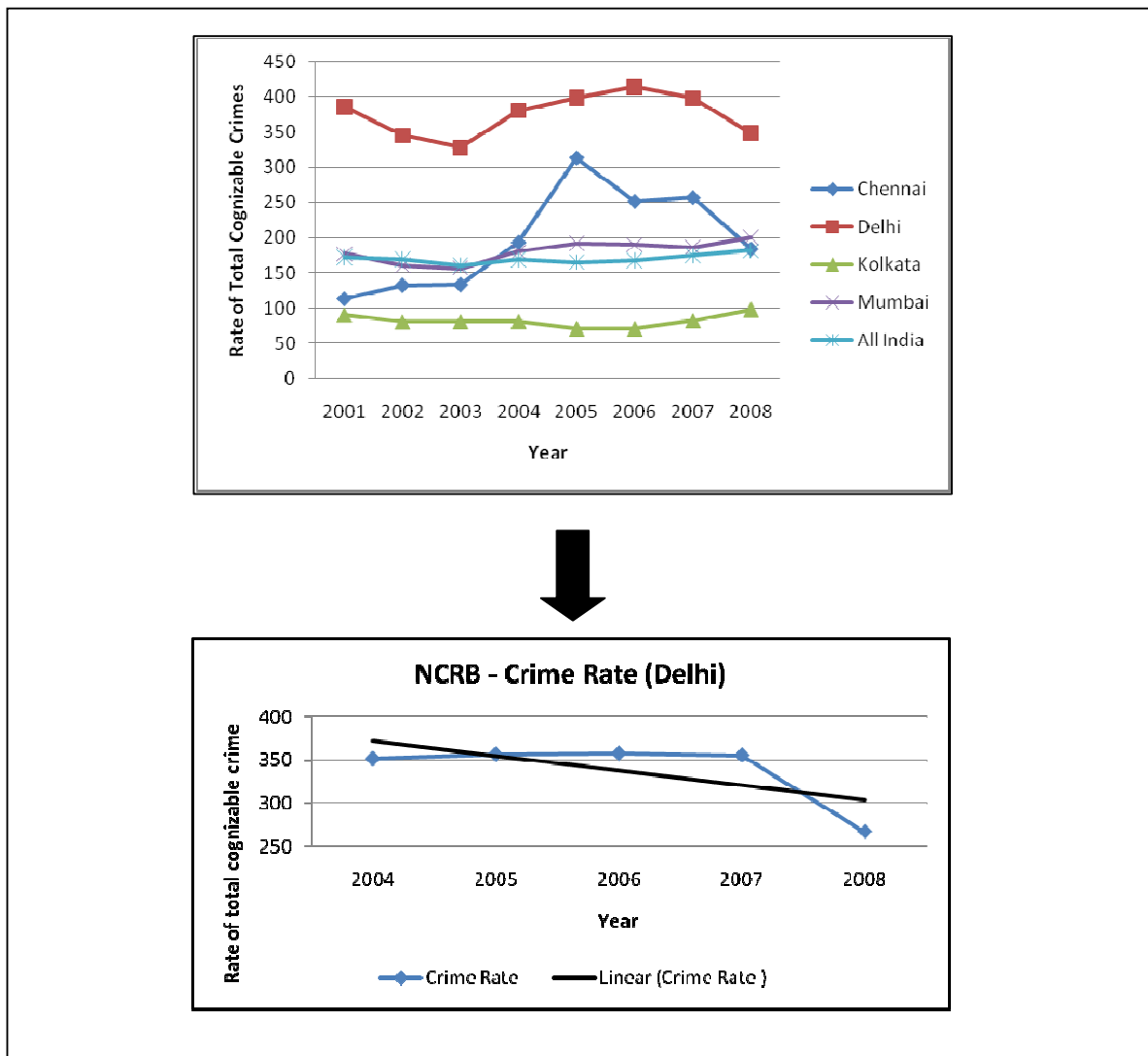
The NCRB reports that the crime rate in Delhi has been on the decrease since 2007.[75] The NCRB subdivides the 'Crime Rate' under the Indian Penal Code (IPC) into: murder, attempt to murder, culpable homicide, rape, kidnapping and abduction, dacoity, preparation and assembly for dacoity. Also, NCRBs report's on Delhi separate the crime and incident rate district-wise. Table 3 represents the incidence of crime in the various districts in Delhi.

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[74] The Crime Rate is defined as the number of crimes committed per 100,000 residents/ or members of population (under the Indian Penal Code). The comparison to the other metropolitan cities and the crime rate in India has a sample size of 8 years to portray the long term crime trends. Refer to Appendix B

[75] The comparison for the crime rate and the Arms Act are measured from 2004 – 2008. This time range is based on the postulation that civilian's perceptions are most influenced by recent events, and thus a time frame of the past five years is adequate to draw upon. Also, the most recent available NCRB data is 2008

Table 3: District Wise Total Cognizable Crime under IPC of Delhi[76]

No.	District	Incidence	No.	District	Incidence	No.	District	Incidence
1.	CAW	107	6.	GRP (RLY)	951	11.	North – West	4204
2.	Central	3100	7.	IGI Airport	530	12.	Outer	5237
3.	Crime Branch	30	8.	New Delhi	1859	13	South	4821
4.	East	5540	9.	North	3113	14	South – East	5904
5.	EOW	170	10.	North – East	4514	15	South – West	3945

In terms of the Arms Act Rate[77] Delhi has a higher number of violations against the Arms Act amongst other metropolitan cities, and the rest of India. It is interesting to note that these high rates are despite the fact that Delhi has the highest police density in the country at 4075.8 per 100 Sq. Kms.[78] With the recurring terrorist attacks on the city in 2001, 2005 and 2008, the police surveillance has increased, but its effects in terms of civilian safety and perceptions remain speculative. The NCRB reports a drastic decrease since 2006 in Delhi's crimes against the Arms Act. The decreasing trend correlates with the decreased crime rate in the city.

Figure 4: Arms Act Rate[79]
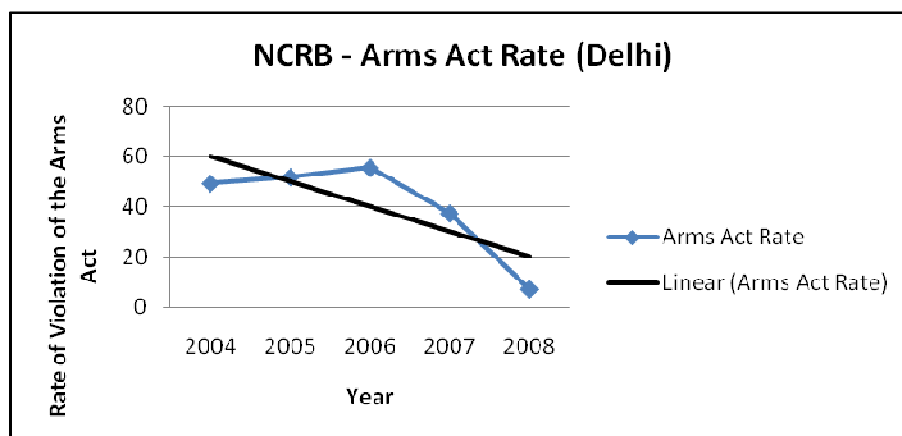
When analyzing civilian use of arms, it is necessary to be aware of its traditional use and social norms which permitted gun acquisition within a community. The following interview outlines a historical perspective on the role of small arms.

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[76]District Wise Total Cognizable Crime under IPC:
http://ncrb.nic.in/cii2008/cii2008/Table%201.14.pdf (accessed 19 April, 2010)
[77] The Arms Act rate refers to the number of crimes with an arm committed per 1,00,000 members of population which fall under the Incidence and Rate of Cognizable Crimes (Special and Local Laws).
[78] GoI, Police Strength per unit Area /Population, Chapter 17
http://ncrb.nic.in/cii2008/cii-2008/Chapter%2017.pdf (accessed 29 March, 2010)
[79] Refer to Appendix A

(a) Historical Role of Small Arms

Historically the role of small arms has been much more vital to the rural population. The needs were quite versatile such as crop protection from animals to personal security due to the lack of public institutions in the vast areas that are sparsely populated. In India, in the past, the use of small arms was largely limited to the armed forces, police and farmers who required guns to protect their crops from wild animals. During interview sessions, a number of interviewees narrated their perspective on the historical role of small arms. Guns in many societies have a cultural affinity with social norms and practices. For example, during an interview session with a resident member of Delhi, Ms. Ratan Mala Singh, I noticed guns hanging in the room we were speaking, and inquired about them.

Box 1: Interview

Question: I see a few guns hanging on the wall,? Could you tell me about them.

"Belonging to a rural background, guns have always played an important role in our family. My father being an avid *shikaari* (hunter) acquired these guns in the beginning of the 20th Century. Within our community, weapons and guns have always been part of our culture as we pride ourselves in our history, as our forefathers were the protectors of India's princely states. Though nowadays, it is quite a hard and long process to gain a license for a new gun, but as these guns were inherited by my sister and I, we were able to transfer the licenses upon my father's death. Also, if we ever want to sell them, they would be worth a lot, since they are old and well kept!"

Question: What role do these guns have for you and your family?
"My sister and I are the owners of these guns, but have never really used them since our father passed away because as women we were always not expected to use such weapons. As we lived in our village and are also an agricultural family my father would use these guns to protect the crops from wild boars and other wild animals and had them also as a means of self protection cause we lived in an area where *dacoit* attacks were common. They are now hung in our living room as ornamental pieces as we now live in the city, and were last used in 2005 for target practicing by my children, while the muzzle loading guns have not been used for many years. Also, as part our yearly Rajput sacred tradition, the family with our pandit (priest) meet on a specific sacred day, where all the weapons in the house are brought out to be first cleaned and then ceremonies are performed. This symbolizes the families continued strength, valor and reminder of our continued duty to one's community. These guns would remain in our family as our children have always had an interest in them. Also, my husband was a hunting enthusiast in his younger days and imported two guns from the US in the 70s when this was possible but these guns now remain locked up in a safe and are brought out only when the license needs to be extended, they need to be cleaned or for ceremonial purposes, and for them to be kept in working condition if they ever need to be used for other reasons."

These answers revealed that guns are keenly linked with family identities, agricultural practices and cultural traditions, and there is continued motivation to keep the guns in working order. Currently, the Indian Arms Act legally permits a person to keep a firearm,

for purposes of target-shooting, protection of person or property and private security. Since Delhi is not agro based, traditional use of guns in agricultural settings does not apply directly to this context.

Being aware of the historical use of arms can be considered necessary since civilian demand for firearms is connected to some degree of social approval of their possession and acceptance in the community. The reasons provided by Ms. Singh do not claim to provide a comprehensive list of historical arms use. Instead it points to the fact that the arms were not used for self defence purposes previously in the city, and arms use for that reason was limited to the rural areas. With Delhi evolving into a mega city and as Milbert notes "urban insecurity often appears to be linked to economic and social inequalities, gender imbalances, new forms of violence and political fragility". The altering spatial and contextual dynamics of Delhi are governed by urbanization effects, influences from its neighboring states, and developing satellite townships, which combined result in novel security concerns for its civilians.

As "security can be considered as a common good, but it is not a given factor,"[80] and with a growing concern for interpersonal violence, civilian concerns make it a significant case study to undertake, to analyze their responses to ensure their personal safety and to diagnose the demand for arms in such an environment.

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[80] Milbert, 2009, *op.cit.,* p.241

4. Research Question and Methodology

4.1 Research Question

Are firearms growing to become a part of civilian's perception of personal security in Delhi? Is this due to the presence of criminal violence in the city or influenced by the surrounding armed conflicts in the country and consequently civilians are arming themselves as a rationale response?

4.2 Hypotheses

H1: Firearms are primarily viewed as tools of self-defence which create a heightened sense of personal security for self.

(There is an nexus between civilian's demand of firearms, in relation to perceptions of arms acquisition enhancing personal security)

H2: An increased acquisition of small arms by civilians is in response to a lack of confidence in the state apparatus to provide adequate public security.

H3: Civilians align their perceived personal – insecurities with subjective experiences, instead of the National Crime Statistics.

4.3 Research Methodology

""The Delhi crime rates demonstrate a gradual decline, which is true. After all look at the population density levels in Delhi! But with the 24/7 media reports, the perceptions of people and their sense of security is different. The national crime rate figures and people's perceptions are in opposing trends, more importantly, there is no scientific baseline to make a comparison."

- *Comment by Dr. Sagar Preet Hooda[81]*

Bearing this comment's relevance to the sensitive theme of the case study, a multi - method approach was adopted to collect primary and secondary data, to identify factors which led to construction of civilian demand. This approach encompassed a combination of techniques: reviewing background secondary sources, police and NGO reports, academic articles and press studies. The NCRB statistics were the main reference source for the reported crime rates and socio-economic demographics on Delhi. However, the statistics were applied and valued critically due to the 'dark figure' problems of such

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[81] Dr. Sagar Preet Hooda is an IPS officer currently serving as the DCP of North District, in Delhi. This comment was provided by Mr. Hooda during an interview session

data.[82] 'Although a large component of the dark figure might be petty offences considered "not serious enough" to be reported to the police, they can very much affect community perceptions and feelings of insecurity"[83] and thus exclusive dependence on NCRB data would result in an essentially incomplete analysis. Also, we have incomplete information regarding the NCRB institutional practices, such as their methods adopted to collect data, which stakeholders do the NCRB statistics represent, a lack of explanations for the statistical trends, which result in reservations regarding the reliability of their data. A newspaper article on the law and order situation in Delhi reported,

"The widespread public perception that there has been a sudden spurt in crime in the Capital stems largely from the rise in incidents of violence at public places. Though the Delhi Police claim that the law and order situation is completely under control, the current situation is reflective of an entirely different scenario…the police are backing their claim with official data showing a declining crime graph. But then the police claims are based on registered crime and not complaints which people actually make."[84]

This statement highlights the reasons for variation in police reports versus civilian opinions of their insecurities. Also, 'where statistics on violence are accurate, tremendous gaps can exist between subject perceptions of violence and objective fact'[85] and of course, fear does not rise proportionately with statistical rates of occurrence. To counter the statistical limitations and drawbacks of NCRB data, primary data was necessary.

I engaged in primary data collection over a two month period (January and February, 2010) in Delhi, with an aim to verify official statistics by contrasting them with civilian narratives and to test the hypotheses underlying the study. The fieldwork involved interviews (structured and unstructured), focused group discussion and site visits. A questionnaire was developed adopting Muggah and Brauer's theory of demand. There was a common questionnaire for all respondents, and which was divided into four subsections: personal security dimensions, city structural dynamics, perception of public institutions and firearms demand. The interviews were carried out in Hindi, Haryanvi, Punjabi, Bhojpuri and English.

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[82] The 'dark figure' refers to problematic data usage due to lack of credible reporting practices, and lack of any external oversight of the data
Anna Alvazzidel Frate '*Victims Of Crime In The Developing World'*, 1998, p. 6 - 10
[83] *Ibid,* p.8
[84] "Law & order: Police fail to comprehend insecurity among residents," *The Hindu*, 19 July, 2008.
http://www.thehindu.com/2008/07/19/stories/2008071952460300.htm (accessed 5 March, 2010)
[85] "Guns and the City", *Small Arms Survey*, 2006, p. 175

The respondents were divided into two groups based on their educational qualifications. The "Educated" group's threshold was individuals that had completed Grade 12 level studies (Indian High school) or pursued further education. The "Semi Educated" group consisted of individuals that had completed minimal formal schooling (in most cases grade 3 – 5, and others had some form of informal or vocational training).[86] Due to the sensitivity of the topic of income which many respondents felt uncomfortable to disclose, the education level of an individual, not income, was applied as the survey group distinguishing factor. Another reason for adopting the education level as an indicating variable was that it corresponded optimally to the individual's income. In India, the average number of years of education is 1.4 in the poorest decile and 11.9 in the richest decile....Persons with a higher level of education can earn more than those with less education".[87] This is important as it influences a person's option for security alternatives in society. Therefore in this study, the 'semi educated' group included lower income level respondents and the 'educated group' consisted of middle – upper class members, with a total sample size of 145 individuals. The following Table 4 provides a detailed list of the different interviewees.

A limiting factor of this research is its static nature. As discussed previously, the 'demand' could alter depending upon the context and time of the study. Also, the list of interviewees was not exhaustive due to practical limitations of time and resources. In order to overcome these shortcomings, I interviewed members from all institutions pertaining to the theme of this study: the judicial system, political establishment, police, NGOs and civil society members. In many cases the interviewees were comfortable with being quoted, but some chose to remain anonymous, especially the police officers, arms retail stores, and elite business men due to the sensitivity of the information provided and for their personal protection.

The strength of this study is the narrative style adopted to collect the primary data. It is constructive to analyze civilian responses with a "narrative" approach, as a general assumption of narrative analysis is that telling stories is a significant medium via which individuals construct and express meaning. Narrations offer deep insights into people's

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[86] It is not suitable to label those who lack formal education as "uneducated", as they all worked to earn a living in different capacities

[87] Friedrich Huebler, "International Health Statistics," 2008

thinking and behavior which are missed in statistical figures,[88] and therefore help avoid statistical anomalies. Further, the narrative approach encompasses qualitative and quantitative responses.

Table 4: Survey Sample

(1) Educated	Sample size		(2) Semi Educated	Sample size	
	Male	Female		Male	Female
Public Institutional Representative • **Justice O.P Garg (Retired Chief Justice of Allahabad)** • **Army officers (Retired)** • **Politician (MLA)** • **Firearms Licensing Officer** • **Police officers**	1 2 1 1 3	 8	**Domestic civil helpers** • **Driver** • **Gardeners** • **road sweeper** • **garbage collector**	8	14
			Taxi Drivers	38	
Teachers **(From schools in Delhi)**		10	**Private security guards/** *chowkidars* **(Community watchmen)**	5	
NGO - Swanchetan **(Dr. Rajat Mitra)**	1				
Advocacy Group - CAFI **(Binalakshmi Nepram and CAFI Staff)**		2			
General public	11	38			
Businessmen (elite)	2				
Sub-Total	22	58		51	14

Total	Male	Female
	73	72
	145	

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[88] Saraswati Haider, "Migrant Women and Urban Experiences in a Squatter Settlement," in Véronique Dupont et al. (eds.), 2000, p.29

5. Case Study Discussion:

Insecurity as Perceived and Defined by Community Level Respondents

This section analyses the civilian narratives in relation to their personal security concerns to test the three hypotheses guiding the study. As mentioned in the research methodology, questions on four themes: personal security, city structural demographics, perceptions of public institutions and firearms demand, were posed to both educated and semi educated members, their responses are evaluated and discussed ahead.

Survey Questions and Tabulated Responses:

Question	Educated		Limited Education	
	Yes	No	Yes	No
Personal Security:				
1. What aspects within the city affect your personal security?				
• Employment/ Business rivalries	12%		85%	
• Transport/ Public place safety	37%		33%	
• Criminal violence	60%		32%	
• Armed conflicts in the country	5%		0%	
• Police harassment and violence	32%		78%	
• Other	5%		2%	
2. Does fear of crime within the city impact your life?	61%	39%	70%	30%
3. Have you ever been a victim of crime?	32%	68%	35%	65%
4. Do you know someone that has been a victim of crime?	77%	23%	60%	40%
5. Do you find increased armed criminal violence in the city?	68%	32%	50%	50%
6. Which of the following types of violence have the greatest negative impact on your community?				
• Sexual violence	25%		7%	
• Family violence	23%		18%	
• Criminal violence	47%		25%	
• Workplace violence	5%		70%	
• Police harassment and negligence	33%		78%	
• Armed Conflicts in the country	18%		3%	
• Other	12%		3%	
7. Do the armed conflicts occurring in Jammu and Kashmir, the Maoist insurgency which result in an influx of arms through the country, affect your personal security?	16%	84%	25%	75%
City Structural Demographics:				
8. Do you agree that the crime in the city has improved in the recent past? (i.e. incidents have decreased)	19%	81%	10%	90%
9. Do the national crime statistics represent the crime trends in the city?	26%	74%	8%	92%
10. Do you think certain parts of Delhi are more unsafe than others?	53%	47%	85%	15%
11. What kind of Housing structure do you reside in?				
• Apartment complex	42%		0%	
• Gated Community	23%		0%	
• Temporary dwelling/ *jhuggi-jhopri* (hutment)	5%		82%	
• Single house	21%		0%	
• Living Quarters (Rented)	9%		18%	
12. Are there any security measures taken in your neighborhood? If Yes, who have they been put in place by:	100%	0%	42%	58%

	Col1	Col2	Col3	Col4
• Government	20%		0%	
• Community members	35%		32%	
• Self	33%		13%	
• Employer	9%		18%	
13. Do you envision a difference between rural and urban violence?	61%	39%	100%	0%
14. Has the increased inter-state mobility within the NCR region had a negative influence on the safety of civilians in Delhi?	79%	21%	80%	20%
Perception of Public Institutions:				
15. Do you trust the police and depend on them when in any form of trouble?	30%	70%	8%	92%
16. Do you envision a nexus between the police and political bodies in Delhi?	77%	23%	100%	0%
17. Are there specific periods during which you witness increased firearm violence?	30%	70%	100%	0%
18. Do the media reports about firearm violence affect your perception of public and personal safety in the city?	18%	82%	63%	37%
19. Is there any correlation between the armed conflicts in the country and the number of civilians arming themselves in the city (Delhi)?	41%	59%	53%	47%
Firearms Demand:				
20. Do you own a firearm?	35%	65%	18%	82%
21. Would you consider having a firearm for your personal safety?	42%	58%	75%	25%
• Licensed type	35%		48%	
• Unlicensed type	9%		27%	
22. Do you know people who possess a firearm?	58%	42%	82%	18%
23. Do you know where one can purchase a firearm?	54%	46%	87%	13%
24. Have you had prior firearm experience, i.e. do you know how to use a gun?	54%	46%	65%	35%
25. Can you afford a licensed gun in Delhi?	89%	11%	12%	88%
26. What role does a firearm have for you:				
• Safety tool	46%		57%	
• Status symbol	40%		60%	
• Cultural heritage/Recreational purpose	26%		3%	
• Police weapon	23%		5%	
• Militants weapon	44%		8%	
• Criminal weapon	32%		20%	
• Other (Suicide tool)	4%		0%	
27. Is there a novel development of increased access and interest of firearms amongst the youth in Delhi?	79%	21%	43%	57%

Discourse Analysis: Narratives of Civilian Stakeholders

5.1 Personal Security

The primary questions (1 – 7) delved into civilian personal security dimensions. Among both group's answers there were common elements of concern regarding employment opportunities, criminal violence, public transport and traffic, police harassment and negligence. There was a higher degree of anxiety related to employment opportunity and job security among the semi educated members (85%), as they largely worked in the

informal sectors as domestic helpers, garbage collectors etc. Such concerns correlate with Milbert's study of urban social vulnerabilities. She puts forth that unemployment and insecure employment are the biggest risk for low income city dwellers, since the growth of the informal sector keeps people in an insecure livelihood with low salaries, uncertainty of work and competition, and it keeps them out of the formal political negotiating tables.[89]

There was a proportionate level of concern among both groups for public traffic and road rage. Some narrated a gradual worsening over the past decade caused from the increased mobility of people and circulation of goods within the NCR region, which in turn, brought increased and rowdy traffic to the NCT. The heightened circulation of people was associated to a perceived rise in criminal activity in the city. In an interview with a respondent belonging to the educated group, he narrated,

"It is easy enough for anyone to commit a crime, for example if the crime is committed in Gurgaon, the criminal then drives off quickly to Delhi, now the situation is tracking the criminal in Delhi who committed the crime in Gurgaon. By this time the Gurgaon police would have lost interest. The porous barriers in NCR make it easy for criminal elements to freely move around and they know they can get away with it!"

This opinion was confirmed by the Gurgaon and Delhi police constables. They alleged that this problem was due to the police institutional inertia to tackle this known criminal problem, which had developed simultaneously with the growth of the NCR region. Apart from the civilian perceived rise in criminal activity, civilians voiced concern about a novel development of armed criminal activity in the city, which was viewed more lethal and growing increasingly frequent. This development was again linked to the increased general mobility of people and goods (in the NCR region), and arms were one such good. Respondents linked the source of weapons to the multiple unregulated arms manufacturing units in parts of Western UP and Bihar, and the increasing migrants from those regions.

Based on the survey data it was established that crime in the city was a safety concern for a majority of the respondents. Among the interviewees 32% (educated group) and 35% (semi educated group) had been a victim of crime at least once during their lifetime, while a large percentage of respondents claimed to know others who has been victims to criminal and armed criminal violence. It is of significance that despite equal proportion of members being a victim of crime, the educated group perceived it to be a much stronger security threat (60%), in comparison to the semi educated group (32%).

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[89] Milbert, 2009, *op.cit.,* p. 238

The educated respondents judged that they were increasingly targeted due to their higher economic status, ownership of commercial goods, such as cars and electronic gadgets, which made them attractive to criminals and to members from lower economic backgrounds. Consequently, almost half of the educated group members listed criminal violence as a negative threat in relation to their community safety, as compared to 25% of the semi educated. Other community safety concerns shared by both groups were sexual and family related violence, and which were framed as domestic and private family issues.

A jarring difference among both group's responses was the degree of concern with workplace violence and police harassment. Related to the workplace, a majority of semi educated members worked in the informal sectors, where minimal provision of any legal social security and regulation are implemented. The high level of concern (70%) of the workplace violence can be rationalized with the status of the informal sector in India. The sector is broadly characterized as consisting of units engaged in the production of goods and services with the primary objective of generating employment and income to the people concerned. These units typically operate at a low level of organization, with little or no division between labour and capital as factors of production on a small scale. According to the National Sample Survey Organisation (1999 – 2000), confirmed that out of total workforce of 397 million in India, only 28 million workers are employed in the organized-formal sectors and remaining in the unorganized/ informal sectors.[90] In terms of social security in the informal sector, provisions which may be statutory, public or private exist in theory, but their effective implementation is not formally documented and hence their benefit to workers remains unknown. This institutional gap can be associated to the following heightened concern of the semi educated members with police harassment and violence (79%).

Given the evolutionary nature of the Indian police institution, the triangular nexus between political parties, criminal organizations and police continues to be plagued by corruption, essentially making semi educated communities easy bait. This aspect was furiously debated during a focus group discussion with 38 taxi drivers at the Haryana Institute of Public Administration centre in Gurgaon. In a unanimous voice the taxi drivers identified and equated the police and the state apparatus with criminal entities. They narrated stories that despite them all having legal driving licenses and papers (which

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[90] GoI: Informal Sector in India - Approaches for Social Security, p. 2 – 7

permitted them to freely move within the NCR region) they were regularly stopped at border crossings for no legal reason. Unless, they paid a *rishwat* (bribe) to the police, either their vehicle would be towed, license withdrawn, they would be physically manhandled and not be allowed to continue their journey. In an empirical study by Dupont on mobility patterns and economic strategies of lower income individuals from Old Delhi, she recorded similar observations.[91] In her interview with a 'Three Wheeler Goods Carrier' (migrant from Meerut), he stated, "We get trouble from the police in many places. They take bribes. If we don't give them, they fine us for no reason", another taxi driver (migrant from Bihar) stated, "I don't have a ration card or an identity card. I don't even have a house [the] taxi is my home and is where I sleep", this answer draws attention to the insecurities and status of semi educated workers in the unorganized sector. Under such circumstances the taxi drivers narrated, in order to avoid police harassment; they would pay what was demanded illegally of them. An analogy to conceptualize this reality is *oiling the system*, i.e. the taxi drivers conform and prolong the existing system. Instead of refusing to pay and filing formal complaints, to avoid further harassment by the police, they would rather continue to contribute to the system as it is. However, in the case of the educated group, members reported a lack of confidence in the police and their capabilities, and many admitted to have paid bribes on multiple occasions, again to avoid dealing with the system. A minority among the educated group did have a positive opinion of the Indian police and perceived an improvement in their performance based on personal interactions.

The final element of personal insecurities was the armed conflicts in the country. 5% among the educated group viewed it as an individual concern, and 18% perceived the conflicts as having a general destructive effect on their community. The respondents equated the armed conflicts with terrorist groups, but which had a minimal level of personal security concern to their self. Also, the semi educated members narrated a lack of perceived apprehension on their personal safety. However, there was growing alarm about the impact of the armed conflicts on their community, as they envisioned the conflicts as a resource pool for arms. There was a sense of unease that the armed conflicts had resulted in an influx of arms into the city, further adding to the number of arms. The influx of arms was perceived as a preemptive concern to their possible usage.

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[91] Dupont, 2000, *op.cit.,* p. 97,

The next section shifts focus to the regional context of Delhi and the following set of questions (8 – 14) discuss the city's structural demographics which influence civilian security and factors which govern arms demand.

5.2 Delhi: City Structural Demographics

Attention to the city's spatial and structural demographics is essential to identify the push and pull factors particular to the context which influences civilian demand. The foremost question addressed the group's opinion about the decreasing crime rate (according to NCRB reported data). A unanimous response from both groups's instead perceived a hike in the rate of crime incidents. In seeking the logic of this response, which posed contrary to the NCRB reports, I inquired, "Do the national crime statistics represent the crime trends in the city?" 26% of the educated respondents and 8% amongst the semi educated group agreed that the NCRB portrayed correct results of the crime situation. It is imperative to note that amongst both groups; there was minimal awareness of the existence of NCRB reports, and a majority of the respondents which were satisfied with the accuracy of the NCRB data belonged to the police personnel or worked in different capacities with the public state institutions.

The NCRB statistics report that the total cognizable crime rates in Delhi have been decreasing since 2007 (Figure 2). To substantiate these trends, the Delhi Police Commissioner, Y.S. Dadwal made a public statement (reported in multiple media reports), claiming that in 2009 the number of heinous crime and non – heinous crime (under the IPC), murder cases and crimes was at an all time low in the Capital, compared to previous years.[92] Despite the public reporting on the lowering crime rates, conversely civilian's responses expressed strong concerns about a rising crime rate in Delhi.[93]

Based on the survey data one can infer that civilians essentially do not correlate their perceived sense of personal insecurities and fears with either their personal experiences or the NCRB, of which most were either unaware or lacked confidence in the

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[92] Refer to Ashok Kumar, "Crime rate down, claims Police Chief", *The Hindu*, 5 July, 2009
http://www.thehindu.com/2009/07/05/stories/2009070557490300.htm (accessed 5 April, 2010)
A similar report, "Low crime rate in Delhi: Police Commissioner Dadwal," *MeriNews*, 6 July, 2009
http://www.merinews.com/article/low-crime-rate-in-delhi-police-commissioner-dadwal/15775006.shtml
(accessed 8 April, 2010)
[93] Civilians concern in this context address H3: Civilians align their perceived sense of personal – insecurities with their personal experiences, instead of the National Crime Statistics

reported data. With an average of 33% of the respondents being a victim at some point, instead increased number of respondents knew of other victims of crime. Such responses can be best interpreted by the work of Agbola (1997), who advocates that real and perceived violence mutually reinforce each other depending upon the circumstances. Therefore, despite not all respondents being a victim of crime, their perceptions were not formed by personal experiences or documented NCRB trends. Instead the claim to know other victims and knowledge of other incident driven stories was sufficient to fuel perceptions of their personal insecurities.

Delhi's demographics consist of rural and urban centers, which have resulted in an asymmetrical distribution of urban services for its residents. By delving deeper into the city's spatial structures, the subsequent survey questions addressed if segments of the city were perceived to be safer than other parts. 53% of educated and 85% of semi educated (responses respectively) perceived a difference in the level of safety among different districts and two key reasons were provided.

First, on a macro level, over the past decade there has been rapid development of Delhi's peripheral towns which has resulted in increased flows of populace. The areas such as Ghaziabad and Haryana have sprouted from mere village dwellings to developing townships. This had resulted in daily migration of workers between the NCR districts, which contribute to Delhi's spatial structures and its cultural environment. In consequence, both groups envisaged that the interstate population transfer, combined with the lack of a NCR administration and vigilant police apparatus created a vacuum of any central and responsible authority that civilians could depend on. The second reason, on a micro level, was the presence of a politician which created a vast difference in the neighborhood quality, in terms of government provided civic amenities, such as neighborhood security, regular water and electricity and good conditioned roads. This aspect highlights the distribution of basic amenities are better provided where the rich and influential members of society reside, while the worst or no provisions are provided in the several temporary peripheral areas. However, "the squatters of Delhi form important and sizeable 'vote banks' whose votes can make or mar the career of a Delhi politician. *Jhuggi-jhopri* (JJ) clusters in Delhi are a hotbed of politics. And in such a context, the politics is largely a politics of basic amenities".[94] A similar perspective was provided in an interview with a

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[94] Dupont, 2000, *op.cit.,* p. 34

MLA politician.[95] He quotes, "where a politician resides, is an attractive reason for other civilians to want to live there, there is always government security, my own house has 2 armed police guards". This aspect emphasizes where police priorities have been placed and the influence bestowed by a politician's presence.[96] Amongst the educated group, 47% responded that were was no difference of safety in parts of the city. Since members of this group belonged to the middle – upper economic strata in society, steps had been taken to enhance their home's safety via additional inputs. Some mentioned they had grills installed on home windows or had hired private security guards, and therefore the location in the city was not a source of concern. This category had ample means to reinstate their security boundaries wherever they were located.

Following on the previous answer, as respondents correlated the variation in the city's districts with the housing type and consecutively the security provided, the next questions (11 – 12) explored the respondents housing structure.

A majority of the educated group respondents resided among apartment complexes, gated communities, and single house types. In most cases these respondents had organized their own security, either via personal means or through the community (i.e. private resident welfare associations). While the government provided police mostly kept guard of civil servant residential areas, in some cases even retired public servants homes were provided with security. In all cases the respondents of the educated group had some level of security in their households, this directly correlated to their income, as they either resided in areas with community security or could afford private security options.

Amongst the semi educated, a majority resided in peripheral zones in and around Delhi which provided more affordable housing possibilities, and sites for temporary squatting.[97] In terms of security provisions, discussions highlighted that no measures had been provided by the government either for their homes or community area, and hence public security in any form had never existed. The public security was self created with other fellow members, which resulted in a strong informal community network. For example, the female domestic workers stated that all the village members pooled in their

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[95] He chose to remain anonymous for the study

[96] Also, during the focus group discussion with the taxi drivers, they hinted that the area of Chankyapuri in Delhi was considered the safest region since most government embassies were located and unexpectedly large government security were instilled

[97] Also, refer to a similar discussion presented in Haider, 2000, *op.cit.,* p. 34

resources to put up some form of lighting in *galis* (streets) and groups of male members on a weekly rotation basis would take rounds of the houses during the night time. Few semi educated members resided in single rooms provided by their employers. In all these cases, the respondents affirmed that their employers had taken self measures to beef up the security of their homes. The discussion from both groups yielded that the norm for public security provisions of the neighborhood were instilled by the individual and community members.

5.3 Perception of Public Institutions

The theme of the following set of questions (15 -19) investigate civilians perception of the quality of public state institutions (police and political parties) which contribute to the public security of the city. The police are a visible symbol of state authority and policing is a reflection of a public good.[98] In response to the question, "Do you trust the police and depend on them when in any form of trouble?" both groups shared a similar opinion of a general failure in the state machinery to provide security and being unresponsive to the needs of ordinary people. Among the educated group, the majority of the 30% that instilled their trust in the police either worked for them or were part of a public institution that had mandated police protection. Few respondents belonging to the semi educated group narrated incidents of visiting the police to lodge a formal complaint, and stories were narrated about how many went through bureaucratic hurdles (tedious paper work, long waiting time, multiple meetings), indirectly and directly asked to pay bribes, and in the end, none had managed to lodge a formal complaint.

Many interviewees (from both groups) narrated that police priorities in their opinion were reserved for VIP and political party members. In a similar vein, Dhillon states that provisions of physical protection to those in positions of power has for long been a part of the charter of duties of security agencies and currently the elected representative apprehend a threat from the people that they undertake to serve and perhaps, it is the total loss of credibility of the system that no one politician – minister, legislator or party functionary, will venture out in the street, without highly visible security cover.[99] Dhillon's proposition was confirmed by the civilian responses to the subsequent question, "Do you envision a nexus between the police and political bodies in Delhi?"

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[98] Andrew Goldsmith, "Policing Weak States: Citizen Safety And State Responsibility," *Policing and Society*, Vol.13: 1, 2002, p. 3 – 21. 2002, p. 8
[99] Dhillon, 2005, *op.cit.,* p. 145 – 147

77% among the educated and 100% among the semi educated agreed there was an unhealthy resonance between the two public institutions, which were inherently created to serve the people as independent entities. To better appreciate the nexus, it was essential to gain the perspective of a politician.

In an interview with an MLA, who at the beginning took out a revolver from the back of his pants, placed it on the table and then responded,

"Listen, every politician has a number of legal and illegal weapons, we need them. No significant action is taken by the police without the ordering and consent of either MPs or MLAs. Over the last decade there is an increased dependence on the police and criminal gangs to further ensure our electoral support, and if necessary the media gets used also…during election time politicians have their men, who they arm to threaten and scare people. Particularly, near the vote bank areas there will be such man hanging around. The only people the armed members might actually shoot is our rivals. The police have no role or control in this situation; they have learnt it is in their benefit to stay out of matters that are none of their business...the armed men mainly go to the rural areas to scare people, but almost never would they shoot anyone…"

This response steered the next question, "Are their specific periods during which you witness increased firearm violence?" 30% among the educated group confirmed that there were peaks of violence during election cycles, and their opinions were based on media reports as none had ever personally encountered a threat. Another reason provided, was that many associated firearm violence to occur during the night time, in relation to criminal's use. This observation was confirmed by interviews with the police officers. They reported that over the past years, gun usage during the day time had decreased due to increased number of police officers being on patrol, which made them more visible all over the city.

The semi educated group agreed that it was during election time that they witnessed increased firearm violence in their communities which were located in urban peripheries, and where police patrol was rare. Many narrated stories of being threatened by armed men regarding who they should vote for. Dupont, in her studies shared similar observations from interviews with JJ members, that squatters in and around Delhi formed sizeable 'vote-banks' areas.[100] The narratives of civilians, politician and other academics

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[100] Dupont, 2000, *op.cit.,* p. 34

validate a muscular relationship amongst the political parties and organized crime in the city, between which the police apparatus remain inconspicuous.[101]

To determine other elements on the status of public institutions and firearm violence, the next question posed, "Is there any correlation between the armed conflicts in the country and the number of firearms in circulation in the city?" Amongst the educated member's responses, 41% agreed that there was an association. In an interview with Binalakshmi Nepram from CAFI she stated, "many people from the North East and Kashmir conflict regions are granted licenses for self defense reasons, and then they are selling them to people in Mumbai and Delhi, when these licenses and guns enter urban areas, and it leads to a new gun culture in the city …"[102] This response traces the problem of proliferation and gun running in the city due to the supply from the armed conflicts. Conversely, a majority of educated respondents perceived a minimal nexus of arms in the city to the armed conflicts in the country. Instead, they advocated the arms circulation due to increasing migration from Delhi's neighboring states of UP, Bihar, Haryana and Rajasthan, which all burden illegal arm manufacturing units.[103] Also, as highlighted earlier, the porous regions in the NCR allow unchecked circulation of weapons in the region. Among the semi educated group, the armed conflicts were viewed as an indirect source for illegal arms procurement.[104]

Overall the status of public state institutions which were meant to provide public security were perceived to be in a dismal state. The ongoing armed conflicts were identified with the state's inability to curb its internal conflicts, coupled with the opinion that the police apparatus remain unconnected to the travails of ordinary people. This relates to the question raised at the beginning of the study, in such circumstances *what are civilian's options to ensure their personal security?* After gauging with elements which

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[101] In response to the questions 16 and 17, there was a 100% response from the semi educated group, which was not expected. Therefore, I raised these questions; however, a consensus of opinion already existed among these members of society.

[102] Binalakshmi Nepram is the Secretary General of Control Arms Foundation of India (CAFI) located in Delhi, which is the leading NGO working on issues of armed violence

[103] These are multiple small scale manufacturing units located among these regions

[104] Some respondents gave the example about family relatives which resided in parts of Kashmir, the North East, and when they migrated to Delhi (for reasons such as employment, to move out of conflict areas, to be with their family), their weapons would be brought along. Though the motivations with which arms were previously acquired in conflict zones were different, as compared to reasons for which they were carried in part to the rest of their baggage to Delhi.

threaten personal safety, city structural demographics, state public institutions, the final set of questions (20 – 27) analyze civilian demand for firearms.

To study the motivation variable among civilians, the role of a firearm that precedes weapon acquisition is examined. While to conceptualize the means dimension, the cost of gaining a gun license is applied as an indicator variable for two reasons: one, since the government listed prices are affordable rates by all members, yet the actual cost of attaining a license in most cases is a exorbitantly high figure, and two, the high cost of purchasing a firearm with the specifications that could be licensed, highlights other useful dimensions which influence civilian demand.

5.4 Firearm Demand

(a) Motivation dimension

The foremost question posed was, "Would you consider having a firearm for your personal safety?" 42% of the educated group and 75% of the semi educated confirmed a positive demand for reasons of personal security. Though, 35% from the educated group (members belonging to the police personnel, the politician, retired army officers, businessmen and general civilian members) and 18% among the semi educated (members belonging to private security guards, taxi drivers and domestic workers) claimed ownership of a firearm. A few disclosed their weapons, which consisted of rifles, revolvers and pistol types. The percentage of ownership level indicated that a majority did not own a firearm.

Ironically, in comparison to the percentage of people that owned arms, 58% of the educated respondents knew others who possessed an arm and 55% knew where they could purchase one, and respectively, 82% and 87% among the semi educated members. The motivation 'type' to acquire an arm can be juxtaposed with the role that a weapon has for members of a community. For purposes of self defence, less than half among the educated, and a majority among the semi educated perceived firearm acquisition to result in a heightened sense of personal security (such opinions address and confirm H1).[105] The reason being that mere ownership of a gun was perceived to create an agency which would result in natural enhancement of the security of the individual.

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[105] *HI:* Firearms are primarily viewed as tools of self-defence which create a heightened sense of personal security for self.

Both groups highlighted security as a right of the individual and held expectations of the state to provide adequate public safety provisions, which were lacking in the city. The reasons provided were alluded to in earlier discussions on criminal violence, public institutions, armed conflicts and Delhi's geographical location. In response, to counter the state's inadequacies, the act of gun acquisition was viewed as a rational response. A member from the educated group narrated an incident of when his house had been burglarized,

"I recently applied for a gun license since owning a gun will allow me to take charge of my and family's safety. When the robbers broke into my house, did the police help, no! You are naïve to think they will come…and why should I not own a gun, the problem lies with our corrupt governance systems and criminals – they are the root causes of insecurities, not owning a gun…"

Another respondent narrated a nationalist narrative when associating gun ownership to self security,[106]

"You remember, Mutiny of 1857, when the British disarmed the masses, that's where India's colonial gun control laws are rooted, it's a shame! In Gandhi ji's autobiography, he wrote, 'Among the many misdeeds of the British rule in India, history will look upon the Act depriving a whole nation of arms, as the blackest." [107] Look at Mumbai attacks, could they have been prevented if more civilians were armed? In America they all carry guns, why should we continue with the former colonial mentality, today I should be allowed to carry a gun for my country's and my protection…"[108]

Building further on the security discourse, the semi educated group responses necessitated separate attention since a higher percentage (75%) opted for firearms for personal security and the reasons provided were rooted in concerns different from those of the educated group.

A common motivation among both groups for gun acquisition associated to personal security was the ascribed status symbol that came with weapon ownership.

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[106] For the interview the respondent had printed out documents for me to read about the India's Arms Act and discussed the work of Abhijeet Singh, the founder of National Association of Gun Rights in India

[107] "The story of My Experiments With Truth", by M.K. Gandhi, 1927, p.238

[108] Civilian opinions of this nature have been widely expressed since the Mumbai 2008 terror attacks. In a media report, Richard Munday, "Think tank: If each of us carried a gun…we could help to combat terrorism", The Sunday Times, 7 December, 2008
its states a civilians opinion:
"Among the many misdeeds of British rule in India," Mahatma Gandhi said, "history will look upon the act depriving a whole nation of arms as the blackest." The Mumbai massacre is a bitter postscript to Gandhi's comment. D'Souza now laments his own helplessness in the face of the killers: "I only wish I had had a gun rather than a camera."
http://www.timesonline.co.uk/tol/comment/article5299010.ece (accessed 3 June, 2010)

Among the educated group the more exotic (an imported weapon in most cases) and expensive the arm, the more prestige it held, and in this case the price was not a constraining variable. These views were confirmed in a media report titled, "*MP Ministers love their 'exotic' guns*" which reported an incident where the Chief Magistrate was shown firing a revolver after a ritual in which weapons were worshiped, and commented that most MPs of the cabinet "love their guns and love to flaunt them", including female MPs.[109] The ritual element of worshiping weapons was also mentioned in the interview with Ms. Singh, which indicates a continuation of cultural traditions related to arms.

Among the semi educated, increased members narrated that gun ownership was considered prestigious in celebrations, as rifles were used to shoot bullets in the air to express the family's joy as they sing and dance in the procession that accompanies a groom to his wedding.[110] This tradition is borrowed from parts of UP, and over the years, the custom's practice has altered from one that was displayed in public, to a more covert style since public shooting in any form in India, is illegal, except for reasons of self defence. Nonetheless, the tradition continues at weddings in parts of Delhi, as it is considered important in defining the status of a family, and none would want to appear unable to celebrate in as grand a manor as is the social norm among marriage celebrations. In these situations families rent, borrow and in a few instances buy arms to carry out this tradition. In another case, the ownership of a gun brought along with it the authority and respect as the owner was able to offer a sense of security by providing a preemptive protection mechanism to the community. Since ownership of a gun was viewed as a soft threat to others that did not own one. This was also the primary reason that led to an increased percentage of semi educated members knowing others who possessed an arm and where to purchase it from.

Amongst the educated group arms were related to recreational use, such as at the shooting range, previously for hunting, and some arms had been passed from generations in their family or were used during a war and were now ornamental trophies. Others associated the role of arms with the police apparatus, a criminal's weapon, and militant's weapons. For the militant category a majority of respondents recounted the 2008 Mumbai terror and Naxal related attacks. In the case of the semi educated members, similar roles

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[109] Anup Dutta, "Ministers love their 'exotic' guns," *India Today*, 5 April, 2010
http://indiatoday.intoday.in/site/Story/91295/India/MP+ministers+love+their+%27exotic%27+guns.html (accessed 10 March, 2010)
[110] "Business stopped in gun capital of India," *Taipei Times*, 15 April, 2007
http://www.taipeitimes.com/News/world/archives/2007/04/15/2003356725 (accessed 12 March, 2010)

with arms were associated though by a smaller percentage of the respondents. Based on civilian narratives, the two primary roles of firearms (for both groups) were its use for self defence and related, a status symbol tool. These roles again verify H1.[111]

Apart from these roles, there was an increased general awareness of arms in the city and a contributing factor was the urban youth. In an interview with Dr. Rajat Mitra, he observed that over the past decade, "there has been an escalation in the levels of violence where personal security is being questioned and threatened at many levels, and the prevalence of firearms demand and use has increased drastically among the civilian members".[112] The gun is increasingly being used to resolve petty issues in society. "Further, due to easy firearm access in the city, has led to an increased interest by teenagers belonging to wealthy families. They borrow their parent's weapons, and in some cases with their permission, use it to show off at parties, and is increasingly becoming a fashion status statement." In the case of the semi educated youth, due to a lack of economic opportunities and perceived injustices, it compelled some to take up arms as an alternative, and many got involved in petty crime.

The different narratives regarding civilians perception of public institutions, combined with perceptions of firearms confirm H2.[113] Hence in response, a number of civilians were turning to acquire a gun to fill the gap. The increase in civilian demand was confirmed in an interview with a senior officer belonging to the Delhi's licensing office branch in Defence Colony, in South Delhi.[114] He mentioned during the past 5 years there had been a surge in gun license applications from urban city dwellers, including women (5 – 7% of the applications), which previously was rare. Earlier most applications came from agriculturalists and industrialists. He also agreed that the increased demand was coupled with an increased general awareness of guns in the city, where the role of the gun was not limited to self defence purposes.

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[111] H1: Firearms are primarily viewed as tools of self-defence which create a heightened sense of personal security
for self
[112] Dr. Rajat Mitra , is the Director of Swanchetan, an organization in Delhi which deals with survivors of armed violence among other traumas
[113] *H2:* An increased acquisition of small arms by civilians is in response to a lack of confidence in the state apparatus to provide them with public security in general.
[114] Due to institutional privacy concerns, the respondent chose to remain anonymous

Among the educated group there were interviews with two business tycoons in Delhi, whose responses and arms acquisition were anomalies, in comparison to the other survey members. Their interviews are discussed in Box 2.

Box 2: Interview with two businessmen in Delhi

In the interviews with the two business tycoons in Delhi, their motivation to acquire arms was fundamentally for personal and family security. In terms of their 'demand' the means variable was not a constraint and therefore the means required were of no significance as there were plentiful resources. Both respondents personally owned 3 types of imported arms and carried one arm at all times. In addition each said they had between 30 – 40 personal armed security guards. Their arms were acquired from Indian Ordnance factories. The businessmen had an all India type license, which allowed them to carry their arms throughout the country, and they claimed that their armed security guards each had licenses, and hence all weapons were legally purchased. Also apart from arms acquisition their grand homes had gates, grills, and electronic security systems installed and one house even had its own shooting range. During the interview they both emphasized that the licensing process had become an increasingly difficult procedure over the years.

Their motivations to carrying arms were multi-faceted and based on actual events, the perceived increase in crime and armed conflicts had no bearing on their motivation to acquire arms. Instead their motivations were driven by economic rivalries and lack of trust in the state apparatus to provide full proof protection. The police categorized them within a 'risk category' from being economically attractive, and one police officer stated, "If people are aware they are under a specific threat, which is the reason by which a license is authorized, they should acquire an arm for their safety", and Justice O.P Garg (Retired Chief Justice of Allahabad) stated, "the Indian police does not have the capacity to keep all civilians in check, it is just not possible for the state to do everything…"

This is important to note that civilians having a high threat to their personal security require mechanisms to protect themselves that the state cannot offer and in these cases civilian ownership of arms is justified and beneficial to maintain their personal security.

(b) Means Dimension

To conceptualize the mean's dimension, acquiring a legal gun license and the processes involved is applied as an indicator variable. Table 5 lists the GoI prices to acquire a fresh license and to renew one (for different type of arms). The legal listed costs are very low, and from the survey data most respondents desired a licensed arm (if they were to acquire one). Ironically, in response to the question, "Can you afford a licensed gun in Delhi?" 89% among the educated group, and only 12% among the semi educated group could afford a licensed arm. This response could denote two facets of acquiring a weapon legally: one, there are high transaction costs, including bribery charges and two, the cost of acquiring a licensed weapon is high, and these are discussed ahead.

Table 5: Government fee required to be paid for fresh issue of license and renewal[115]

Type of Weapon	Fresh/Addition (3 Years)	Renewal (3 Years)	Late Fees (Per Year)	Revalidation (Per Year)
Revolver/ Pistol/ Repeating Rifle.30	$4.32	$3.24	$1.08	$2.16
Rifle	$2.59	$1.94	$0.65	$1.30
Gun/.22 Rifle/Air Rifle	$1.73	$1.30	$0.43	$0.86
M.L. Gun, Sword, Bayonet, Dagger and Spear	$0.43	$0.32	$0.11	$0.22
Duplicate	$1.08			

According to Table 5, the costs of acquiring a gun license exemplify the reality that the actual legal monetary cost of acquiring a license is extremely low. However during many interviews, the interviewees mentioned how tedious, time consuming and costly it was to attain a license. This raises a question that what were these high costs involved in getting a license? The process to acquire a gun license in India is highly bureaucratic, with much paper work required which includes a criminal antecedents check from the local police headquarter.[116] The local police department can often be rather stubborn and require incentives to provide the required information. Thus almost all of the costs incurred in acquiring a gun license are indirect ones. Often members of the low strata of society cannot afford these high costs and are also harassed by the police who take advantage of the lack in level of education of the license applicant and also his/her desperation. If ultimately turned down by a licensing officer, combined with the additional indirect costs, a civilian has access to the plentiful illegal cottage gun-manufacturing units around Delhi and from armed conflicts in different parts of the country.

Apart from attaining a gun license, even procuring a licensed firearm is a high cost. The price range of a few type of arms were provided by the arm retailed stores, business elite members, private security guards and few members of the semi educated group.[117]

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[115]Indian Government: Areas of Licensing
http://www.delhipolice.nic.in/home/licensing/touch_screen.htm

[116] The applicant has to approach the police commissioner's officer or the district magistrate, fill a standard form stating his/ her need for a weapon for self protection or sport. The individual has to prove the need for self protection by producing a written police complaint or prove a history of threats, and the person has no criminal records. Once the license is issues the applicant can buy the weapon directly from ordnance factories, another licensed holders, authorized gun dealer or import the weapon

[117] The price ranges matched those provided in the media article, "Now, Common Citizens look for Small Arms,"

Table 6: Cost of Firearms[118]

Small arm type: Legal[119]			Approximate price
0.32 pistol (sold at IOF)			$ 1,484
0.22 revolver (sold at IOF)			$ 848
Beretta .32 revolver (imported)			$ 6,361
Browning .32 (imported)			$ 5,938
a pump action shot gun[120]	Imported price $ 4241	IOF $ 636	Bullet price $ 0.48
Small arm type: Illegal			Approximate price
Katta/ Tamancha/ Dunaliyya/ pen pistol (locally produced)			$5 - $550

The price range of acquiring a licensed arm indicates that it is an investment to buy a legal gun, and prices that only few semi educated could afford. As discussed earlier, the semi educated group indicated an increased demand for arms as compared to the educated group, and also stated their inability to afford a license. This aspect points to the fact that rationally, semi educated members would be forced to the illegal side to acquire affordable weapons. It is lack of affordable and easily accessible licenced weapons which forces members of the semi – educated group towards illegal arms sources. Also noteworthy, once civilians are forced to turn to the illegal sector; their means are no longer a constraining variable, since all members can afford some type of illegal arm. In such circumstances the demand for an arm is mainly the motivation variable, which if already exists, then under such means circumstances allow easy accessibility. By installing harsh licencing standards, coupled with the high cost of weapons (from the IOF), the state institutions are indirectly compelling civilians to turn to the illegal market.

The survey data based on civilian narratives verified the research hypotheses: one, firearms and perceived association to civilian personal security. Two, an increased demand of firearms has developed in response to a growing lack of civilian confidence in the public security domain, particularly in the police apparatus. The third hypothesis demonstrated that civilians do not align their perceived sense of personal insecurities with either their personal experiences or the NCRB statistics. The narratives also illuminated specificities about the variables: motivations and means, which combined create and allow

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[118] The exorbitantly high prices of the weapons are due to the fact that the Indian Ordinance Factories that are owned by the government have a monopoly on small arms manufacturing. The prices are controlled and are used as a deterrent to limit small arms accusation. The rich however are able to afford these weapons but this restricts the uneducated to the informal sector.

[119] GoI: Indian Ordnance Factories: Civilian Arms and Ammunition

http://ofbindia.gov.in/index.php?wh=Sporting%20Arms&lang=en#subclass0

[120] Aabhas Sharma, "Guns for pleasure, anyone?," *Rediff*, 24 February, 2007

http://www.rediff.com/money/2007/feb/24spec1.htm (accessed 10 March, 2010)

civilian demand for arms. Further to gain a holistic understanding of civilian security concerns, it would be constructive to test if they are aligned with the NCRB reported data.

6. Comparison of Case Study with the National Crime Statistics

This section is a comparison of the NCRB data on the crime *rate* and *violation of the Arms Act* with the survey data. Also, as the narratives indicated a high degree of antagonism between the police and civil society, there is a third comparison of the *civilian relations with the police*. These empirical comparisons are useful since this study is based on the assumption that if the state provided adequate public security which met civilian needs, consequently there should be no civilian demand for arms. Other than for purposes of recreation, and there should be a decreasing trend of demand in a non conflict context, such as Delhi.

6.1 Crime Rate

The NCRB district wise distribution (Table 3) was valuable as the different incidences in each district confirmed that there are varying levels of threats in parts of the city. This was advocated on behalf of the civilian responses (53% from the educated group and 85% from the semi educated group) perceived certain parts of Delhi to be safer than others. This opinion was strongly voiced by the taxi drivers, and also, reverberates with the politician's comment about neighborhoods with a politician's presence being safer.

In terms of the overall crime rate, civilians perceived a general increase, and in particular, armed criminal violence was viewed as a novel development. It was in response to the perceived increase in crime, civilians felt it necessary to acquire some form of additional safeguard for their self (apart from the state provided security). In this context, respondents narrated a desire for acquiring an arm (42% among the educated, 75% among the semi educated). In comparison, the NCRB data (Figure 2, Delhi – NCRB: Crime Rate) reported that the crime rate in the city been on the decrease post 2007. Hence, in the case of the city's crime rate, the civilian's perceptions do not align with the NCRB's reported data.

6.2 Arms Act[121]

The NCRB data (Figure 4) reported a drastic reduction from 2006 till 2008 in violations committed against the Arms Act, what factors were responsible for the rapid decrease? After posing the question to many police officers, no valid explanation was provided. In an interview with Arvind Verma, he advocated that the Arms Act decline reflected a change instead in the institution's organizational practices, and deemed the police crime

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[121] Refer to Appendix A

data as having no bearing to the criminality seen in the society, and instead was constructed for 'political consumption only'.[122] As per the survey data, the civilian narratives suggested a perceived increase in the level of armed criminal violence in the city (69% of educated responses, 60% semi educated responses). Again in the case of the Arms Act rate comparasion; there is a divergence in NCRB data and civilian responses.

6.3 Civilian Relations with the Police

Figure 5:[123]
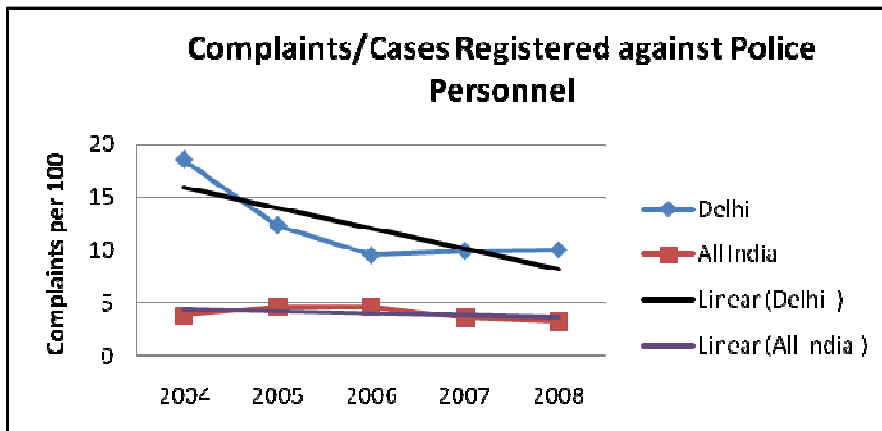
The police are a governmental organization, which are meant to provide security in general to civilians, and society at large.[124] The significance in analyzing the public security sector is that it exposes the relationship between the police and civilians, which indicate the confidence and dependence levels. According to the NCRB data reports (Figure 5) there is a decreasing trend in the number of complaints. From these statistics two interesting phenomenon's can be drawn.

One, there is stark gap between the All India and the Delhi rate of complaints (per 100 policemen), where Delhi's rate is much higher as compared to the National rate.[125] Two, post 2006 statistics highlight a dramatic drop in Delhi's rates and it has remained stable thereafter and still 10% of the police force in Delhi had a complaint against them in 2008. The high complaint rate fall in line with the civilian perceived lack of trust with the police (70% educated and 92% semi educated group's responses respectively). A plausible

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[122] In an interview with Arvind Verma, an academic and ex-police officer who has written extensively about the police, the reliability of the NCRB data and the police - politics relation in India

[123] Refer to Appendix C

[124] A definition provided by Ajay Mehra during an interview session

[125] Though one remember that these numbers could be could be swayed by the fact that Delhi has the highest number of police per 100 sq kms, and which is not case in other states

explanation proposed by Verma for the decrease in complaints post 2006, is that for any citizen to go to court to settle the matter is a time consuming and costly process that makes them vary of confronting the police, which in turn, could result in underreporting practices.[126] However, any legal and official reasons elucidating the decrease remain unknown.

The NCRB *Crime Rate* and *Arms Act* statistics failed to represent civilian perceptions and narratives, while in comparison the case of *civilian's relations with the police* were more aligned. To rationalize the three evaluations, one must take into consideration the small sample size of this study and the lack of any NCRB explanations regarding trends represented in their data, combined with concerns of their data reliability. Therefore, it cannot be confirmed if the NCRB data represents the social state of affairs in the city, and for the purposes of this study their statistics remain inadequate to identify factors which contribute towards civilian demand.

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[126] Arvind Verma, "Cultural Roots of Police Corruption in India", *Policing: An International Journal of Police Strategy & Management,* Vol.22: 3, 1999, p. 267

7. Case Study Results

To conduct this study a demand centric theoretical framework was applied to research civilian personal security dimensions, to analyze if there existed a demand for firearms. Based on the discourse analysis of civilian narratives and the three hypotheses results, one can conclude that firearms are growing to become a part of civilian's perception of personal security in Delhi.

Contributing factors of arms supply in Delhi are the surrounding armed conflicts in the country. Civilian narratives highlighted that byproducts of the armed conflicts contribute to the arms proliferation in general, but had a negligible direct impact on their personal safety, and hence civilians are not arming themselves in response to the on-going conflicts in the country. Based on the narratives, the armed conflicts can be classified as an externality, which result in creating a supply source of arms. Though not directly influencing demand in the city, the increased circulation of firearms in the country is an external factor contributing to the supply of firearms in Delhi. The armed conflicts discussion resonates with the dominant literature on small arms in India, where the crux of the problem is the availability of arms which are out of state control and used to fuel the conflicts.[127] The continuous concentration on the armed conflicts which frames the problem of arms proliferation narrowly in terms of insurgencies has resulted in making them a 'visible' threat, and which fall under the rhetoric of 'nationalistic' threats to the State. This in turn, desecuritizes threats to civilians and factors which contribute to the growth in demand from civil society remain overlooked. The following Figure 6 provides a framework for the supply and demand for firearms and highlights the reasons that contribute to civilian demand in Delhi.

Based on Figure 6, in terms of the sources of small arms, there were multiple based on the legality of the weapon. A legal source of weapons was the IOF, whereas the sources of illegal weapons were the indigenous arms factories in areas surrounding Delhi and the armed conflicts. The demand of firearms was based on the perceptions and narratives of civilians, and was distinguished under the variables of means and motivations. The constraining costs in the means aspect were the cost of a licence (direct and indirect costs) and the costs of the gun itself. The motivations that led to civilians demanding guns were diverse and intertwined. The apparent lack of state security measures, in addition to the perceived increase in crime in the city was a pivotal factor driving civilians to acquire

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[127] Mallika and Joseph, 2005, *op.cit.,* p. 21 - 23

arms. The change in the nature of crime, with the frequent use of arms has altered the type of violence in the city. These aspects can be identified as a push factor, which drives civilian demand. Another dimension is the cultural aspects and social connotations that come with the ownership of an arm, such as the perceived status.

The specificity of Delhi being the national capital and its rapid urbanization has led to large scale interstate migration, combined with the unconstrained flow of arms in the NCR area has further contributed to civilians demanding arms. All these factors combined have led to the establishment of a framework where there is a supply of arms in the city, and a corresponding demand leading to small arms proliferation by civilians.

Figure 6: Case Study: Supply and Demand for Small Arms

The trigger factors of civilian demand can be discussed under two conceptual pillars (a) Security: Public and Personal, and (b) Expanding Role of the Gun.

7.1 Conceptual Pillars of Civilian Demand in Delhi:

(a) Security: Public and Personal

In this study, 'public security' refers to the state/ public institutions and 'personal security' concerns human security dimensions, referring to individual freedom from want and fear. During an interview with Mehra, he characterized public security as, "In a democratic society, security should be in the realm of public institutions, 'security is a right', a right to demand it from the state institutions which should guarantee it to all members of society". 'Personal security' is concerned with an individual's physical safety and non-traditional security concerns, such as employment, public transport and housing. The two types of security conceptions feed into each other, since 'public security should be pervasive, if it satisfies society's needs then there is no need for personal security'. Individuals gravitate towards personal security when it is lacking in their environment.

In the case of insufficient state security protection, policing and justice via the judicial system, particularly affect poor people. Also, since in most cases they are unable to pay for services (public and private), they are more susceptible to institutional impunity, corruption and brutality. While the crimes of the rich, such as corruption and economic criminalization are far less visible than those of the poor, and the wealthy are more able to manipulate or "buy" justice. Dhillon provides an apt example, 'spoilt children of rich politicians and other highly connected persons in many affluent parts of India, routinely throw their weight about, threaten police officials, who dare to challenge them and literally get away with murder."[128] While Dhillon's example is a single one, in general in India, there exists a highly politicized nature of law-enforcement. In the context of Delhi, the verification of H2[129] emphasized that an increased acquisition of arms by civilians was in response to a lack of confidence in the state apparatus (mainly the police).

Another governing factor of civilian arms acquisition was Delhi's changing spatial expansion. This brought increased mobility of people, put higher pressure on the city's infrastructure and urban services required to fulfill the needs of this burgeoning expansion, however, which remain unmatched by the state's public institutions that are unable to keep pace and evolve to implement adequate security measures. This systemic problem has contributed to the inadequacies of the public institutions to curb crime and led to civilians

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[128] Dhillon, 2005, *op.cit.,* p. 123

[129] *H2:* An increased acquisition of small arms by civilians is in response to a lack of confidence in the state apparatus to provide adequate public security.

finding alternate means to ensure personal safety. For instance, in response to the civilian perceived increased crime in the city, Regehr observes that "high rates of crime in the urban settings encourage higher levels of arms retained in domestic households."[130]

The two factors, the police inadequacies and Delhi's spatial changes are related matters which can be better understood via Mehra's analysis of the public institution status since India's independence. Mehra narrates, "post 1947, India transformed into a democracy, the state institutions too required change, but instead mere modifications were put in place, if any at all. Since, many recommendations about police reform have been discussed, but everything remained on paper…".[131] In result, Dhillon comments, 'such a situation would not only militate against social norms, discipline and unity of purpose within the department, it would also materially and inevitably degrade the quality of their service to the citizen.'[132]

To appreciate the nexus between public and private security, the motivations of gun enthusiasts who perceived gun acquisition exclusively for self defense reasons juxtaposed it against the public state provisions. Adopting a narrative similar to that of the NRA[133], some members from the educated group echoed their right to self defense against the state's inadequate ability to ensure civilian protection. One respondent quoted a famous NRA slogan, "Guns don't kill people, people kill people"[134], and consequently in this tone promoted civilian ownership of arms.

In the case of the semi educated members, many opted for a firearm for purposes of self defence, again due to the lack of any protection from public institutions. Many narrated; the characteristics of a gun (durable, small) made it an attractive option and in Delhi's environment there was easy availability (also, the requirement of a license was not a restricting criteria to possess a gun). Others narrated reasons that gun acquisition was within their budget and hence demanding a gun for personal protection was viewed as necessity (since unlike the educated group, they lacked the means to acquire private

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[130] Reghr, 2004, *op.cit.,* p. 8

[131] Narrated during the interview session

[132] Dhillon, 2005, *op.cit.,* p.126

[133] The National Rifle Association (NRA) is an organization based in the U.S. which promotes civilian firearms ownership

[134] This respondent chose to remain anonymous

security guards and install grills on their temporary houses).[135] In comparison, the educated respondents had more options to enhance their personal security, and hence acquiring a gun was one of the many choices, which was becoming increasingly popular in response to Delhi's unsafe environment.

The semi educated group motivations for demanding a gun resonate with the case discussed by Björkert, where women becoming arm-bearers permitted them to carve out a form of agency for themselves, which allowed them to take responsibility for their own protection as none was provided by the state. The reality is that underdevelopment produces conditions in which there is a higher prevalence of civilians resorting to arms. Social and economic exclusion, weak state institutions and political grievances all motivate gun violence,[136] and one might add, generate "demand" or interest in gun acquisition.

The assertion where civilians take security measures into their own hands results in a stance independent to the state authority, and can be conceptualized as a new form of social spatial governance developing within the city. Another key factor influencing the demand for arms is the role it plays for the different members of society and the subsequent section discusses the expanding role of arms.

(b) The Expanding Role of the Gun

This study brings to light that there are other perceived roles of firearms apart from self defence which influence civilian demand. This paper makes the argument that the firearm roles are formulated due to the convergence of rural and urban influences in the city.

Delhi's environment is the result of processes of suburbanization, which is reflected in the fast growth of peripheral zones and migration has played a major role in the demographic evolution of the city.[137] Coupled with the increased circulation of people and goods in the region, these factors coalesce to expand the role of arms, from traditional - cultural to novel gun roles. Based on the survey data, firearm roles can be subdivided into primary and secondary (Figure 7). The primary roles are the pull factors that lead

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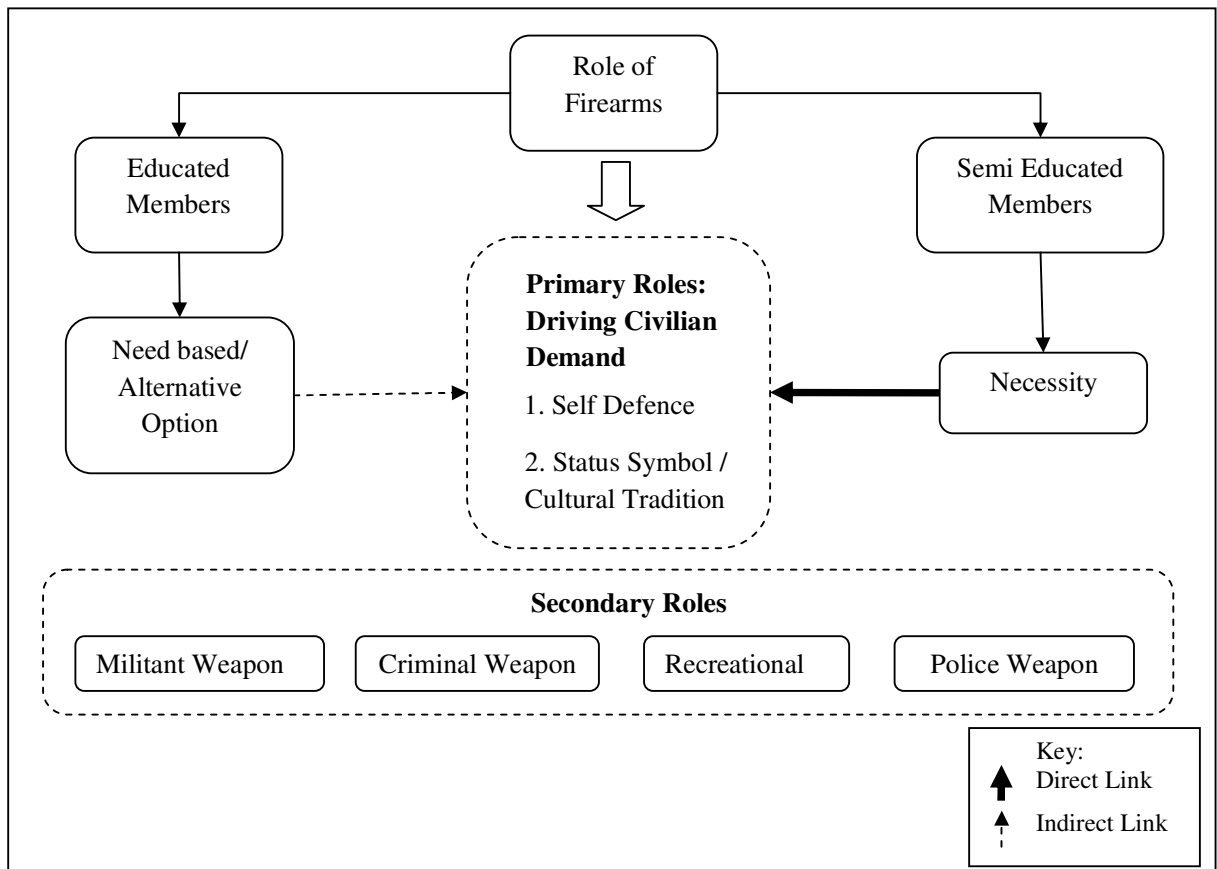[135] The Semi educated members who were aware of guns, gun and ammunition prices narrated that they could purchase illegal ones for a fraction of the price of legal arms

[136] Suggested in Winton (2004) and Moser (2004)

[137] V.B Singh, "Political Profile of Delhi and Support Bases of Parties: An Analysis", in *Delhi: Urban Space and Human Destinies*, Véronique Dupont *et al.* (eds.), 2000, p. 238

civilians to purchase, borrow or hire weapons. The secondary roles, discuss 'other' functions of guns, which do not necessarily influence demand. For example, the educated group associated a militant weapon as a role of the gun but that did not influence their demand, and thus it is secondary in nature.

Figure 7: Expanding Role of Firearms

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                          ┌─────────────┐
                          │   Role of   │
                          │  Firearms   │
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         ┌───────────────────────┬───────────────────────┐
         ▼                       ▼                        ▼
  ┌─────────────┐        ┌──────────────┐         ┌───────────────┐
  │  Educated   │        │              │         │ Semi Educated │
  │  Members    │        │              │         │   Members     │
  └─────────────┘        │              │         └───────────────┘
         │               │ Primary Roles:│                │
         ▼               │ Driving Civilian│              ▼
  ┌─────────────┐        │ Demand        │        ┌───────────────┐
  │ Need based/ │╌╌╌╌╌▶  │               │ ◀━━━━━ │   Necessity   │
  │ Alternative │        │ 1. Self Defence│       └───────────────┘
  │   Option    │        │               │
  └─────────────┘        │ 2. Status Symbol/│
                         │ Cultural Tradition│
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  ┌──────────────────────────────────────────────────────────┐
  │                    Secondary Roles                        │
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  │ │Militant Weapon│ │Criminal Weapon│ │Recreational│ │Police Weapon││
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The normative primary role of firearms that drive civilians to acquire them is for self defence, however "the development of a gun culture makes weapons valuable not only for defence, but also for status and symbolic power".[138] A pull factor that is more prevalent among the semi educated is the authority and respect a member of the community was granted if he/she owned a firearm. This special status was complementary to the duty to provide protection to the community. The knowledge that a community member owned a firearm provided a pseudo security net to the residents of that community and a higher status to the owner. An extension of this can be found in marriage ceremonies where the

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[138] Winston, 2004, *op.cit.,* p.168

status of the family is reflected in dowry demands and the possession of a firearm license escalates the dowry rate for the groom.[139] Also, the tradition of shooting into the sky during marriage celebrations, as was discussed earlier, continues to exist. Therefore, gun acquisition "is as much a requirement for security as a cultural thing".[140]

Other vectors contributing to the gun culture in the city are two novel stakeholders: working women and urban youth. Where arms acquisition is generally dominated within male gender discussions, with the growth of townships around the Capital (Gurgaon, Ghaziabad, Noida and Greater Noida) where a number of multinational, software and outsourcing firms are located, has resulted in a growing trend of working women applying for gun licenses for personal safety. "Official statistics reveal a significant increase since 2006, in the number of applications and procurement of gun licenses by women in the western region of UP that adjoins the Delhi-NCR belt. On an average at least 1 application is being received daily by the police from women".[141] Such developments were confirmed during interviews with police personnel and the licensing officer, and increasing numbers of women applicants is expected in the future.

The other stakeholder contributing to the gun culture are the youth, and their reasons for interest can be better understood as pull factors in the city. With increased media exposure, where gun's are framed as a 'glorified tool' and labeled a 'savage beauty'[142], carrying a gun to a social event is viewed as a statement of one's wealth, power and influence. Further, being well aware of the easy protection from the legal system and police, there are minimal legal constraints.

Hence, when referring to a growing 'gun culture', it encompasses all members and novel members of society, though the type of arm, legality (licensed or unlicensed) varies. The significance of such circumstances is the increased number of armed civilians and circulation of weapons, due to a growing demand in the city.

The secondary arms role are civilian associations to the gun, but which essentially do not influence demand. Among the educated group, few members listed recreational

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[139] Example provided during an interview with Avind Verma

[140] *Idem*

[141] Priyanka Bhardwaj "India's Pistol-Packing Mamas," *Asia Sentinel*, 6 March, 2009. http://www.asiasentinel.com/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=1758&Itemid=404&limit=1&limitstart=1(accessed 5 February, 2010)

[142] The descriptions of guns were provided by civilian members during interview sessions

purposes. However, the lack of galleries to practice shooting and proper training facilities in Delhi was an inhibiting factor preventing many from taking up shooting as a sport. Shooting as recreation is dwindling since legally one cannot shoot publically except for reasons of self defense. Also, since 1972 hunting became part of the Concurrent List where animals are protected under the Wildlife (Protection) Act, which applies to all states except Jammu and Kashmir, and therefore hunting as a sport and luxury is legally banned.[143]

Many members among the educated group associated guns to be a militant's and police tool. The perceived role of a militant's weapon was novel and the reason was due to the on-going armed conflicts and lasting impacts from the 2008 Mumbai terror attack. Both group members perceived a growing nexus between arms and criminal usage. In an interview with police members, they pointed that in particular, armed 'youth gangs' were increasingly becoming active among criminal syndicates in society. In a study referring to urban vulnerabilities in India, Milbert highlights that unemployment is the biggest risk.[144] "The informal sector enables millions of people, especially the youth, to find work in the context of the limited recruitment by the organized sector." Arguably, many of the youth are migrants, who come to Delhi in search of economic opportunities, unable to find any employment many get involved in criminal activities and the informal sector. It is the circumstances among which many of the youth reside that their taking to arms and criminal activity can be devised as coping strategies to survive.

In the case of Delhi, there was an overall general awareness of arms among both the educated and semi educated groups. Based on the case study results it can be inferred that the demand for firearms and its perceived roles has both rural and urban dimensions. Studying this blend of a rural-urban setting within the city is a new perspective on gun use and metropolitan criminal armed violence. The indirect effect of armed conflicts in neighboring non conflict zones such as the supply of weapons has varying degrees of relevance which extend beyond the traditional security concerns of an armed conflict. The inadequate public security measures within the city, result in the need for civilians to take personal security measures as well other roles of firearms confirm that there is a civilian demand for small arms in Delhi.

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[143] "Is hunting punishable equally?" *The Times of India*, 16 April, 2006
http://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/articleshow/1494956.cms (accessed 10 March, 2010)
[144] Milbert, 2009, *op.cit.,* p. 238

8. Conclusion

This epistemological analysis made evident that there is a growing demand for small arms by civilians in Delhi, and this study was a reflection on those realities. In terms of the existing literature on weaponisation of the Indian society, Bhumitra Chakma advocates that the literature discussing the small arms are dominantly presented as nationalistic sentiments carved within elite political narratives, which continue to be posed as primary threats to the state territory. Chakma confirms this practice is fitting within the overwhelming realist tradition of South Asian security studies, emphasizing the security of the state more than the needs of the people.[145] An emphasis on the State threats while useful, prove counterproductive as other aspects contributing to arms proliferation, such as civilian demand remain overlooked. The research indicated that the narrow definition of security focused on the threats from insurgencies which encourage military responses fail to achieve collective security, which would include proportionate human and state security dimensions. Therefore this study was essential to explore the dynamics for small arms demand at a local level in society.

The case study of Delhi demonstrates that the demand is not an automatic reaction to the surrounding armed conflicts and to easy access of weapons. Instead, the evidence strongly suggests that the demand is born out of the community's experience of multiple grievances and discords between the state and individual, power dynamics and cultural traditions. The civilian narratives indicated a growing demand, especially among the semi educated category of civilians, primarily due to the lack of public security. To overcome this lack, certain institutional reforms of the state's public institutions are necessary. Foremost, a delinking of the political and police set up is imperative for the independent functioning of the police. In the case of India, police bear the brunt of an inept political establishment, and this alters the professionalization of the police force. This was strongly evident in the case of Delhi, which despite having the highest police density in India; it also had the highest reported number of complaints (per 100 police officers).[146] Also, the comments provided by the MLA highlighted that there were certain domains in society where it was best for the police to remain absent.

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[145] Bhumitra Chakma, "South Asia's Realist Fascination and the Alternatives", *Contemporary Security Policy*, Vol. 30: 3, 2009, 2009
[146] GoI, Police Strength per unit Area /Population, Chapter 17
http://ncrb.nic.in/cii2008/cii-2008/Chapter%2017.pdf

Another institutional reform required relates to the NCRB reported data, whose authenticity and reliability remain speculative at best. Due to a general overall lack of information regarding their institutional practices makes referencing them problematic for several reasons, which were discussed earlier. The NCRB should aim to follow transparent and best practices data collection techniques, and have third party verification to prevent data tampering. To overcome the limitations of the reported data, the narratives methodology was applied to examine the demand optic in Delhi.

To answer the 'why' there exists a civilian demand for arms, evidence suggested that there are social control and norms which permit civilian acquisition of arms, and this study concludes that the development of the role of the gun as a means to insure personal security in urban settings is a recent phenomenon. In the past the use of arms as a means of self protection was limited to the rural sections as large areas had almost no institutional protection with the police presence in these regions being rather minimal. In addition, with the rural areas being agro based they required arms to protect their crops, which was their source of livelihood. To answer 'who' is demanding arms, intriguing evidence from the case study indicated a novel stakeholder – the women, and the discussion of factors which contributed to their demand indicated that arms acquisition breaks into the normative male gun dominated domains. Overall, the case of Delhi stood as unique, as analysis of the civilian 'demand' (motivations and means) made evident that it was created by an infusion of rural and urban influences, and therefore pointed towards the complex relations between the city, and how it interacts with its surrounding regions. Thus the proliferation of arms cannot be narrowly mapped as an urban growth, and this may well be a new perspective on studying urban violence and novel urban developments.

Though this study on Delhi was limited by its sample size, the research on the civilian optic indicated that the growing demand is comparatively more dominant among the semi educated members. Due to excessive government institutional regulations and soaring gun prices, many that demand arms are forced to acquire illegal ones which contribute to the unaccounted guns in the country. To counter this problem, regulations and policies regarding license acquisition and government monopoly of arms production need to be reevaluated.

This study aimed at filling the void that encompasses the wider issues of small arms proliferation, outside the realm of national armed conflicts and delved into the core

issues that influence civilian demand of firearms in an infused rural- urban setting. A finding of this study is that it can be expanded outside Delhi and brings to light that the present concentration on armed conflicts covers only one dimension of small arms proliferation within the Indian context.

Appendix Section

Appendix A:

Delhi State Crime Facts: (accessed 5 April, 2010)

Crime Statistics: http://ncrb.nic.in/ciiprevious/data/cd-CII2007/cii-2007/Table%201.6.pdf

Crime Rate: http://ncrb.nic.in/ciiprevious/data/cd-CII2007/cii-2007/Table%201.8.pdf

Arms Act Rate: http://ncrb.nic.in/ciiprevious/data/cd-CII2007/cii-2007/Table%201.18.pdf

Murder Rate: http://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/articleshow/45999894.cms

Firearms in Circulation (2003): http://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/articleshow/45999894.cms

Police density per 100 Sq Kms. (2008): http://ncrb.nic.in/cii2008/cii-2008/Charts.pdf

NCRB data for the Arms Act Rate: (accessed 4 April, 2010)

Arms Act Rate	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008
Delhi	25.6	33.7	42.6	56.7	60.9	65.9	46.9	8.6

2001: http://ncrb.nic.in/ciiprevious/data/cd-CII2001/home.htm

2002: http://ncrb.nic.in/ciiprevious/data/cd-CII2002/cii-2002/C-Table%201.18.htm

2003: http://ncrb.nic.in/ciiprevious/data/cd-CII2003/cii-2003/Table%201.18.pdf

2004: http://ncrb.nic.in/ciiprevious/data/cd-CII2004/cii-2004/Table%201.18.pdf

2005: http://ncrb.nic.in/ciiprevious/data/cd-CII2005/cii-2005/Table%201.18.pdf

2006: http://ncrb.nic.in/ciiprevious/data/cd-CII2006/cii-2006/Table%201.18.pdf

2007: http://ncrb.nic.in/ciiprevious/data/cd-CII2007/cii-2007/Table%201.18.pdf

2008: http://ncrb.nic.in/cii2008/cii-2008/Table%201.18.pdf

Appendix B:

With Delhi being a metropolitan city, it is apt to compare the crime rate to the other metropolitan cities. These cities have populations over 6 million (according to the 2001 Census), are state capitals and are the recognized regional economic hubs of the country (North – Delhi, South – Chennai, East – Kolkata, West – Mumbai).

Figure 2 - Rate of Total Cognizable Crime: Crime Rate: (accessed 2 April, 2010)

2001: http://ncrb.nic.in/ciiprevious/data/cd-CII2001/home.htm

2002: http://ncrb.nic.in/ciiprevious/data/cd-CII2002/cii-2002/C-Table%201.6.htm

2003: http://ncrb.nic.in/ciiprevious/data/cd-CII2003/cii-2003/Table%201.6.pdf

2004: http://ncrb.nic.in/ciiprevious/data/cd-CII2004/cii-2004/Table%201.6.pdf

2005: http://ncrb.nic.in/ciiprevious/data/cd-CII2005/cii-2005/Table%201.6.pdf

2006: http://ncrb.nic.in/ciiprevious/data/cd-CII2006/cii-2006/Table%201.6.pdf

2007: http://ncrb.nic.in/ciiprevious/data/cd-CII2007/cii-2007/Table%201.6.pdf

2008: http://ncrb.nic.in/cii2008/cii-2008/Table%201.6.pdf

Appendix C

Number of Complaints per 100 policemen: (accessed 28 April, 2010)

2004: http://ncrb.nic.in/ciiprevious/data/cd-CII2004/cii-2004/CHAP16.pdf

2005: http://www.mppolice.gov.in/static/CD-CII2005/cii-2005/CHAP16.pdf

2006: http://www.mppolice.gov.in/static/cii2k6%20book%20cd/Data/CII2006/cii-2006/CHAP16.pdf

2007: http://ncrb.nic.in/cii2007/cii-2007/Chapter%2016.pdf

2008: http://ncrb.nic.in/cii2008/cii-2008/Chapter%2016.pdf

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