

## SECTION II

# THEORY IN PRACTICE

French sociologist Pierre Bourdieu in his work *Distinction*, introduced the concept of cultural capital and distinction. It describes how lifestyle practices (which seem trivial at one level) contribute to the reproduction of sociocultural and economic hierarchies. The broader framework of sociocultural and material circumstances shape people's aesthetic and pragmatic tastes as well as practices within people's everyday lives. These ideas are highly relevant in understanding the architecture and urban spaces that people inhabit. The spaces constructed cannot be simply explained by referring to people's personal wants and needs but must be understood as components of people's overall aspirations and ideological positions they consciously/unconsciously embody. Blurring the assumed boundaries of theory and practice, personal and public, architect and cultural theorist Kaiwan Mehta's essay discusses the perils of nation building through the lens of architectural practice that literally and symbolically determines the identity of not only the nation but also its people. Diagnosing the maladies of an intolerant society, the article examines the politics of demolition of nationally significant architecture, yet, it also suggests a hopeful future in the land that boasts of Gandhian values.