Lakshmi Raj: Shaping spaces in post industrial Mumbai: Urban regimes, planning instruments and splintering communities
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Citation for published version (APA):

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CHAPTER 4: DESIGNING BOMBAY: AN OVERVIEW

INTRODUCTION

The chapter intends to give the background and context of the study by exploring the Bombay’s spatial growth, from colonial rule to its post-independence development as Mumbai. In its early history, Bombay was subject of a dispute between the Portuguese and British colonial authorities. It was finally transferred as property gift to the British Crown, who in turn leased it out to the East India Company. Section 4.1 explores the economic and political history of Mumbai, both under colonial rule and during the post-independence era. The aim of this chapter is to understand how these two different national regimes, the East India Company and the Republic of India, manipulated urban space to achieve their goals. Continuations and changes in national regime practices are identified along with their impact on human settlements and the spatial patterns created in the process.

Section 4.2 looks at the ‘resident patterns’ in the city, tracing the settlement and creation of geographical neighbourhoods in the city based on class and social groups. The section first looks at the changing city limits from the colonial times to the present and then further examines the ways migrants to the city found or built housing and their neighbourhood environment as well as the associated issue of land value. Section 4.3 relates the typology of housing that was provided and created by the various classes of the city. Section 4.4 looks at land ownership records and use of land, from colonial rule to today.

4.1 POLITICAL AND ECONOMIC HISTORY

Colonial rule and expansion

Unlike other Indian cities—which grew around sacred sites or trading routes—Bombay was a colonial creation built by the British to serve British mercantile interests. Named after the Mumba Devi goddess, who was called Bom Bahia by the Portuguese sailors, the Island City had come into Portuguese possession after a treaty in 1534, given by the Gujarat Sultanate. By 1652, the British had started to pressure the East India Trading Company to buy the city from the Portuguese. The British had been eyeing the city as a strategic base point in face of the growing strength of their chief colonial rival—the Dutch.

The city came under British colonial rule when it was given as a part of the dowry as per the marriage treaty of 1661 between Catherine Braganza, daughter King John IV of Portugal, and Charles II of England. Despite this treaty, the British and the Portuguese continued to squabble over ownership rights.

Bombay finally came under British rule in 1664 after lengthy negotiations. It took another two years to gain control of Mahim, Sion, Dharavi, and Wadala. By 1668, Charles II leased out Bombay to the East India Company for an annual fee of £10 in gold. In 1687, the city became the headquarters of the East India Company. The Portuguese still retained control over Salsette and Bassein for some time, until the Marathas captured them (Salsette in 1737 and Bassein in 1739). These areas in turn came under British control in 1782 following the First Anglo-Maratha War.

Over the next one hundred years, the East India Company developed into a political powerhouse throughout the Indian sub-continent with Bombay as its economic seat of power. By the nineteenth century, the flourishing cotton trade in the city had transformed it from a trading outpost to a manufacturing and financial hub. Well connected to the English market and other markets in Asia and Europe, the city was the gateway and chief trading hub of India. The migrants who came into the city were offered employment opportunities by the English as educated clerks, whereas the merchant and business communities also employed skilled artisans – weavers, blacksmiths, goldsmiths, tanners, and

10 These were fishing and farming villages.
the labourers. The migrants arrived from the famine-ridden agricultural areas of the Konkan region and Andhra Pradesh, while the merchants arrived from Saurashtra and Kutch.

By the mid-nineteenth century Bombay had begun to evolve from a mercantile community into an industrial city. The first cotton mills were established by the British in 1820, and the first Indian mill—Coswasji Davars Oriental Spinning—was established in 1854. Many of the affluent traders were setting up indigenous cotton mills, quickly increasing from 32 mills (with over 30,000 workers) in 1880 to 83 mills by 1890.

In 1842, the opening of China by the British introduced a new, huge market for Bombay mill owners. Unable to compete successfully with British (Lancashire) manufactures in yarn and cloth on the domestic market, they could turn their attention to and exploit the new market in China. Cotton trade to China was steadily increasing, by 1873 absorbing 80% of Bombay’s yarn production. The Chinese market was also the recipient of the opium trade from Bombay11 (Dossal 1995) (in Thorner and Patel, 1995). By the end of 1864, Bombay’s population had grown to 816,562. In 1875, the first stock exchange in India was established in Bombay.

Between 1900 to 1925 153,000 workers were employed in the textile industry. The Swadeshi movement (1904-1907) increased the indigenous cotton mills share in the domestic market. By 1913, Bombay’s share in cotton textile mills in India was only 31%, but it had 44% of the spindles and 47% of the looms in the country. Bombay employed 42% of the 250,000 mill workers in the Indian cotton industry.

Between 1897 and 1906, industrialization greatly intensified, recording a 36.8% increase in capital investment in companies registered in India. Indian capitalists dominated in the textile industry, and Bombay was host to the rising entrepreneurial class in the Indian subcontinent. The Tata family was responsible for erecting the first modern steel production plant in 1913, while the automobile and aeronautics industry began with the efforts of Bombay-based Walchand Hirachand. By the 1930s, the largest business house in the city was owned by the Tata family. Keeping to the tradition of joint family system in India which operated in the agricultural sector, where land ownership, its cultivation and habitation are collectively exercised by families or large clans kitted together by blood relation a similar pattern took shape in urban areas vis-à-vis commercial activity. Such family owned business is called a business house; the Tata’s is one such business house.

Industrialization of the city created of two distinct economic classes, which were instrumental in shaping the political economy of the city that time (and still are key movers). Large landowners and business houses were interested in expanding their control over land and commerce. Their efforts were curtailed by the colonial regime of British East India Company. It was to satisfy their own business interests that the business class played a leading role in supporting the nationalist movement.12 In 1927, the first association of the Indian business class was founded—the Federation of Indian Chambers of Commerce and Industry (FICCI). In 1928, President Purushottam Thakurdas firmly stated FICCI’s nationalist affiliations and openly declared the need to link associations of commerce and industry to the nation’s struggles to be free from British rule, by stating that politics could no longer be separated from economic interests.

11 Between 1830-33 and 1860-61, the value of merchandise exports from Bombay increased sixfold, while value of opium sales alone increased more than tenfold C. Markovits, "Bombay as a Business Centre in the Colonial Period: A Comparison with Calcutta," in Bombay: Metaphor for Modern India, eds. S. Patel and A. Thorner (New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 1995), 26-47.

12 In 1885, the first conference to form the Indian National Congress was held in Bombay.
At the same time, the working class in Bombay was also transforming. In 1890, the Bombay Mill and Millhands Association was founded by Narayan Meghajee Lokhanday. Even though it was more altruistic in ideology, it was one of the first instances of the working class transforming into an organized labour force. Over the years the workers organized themselves into a political force. In 1920, the All India Trade Union Committee was formed, with Lokmanya Tilak as one of the leaders. In November 1921, in response to the INC’ call to boycott the occasion of the visit of Prince of Wales, the textile factories were shut down with nearly 140,000 workers come out on the streets of Bombay in protest. In February 1930, as a part of the Civil Disobedience Movement, 20,000 workers (mostly from GIP Railway Union) stopped working and on April 6, the GIP Railway Union workers launched a satyagraha by blocking railway tracks. On July 6, following mass arrests of freedom movement leaders, workers in 49 factories went on strike. The action of 90,000 workers in Bombay on 2 October 1939 was among the first large anti-war strikes. The year 1946 saw the historic mutiny of Bombay workers as between 200,000 to 300,000 workers took to the street in peaceful demonstrations. They rapidly turned violent when the British police intervened, and, following an army intervention, 250 workers were killed.

The capitalist national class was however not in favour of supporting the worker’s calls for reform. One of the reasons for this reluctance was to avoid fragmentation of Indians along class lines and thus weaken the nationalist movement. Dadabhai Naoraji, in the second session of the Indian National Congress (INC) in 1886, said, ‘The Congress must confine itself to questions in which the entire nation has a direct participation and it must leave the adjustment of social reforms and other class questions to class congresses’ (Mukherjee 1988, 211).

The nationalists also contended that it was the increased competition faced by the British from the rising Indian industrialists that prompted the Factories Acts of 1881 and 1891(formulated by the British). Their regulation of working hours was seen by the Indian industrialists as detrimental to the competitive edge enjoyed by Indian industry. The capitalist class saw industrialization as a means for India’s economic development (Mukherjee 1988).

**Post-independence period**

The first early Five-Year Plans focused on promoting a wide range of industries—especially engineering, chemicals and pharmaceuticals in and around Bombay. Ancillary industries (such as chemicals, dyes, engineering workshops, other factories) did develop, but it was the textile industry that was the mainstay of the city.

During British rule, the port and related services were situated in the south-eastern side of the island. In the late 50s, Powai was taken over by engineering and chemical units (due to its accessibility); Trombay in the north eastern M ward attracted large scale state-owned companies in the fertilizer and petroleum sectors. The other emerging suburbs in the north-eastern part of the city saw the setting up of engineering, chemicals and pharmaceuticals factories, mainly along the suburban route of the Central Railway between the Agra Road (now Lal Bahadur Shastri Marg) and the Central Railway and in areas such as Kurla and the eastern part of Andheri. With the setting up of Premier Automobiles in this area, Kurla turned into an automotive industrial zone.

In the first two decades of independence, Bombay witnessed a significant shift in the structure of the textile industry. Under-utilized production capacities, poor market consumption and outdated technology resulted in a shift to capital-intensive industry and a fragmentation of the textile mills into handlooms, powerlooms and mills. The fragmentation also resulted in decentralization of the industry, with the share of the unorganized sector increasing and moving from Bombay city to the outskirts, such as Bhiwandi and Malegaon, in 1980s, supported by the growing power loom sector of the industry. Top business houses like the Tatas, Singhania, Mafatlal and Birlas remained in business. The textile strike of the 1980s, ended in closure of several mills, with over 100,000 workers losing their jobs. Many of these workers were absorbed in the growing informal labour sector in the city. These
decades also witnessed the dilution of the political strength of the working class by the growing unorganized labour sector (Wersch 1992; Adarkar 2008).

The shift from production to services happened slowly through several decades, as manufacturing units moved out of the city limits. The post-1991 period was marked by the final decline of the textile industry and the growth of the city as the financial capital of the country. The decline and fall of textile industry; the relocation of pharmaceutical, chemical and engineering industries to the outskirts and other regions in the state; and the shift towards the service sector is clearly visible in the employment data. In 1981, industry provided 44% of jobs while the service sector accounted for 54%. The next ten years saw service sector participation increase to 60%, while industrial employment fell to 39%. By 2001, the tertiary sector accounted for 72% of jobs (Directorate of Economics and Statistics, Government of Maharashtra, 2006; National Resource Centre for Urban Poverty 2009).

Post-1991 trends show an increased number of jobs offered to skilled and educated workers, while the others have moved to the informal sector. The fragmented, unorganized working class in the informal sector had lost out on the gains of development. According to the Planning Commission’s report, titled, ‘Employment Generation in Post Globalization Era in Greater Mumbai’, globalization, ‘bringing so-called labour flexibility and the international competition through increased emphasis on reducing labour costs, labour saw the erosion of many benefits. It has led to further segmentation of the labour market and the expansion of low-income informal sectors in the economy. This process has been accompanied by increase in actualization, contract labour, subcontracting and lengthening of working hours’ (Dewan 2000).

Post-independence Bombay witnessed a series of events—largely related to identity politics—that further strengthened the spatial segregation within the city and further marginalized the urban poor. Bombay was already fragmented on the basis of linguistic and regional identity, both the Gujarati community and Maharashtrians fought over control of Bombay during the process of state formation by the Union. Another chasm was between the natives Marathi speaking population and Hindi-speaking refugees from Pakistan and North India. Amongst the Marathi speaking population too there were ethnic tensions between the lower caste or the Dalit populations and the upper caste Hindus or what is generally termed the Marathas. This is over and above the pre-partition conflicts between a section of the Muslim and a section of the Hindu community.

Generally, political parties in India represent interests of ethnic, linguistic and regional identities; the left organized its members class based interests. The dominance of the Indian National Congress (INC) on the political front as a representative of the middle class, and the strong hold of the leftists (CPI) on the working class in the 1950s and 1960s were challenged by the emergence of the Shiv Sena, a political party propagated itself to be defenders of the Marathi speaking population of Bombay.

In the late 1960s, Shiv Sena launched a campaign calling for ‘Maharashtra for Maharashtrians’, demanding that all non-Maharashtrians leave Bombay. This attack was aimed predominantly at the south Indians living in Bombay, slums areas such as Dharavi, where south Indians dominated were converted into battle grounds13.

More recently, the Shiv Sena has shifted to virulent anti-Muslim propaganda. The riots and bombings of 1992-93 and strident rhetoric of the Shiv Sena thoroughly polarized the city along communal lines. This further strengthened creation of social ghettos and drew clear boundaries between religious group settlements. The minority Muslims live in constant fear of riots and reprisal from the followers of the Sena In 1995, the Shiv Sena campaigned fiercely and succeeded in renaming Bombay into Mumbai (D’Monte 2002).

13 People from Kerala, TN, Andhra Pradesh and Karnataka.
4.2. CITY DESIGNS

Designing a Colonial City

Bombay originally consisted of seven islands—Mahim, Parel, Vadala and Sion under the *kasba* of Mahim and Mazagaon, Bombaim and Worli under the *kasba* of Bombaim—​together with Bassein (the north of Mumbai, now called Vasai). In 1782, the Hornby Vellard project, initiated by its governor who sought to connect the seven islands, joined Bombay to Worli. Massive engineering projects followed and by mid-nineteenth century the seven islands of Bombay were a single landmass totalling 435 square kilometres.

Socio-spatial segregation of the city is not new to Bombay. Segregation was first put in practice when the city only measured 18 square miles in the early nineteenth century. The town of Bombay, located in the southern part of the island, from its very origin, has been divided into two quarters (McFarlane 2008). The Fort or European quarter was separated from the Indian quarter (the old and new ‘Native Town’), by an open *maidan* or esplanade. The majority of the city’s population was concentrated here. The northern parts were primarily populated by farms and saltpans. Reclamation was undertaken in two areas: one to the east near the harbour, for dock related activities, and on the western shore, primarily for the needs of the Central Indian Railways.

The fresh money pouring into the city was invested into land reclamation and city improvement. A report by Sir Edwin Arnold, then Chief Editor of Daily Telegraph, in 1885 testifies how the city transformed from ‘a town of warehouses and offices’, when he left it nearly twenty years earlier, into ‘a city of parks and palaces’ (Arnold 1886).

The textile industry was located right next to the market area to the north of the docks. Docks and related activities naturally clumped in the south-eastern part of the city. Textile mills clustered together along with workers’ homes, amid railway stations. The industrial corridor of the city started at the centre and then gradually moved up to the eastern part of the city. The southern part of the island was already developed as the living quarter of the European and Indian upper class.

The British tried various means to bring additional land to the northern suburbs under their control. Efforts by British officers to undertake survey of lands and record various land tenures and practices were the means of exercising control over lands which were cultivated by local Indian residents (figure 4.1).
In 1920, the Salsette taluka of Thane district was divided into North Salsette and South Salsette. South Salsette taluka (encompassing 86 villages) was separated from Thane district to constitute the newly created Bombay Suburban District. This district consisted of two talukas—Borivali with 33 villages and Andheri with 53 villages. In 1945, 33 villages from this district were transferred back to Thane district. In 1946, 14 of these 33 villages were returned back to Bombay Suburban District for the development of the Aarey Milk Colony.

Between 1941 and 1951, there was a 66% increase in population (from 1,801,356 in 1941 to 2,894,444 in 1951), attributed to the huge influx of refugees after the Partition. The poorer section of the refugee population was provided accommodation in temporary structures in recently reclaimed areas at Chembur (now known as Chembur Sindhi colony), Antop Hill, Chunabhatti, and Koliwada. Those better off settled in Sion, Mahim, Bandra, Marine Lines and elsewhere.

This increase created unequal densities of population within the city limits already congested by the existing built-up areas, extending even to the reclaimed marshes and salt pans in Sion and Wadala. There were only 140 hectares of open space left in the city, which led the government to expand the city limits. Land was cleared and acquired near Kalyan where a large refugee colony was established.

Source: Dwivedi and Mehrotra (1995)
in the early 1950s. This colony has evolved over the years into a township, spreading over Ulhasnagar and Vitthalwadi, now part of Mumbai Metropolitan Region.

Bombay is a city built by migrant labour. The early nineteenth century was a critical period in Bombay’s history: it grew into an industrial hub with an associated influx of migrants. In 1827, as per Lieutenant Dickinson’s survey, the population of Bombay numbered 230,000; it increased to 816,000 in 1865 and steadied at 645,000 in 1872 (according to Laughton’s survey).

The growth of the cotton mills and other opportunities drew in large numbers of migrant labourers, mostly from lower—economic and social—strata of society. These constituted the working class that was employed in the various factories in the city. At the same time, the city drew in the prosperous class of merchants and traders mostly belonging to the upper strata of India’s caste system. The beginnings of the middle class could be traced to those who formed the bulk of service providers—in low-level administrative positions in the private and government sector.

This was written in the Geography section of Maharashtra State Gazetteers of greater Bombay District written by Professor B. Arunachalam, Geography Department, University of Bombay. He wrote that the social affinities of the immigrants’were ‘strongly present in the resident patterns in the city’ and then quoted Sir Edwin Arnold that ‘the Parsis mostly sought the home of his ancestors in the North Fort or Dhobi Talao; the Goanese were never absent from Cavel; the Julhai, the silk weaver, sought Madanpura; the grain merchants were a power in Mandvi; the Bene-Israel owned their Samuel street and Israel mohalla; the dancing girls drifted to Khetwadi and the 'scarlet woman' to Kamathipura; in the Null Bazar lived the Sidis; in Parel, Nagpada and Byculla, were mill hands from the Konkan and labourers from the Deccan; many a Koliwadi from Colaba to Sion sheltered the descendants of the aboriginal fishing tribes of Bombay; Musalman was a power in Mandvi, Chakla and Umarkhadi; the Arab haunted Byculla and, in Girgaum, the Brahman made his home.’ (Arunachalam 1986).

By 1890, Tardeo, Parel, Byculla, Tarwadi, Nagpada, and Chinchpokali had expanded into one vast industrial labourer dwelling quarters. The English had moved into the outlying suburbs of Parel, Lal Baug, Byculla and Malabar Hill, shared by wealthy Indian merchants such as Wadia, Cama, Jeejebhoy families. The Fort area had become a business centre.

As per the 1906 census (Gazetteers of the Bombay Presidency), Kumbharwada, Second Nagpada, Khara Talao, Chakla, Kamathipura, Umarkhadi, and Bhuleshwar, were the most congested areas while the least congested were Upper Colaba, Fort South, Esplanade, Walkeshwar, Mahalakshmi, Mazagon, and the four most northern sections. Nagpada, Khara Talao, Umarkhadi and Chakla were chiefly occupied by Muslims; middle and lower class Parsi families inhabited the northern portion of Dhobi Talao and the Fort; Upper Colaba and the southern portion of the Fort were the chief European centres. During the period 1872-1906 there was 51.7% increase in population (mostly in Mahalakshmi, Byculla, Tarwadi, Parel, Sewri, Sion, Mahim and Worli), connected to the expansion of the cotton industry in the city (Edwardes, Macnabb Campbell, and The Bombay Presidency 1909).

According to the Gazetteer, ‘Subject to these remarks it is impossible to definitely localise any one community, though certain areas have for many years been regarded as the home of certain distinct classes. Hindu ascetics of all classes, for example, haunt the neighbourhood of the Walkeshwar and Mahalakshmi temples; the Goanese and Native Christians are firmly attached to Cavel, the old home of some of the earliest converts to Roman Catholicism; the Musalmans hand-weavers known as Julhais or Jolahas congregate in Madanpura between the Rip on and Morland roads; the Bene-Israel who have given a name to Samuel street and Israel Moholla are more numerous in Mandvi, Umarkhadi, and Dongri than elsewhere; many dancing-girls reside in Khetwadi, in Foras road and in Falkland road; Parsis and Hindus of the middle-class have of recent years taken to residing in flats in the western portion of Khetwadi; in the neighbourhood of the Umarkhadi Jail and close to Ripon road dwell many Sidis or African Musalmans; the industrial population is specially numerous in Parel, Byculla and Nagpada; and the several Kolivadis of the island from Colaba to Sion shelter the descendants of the aboriginal colonists of Bombay. The Jams cling to and the Market; Arabs are numerous in Byculla; and in Girgaum are the Prabhus and various classes of Brahmans. Since the first appearance of plague in 1896, an increasing number of Bhattias and several rich Muhammadans have deserted the business-quarters of the city and taken up their residence on Malabar Hill.’
Many Muslim families come in from rural India and settled in the E and C Wards around 1947, during the bloodshed that accompanied the Partition (dividing the Indian subcontinent into Hindu-majority India and Muslim-majority Pakistan). These two wards are still quite densely populated and have many old residential buildings. Wards A to G came to be called the ‘Island City’, drawn from the seven islands which made up this part of the city.

The Gazetteer predicted that ‘The middle-classes will eventually find more suitable accommodation in the northern sections of the island which are now in process of acquisition by the City Improvement Trust; the upper classes, particularly Europeans... will perhaps find relief in the reclamation of the western foreshore of the island; while the whole of the central belt of the island between Grant road and Naigaon Cross road will thus be reserved for the industrial and lower classes’ (Edwardes, Macnabb Campbell, and Presidency 1909). It appears that social fragmentation was not just historically created by social groups that chose where to stay, but was also woven into state policy.

The municipal limits of Bombay were extended in 1950 to include the Andheri taluka of the Bombay Suburban District as Suburban Bombay. The limits were extended up to Jogeshwari along the Western Railway and up to Bhandup along the Central Railway. The limits were further extended in February 1957 up to Dahisar along the Western Railway and Mulund on the Central Railway. The jurisdictions of the Commissioner of Police (Bombay) and the Collector (Bombay Suburban District) were made now coterminous with the extended jurisdiction of the Bombay Municipal Corporation(Arunachalam 1986). The geographical expansion of Bombay was structured by the existing railway line, as suburban townships grew at every station.

In 1957, Borivali taluka together with its villages was transferred from Thane district and also appended to Bombay, thus further extending the limits of the Bombay Municipal Corporation. Thus the present Greater Bombay District, comprising the city proper and its suburbs, came into existence on 1 February 1957.

By the early 1980s, the upper classes were moving into the western half of the H Ward, because of its location near the seaside and the better of the city’s two railway systems. Moreover, this locality was not disturbed by the noise and pollution of factories. D Ward was also largely inhabited by members from rich and powerful families for similar reasons.

The spatial distribution in Mumbai in the twentieth century primarily leans towards the suburbs, particularly the western suburbs (Wards H, K, P & R) which have experienced a three-fold increase in population density between 1971 and 2001. Population density in western suburbs increased from 4,169 in 1961 to 24,000 persons per square kilometre in 2001. In the eastern suburb it also increased from 3,151 persons per square kilometre in 1961 to 22,000 persons per square kilometre in 2001. This shows the population shift, driven by the search of cheaper accommodation and housing, and that most migrants have been choosing to settle there. Over time, the south western coast of Mumbai has emerged as the space were the rich and powerful live—particularly wards A, D and G/South. The cotton textile mills and ghettos of mill workers live in E, G and F Wards.

The history of Bombay has been a history of fragmentation and polarization along community identity lines—class, caste and religion. Segregating community-based neighbourhoods was a policy started by the British in urban areas, although in rural India this segregation is common. Land ownership has played an important role in creating segregated communities. This process was reinforced by the ruling elite, who wanted to retain certain high value areas (the town area, coastal areas and the hills) within their community. New migrants were permitted to occupy swampy areas and where new waves clustered with earlier arrivals. The city has never been a melting pot where the borders between communities have broken down. The city’s major groups have been open to influence and learning from each other and at times working together, but have tended to live in areas segregated from each other (Siddiqui and Bhowmik 2004; Das 1995).
This historical pattern of segregation of the city by social and economic group along with its rapid growth is reflected in the type of housing and public amenities available to the different sections of its population. This can be clearly observed in the slum areas where the majority of the lower caste workers live and which are mainly located on marshy land or on inaccessible hills. State interventions in land ownership can be used to promote more equal access to land in societies fragmented along class and caste lines. In the next section I shall examine how patterns of land ownership and tenure in Mumbai have evolved and influenced existing disparities amongst social groups.

### 4.3 LAND OWNERSHIP AND TENURE

Land ownership in Mumbai is split equally between government and private landowners. Amongst the government agencies owning land in Mumbai are the Government of India, the state government, and local government (i.e. the Municipal Corporation of Greater Mumbai). The location of ownership varies: in the island city much of the land belongs to the Municipal Corporation and other government bodies (a legacy of the colonial past), while lands located in the suburbs of Mumbai are distributed equally by private landowners and state government (see table 4.1 and figures 4.2 and 4.3 for details overview of land ownership).

Table 4.1: *Land ownership in Mumbai in 1981 in acres*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Region</th>
<th>Municipal</th>
<th>State Govt &amp; MHB</th>
<th>Central Government</th>
<th>Private</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Island City</td>
<td>59.02</td>
<td>8.27</td>
<td>20.75</td>
<td>2.81</td>
<td>90.85</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Suburb</td>
<td>35.91</td>
<td>38.34</td>
<td>76.53</td>
<td>41.34</td>
<td>192.12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Extended suburbs (wards P, R, T)</td>
<td>5.07</td>
<td>33.89</td>
<td>2.72</td>
<td>30.99</td>
<td>72.67</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Details unattained</td>
<td></td>
<td>19.5</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>24.96</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total (actual)</td>
<td>624,515</td>
<td>740,550</td>
<td>191,745</td>
<td>1,611,955</td>
<td>3,168,765</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total (percentage)</td>
<td>20%</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>51</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


**Figure 4.2: Land ownership in Mumbai by different actors**

![Land ownership in Mumbai by different actors](chart.png)
Land Tenure

Tenure rights on land in Mumbai are fragmented. The Gazetteer of Bombay records a number of tenure methods in practice during the pre-independence period. Some of these customary and complex tenure practices—regarding the relationship between land owner and agricultural tenants—were carried over from earlier ruling regimes (the Portuguese, Maratha Kings, Mughal and others), whereby some of the older systems of tenure were recognized, recorded under names such as Fazindari, Toka, and Imami.

As a means for establishing its position as legitimate owners of all Bombay land, the East India Company undertook measures to declare all sales and transaction of land in the past as illegal, and threatened all Indians who assisted in revenue collection, undertook revenue survey of the city and applied the new system of land tenure (Gazetteer of Bombay Presidency, 1885); (Dossal 1995). It was during this time of large expansionism and asserting control over land in Bombay in the late eighteenth century that the British Administration pointed out to widespread encroachment on and sale of government land (Dossal 1995). Another feature of exercising their rights over land was the reclamation efforts that the Company undertook. It also exercised its rights by gifting away huge chunks of land to Parsi families that had helped the crown.

The Ryotwari system of land tenure was applied to Bombay during the British Period, as a form of agricultural tax, totalling one third of the gross product. The levy was not based on actual revenue from the produce of the land, but instead an estimate of the potential of the soil. But most importantly the new system changed the relationship between the local landowners and their land; it rendered them as mere leaseholders and granted ownership rights to the British.

The new system introduced by the British was not taken lightly by the large land owners, The Fezandars (landed proprietors) had enjoyed substantial rights in the land during Portuguese rule and they resisted the move on the part of the English East Indian Company to reduce their status to mere leaseholders (Dossal 1995). These conflicts between the landed proprietors and the company were resolved by using what Dossal calls a conciliatory policy in times of insecure position of the company and aggressive in times when expansion of territory was found to be necessary. In 1872, Lieutenant Colonel G.A Loughton completed his revenue survey of Bombay Island which covered 22 square miles of territory: he found seventeen property registers with nine different land tenures on Bombay Island (Dossal 1995, 99). Subsequently, all the land in Bombay Island was classified as government land. However, this intervention did not completely do away with existing customs and practices of tenure and rental relationships which were in practice prior to the government declaration. The two systems co-existed; as Dossal writes, ‘Encroachments would continue; the government would constantly fear the hidden transfers and unknown transactions taking place without its consent or payment of its dues’ (ibid: 99).

Also in the suburbs there were similar tenure practices. While the British were more concerned with the Island City, the Indian government tenure regime designed with the First Development plan of

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16 It is a name given—particularly in common law systems—to the legal regime in which land is owned by an individual, who is said to ‘hold’ the land. The sovereign monarch (known as the Crown) held land in its own right. All private owners are either its tenants or sub-tenants. The term ‘tenure’ is used to signify the relationship between tenants and lord, not the relationship between tenant and land. The concept of land tenure has been described as ‘spatial fragmentation of proprietary interests in land’. No one person could claim absolute ownership of a parcel of land, except the Crown. Thus the modern concept of ‘ownership’ is not helpful in explaining the complexity of the distribution of rights. In relation to a particular piece of land, a number of people had rights: first the tenants in demesne with possessory rights: second the mesne lord to whom the tenant owed services; third, a tenant in chief to whom the mesne lord owed services and finally the Crown which received services directly from the tenant in chief.

17 In the 1920s Chowpatty to Colaba were under the sea, Harvey was Chief Engineer and Mr. Nariman was a public worker who fought against the reclamation in the public arena as well as in courts; some of the reclamation was indeed halted.

18 Associated with the name of Sir Thomas Munro, who was appointed Governor of Madras in 1820.
Bombay was interested in governing all lands. These different tenure patterns continue to co-exist and make exercising eminent domain by the state very difficult.

Land ownership and its tenure have a direct impact on transaction value. As such, it is not surprising to find that private land under unclear tenure had a low price and was used for creating informal housing which the land owners and their managers built in the period of the state-controlled regime. A combination of factors appears to influence what kinds of development take place in a ward. The first predominant factor is the land ownership and the power relations within the policy regime. For instance, if the land is privately owned and the urban policy regime is one where private lands are not allowed to develop freely, the landowner will find means outside the legal system to monetize the value of his land. The value of such lands is likely to remain low until the regime is altered.

Figure 4.3: Residential prices per square metre in Mumbai Corporation Area, according to ward


The next section will present some of the housing types existing in the city along with the differences within the city with regards to basic amenities. State efforts to extend basic amenities and housing to marginalized communities and bring them into the mainstream shall be analyzed in the next chapter.

Housing the city

The establishment of the cotton mills in mid-nineteenth century saw an influx of migrant labourers who settled on the agrarian lands near the mills. Mill owners built residential buildings—called chawls—for the workers. These were usually multi-storied buildings, each level containing single room tenements connected by a long corridor or veranda. Apart from mill owners, colonial government organizations (such as the Bombay Improvement Trust, the Bombay Port Trust and the Railways) also constructed chawls for the working class in the early twentieth century, following the increase in population and growth in trade. In 1929, there were 64,000 millworkers living in chawls.

In places like Dadar, most workers lived in rooms occupied by six up to twenty or even more persons.

The early (eighteenth century) trader settlements were built on agrarian lands, outside the Fort walls, either bought from the original owner or developed by them. These settlements also known as wadis, provided housing for traders and migrant labourers who worked for them. As the city’s population expanded, the British took over land belonging to the native inhabitants (the Kolis, the Agris and the Bhandaris) and gave them land and housing in alternative places as compensation, thus turning the Koliwadas, the Agriwadas and Bhandarwadas into the inner city.

19 It was usual to find such a single tenement housing a family of more than 6 people, living in a single room of 10 m² and around 30 such households sharing 3 water closets and 3 bathrooms (Study of Housing Typologies, CRIT, May 2007, Learning From Mumbai, Urban Age Seminar 2007).
The 1971 census puts the population of greater Mumbai at 5,970,575, with a population growth rate of 3.7% per annum. The largest chunk of this growth took place specifically in the suburbs, following the earlier trend.

During this period, the fastest growing wards in the suburbs were N and M; they grew by 190% and 133% respectively between 1961 and 1971. The next fastest growing were P, T and R wards. The growth in population does not follow the growth in employment in these wards: in the 1970s the highest density of workers (of the formal sector) was found to be residing in G, F and E wards. Thus, employment in the informal sector and self-employment took precedence in the suburbs of Bombay.

Two factors contributed to the city’s population growth between 1971 and 1981—natural internal growth and migration. During this period, it was estimated that growth was around 52% and 48% respectively. According to the 1981 census, 77.4% of households in greater Bombay were residing in one-room units in the chawls and slums. A total of 20,000 buildings in the Island City of Bombay were identified as houses in need of repairs, 16,000 of these have been constructed prior to 1940 and some were even more than hundred years old (Census of India, 1981).

The economy in the 1970s was dominated by manufacturing industries with almost 37% of employment and 23% of total output contributed by the composite textile mills, which were owned by the business houses. Although the textile industry was already showing signs of slowing down with a drop in employment in 1972, the percentage of employment in the textile industry fell even further, down from 49% in 1961 to about 42% in the 1970s. Employment in other industries grew during this period, especially the growth in chemical and rubber (50%) as well as the basic metal engineering industries (23.4%) was phenomenal. Despite the growth of economy and increased employment in the formal sector, a very large chunk of the workforce remained outside formal employment and entered the informal sector as self-employed or contract workers (Pendharkar 2003).

City congestion due to increased migration in residential spaces assigned to the labour class led to the population spilling over from the chawls to self-created housing or slums. From 1950 to 1968, the number of slum areas increased by 18%, and by 1980 slum dwellers made up half of the city’s entire population. During the 1960s and the 1970s, the average annual need for new housing was 46,000 dwellings and 60,000 dwellings respectively by decade; however, supply was far below demand—only 17,600 and 20,600 were constructed respectively by decade (both private and public sector housing) (MMRDA, 2003).

In 1964, as a result of the Town Planning Act and Land Acquisitions Act, residential colonies were established for the burgeoning population, however with different types of housing for the lower income group, the middle class and the higher income group. Public housing was being differentiated along economic class lines. While the lower income groups were housed in tenements that resembled chawls, the middle class and higher income group received apartments. One Bedroom Hall Kitchen (1BHK flat) was created for the burgeoning middle class, mostly civil servants leaving the chawls, and white-collar migrant population. Keeping pace with the growing number of middle class families in the city, much of the construction activity was devoted to building 1BHK flats. Government housing also included the development of resident spaces for government workers. Housing was either provided as quarters maintained by the government department itself, or it was a cooperative society built by employees of government department with subsidized government aid. The pattern was also followed by private industries. Later on many of these cooperative society flats were sold to those who are not employed by the government. Apartment type again depended on the pay scale and seniority levels of the employees.

The 1990s—especially the first half of the decade—saw an unprecedented real estate boom. Residential townships were created by private developers, and builders offered 2-6 bedroom flats in large apartment buildings. These townships had ample open spaces, commercial establishments, health centres, entertainment centres and were advertised as self-sufficient.
Due to historical reasons given above, certain areas have always been preferred residential areas over others. Over time, the western coastal areas have become preferred residential places for the ‘new rich’, while the Island City has been retained by the ‘old rich’. In the last three decades K West and H West have emerged as high priced residential localities. D Ward has always held a special place as it houses the chief minister, most of the industrial owners and also faces the coast.

Shack dwellers

In 1976, 39% of the population of greater Bombay was recorded to be living in slums, as per the slum census undertaken by state government. The Island City had 17.8% of its population residing in slum areas, the eastern suburbs had 71% and the western suburbs 70%. Wards such as M, L, N and R had over 75% of their population living in slum areas, while L Ward was considered to be completely a slum ward (see table 4.1). These were also the wards with high levels of private land holdings.

Today, greater Mumbai is home to 12.5 million people (Census 2011), spread out over 437 km² with 49% of its population living in slums or homeless (living in tenements and huts on pavements along railway tracks, under bridges and other locations). It is estimated that another 15% above this figure actually live in slums, although not recognized by the government as such. More than half of the population lives in abject poverty, squalor and deprivation. According to the 2001 census, 1,774,332 households live in Mumbai, of which 56.5% do not have access to latrines, 29.4% have to carry water from sources outside of their premises, and 62.3% live in one room houses (Hardoy and Satterthwaite 1989; Swaminathan 1995; Patel 2005).

Slums or shacks dweller existed during the rule of East India Company too; they were called blighted communities. The difference the Republic of India brought to this phenomena is the introduction of a special law which governs slum areas. The Slum Areas (Improvement and Clearance) Act 1971, defined slums as areas that ‘(a) are in any respect unfit for human habitation; or (b) are by reason of dilapidation, overcrowding, faulty arrangements and design of such buildings, narrowness or faulty arrangements of streets, lack of ventilation, light or sanitation facilities, or any combination of these factors detrimental to safety, health or morals’. The Act also lays down a process by which areas can be declared a slum and by which authority residents of slum areas can gain access to services. (The Government of Maharashtra 1971)

Slums are self-help housing, that migrant workers build, occupy and improve, seeking permissions from local and state government to occupy the piece of land, and construct temporary shacks on it. The majority of the slums in Mumbai are located on what used to be marshy lands, far from railway stations on inaccessible hills, and therefore unattractive for formal housing. These lands were reclaimed and made habitable by the migrants before they could construct homes on them.

Slum housing range from structures put together by plastic and tin sheets (sometimes also with refuse material from construction sites) to semi-permanent structures where the original building materials have been reinforced by cement, wood and brick. The houses are usually single room tenements to which rooms or a storey or two are added to accommodate growing families. Additions to the original structure are at times rented out.

These houses are tiny, with about 42% having areas of 10 m², 38 per cent having areas between 15 and 20 m² and the rest 20 m². In 2001, YUVA, a nongovernmental organisation, and Montgomery Watson Consultants counted 1,959 slums with a population of 57.2 lakh people, whereas the Environmental Status Report for 2002-03 of MCGM recorded abound ‘2,245 slum pockets’. Out of these, 93% are slums recognized by the state government with consent from the land owning authority. Once a

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20 Slum areas have been broadly defined by the Census Department for the 2001 Census as ‘all notified slums under any act, all recognized as slums which may have not been formally notified as slum under any act and as compact areas of at least 300 population (unspecified special unit) or about 60-70 households of poorly build congested tenements in unhygienic environment usually with inadequate infrastructure or lacking in proper sanitary and drinking water facilities’.
settlement has been declared a slum, its residents receive civic and public amenities by the municipal authority as well as being issued proofs of residence, i.e. photo passes or ration cards. Settlements which are not declared21 ‘slum areas’ can be subject to evictions and are not entitled to benefit from potential rehabilitations(YUVA and Montgomery Watson Consultants India 2001; Risbud 2003; NRCUP 2009; UNDP 2005).

Declaration of a settlement as a ‘slum area’ ought to bring amenities, development and the assurance of some kind of rehabilitation if the area is required for development. It means that the state chooses to temporarily ignore planning and zoning norms to regularize otherwise illegal settlements and include the residents as part of their service network. The process of declaration of a settlement as a slum area is a political process and is often led by political representatives of the area.

Creating a foothold in the city for a household begins with securing a temporary shelter using family and village networks. The ration card is the very next document of recognition that the slum household attempts to acquire. It gives access to a public subsidized food system, and is also generally used as proof of existence for the household. It is an important document to prove how long the family has occupied a slum hut and is the basis for other proofs of residence which a slum resident must gather to make their habitat claims. Access to services such as water taps, electricity connections, access to assistance projects (such as slum redevelopment schemes), depends on whether the household has been issued a ration card prior to the ‘cut-off date’. This is a calendar date defined by politicians. Households that did not obtain proof of residence prior to this date are excluded from amenities and programs. The extension of these dates is a political project, promised before every assembly elections. Once the majority of the households is able to produce documents that confirm residence prior to the cut-off date, the status of the slum (if it is on state and municipal land) changes from unrecognized to a recognized one, and the community can legally receive municipal services. Having an address on the ration card ensures inclusion on the electoral list of the neighbourhood, making the person a voter in the coming elections. Having the right to be included in the provision of public services is linked to the realization of voting rights at that address of new migrants. Together these create security of habitat and rights for the migrants (Burra 2005).

Amenities are basic in slum areas. The status of the slum areas has not changed much over the decades, the provision of amenities is dependent on the negotiating power of the community vis-à-vis the local representatives of political power—either slum lord, community leader or elected councillors, and leaders of the political parties. An important variable noticed by activists regarding the level of amenities in slum areas is the land ownership of the slum. Slums on municipal lands are better serviced than those belonging to state government or private lands as they fall directly under the jurisdiction of the government of Maharashtra. Worst off in terms of security as well as amenities are slums on central government lands or Ministry of Forest and Environment lands (Landy and Chaudhuri 2004). Almost 70% of the slums are found on lands owned by private persons and are located in the suburbs. Some wards that were recorded as slum wards in the 1980s (such as L and M) continue to house the largest number of slum communities today (see table 4.2 below).

Few amenities and poor living conditions have a direct impact on the health status of the residents of the squatter settlements. High densities, poor ventilation and light cause fatal disease such as tuberculosis. Non-potable drinking water is known to result in high mortality amongst children. With poverty groups living in slums concentrated in some areas of the city it is not surprising to know that high mortality has been recorded in these wards. Mortality patterns studied by Ramasubban and Crook showed that patterns of mortality had not drastically changed after independence and that there is a high mortality and disease clustering effects towards the eastern side of the city in wards N, M and L, these are predominately industrial areas with majority of population living in slum like conditions (Ramasubban and Crook. 1995).

21 Undeclared is the term usually used for the bureaucratic processes, in which slums are gradually recognized and receive basic services.
Table 4.2: Land ownership of slums in Mumbai, 2001

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Land category / Ownership</th>
<th>Number of slum pockets</th>
<th>Percentage of slum pockets</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Private</td>
<td>924</td>
<td>47</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>State government</td>
<td>431</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Municipal</td>
<td>313</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mixed</td>
<td>190</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Central government</td>
<td>88</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Railways</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>1959</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: YUVA and Montgomery Watson Consultants, India (2001) and Census of India (2001)

Looking at the figure on land price and the table on ownerships of slum lands, it is possible to find a certain connection between these two, i.e. wards with predominantly privately owned lands are also the wards with the large number of squatter settlements. These are the low priced lands of the city.

This historical background has led to an uneven development of the city and is reflected in real estate prices. Even today, the southern tip of the island (wards A and B)—largely owned by the municipal government—remains the most expensive part of the city, followed by the western coastal wards (G South, H West, K West and East). Next are the new, emerging localities in the north-western suburbs. Some of the lowest real estate prices are to be found in the eastern suburbs—particularly in L, M and T Wards—all of which have industrial units as well as large slum populations. Real estate prices reflect the value that the location has achieved historically, and the prices are a reflection of its proximity to colonial town, access to the city and the available amenities.

Another factor influencing land prices is the clarity of land ownership and its tenure, as then land can easily be transacted in the market making it attractive for development. Both M and L wards are also wards which have large tracts of land owned by the Union of India.

4.4 CONCLUSION

The city of Bombay was carved out of a natural harbour in the sixteenth century had gained importance as a critical trading outpost in its identity as a mercantile community. To gain control of the city was important for maritime powers, such as Portugal and Britain. The city was disputed territory until it was finally gifted the East India Company late in the seventeenth century by the British Crown. A common denominator in both colonial rule and its post-independence existence was the significance of spatial control by the ruling class.

The East India Company exercised spatial control as a means to expand their capitalist interests. They used various means such as gifting of land, reclamation from the sea, land acquisition, bringing different land tenures and practices under one single legal system. Some of these methods have left their mark and continue to influence urban development even today., such as large privately owned lands in Mumbai, class based segregation of city space, differential privileges for different classes, efforts to acquire privately owned lands at government set low prices,. They also attempted to bring the differing land tenures and practices under one system with little success. The result was a dual system of tenure, which continued to co-exist even after Independence.

With independence different levels of government also came to own land, each governing it under their own rules. This fragmentation of land ownership and the dual system of land tenure has created a
patchy development of the city. This patchy development is reflected in the land prices of the wards, amongst which a very wide range is also to be found. Wards with the largest number of slum population are also the very areas which have very low land prices. Further, we are able to show that land ownership dictates the quality of housing and amenities that are found on it. Slums owned by the Union of India are likely to be worst off and slums on municipal government land are best serviced. The more local the level of government that owns the land is, the better the chances of the slum being serviced are.

This chapter has presented the fragmentation of urban space in Mumbai in its various phases. It also sketched the relationship between control regimes of the British and the Government of India and its implications on land ownership as well as the creation and development of slums. Governments of free India appear to be continuing exclusionary practices institutionalized by the British. We find that several factors have contributed to the large number of slums in Mumbai. First, the large level of private land ownership in Mumbai with multiple co-existing and unclear tenure systems prevented land markets from becoming commercialized. Second, the British did not manage to make this system more uniform in character, so that regular ownership became impossible for large groups of residents. Finally, the high population growth from migration together resulted in a large number of city dwellers living in slums with few basic amenities. In the next chapter, I will examine the role that the state has played in urban development and its efforts in applying multiple tools in order to improve the social welfare of the city’s residents.