Subaltern urbanism in India beyond the mega-city slum: The civic politics of occupancy and development in two peripheral cities in the Mumbai Metropolitan Region
van Dijk, T.K.

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UvA-DARE is a service provided by the library of the University of Amsterdam (http://dare.uva.nl)
Tara van Dijk leverages concepts from subaltern urbanism, namely political society and occupancy urbanism, to look at how residence and locality development are constituted and governed in practice across three types of settlements in two ‘satellite’ cities of the Mumbai Metropolitan Region: Kalyan-Dombivli and Mira-Bhayandar. Academically, this work contributes to filling in some of the gaps present in research on political society in postcolonial cities and its diverse spatial manifestations. Practically, this text speaks to discussions regarding localised political and spatial bottlenecks to urban governance offsetting inequalities and uneven development. Additionally, network approaches to urban politics and splintering urbanisation of all sorts can benefit from a better understanding of the processes and power dynamics within political society that contribute to the making, maintaining, or unmaking of localities, and the networks adapting or forming to create and accumulate value(s) from these processes.
Subaltern Urbanism In India Beyond The Mega-City Slum

The Civic Politics of Occupancy and Development in Two Peripheral Cities in the Mumbai Metropolitan Region

Tara van Dijk
This research was supported by a PhD grant within the Netherlands Organisation for Scientific Research - Wotro Integrated Programme, “Using spatial data infrastructures in urban governance networks: reducing urban deprivations in Indian cities?”
Subaltern Urbanism In India Beyond The Mega-City Slum

The Civic Politics of Occupancy and Development in Two Peripheral Cities in the Mumbai Metropolitan Region

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Tara Kaye van Dijk

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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Abbreviation</th>
<th>Full Form</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>BJP</td>
<td>Bharatiya Janata Party</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BPL</td>
<td>Below Poverty Line</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BSP</td>
<td>Bahujan Samaj Party</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BSUP</td>
<td>Basic Services for the Urban Poor (part of JNNURM)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C₁</td>
<td>Capital (potential functioning)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C₂</td>
<td>Capital (actual functioning)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CARs</td>
<td>Capitals, Assets, and Resources</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CMC</td>
<td>Chief Municipal Commissioner</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FSI</td>
<td>Floor Space Index</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GoI</td>
<td>Government of India</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GoM</td>
<td>Government of Maharashtra</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>INC</td>
<td>Indian National Congress</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>JNNURM</td>
<td>Jawaharlal Nehru National Urban Renewal Mission</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>KD</td>
<td>Kalyan-Dombivli</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>KDMC</td>
<td>Kalyan-Dombivli Municipal Corporation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MB</td>
<td>Mira-Bhayandar</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MBMC</td>
<td>Mira-Bhayandar Municipal Corporation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MC</td>
<td>Municipal Councillor</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MLA</td>
<td>Member of Legislative Assembly</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MP</td>
<td>Member of Parliament</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MRTP</td>
<td>Mumbai Regional Town Planning Act</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NC</td>
<td>National Congress Party</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NOC</td>
<td>No Objection Certificate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PIL</td>
<td>Public Interest Litigation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RPI</td>
<td>Republican Party of India</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SJSRY</td>
<td>Swarna Jayanti Shahari Rozgar Yojana Programme</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UDD</td>
<td>GoM's Urban Development Department</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
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CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

Spatial inequalities, in terms of basic services, infrastructure, housing, and livelihood space continue to intensify in many cities despite formal processes of decentralisation, mechanisms for greater private sector and civil society participation, and increasingly geo-referenced databases on the different aspects and scale of urban poverty and inequalities. The motivation of this thesis is to better understand how spatial inequalities are made. How do they come to be in the places we find them rather than some other part of the city, and which actors are involved in the production of these inequalities and why? This point of departure differs from those that view spatial inequalities as deriving from neoliberal policies, capitalism, population growth, or poverty. These are all significant factors that affect inequality, but on their own they cannot carry out the work and conduct the practices and perceptions of the configuration of actors whose succession of activities produce the geography of uneven development on the ground in different cities. To better account for how spatial inequalities take the form and the geography they do, this study explores the civic domain in two peripheral cities in the Mumbai Metropolitan Region: Kalyan-Dombivli and Mira-Bhayandar to examine the civic politics, or local political order, shaping the production of spatial inequalities. Civic politics refers to how power and authority are de facto constituted, distributed and deployed in the city in matters affecting public welfare, public goods and services and the city's general development (Davies, 2009). Researching civic politics requires examining the local political institutions, their sources and expressions of authority over the everyday and primary needs of housing, basic services, and security as well as the characteristics of municipal government in practice. The civic domain thus refers to the places where these public issues and power-relations are worked out and the institutions and political culture guiding these processes. This is the terrain where, 'rights to the city,' both in terms of access and citizenship today, and in terms of whose needs and wants are included (and how) going forward are negotiated in ways that can be both complementary or contradictory to the policies and plans worked out at the state, central, or international level (cf. Stone, 2009; Gottdeiner and Hutchison, 2011; Gudavarthy and Vijay, 2011: 49; Magnussen, 2014: 10-11).

While many scholars agree that local everyday politics is important to grasp and engage with, it rarely takes centre stage. When it is taken up in research on cities in the Global South, a common analytical coordinate is Chatterjee’s (2004) ‘political society’ argument that places the civic politics accessible to the urban poor-whose livelihoods and modes of spatial production are illegal and/or unsettle the vision of modern and orderly cities—as a separate practical and epistemological domain that sits in contradiction with civil society where citizens whose livelihoods and residences conform with laws and modern norms can operate through rights-based liberal institutions in the civic domain. Chatterjee theorises a polarised civic domain with two parallel meta-modalities of local politics (cf. Gudavarthy, 2011: chapter 1). One populated by 'citizens' adhering to norms of 'modern civil society' and a rule of law
local state and one containing 'populations' adhering to informal institutions and secret clauses of 'political society' with a compromised or mediated local state. However, the large majority of residences in Indian cities are likely technically illegal, or at least legally ambiguous (cf. Roy, 2009; Bhan, 2013; Ghertner, 2011a; Zalsloff, 2011), and upwards of 90 percent of Indians work in the informal or unorganised sectors (Harriss-White, 2010). These indicate that political society—if taken to refer to the informal politics, marked by ad hoc and contingent negotiations and arrangements with various local authorities around securing space, services, as well as occasional efforts to reshape urban space more extensively—is a circuit of civic politics and knowledge that extends far beyond slums. This means that much of the work on urban governance, civil society and inequality are marked by an 'absent presence' that needs to be rendered more visible. The empirical goal of this thesis is to make political society's presence, institutions and practices in Kalyan-Dombivli (KD) and Mira-Bhayandar (MB) more visible. To do this, I focus on the spatial manifestation of political society Benjamin (2008) terms 'occupancy urbanism'. Occupancy urbanism refers to settlements produced through the informal to illegal appropriation of space, services, and markets. The dimension of particular interest here is the local political and bureaucratic facilitations of these 'appropriations.' The main interest within this dimension is the political actors or operators involved in the housing market and locality development and what their motivations are for facilitating informal to illegal forms of occupancy urbanism. These political actors’ capacities, practices and relationships are examined to analyse if and to what extent they are able to achieve structural domination in ways difficult to formally challenge. In other words, following Sammaddar (2010) this thesis is interested in the politics of political society as it pertains to development and democracy in the city. I contend that how and to what extent political society, rather than civil society, dominates politics in the civic domain is knowledge critical for both designing and implementing suitable reforms and for organising political actions for the purposes of reducing spatial inequalities.

Development in this thesis is defined in line with how these cities’ development codes and plans define it. For example KD defines it thusly:

Development with its grammatical variations means the carrying out of buildings, engineering, mining or other operations in, or over, or under land or the making of any material change, in any building or land or in the use of any building or land or any material or structural change in any heritage building or its precinct and includes demolition of any existing building, structure or erection of part of such building, structure of erection and reclamation, redevelopment and layout or sub-division of any land and to develop shall be construed accordingly (Development Code Regulations, 2004).

Development is taken from this definition to refer to housing, infrastructure, and services, i.e., serviceable and serviced urban land. These dimensions of development represent the material processes that both necessitate the civic domain and are produced by it. The extent these processes are marked by inequality and competition indicate a civic politics not motivated by norms of inclusive development in practice.
The bulk of this thesis is comprised of published or submitted journal articles (chapters 4-8). Space restrictions of journal publications precluded discussing all the literature, debates, and dilemmas informing the chapters of this thesis. I will take the opportunity to cover this ground here. I begin with discussing how the lacklustre results of changing forms of urban governance to reduce poverty and inequalities are being understood in academic debates, as well as what direction present research is taking. For the Indian context, I argue that insights from subaltern studies referencing state-society relations and civic political cultures should be more centrally incorporated in our analyses of urban governance to better account for the presence and capacities of political society. This chapter closes with an explanation for choosing to focus on the role political society plays in spatial inequalities and operationalizes political society for political institutional analysis.

1.1 Urban Governance, Inequality Reduction, and Poverty Alleviation

During the last decade of the twentieth century and the beginning of the twenty-first century the table seemed to be set for drastic reductions in urban poverty and inequalities. There was a conjuncture of economic liberalisation, decentralisation and democratisation combined with a new ethos of participatory development and inclusive growth coming from the World Bank, the UNDP and national development authorities. This period also saw a growing wealth of case studies and livelihoods profiles covering how local governance organisations and the poor themselves were making progress on reducing various ‘deprivations’ in their localities or livelihoods respectively (Rakodi & Llyod, 2002; Moser, 2007). The ways NGOs, funders, and governments could support the activities of the urban poor (or at least not undermine their efforts) received increased attention (Satterthwaite and Mitlin, 2004). New forms of urban governance that included mechanisms for citizen participation and cooperation with civil society organisations and private firms were being experimented with in many cities (cf. Devas, 2004; Baud and de Wit, 2008; Beall et al., 2009). Although with likely setbacks, an urban development era marked by enhanced accountability, knowledge, efficiency, and equity was thought to be reachable. The gist was that if the appropriate institutional and organisational reforms could be implemented then benefits of globalisation and economic growth would materialise for hitherto marginalised groups and localities within cities.

Evidence of the ‘pro-poor’ or social or spatial inclusiveness outcomes of the neo-institutionalist governance turn is mixed with much geographical and sectoral variation. When poverty lines reflect more realistic costs of living and take into consideration other deprivations or vulnerabilities in addition to income, we see that aggregate urban poverty levels remain high (Mitlin and Satterthwaite 2013). Inequality within many cities, particularly in terms of infrastructure, services and housing, has increased to the point where Graham and Martin’s 2001 thesis of ‘fragmenting urbanism’ may be the new normal. There is a general consensus that in the last 20 years Indian cities have seen intensifications of fragmentation and division in multiple scales and domains: economically, spatially, ecologically and politically (Rurarelia et
al., 2011: 3-5; McFarlane, 2012). Optimistic goals of inclusive cities are starting to be replaced with more conservative goals such as: securing the poor’s ‘right to survive’ (Argawala, 2008) with efforts being directed at rolling-back trends of criminalising aspects of ‘informal’ livelihoods. Along the same lines, goals of ‘resilience’ have gained resonance with efforts directed at how vulnerable groups and places can keep hold of what meagre functionings\(^1\) they have managed in the face of increasingly precarious economic and environmental times (cf. Amin 2013a).

### 1.2 ‘Lack of Interest’ In Poverty Alleviation and Inequality Reduction?

We believe that the scale and depth of urban poverty is ignored within most low-income nations, many middle-income nations and globally. We believe that this reflects considerable misrepresentation and underestimation of urban poverty, and occurs because of the very narrow ways in which poverty is usually conceived, defined, and measured. This also reflects a lack of interest from governments and international agencies in seeking to understand urban poverty and many deprivations that it causes or contributes to \([…]\) at core our criticism is the use of inappropriate frameworks, tools and methods for defining and measuring poverty (Mitlin and Satterthwaite, 2013: 2-3 emphasis mine).

Those tracking the macro political economy of urban development attribute this ‘lack of interest’ Mitlin & Satterthwaite speak of to miss-allocations of capital in non-productive assets (eg. gold, art, real estate, Facebook, derivatives) and capital intensive industry (IT, insurance), and to financialisation in general that combine into low-job producing growth, especially for low-skilled labour (cf. Breman and Agarwal, 2002; Harvey, 2008; Chatterjee, 2008; Nijman, 2012; Sassen, 2014). It is argued that too many resources are being circulated in what Lefebvre coined as the ‘second circuit of capital’:

‘Real estate’ (speculation, building) as it is called, plays the role of a second sector, of a circuit parallel to that of industrial production \([…]\) Capital initially makes fabulous profits, but it soon founders. In this sector, the ‘multiplier’ effect is slight: few induced activities. Capital comes to a halt in real estate. The general economy soon suffers from this. However, the role and the function of this sector continue to grow. Whenever the main circuit, that of common industrial production of ‘movable’ goods slows down, capital goes to be invested in the second sector, that of real estate. Property speculation may even become the main source, the almost exclusive place of the ‘formation of capital,’ that is to say making a capital gain (1970: 211–212).

Investment portfolios, building-booms (especially of relatively upper-scale commercial, tourist, and residential areas) and the push to ‘world-class and slum-free’ cities in India indicate the significance of this second circuit. The high demand for developable urban land make it unnecessary to invest in infrastructural or other built

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\(^1\) Sen (1999) defines functionings as what one is able to do and be.
environment improvements to turn a profit, especially in periods of speculation (Gottdeiner and Hutchison, 2011). Sassen (2010) points out that unlike in earlier phases of capitalist production of space, where lower income people on the land were included as labour and consumers, today a trend is emerging for the property to be the main or only concern to the investors, developers, and eventual buyers. The people are too often expelled via a variety of mechanisms, such as predatory mortgages, priced out, bought out, evicted, zoned out or resettled (Sassen, 2014). Also, the trend towards cost-recovery or profit making from infrastructure development and basic services provision can lock-in disincentives to develop these in deprived areas where profit margins are believed to be smaller (cf. Bakker & Kooy, 2008; Sangameswaran 2009).

Meta-level analyses suggest that we have entered a ‘network society’ that is increasingly able (due to technological advances and liberalisation policies) to bypass areas and people that are not of ‘value’ or are superfluous to the value(s) being generated and distributed within and between networks (Castells 2009, pp. 19-24). Castells foregrounds the social to pinpoint which actors within a network and/or which network within a configuration of networks are ‘programming’ the goals and processes of value formation, and which actors or networks are ‘switchers’ within and between networks who can alter flows. Network society tends to produce a new meta-geography of development that Sidaway (2007) termed ‘enclave space’. Those looking at urban development dialectically with changes in governmentality focus on how the spaces and people rendered surplus or redundant (cf. Giwandi and Reddy, 2011; Li, 2009) by these political-economic shifts are being disciplined ‘to make do’ on their own. Two trends dominate here. One is how these spaces and people can be ‘empowered’ to connect themselves into the circuits or networks of the globalising economy through cultivating local entrepreneurialism often jump-started with micro-credit (cf. Roy, 2010) or tenure (cf. de Soto, 2001). The other is to spatially concentrate the ‘urban precariat’ neighbourhoods and livelihoods by increasingly punitive techniques of de facto segregation, exclusion, or expulsion (cf. Wacquant, 2008; Davis 2006; Mezzadra, et al. 2013; Bhan, 2009; McFarlane, 2012: Sassen, 2014).

Research on the local or civic politics in cities that have ostensibly undergone processes of decentralisation, where the relatively poor and marginalised have an electorally significant majority, finds that electoral pressure is rarely mobilised to push for more just geographies of development (Khemani, 2008 & 2010; Wood and Gough, 2006). Many modes of clientelism and various levels of political or elite capture of state agencies or municipal departments remain, and poorer groups rarely engage in horizontal politics focused on longer-term development of public goods and services (cf. Keefer and Khemani, 2004; de Wit & Berner, 2009; Berenschot, 2010). Another strand of literature focuses on the emerging class dynamics of spatial politics to analyse how the new middle-classes organise to benefit from the ‘spaces’ decentralisation and participation open up. Findings show that these spaces can be used to both participate in how their neighbourhoods are governed and to influence the general direction of citywide development (cf. Anjaria, 2009; Harriss, 2006;
Ghertner, 2011a and 2011b; Baud and Nainan, 2009). Middle Class activism tends to bypass the poor or to see them (their neighbourhoods and civic politics) as antagonistic to their entitlements as citizens being better discharged. Rather than middle-classes facilitating a better social contract for everyone, in terms of development, in postcolonial states they often pursue politically “illiberal” interests (Chakrabarty, 2009; Hadiz & Robison 2005; Fernandez & Heller 2006; Chatterjee 2004). Together these point towards ‘development without the poor’ (Ballard 2012) and ‘enclave urbanism’ (Wissink 2013; Kaker 2013), as playing a role in urban governance actors’ ambivalence towards poverty and inequality. City governments are pushed and encouraged from above and below to be entrepreneurial, concerned with developing a good business and investment climate, and accommodating more ‘consumer citizens’ (Harvey, 1996b; Banerjee Guha, 2009; Bhan, 2009; Lauermann & Davidson, 2013).

In “Telescopic Urbanism,” Amin (2013b) argues that it is not only the state and large-scale capital interests that are combining to produce urban fragmentation, but well-meaning researchers and activists as well. He claims that the ‘telescopic urbanism’ of both those focused on ‘business consultancy urbanism’ and of those focused on cultivating the ‘human potential’ of the (existentially) self-reliant, entrepreneurial and improvisational slums are both:

Implicated in preventing the scale and severity of human existence from being considered as anything other than a problem of autochthonous development [...] they reinforce that the city in a global age only exists as a collection of settlements with varied geographies of affiliation, rather than as the sum of its parts [...] only particular parts of the city are projected as spaces of potentiality or attention for such a future, eschewing any obligation to think the city as field of shared life and common rights (477).

These arguments challenge the notion that you can address areas of urban poverty and inequality without also looking at areas of urban prosperity and privilege and how they are implicated in one another’s trajectory. The people and places actively supported by policies and projects and those left largely to their own devices need to be looked at as being co-constitutive of each other. Development requires resources, surpluses if you will, bundled by iterative political processes and technologies of creation, extraction, deployment, accumulation, and distribution that are spatially and socially uneven, never benign, and at some level institutionally connected. How to better understand, track and perhaps help shift these connections towards fairer processes and outcomes become crucial. On this point, Loïc Wacquant (2002) argues that:

The task of the social scientist is not to exonerate the character of dishonoured social figures and dispossessed groups by ‘documenting’ their everyday world in an effort to extract sympathy for their plight [...] It is to dissect the social mechanisms and meanings that govern their practices, ground their morality, and explain their strategies and trajectories (1527).
This requires developing our sensitivity to the formal and informal institutions organising perception, practice, and thus the production of space. This would help move scholarly and applied work past the ‘autochthonous development’ impasse built upon the process of seeing inequalities as derivatives of individual or group economic and social achievements or assets, and the spatial counterpart of discussing ‘neighbourhood effects’ of ‘problem areas’ like slums. On this task Pierre Bourdieu notes:

One can break with falsely evident notions, and with errors inscribed in substantialist thinking in terms of places, only on condition of affecting a rigorous analysis of the relations between the structures of social space and the structures of physical space (1999: 123-124).

We should not presume that what manifests in a particular area or for a particular group stems only, or even predominantly, from their actions and attributes. How things appear, and how things work, are also conducted from elsewhere in ways and means and by actors we are not aware of. In these situations issues of sufficient information, consent or accountability become non-sequitur. The practice of endowing the perceptions and livelihood strategies of the poor and marginalised privileged status can become counterproductive to stated goals of empowerment. Individual and localised activity is in large part conducted by broader configurations of institutions, actors and spatialities of power (cf. Allen, 2009; Latour, 2005).

While new forms of governance and nascent spaces of citizen participation draw most scholarly attention, how pre-existing forms of governance such as: vote-bank politics, patronage, clientelism, brokerage, bossism adapt and develop strategies to benefit from (or capture) these institutional shifts, are too often ignored, i.e., regarded as anachronistic or aberrant forms vulnerable to the incentives and rules being forged by decentralisation, democratisation and liberalisation (Hadiz, 2004; Hansen and Stepput, 2006). However, growing evidence indicates that local political actors and forms of informal public authority can successfully adapt to changing institutional landscapes without incurring significant reductions in influence. This raises issues of money politics, muscle politics and varieties of patronage functioning quite well within ostensibly democratic, decentralised, and liberalised formal institutional contexts (cf. de Wit, 2011; Hadiz, 2006: pp. 631-632). For example, de Sardin (2011) discusses eight modes of local governance commonly found to be co-existing in cities in West Africa:

The coexistence of many modes of local governance seems to us to be a central characteristic of Niger as well as many African countries. The process of ‘piling up’ types of power in local arenas has become generalised: when a new form of political authority is set up (either by the state or by development agencies) it does not substitute for the layers of institutionality already in place but adds to them [… ] There are layers of power and legitimacy dating from different periods which all coexist in the same sociopolitical space,

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displaying a complex mixture of mutual recognition and blind competition, of tolerance and masked rivalry (23).

Already existing modes of local governance and civic politics with different modes of accountability, operating logics, and capacities, no doubt play a role in how policies like decentralisation are taken up on the ground and with what consequences for cities becoming more or less civically and spatially inclusive. These findings highlight how institutional reforms coming from elsewhere tend to miss the importance of already embedded modalities of civic politics and public authority at the local level. Too often it is taken for granted the extent to which an organised and powerful enough social base in support of these reforms is needed to mobilise these institutional fixes in the direction of envisioned progressive outcomes (Hadiz, 2005).

The missing or dismissing of existing fields of local governance and civic politics when designing, implementing or championing formal institutional reforms (even in the era of supposedly ‘bottom-up’ development) remains a problem. Policy-makers who only know areas on paper, if at all, have little idea, and thus little control, over what processes and which actors these reforms will strengthen in practice. In other words, the civic political culture shaping practices and interactions on the ground between citizens and between citizens and public authorities may be incongruous with the civil society or ‘social capital’ required for liberal-democratic-capitalist institutional reforms to take root and flourish (cf. Putnam, 1992). Civil society, and thus civil politics, marked by internalised norms of political equality, individual rights and autonomy from state and social domination, and public accountability cannot be presumed to be universal, even in nascent forms. Further, civic politics around organising individual and group needs in ways that, as much as possible, promote rather than undermine the common good of the city, presupposes both that citizens of the city accept in practice the authority of the ‘rule of law’ and the state it constitutes, and a generalised sense or feeling of civic responsibility (Almond and Verba, 1989). The theorised necessary connection between civil society and a functioning democratic state leads Partha Chatterjee (1998: 10) to refer to Nehru’s modernisation-development projects as having the common underlying purpose of trying to create a civil society. By this metric (creating civil society) he failed in large part because these projects “were reinvented at the District and Block levels by politicians and lower-level bureaucrats who often did not share the world-views of their English-educated superiors” (Corbridge et al., 2005: 189). On civic political culture in India, Dipankar Gupta (2007) argues:

Whether one goes to a hospital, school, government office, or participates in politics, there is no escaping the fact that the mode of relations among people in our country is still not modern. Family connections, privileges of caste and status, as well as the willingness to break every law in the book characterise our social relations very deeply. True modernity is about how people relate to other people, and likewise, true ethics is all about a concern with ‘others’ as equal citizens. Modernity is an attitude, which represents universal norms where the dignity of an individual as citizen is inviolable and not diminished by family background or lack of connections. Once modernity is understood in this fashion, it is apparent that India has a long distance to go (8).
Leaving aside this likely overly stylised definition of modernity, the point here is its association with civic political culture, where civil society’s values being dominant and prevalent are taken to be synonymous with modernity and how India’s civic political culture is thus not modern. Civic politics still very much faces the political-ethical conundrum of the stranger, i.e., what do we owe to those, in terms of civility, recognition, and distribution, not directly related to us, and to whom we have no tacit affinity or social mutuality. De Tocqueville (1945) argued that civil society supportive of democracy and expansive public welfare requires a homogenous (enough) public in order for feelings of solidarity and trust to emerge. Without sufficient trust and solidarity (social capital in today’s parlance) common good projects that inevitably require give and take and acting against parochial interests for the good of the whole are less likely to emerge and succeed. Contrary to liberal notions of multiculturalism or pluralism, diversity can be the death knell of civil society and lead to forms of electoral democracy at the state and federal level with everyday tyrannies at the local level (ibid.). Reaching this point differently, Marx notes that civil society (what he normally referred to as bourgeois society) cannot bring about equality in conditions of pronounced economic, social and cultural inequality (2005). State authorities and auxiliaries treating citizens the same is great for those with enough economic and cultural capital to hold their own in societies rife with relations of exploitation and exclusion in the economy, in the family, and between castes and ethnic groups. In some contexts, formal political equality and autonomy from the state can lead to less protection from everyday forms of private or social dominations. This scenario is more likely where governments engage in salutary neglect. Chandavarkar (2007) argues that from the colonial period up to today that salutary neglect—where laws or conditions attached to grants are not enforced—is a common tactic at the federal and state level in India. Most issues pertaining to public order and welfare at the everyday material level are, in practice, left to local political actors and elites, with the social institutions supporting their standing as arbiters and access points to the state rarely targeted for reform (cf. Nirmal et al., 2009; SARC, 2007). The crux is that passing laws and funding for projects with lists of conditionalities cannot be taken at face value to represent the collective intentionality of a particular level of government. What happens later in implementation and evaluation phases are arguably much better indicators of intent. The extent acts and programs are passed along with an implied ‘wink’ that only certain things need to be acted on, while others should be ignored or dragged out as long as possible obscures which links in the institutional chain of governance are at fault for ‘implementation deficits’. Žižek (2008) argues that rules and norms that are not supposed to be followed, or at least not supposed to be followed by some, are numerous. He refers to these as secret clauses—the unwritten, disavowed, but necessary rules that every legal edifice or set of social rules or relations require to be durable (ibid.: 7). These secret clauses communicate what needs to be taken seriously, what can be ignored, and what is only for the sake of appearances. For Žižek, substantive and durable change is achieved when changes occur in this domain of legally or publicly disavowed, but nevertheless followed norms and rules (2010: 165). This indicates that the room to manoeuvre or space of elaboration that exist where institutions are to link up in practice, and in terms of principal-agent
relations, are shaped by formal, informal and secret institutional caveats. In the realm of civic politics, this means that the local state cannot be counted upon to be a neutral arbiter of conflicts or distributor of the privileges of citizenship—making other relations or connections necessary in these matters. Knowledge exists on the degree formal institutional measures link up or not, but very little exists in terms of how this process is shaped by much harder to trace norms and tacit, but publicly rebuked, understandings. To the extent understandings and social relations are framed by the level of informal institutions and secret clauses, the greater the degree that knowledge framed from within the coordinates of formal institutions and civil society will miss many drivers of civic politics and the actual levels of social integration.

This section briefly reviewed literature covering factors that are likely combining in ways to block the reductions in urban poverty and inequality that the nexus of liberalisation, decentralisation, and democratisation-cum-participation are thought to have the capacity to bring about. The macro-level political economy trends of allocating capital to non-productive and low job-producing investments, and the societal changes brought about by ‘network society’ leading to ‘enclave geographies’ of development (or vice-versa), middle-class activism, and existing forms of de facto governance and every-day civic politics arguably interact to limit the inequality reducing capacities of these reforms. This thesis focuses on the last factor of de facto civic politics at the municipal and locality level; both because these factors are under-researched, and because the effects of the others can be amplified or softened by local institutional configurations and the political actors who fashion them (cf. Anjaria 2009; Harris, 2008; Wilson, 2004).

1.3 Subaltern Studies³

Subaltern Studies' main subject matter is the durability and magnitude of institutions rendered informal or secret (subaltern in their lexicon) in relation to liberal-capitalist political and economic institutions that dominate higher-level state processes, corporate capitalism, and the ‘new middle-classes’. They argue that these informal institutions and secret clauses, referred to as political society by Chatterjee (2004), are both incompatible with western derived theories and practices of governance, development and urbanism in particular, and incompatible with western derived universalism’s of capitalism, liberalism, and the enlightenment in general. Basically, the productive, political, and cultural lifeworlds of the majority of Indians cannot be sufficiently known by applying western theories and concepts, whether they be Marxist, neo-liberal, or those that fall in between—the subaltern remains minimised and marginalised; it cannot speak (cf. Spivak, 1989). From this cultural and historicist understanding it logically follows that reforms based on sanitised and depoliticised western institutional coordinates fall short. They fall short because they mistake

³ Subaltern Studies includes many theorists and writers. This section is a summary based on Chatterjee (2004); Guha (1997); and Chakrabarty (2009) and is not intended to be an exhaustive review.
institutions that are dominant in official documents and in elite economic, political and social circles to be prevalent throughout society. Subaltern studies is adamant on the point that India is not a society economically and politically integrated along liberal-democratic-capitalist norms and relations. This mismatch is unlikely to be reduced by only retooling best practices or including 'local partners'. For example, popular development economist Jeffery Sachs, upon reflecting on the misadventures of structural adjustment, discusses the need for better knowledge of the areas models and best-practices are going to be applied; he realised that without adequate geographical, social-anthropological, historical, and political bearings we are likely to continue to conceive erroneous solutions to pervasive problems (Sachs, 2005: 89-92). This knowledge he speaks of is likely for formatting applications of solutions, and likely not for critiquing the solutions themselves, or to be used as the basis for devising different solutions. In this sense, Sachs misses the main point of subaltern studies. On this topic, David Harvey⁴ writes:

All universalisation projects, be they liberal, neo-liberal, conservative, religious, socialist, cosmopolitan, or rights-based run into serious problems as they encounter the specific circumstances of their application. Noble phrases and ideals [slum-free cities] crumble into shoddy excuses, special pleadings, misunderstandings, and too often into violent confrontations and recriminations...[For example] the failure of neoliberals to imagine the consequences of imposing private property rights and monetised market solutions on divergent geographical, ecological and anthropological situations is one of the more astonishing conceits of our times (2009, pp. 8 & 55).

Subaltern studies claims that capitalism, liberalism and the other hallmarks of modernity are dominant, but not prevalent in the daily lives and lifeworlds of the majority of Indians. They are dominant because they are the espoused economic, political and cultural values of the elite. Guha (1997) argues that the 'bourgeoisie' in India did not bother to integrate lower classes by making the case that their interests and norms, if institutionalised, would overtime benefit everyone. He argues this was the case in Europe, where the bourgeoisie reached hegemony through integrating all groups (over time) into liberal citizenship, private property and capital. In this manner, the bourgeoisie replaced the ancien régime based on feudal relations and numerous interpersonal dominations, and paved the way for capitalism and liberalism to reach hegemony. In India, this process never happened; the bourgeoisie revolution over the ancien régime did not happen. Rather, the new elites, those that emerged during the colonial and post-independence period, carved out spaces for themselves via mechanisms of avoidance, accommodation and co-optation. These tactics resulted in forms of neo-feudalism and clientelism for the majority, and a sphere of ostensible political equality, contractualism and private property for the post-independent elite and bourgeoisie. This is not to imply that power structures and institutions outside this elite sphere of the political-economy are fixed in time, only that the transition and integration into a commonly understood and practiced

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⁴ It should be noted here that while sympathetic to subaltern critiques, Harvey considers capital to be a general condition.
political-economy along the lines of what happened in Europe did not happen, and will not happen in India. The historical, economic, and urban strands of subaltern studies have been critiqued theoretically and empirically (cf. Chibber, 2013; Smith, 2013). It is not the goal of this thesis to contribute to these discussions. Rather, I am interested in the subaltern studies thesis that there is an elite civic political sphere and a popular one, side by side, or territorially co-present, which are theorised as being different at an ontological, epistemological, and practical level. In particular, I am interested in what this means for how we conceptualise and research urban inequalities. Regarding urban studies and development, subaltern studies helps bring to light what tends to remain ‘indecipherable’ to most standard conceptualisations of politics, the state, and citizenship applied to cities of the Global South. It is the field of the ‘unknown unknowns’ of western derived scholarship on these matters. Regarding urbanism there is a growing, somewhat disparate sub-body of work on the postcolonial: state, state-society relations, and everyday politics in cities, increasingly aggregated under the banner of ‘subaltern urbanism’ (Roy, 2011a) that aims to unsettle western derived epistemologies that are not sensitive to the opaque processes informed by informal institutions, secret clauses and ‘money and muscle’ politics. To make this more tangible, let us consider the following two arguments:

In Mumbai razor-sharp inequalities constitute a malevolent urbanism that is simultaneously political, economic, social, moral, and ecological. Here, the political and economic elites — with some exceptions — literally step over, ignore, exploit, dispossess, punish, and take from the poor. The poor are punished for sanitation poverty through demolition and other processes […] it is also the case that many elites simply do not care, or choose to ignore, or have become inured to severe sanitation inequality, and know little of the commoditisation of water, the charging of users for toilets, the particularly dire provisions and higher costs for women, and the torment of daily sanitation illness and disease for those often characterised as ‘dirt’. Such sharp juxtapositions of material wealth can only be sustained through capitalism joined to an architecture of male that I’m calling here malevolent urbanism. To echo Don Mitchell (2001), this marks a shift from malign neglect to punitive post-justice urbanism, where the poor and marginal are increasingly seen as incompatible with elite visions of urban development and are often violently displaced or regulated (McFarlane, 2012: 1288).

With the continuing rapid growth of the Asian economies, the hegemonic hold of corporate capital over the domain of civil society is likely to continue. This will inevitably mean continued primitive accumulation […] But most of these victims of primitive accumulation are unlikely to be absorbed in the new growth sectors of the economy. They will be marginalised and rendered useless as far as the sectors dominated by corporate capital are concerned. But the prevailing political climate makes it unacceptable and illegitimate for governments to leave these marginalised populations without the means of labour to simply fend for themselves. That carries the risk of turning them into the ‘dangerous classes’. Hence, a whole series of governmental policies are being, and will be, devised to reverse the effects of primitive accumulation […] The fact, however, is that the bulk of the population in most Asian countries still lives outside the orderly zones of proper civil society. It is there [political society] that they have to be fed, clothed, sheltered, and given work, if only to ensure the long-term and relatively peaceful survival of society as a whole. (Chatterjee, 2008: 125-126)
These two assessments convey a very different explanation than that of Mitlin and Satterthwaite’s (2013) focus on inappropriate measurements. The quote from McFarlane gets at the inconvenient practices or disavowed norms of civil society, which he argues in combination with contemporary capitalist relations, are producing a ‘malevolent urbanism.’ The quote from Chatterjee is indicative of the inconvenient and publicly disavowed ‘secret clause’ that India’s variety of (neo) liberal capitalist urban development, which currently takes the form of ‘world-classing’ and ‘slum-freeing’ cities and enabling the ‘entrepreneurialism’ of the poorer classes, cannot deliver in terms of improved and more equitable and sustainable levels of well-being across the board. These theorists present urban inequalities as stemming from contradictory and asymmetrical political and ideological dimensions. Presently, the discussion of slum-free cities, for example, circulates around what should be done to slums (i.e., demolish, relocate, in situ development, regularisation etc.) in order to have slum-free cities. This technocratic and administrative framing of the issue obscures how elite institutions of private property, liberal citizenship, and capital are constitutive factors of slums as well. The extent that slums and what to do about them are defined from the point of view of these current conditions that are constitutive of the ‘malevolent urbanism’ generating slums is a serious contradiction. In other words, to the extent that in the urban Indian context private property, liberal citizenship, and capital are to blame for slums and urban inequalities in general, the more problematic it becomes to design policies and programs based on the expansion and intensification of this type of political-economy. As long as this contradiction remains unaddressed, it limits everyone’s capacity to both critique current political, economic and social relations and to imagine alternatives that might actually address causes rather than symptoms of urban spatial inequalities and inadequacies (cf. Žižek, 2009).

Taken together, the quotes from McFarlane and Chatterjee, place political society central to both processes. This domain eases the bite of primitive accumulation and inadequate absorption into the dominant political economy and is thus a facilitator of ‘post-justice urbanism’. This reading implies that the fate of the poor and marginalised will be considerably shaped in and through political society. The section below delves into literature focused on local level details of political society shaping this study and highlights the particular issues or gaps to be explored.

**Political Society**

It cannot be assumed that the rule of law, formal institutional arrangements, and planning protocols are both dominant and prevalent in practice in India’s cities. The ‘state-idea’ originating in the West and codified by Max Weber as an autonomous and rule-bound state separate from the biases and power-relations within society, where bureaucracies are not tainted by politics, is a productive illusion in many developing or postcolonial countries (cf. Ferguson and Gupta, 2004; Wood and Gough, 2006; Chatterjee, 2004). The boundaries between informal (social) institutions and formal state institutions are ‘blurred’ (Gupta, 2012). Bureaucracies, especially at the local and
district level, are ‘porous’ (Benjamin, 2008) and vulnerable to elite or political capture (cf. Hackenbroch and Hossain, 2012). Municipalities are easily ‘vernacularised’ by local politics (Kivijari, 1988), ‘informal sovereigns’ (Hansen and Stepputat, 2006) or ‘arbiters’ (Chandavarkar, 2007). Roy (2009 & 2011b) places informality as the Indian state’s prevalent mode of spatial production.

These conditions lead to two important ‘open secrets’ demonstrated in everyday practices. First, state agencies, policies, and projects can be easily made into tools or platforms of extending private authority and accumulating resources. Many state institutions and departments are politically mediated to function in line with local power structures and interests (Witsoe, 2013). This situation is what often gets referred to as the land or water ‘mafias’ colloquially and in the media (Ranganathan, 2014). Secondly, a membrane of netas, bosses, patrons, brokers, and fixers mediates many everyday state-society and civic relations. This fixed, brokered, and policed zone is what Chatterjee (2004) tries to capture with his concept political society. Political society accounts for governmental regulation (in effect) of those whose livelihoods and/or residency practices are illegal or unsettle the vision of modern and orderly cities. It also accounts for how the poor must negotiate informally with local government for ad hoc and contingent basic services arrangements and occupancy in the city, what Chatterjee refers to as the ‘politics of the governed’. Their claims are filtered and handled through political society because they lack the necessary cultural capital to be seen as legitimate citizens, thus they are treated with less esteem and as not having rights to many public goods and services. Hansen and Stepputat (2006) describe this arena as being populated by 'informal sovereigns' who insert themselves to facilitate implementation of public goods and services to accumulate economic and political gains and cultural standing. Benjamin’s (2008) ‘occupancy urbanism’ refers to the informal to illegal appropriation of services, occupation of land, and access to markets that the poor manage through ‘vote-bank politics,’ i.e., where they negotiate local political and bureaucratic facilitations of services and protections against intermittent threats in exchange for votes and other obligations. The formal laws and public norms that political society operations bend or break indicate salutary neglect and disavowed rules that enable the prevalence of political society in the domains of occupancy, locality development, and civic politics in general. For example, Chandavarkar (2007) argues that:

Salutary neglect was to create social arenas that were removed at least partially or intermittently from the systematic rule of law and where the play of power and negotiation of dominance achieved a measure of impunity from its operation. The expansion of the state and the fuller integration of these domains into the political system in the late twentieth century did little to breach these immunities and may even have paradoxically increased the scope for the arbitrary exercise of power (453).

To the degree that political society rests on tacit understandings of secret clauses and informally instituted salutary neglect, reforms that target formal institutions and public norms will fall short of enabling greater civic and spatial equalities.
Scholarship on political society and its manifestations, like occupancy urbanism, also has telescopic shortcomings. The positive or progressive aspects for the poor are highlighted, in terms of access to services and protection, and some times more provocatively as being an evolving realm of 'postcolonial democracy' (Chatterjee 2013). Negative or regressive issues of domination, violence and uncertainty are sometimes acknowledge, but always minimised (eg. Appadurai, 2002, Manor, 2004, Jha et al. 2007, Benjamin, 2008; Krishna, 2011; Vasudevan, 2014b). Political society and spaces of occupancy urbanism are also shaped by exclusion, exploitation, and domination. When aspects of public services and goods are commodified or occupied, this excludes people without sufficient economic, cultural and political capital access even if they officially qualify (Gupta, 2012; Pattenden, 2011). Securing occupancy and arranging development through political society institutions is not paperless; they often facilitate access to public resources requiring documents. The ability to secure 'clean fakes,’ the right signatures, stamps, informal notes from local notables or their visiting cards is also time consuming and requires certain resources and connections (Srivastava, 2012). Conflict resolution and claims making in this field also require a lot of time and patience. Lesser clients or contacts will need to come back multiple times before securing the note, signature, stamp, phone call or other assistance they require. Waiting is particularly telling here. Who waits for who, for how long, with what assurances, and who has to wait regardless of how they are treated are important indicators of social norms and power-relations (cf. Auiero, 2010 & 2011). Why one’s efforts manifest in success or failure remain largely a mystery; because the relations and codes of conduct between political society and state agencies and functionaries are not transparent (cf. Nuijten, 2006). If one breaks official statutes you can be fined or denied access. If one breaks informal or disavowed rules, he or she can be extorted from, verbally or physically harassed, denied assistance, or simply be thwarted by obstacles difficult to understand. The quotidian practices by which domination is communicated and reinforced in political society warrants equal attention with its proposed stealth capacity to democratise access to the state and to space in the city.

Another telescopic aspect is the focus on the urban poor with the political actors of political society often reduced to means to an end. Craig (2009) points out how, ‘the accumulative tactics of these ‘midding sorts’ are rarely the explicit object of discussion in Chatterjee’s analyses or in the work of anthropologists concerned with state/society relations in the Global South” (85-186). The deontology (structure of obligations) between supply-side political actors and demand-side actors remains under researched. Additionally, recent research shows that political society is utilised by the state, private sector, and middle-class actors as well as by poorer groups (Roy, 2011b; Shatkin et al., 2014; Sami, 2012; Craig, 2009 respectively). Political actors play a role in the making of elite, standard, and deprived spaces. The structure and content of obligations between these actors is not a given. The possibility of Janus-faced

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5 See Ranganathan 2014; Witsoe 2013 for notable exceptions.
political society actors and institutions, in terms of how they address claims and in what manner, is likely tied to the degree they respond to political-economic shifts on the ground more than to a democratising ethos. Political society can function as a publicly disavowed, but nonetheless active, auxiliary of state and capital interests as well (cf. Ranganathan, 2014). The extent to which political actors who deal with residents in political society negotiations may have their own spatial projects and power plays, and how organised these are is rarely explored (Hackenbroch & Hussain, 2011).

Most scholarship presents these actors as either non-aligned political entrepreneurs used instrumentally by the poor, or as functionaries of elected politicians or local elites who connect to corrupt processes and protocols: to acquire rents or to increase caste power (Jeffrey, 2002), to distort policies or projects (de Wit 2010; van Dijk et al., 2012), to exchange votes for protection against eviction or loss of services (Benjamin, 2008), to push through real estate development projects (Weinstein, 2013), to exploit migrant workers (Mosse, 2011), to ‘democratise’ access to particular local state resources (Appadurai, 2002, Benjamin, 2000), or to influence human resource management in public agencies (Blunt et al., 2012). These actors and the arena they inhabit are often reduced to one dimension—mediation. This rationalises their marginalisation in many studies of urban governance; where they are often treated as aberrant or residual forms vis-à-vis the formal institutions of governance. However, some argue that political society warrants a more central role in state formation, especially at the local level. Mehta (1992) discussed how local leaders ‘netas’ who broker between their localities and state and central actors are critical to the formation, and continuing formation of the Indian State. Witsoe (2012) argues that, “brokers are central to the everyday functioning of the Indian State” (49). Regarding Ahmnedabad, Gujarat, Berenschot (2009) argues, “that political intermediaries—mediating between bureaucrats, citizens and service providers—are a constitutive part of the state” (885). Chatterjee (2004), Guha (1997), and Chakrabarty (2009) would argue that political society is the de facto state at the level of material needs and personal (in)security. Sovereignty refers to the generalised capacity to take decisions and to implement them collectively at certain scales—to govern (Davis, 2012). Following Lund (2011), I view the prevalence of mediation as indicating an operative political institution. Forms of mediation, i.e., arbitrage, gatekeeping, brokering and fixing, are instigated by claims being made to those perceived as having de facto sovereignty in these domains or access to those who do. The extent and the regularity with which these claims are met imply recognition of the claimant’s political subjectivity, i.e., whether they are perceived as a citizen, client, constituent, inconsequential, consumer, and so on. Making claims, recognising claims, and the regular addressing of claims, over time, establish a political institution.

Political society and the political actors who constitute it play a role in: the extension (or not) of infrastructure and access to public services, targeting of development projects, vulnerability to demolition or evictions, and in human resource management of government agencies. This certainly qualifies as the taking of decisions that have a
collective impact, and thus as a de facto sovereignty that demands more exploration. In particular, issues of mediation and mediatory institutions, occupancy urbanism, salutary neglect and capture, and secret clauses facilitating coordinated actions require empirical and conceptual work.

**Subaltern Urbanisation**

Most scholarly and journalistic accounts of urbanisation in the Global South focus on mega-cities and the dramas unfolding between slums and forces coalescing behind the goal to “world-class” the city. Some are starting to question the trend of Mumbai and Mumbai’s slums becoming metonymic for urbanisation in India and beyond (Roy, 2011; Harris, 2012). Recent demographic analysis shows that much of India’s urbanisation over the last 20 years has been occurring outside mega-cities (Kudhu, 2011). Dupont (2007) discusses how urbanisation occurring in the periphery of large metro regions should not be presumed to be over-determined by their proximity to the centre. Denis et al. (2012) refer to subaltern urbanisation as being largely autonomous from metros, state planning, and corporate enterprises (52-53). These areas may not be recognised by the state as urban, or the status of that recognition may be in dispute. This means that many urban areas have not gone through the process of municipal incorporation and are still operating within rural governance structures, or that urbanisation was occurring in the absence of bylaws and urban development code regulations for quite some time before municipal incorporation. Both cases make endogenous governance, and the extent it is akin to political society, an important factor in the dynamics behind the morphologies of uneven developments between and within urbanised or urbanising areas.

The aspect of subaltern urbanisation most relevant for this thesis is related to Roy’s argument of informality being the prevalent mode of urbanisation for state and non-state actors alike. However, those leveraging Roy’s work normally focus on mega-cities and do not account for social and spatial differences beyond broad strokes between political society and civil society or between slums and gentrifying areas. In this study, both the spatial entrepreneurialism and the political mediations of political society that make informality urbanisation possible are the focus to the extent they are constitutive of forms of occupancy, locality development, and civic politics in general. While political society is seen as crucial to subaltern urbanism, the role it plays in urbanisation via its actions and interests in the ‘second circuit of capital’ tend to be overlooked. Benjamin (2000 & 2008) discusses the importance of the ‘localised economy’ comprised of micro to medium enterprises in the informal productive sector and how it binds economically weaker groups and the local state together. Chatterjee (2008) discusses the ‘non-corporate economy’ in reference to the informal productive activities geared more towards providing use values than accumulating exchange-value. No doubt that when considering production, exchange and consumption within the localised informal economy many interdependencies exist.

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6 Investment and speculation in real estate and the built environment in general.
However, making profit and taking rents from investments and speculation in real estate development and the property and housing market are more zero-sum games (cf. Desai & Loftus, 2012; Johnston, 2013; Weinstein, 2008). Studies on gentrification or neo-liberalising Indian cities focus on formal and large-scale actors involved in real estate development or speculation, while most people in cities live in slums, chawls, or flats, built by local smaller scale ‘contractors’ or ‘builders,’ of ambiguous legal status. Many slum residents are renters or leasers. Desai and Loftus (2012) argue that:

Rather than informal settlements being seen as blank spaces shaped solely by the waves of land invasions that have occupied a clearly delimited zone, they are better understood to be structured by isolated and sometimes overlapping land claims (9).

These indicate a sizeable informal, but networked, localised real estate development and speculation circuit, enabled and in part made by political society and porous municipalities (cf. Nainan, 2012; Sami, 2012; Srivastava, 2011). Observations and anecdotal evidence of political society actors investing in real estate development and speculation, beyond only taking bribes and other forms of quid pro quo (Nanain, 2005; van Dijk, 2006), indicate that the interests and practices of builders, political actors, and municipal actors are intertwined over longer periods of time; they need to remain sufficiently in sync in order to accumulate value from the city’s informal second circuit of capital accumulation. The complementary and contradictory relations between the first circuit of production and the second circuit have been discussed concerning the globalising formal economy and accumulation by urbanisation (Harvey, 1996a, 1996b & 2008; Smith, 2008; Brenner, 2013). Gottdeiner and Hutchison (2011) argue in The New Urban Sociology that the property sector is the leading edge of uncoordinated and uneven spatial production. However, these processes and relations receive little attention in analyses of the informal economy and political society regarding the production of serviceable or serviced urban land and housing stocks and variety.

1.4 Parameters of This Study

Some scholars see political society as being a constitutive part of the state. Chatterjee focuses on how the poor are regulated through political society as populations, rather than on how civil society and ‘elite politics’ may be susceptible to political society as well. Significant for urban development, in particular for better understanding of the dynamics of civic and spatial inequalities, is what figuration of formal, informal and disavowed institutions are guiding the politics and practices generative of different formations within cities. This thesis contributes to our understanding of the territorialities of political society in relation to uneven development. To this end fieldwork was carried out in three representative types of urban formations: slum, gaothan (urban village), and standard. Slums are informal to illegal formations that

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7 Most are not licensed or likely have fake licenses.
are either encroachments on public land or unauthorised development on private land that are considered unsuitable for residence because of sanitary, locational, or other hazards. Gaathans are non-formal formations on land that was originally the shared built-up areas of agricultural or fishing villages that have become incorporated into the territory of municipalities. Standard formations refer to those that comprise most of the city (land wise) that are usually perceived to be authorised developments, or at least treated as such, by local authorities, landowners, and flat owners, renters, or leasers. Looking at three different types of formations allows for the possible heterogeneity of political society and its dimensions to come through. The main question guiding this work is how extensive and intensive is political society’s presence within different types of urban formations in terms of occupancy, locality development, and civic politics in general. The question guiding the ‘so what’ or evaluative thrust is to what degree do the practices, capacities and agendas of political actors coalesce with the interests of different residents, how contingent are these complementarities, and to what extent are these relations based on domination or some form of democracy.

In human geography the appearances, treatment, uses, and meanings attached to different spaces are considered products of human activity and therefore marked indelibly by power relations. So it was logical to select cases based on objective development differences. The challenge was to capture and discuss the dialectic between how these spatial formations are constituted through political society and to what extent these formations come back to shape civic politics and development. In other words, how these urban formations become generative, rather than only generated by political society is the theoretical horizon of this endeavour. Insights in this regard, broaden our conceptions and perceptions of what comprises these formations and how they come to be and to endure. Both sorts of findings are helpful for those wanting to unmake spatial inequalities. The practical relevance of this thesis is to provide insights into how political actors through political society shape the capacities of residents’ resources and the viable pathways they have for effectively improving development and strengthening the institution(s) of municipal citizenship. Somewhat counter-intuitively, in order to better facilitate the empowerment of many urban residents we should not focus on the residents specifically, but rather on the political institutions that in practice limit or increase their capacities and the actors who seem to benefit from these limitations or contribute to capacity building. To research these questions an ethnographic and political institutional analysis were combined to both (1) expand empirical research on political society relations beyond the point of contact and beyond the expressed understandings of the individual actors and (2) to elaborate on present functionings of livelihood ‘capitals’ related to occupancy, citizenship and locality development in terms of the constraints embedded in the political-spatial organisation of urban formations. Figure 1 illustrates the general conceptual framework.
Political Society as an Institutional Phenomenon

In order to both better understand how slums, for example, are made and the role political society plays, we need to connect constitutive practices and processes to the institutions that guide them, i.e., that provide reasons for modes of perception, behaviour and authority. This thesis considers institutions as mechanisms for how actors are prevailed upon to act in certain ways independent of their needs and interests. This brings us to the question of what makes a phenomenon an institutional phenomenon rather than a social, individual or physical phenomenon? Something is social if it requires the collective intentionality of two or more people (Searle, 2006: 56). Collective intentionality refers to shared knowledge, beliefs, goals, fears, and desires that link people in an action in situations where one can only do what he or she is doing because of others doing what they are doing, believing, or desiring (Searle, 2005: 6). Patrons cannot do what patrons do if there are no people doing what clients do and who perceive each other accordingly. This makes clientelism a social phenomenon. If some object, place, person, or set of conditions takes on attributes or capacities that do not come from their internal structure, but by virtue of the social situation, this is indicative of the institutional. For example, in a slum resident X is treated as a landlord, but when X enters the municipality he is treated as a squatter. The person has not changed, but how he is treated has in line with a change in context. In other words, the institutional context of the slum assigned the function of landlord, and the context of the municipality assigned the function of squatter or slumlord. These assignments impose a capacity on an object that only has this capacity because of the function assigned to it by an institution (ibid.). Functions are assigned in institutions according to status, rather than according to intrinsic properties. The logical structure of an institution is: a person, object, or condition X takes on the function Y because of the status assigned to X in
context C (ibid.). This social process can only function if enough people accept, in practice, the functions (i.e., sovereign, banker, police, landlord, citizen, public, or private) assigned to status indicators. Institutions, then, are mechanisms with the capacity to solidify power relations because of the deontic power embedded in status functions. Deontic power refers to obligations we have to others, or the reasons we have for “interest or desire-independent action” (Searle, 2006: 59). Through the assigning of status functions: rights, duties, authorisations, certifications, permissions, and requirements form between different actors (individual and collective). Institutions are best able to solidify power relations when they are part of a structure of interlinked deontological relationships. For example, someone (X) is born, she becomes a daughter (Y1), a member of the Koli jati (Y2), a member of the varna Vaishyas (Y3), a resident of Kalyan-Dombivli (Y4), a scheduled caste citizen of Maharashtra (Y5), and a citizen of India (Y6). Which one or set of these statuses take on the most significance for power relations depends on the context and which institution is dominant, in terms of setting the norms or limits of deontic relations. For example, in a consolidated nation-state, we would expect the formal institutions of the state to have this role. Status indicators, such as insider or outsider, are context dependent. For example, socially or collectively the residents of locality X are perceived as belonging to the city as they have lived there for many years. Locality X indicates membership. However, legally locality X is an encroachment on state land and is indicative of non-membership or unauthorised dwelling in the city in contexts where law dominates. Social recognition in certain contexts trumps legal recognition and vice versa. Together this elaborates the structure of institutional phenomena to be: X counts as Y in C and we consent that by virtue of being assigned this status X has capacity set A.

From Searle’s exposition, the following questions can be used to determine if political society is an institutional object of inquiry: Is political society defined by a set of X is Y in C rules, do these rules assign status functions which are sufficiently collectively recognised and acted upon, and do these status functions include deontic powers? Political society is comprised of practices of arbitrage, brokering, fixing, and gatekeeping. This implies contexts where person X takes on the status as a mediator or intermediary with certain recognised or expected capacities and practices. If this were not collectively accepted between the fixer, the person who approached the fixer and the people the fixer then approaches, fixing would not exist as such. Duties, claims, and authorisation relations certainly exist between actors engaged in political society. If this were not the case, why would clients go to patrons and why would municipal officials oblige local politicians and vice versa? These indicate operative deontic relations. Institutional change then is fundamentally about shifting status functions and status indicators. Institutional inequalities are fundamentally about the distributive and recognition effects of status functions and status indicators in different contexts. This brings institutionalisation and institutional reform into the realm of the political (as power relations) and the practice of politics.
The subaltern studies thesis that India has two general (but incongruous) political cultures—political society and civil society—would be indicated at the institutional level by contradictory status functions, status indicators, and most importantly, contradictory deontic functions. This situation, to the degree it exists, provides logical reasons for the high level of mediation found in state-society relations. In other words, the quality and quantity of contradiction—how much and in how many domains or sectors, determines the quality and quantity of structural or cultural gaps between different groups or places and the government that can be occupied by political actors. Political society can be logically defined as a configuration of institutions oriented to occupying or managing gaps between those excluded from civil society (or trying to work around it) and the state. Mediation in all its forms (e.g. arbitrage, brokering, fixing, gatekeeping) is a dimension of political society. Occupancy urbanism, settlements that contravene development codes, regulation, or private property norms in general, is then a more spatial dimension of political society. Salutary neglect and elite or political capture are the third dimensions of political society. Lastly, secret clauses are the fourth dimension of political society. Looking at the level of mediation, occupancy urbanism, salutary neglect and capture, and secret clauses we can gauge the balance of power in any city in India between political society and the formal authority of the municipality in general. This step is important as it guides us to which political realm is more central to the dynamics of urban inequalities in different formations for further inquiry.

Academically, this thesis contributes to filling in some of the blind spots of research on political society and its spatial manifestations, namely its: focus on the urban poor and slums in mega-cities, the focus on the democratisation prospects over issues of structural domination, and the focus on reproduction and production in the informal or non-corporate economy, while marginalising informal investment, development and speculation in housing and real estate. This thesis also speaks to discussions regarding local political and spatial bottlenecks to urban governance becoming more responsive to reducing inequalities. Additionally, network approaches to urban inequalities and splintering urbanisation of all sorts can benefit from more insights on the processes within political society that contribute to the making, maintaining, or unmaking of urban formations, and the networks adapting or forming to create and accumulate value(s) from these processes.

1.5 Thesis Outline

Chapter 2 goes over the critical realist method of conceptualisation used in this study and discusses my research design in general. Aspects of research design specific to different entry-points are covered in chapters 4 through 8. Chapter 3 introduces Kalyan-Dombivli and Mira-Bhayandar and discusses the processes and present status of urbanisation, decentralisation, and municipalisation and how these indicate the presence of political society. It also offers profiles of locality development for the cases selected and socio-economic profiles of the residents. Chapter 4 is adapted from a journal article and presents a socio-spatial conceptualisation of livelihood capitals.
and achieved functionings based upon Pierre Bourdieu’s conceptual nexus of fields, capitals, and habitus, retooled with Andrew Sayer’s critical realist conceptualisation and insights from topological approaches in human geography. This chapter argues that the social-spatial context and the fields of activity residents are encompassed by constitute actors’ practices and the capacities of their capitals. It outlines how individual resources and tactics are largely derivative on their own; meaning that they are not good candidates from which to infer future actions, agency and outcomes, or for understanding past ones. Chapter 4 justifies my choice to look at the context and arrangements residents live in and respond to, rather than the attributes of residents themselves to better understand the civic politics of occupancy, development and municipal citizenship. This chapter also develops my methodological approach in greater detail. Chapter 5 is adapted from a journal article and focuses on municipal councillors (MCs), a key mediator between the urban poor and the local state and a key actor in political society. This chapter examines how their actions can both obstruct or facilitate development of their wards and of the city in general. Chapter 6 describes the ‘networks of urbanisation’ involved in the production of different urban formations in these two cities, and is also adapted from a journal article. It shows that political society operations are present across different urban formations, albeit with some different characteristics and network ties. Chapter 7 is adapted from a submitted journal article and works to show how water provision is effectively politically captured and which actors and practices figure prominently in this ‘organised encroachment’ of the municipal water department. It contributes to our understanding of the more quotidian practices and powers involved in the compromising or political cultural embedding of municipal departments. Chapter 8 is based upon a submitted journal article and builds upon the previous chapters to discuss how the dynamics of subaltern urbanism and urbanisation, and the players enabling these through political society, significantly shape the spatial morphology of development and the forms of existing municipal citizenship. Given that the data and analysis chapters come in the form of journal articles that were produced throughout my doctorate, there is not a complete one to one match between these chapters and one specific dimension of political society that one would expect to find in a typical thesis manuscript. Rather chapters 4-8 contribute findings that crosscut between these dimensions. These findings, claims and insights are collated and presented as summary findings in chapter 9. This concluding chapter also reflects back on the issues raised in this introduction and offers recommendations for future academic research.
CHAPTER 2: RESEARCH FOUNDATION AND DESIGN

This chapter sketches the critical realist philosophy of social science that underpins this research, drawing extensively from Andrew Sayer’s influential text, Method in Social Science: A Realist Approach. For those already familiar with critical realism (CR), I suggest you forward to section 2.2, which outlines my general research design.

2.1 Critical Realism

Critical realism was brought into social science as an ontological intervention to both methods privileging discourses and those privileging the empirical. It critiques postmodern discursive approaches for collapsing the epistemological with the ontological, and it critiqued positivism for collapsing the empirical with the ontological. Reasserting the ontological was to serve as a reminder that all knowledge is mediated through the concepts available to us—there is no unmediated access and all knowledge claims are partial, positional and fallible.

Critical realism argues that social reality is stratified and marked by emergence, rather than flat and construed by discourses or constituted by empirics. The CR social world contains three interlocked strata: real, actual, and empirical. The real refers to the internal structure of phenomena, namely their properties and what powers and vulnerabilities develop from these (Sayer, 2000: 10-11). The layer of the actual refers to the events or conditions that occur (whether one is aware of them or not such as legislation, asset bubbles, and election results) that manifest out of what happens when phenomena come together given the properties and related capacities of those phenomena. The empirical level refers to the observations and experiences of actors and their technological extensions. Social reality is not static given that it is full of phenomena capable of interacting in ways that produce events and conditions in the actual strata, with varying degrees of expanse, durability, and visibility in the empirical strata. While the level of the empirical is tied to the criterion of perceptibility (directly or via the accounts of another), the level of the real is tied to the causal criterion. Addressing the causal criterion requires answering the question: what likely exists in order for X to appear in this manner, what is helping to produce, manifest, or enable an event such as a household moving out of poverty? Answers to this question can contain readily empirical phenomena (more cash or a new job), events (increased FDI in the petty manufacturing sector) and non-empirical phenomena (shift in dominant ideology from neoliberalism to well-being, changes in gender norms enabling the wife to more easily work outside the home). Unlike positivism, causes are not based on regularity of occurrence or correlations, but are about first what a thing (person, object, law, relationship, or organisation) can do given its properties and related

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8 Most notably by Andrew Sayer, Margaret Archer, Dave Elder-Vaas, and Kevin Cox
powers and vulnerabilities, and secondly about what events, conditions, or forms are actually manifesting in a particular place and time. The first is an ontological or conceptual question the second is an interpretive question focusing on what is it about this thing or set of things in a particular context and in a particular arrangement that tends to bring about a particular result or condition. Resultant properties, common in empiricist works, come from the aggregation of properties, for example tallying up a household’s assets. Emergent properties depend on the relationships between properties and between different things, for example the interplay between a household’s assets, their motivations, citizenship entitlements, and how other phenomena present are strengthening, weakening, or altering these. This thesis leverages a CR method for conceptualisation, and it is this aspect of CR that I now turn.

**Things, Properties, Powers and Susceptibilities**

Any ‘thing’ that can affect behaviour or influence something exists (Fleetwood, 2009) regardless if it is visible in the empirical strata. Things have properties. People have the properties of being warm-blooded, conscious, emotional, habitual, and of occupying various social roles. A landlord has the additional properties of holding private property and the ability to rent or lease it. Money has the properties of a being a unit of exchange, a holder of value and an accumulator of value. The properties that make up a thing can instantiate certain powers (what a thing does or could do, thus functionings in Sen’s (1999) framework); people can think, labour, lie and so on. Things also have susceptibilities or the ability to be influenced in certain ways by certain things in certain contexts. People are susceptible to shaming, desire, education, social conditioning and so on. Money’s powers are susceptible to inflation, deflation, and lack of trust in its backers (banks and states). Powers and susceptibilities arising out of properties can be actual or latent. People can be violent, but for many this capacity is normally dormant. What powers and susceptibilities are active or dormant is related both to some thing’s internal composition and to those of externally linked phenomena—other things present in a particular situation that support or motivate the actualisation and duration of powers, or conversely constrain or stifle powers from becoming active and effective.

**Relations**

The structure of some ‘thing,’ refers to its properties and the necessary internal relationships between them that make a thing what it is rather than something else. During the conceptualisation phases of research, CR recommends structural analysis to separate contingency from necessity. This highlights the order of CR’s interests (1) things (what are they; what can they do) and then (2) events and material conditions (what actually manifests, where, and how). This method of conceptualisation and analysis helps to better explain why things where not otherwise, as well as how they could be different. Conceptualisation through structural analysis requires separating substantive relations from formal relations and then necessary from contingent relations and then symmetrical from asymmetrical. Let’s take the example of clientelism and subject it to Sayer’s (1992) questions for uncovering structure: what
does the condition of clientelism in this context presuppose? Can it exist on its own? What cannot be removed without clientelism becoming something else? What is it about clientelism that contributes to inequality and uneven development? Clientelism presupposes clients, patrons and uneven exchange. We would expect to find a context of unsettled or negotiable citizenship rights, inequalities in resource access, and norms rationalising this activity. You cannot have clientelism without clients or patrons and the relation between them. Additionally, it seems that if there was nothing to be gained (resources) via this relationship that it would become extinct. Clientelism without uneven power-relations makes little sense; it is in the vested interests of patrons to maintain certain levels of inequality, particularly where access to basic needs is concerned. Relatedly, resources are not likely to be distributed in a needs based way, so it is not surprising that areas with high rates of clientelism are likely to be unevenly developed. Regarding formal vs. substantive relations, the substantive and necessary relationship is between clients and patrons. We could find that most patrons in a city are between 40 and 50 years old, this would be a formal relationship that has nothing to do with the components and organisation of clientelism. The relationship between resources and clientelism is asymmetrical for resources would continue to exist if clientelism ceases, but not the other way around. The relations between clientelism and the external context are contingent. Operating in circumstances of power imbalances and unsettled citizenship rights enable clientelism to continue contingently. This exercise shows that if we focus on occurrences of clientelism we may miss the differences between necessary and contingent relations, or we may confuse one of its components (patrons, clients, unequal exchange) for the whole.

**Processes**

Whether and how powers or susceptibilities are actualised and deployed is contingent, depending on the external relations with other objects’ powers and susceptibilities. Powers and susceptibilities exist in different states ranging from dormant to actualised with some reaching realisation with empirical dimensions. They can act counterfactually or transfactually (Fleetwood, 2009). The events or conditions that properties of a thing could instantiate may never be instantiated—powers and susceptibilities can remain unactualised and thus unrealised but still real. A conjuncture or configuration is acting counterfactually when something did not happen that could have given the properties of the thing(s) conjoining or being configured. Transfactual refers to a situation when powers or susceptibilities have been actualised, but the expected consequences have (as-yet) not materialised. This points to possible sources of mediation, suppression, or resistance that may be unobservable at the empirical level. For example, consider instantiated caste norms (those that are acted in accordance with by others) that are not having an appreciable effect on everyone. This is a transfactual condition that does not mean that caste norms have no powers or do not exist because some do not exhibit their influence as expected. The closer the powers of a things internal and external realising conditions are to being met the more likely its capacities are likely to manifest. For example, at birth humans have the latent capacity to speak, but initially this power is dormant because the basic internal
physiological conditions have not been satisfied. Eventually the internal conditions are satisfied and this power is able to be actualised, but this is not enough. If the external necessary conditions are not satisfied (being regularly exposed to language and having loving caregivers) then the event of a toddler starting to speak language can be delayed and their future cognitive development impacted.

Understanding a process—understood in CR as the relation between transfactually and counterfactually acting powers—susceptibilities and their consequences requires (1) thorough conceptualisations of things’ properties and the relations between them which allow for its powers and susceptibilities to exist, and (2) identifying what external enabling conditions seem necessary to bring about a particular event or condition, while keeping in mind that events and effects ride also on the tendencies of other things they are in contact with in their environment—things that can obstruct, overrule, amend, or strengthen tendencies:

There is therefore a double contingency involved in the movement from causal powers to susceptibilities to effects. Causation is unlikely to be linear. We should expect agents NOT to be masters of their own plans. Voluntaristic accounts of social construction are implausible: what is constructed is always likely to diverge from what was intended, so it is unsurprising that agents are not masters of their own plans. [...] A key notion of critical realism is that systems are open—arrangements are likely to unravel, unless steps are taken [i.e., institutions and other borders or mediations put in place] to keep them from doing so. And much of the activity of agents (individual or organisational), is taken up with struggling to keep things which are favourable to them at least roughly intact in the face of internal and external change (Sayer, 2004: 265).

2.2 Critical Realist Conceptualisation

Critical realist social science is concerned with conceptualisation and causation. It is a relational method as its focus is not on unidirectional impacts of substantive or discrete variables. For example, I try not to treat mediators or mediation as a fixed role, practice, or institution (i.e. as an independent variable) to see how it impacts outcomes in access to basic services. Mediators, mediation, and the mediated do not travel across space (social and material) unaffected. Their powers and susceptibilities can take different forms and develop different magnitudes. Mediation could be a derivative of the separation between political society and civil society as described by Chatterjee. It could be transformative, if it is altering social-spatial relations, or it could be found to be constitutive if it is playing a role in the production of new types of spaces, practices, or citizenship. These different roles are possible because of what Sayer (ibid.) refers to as ‘double-contingency’. Properties of mediation in political society are one part of a contingent field or configuration that shape practices, processes, events, and conditions in different urban formations. This means that differential citizenship, forms of occupancy, and locality development in KD and MB are over determined by many interlinking and parallel causes and contingencies. The goal of this thesis is to explore the causes and contingencies of urban formations
related to political society actors and institutions. To this end the process of describing objects of inquiry in terms of properties, potential capacities⁹ and actual capacities is used throughout. Analytically this type of explication is used to explore under what circumstances does a potential capacity become active, and under what knot of circumstances (conditions, relations, practices) does it seem to produce some effect. For example, when does mediation seem to result in strengthening an urban formations occupancy security, and when does it seem to undermine it?

I refer to the different areas researched in these two cities as urban formations rather than as settlements. Most areas in most cities these days are anything but settled in terms of their civic, political and spatial status being fixed. Many processes, some more visible than others, reach these formations and play a role in their constitution or development such as, but not limited to: capital accumulation via urbanisation, industrialisation or deindustrialisation, state regulations, budgets, and projects, consumption patterns, different modalities of spatial production (unauthorised, encroachment, self-help, sub-divisions, gentrification), migration, changing demographics and labour markets. The ‘urban-ness’ of these former towns is relatively recent and their municipalities are still in their adolescence. The urban formations studied are in a relatively early phase of development. Except for one, they are not the result of some formal, inaugural event like the municipal charter, ratified development plan, or government scheme. They are a mix of various informal and quasi-formal processes and actors. While they are not settled, they do have sufficient coherence and duration to be seen as existing social-spatial phenomena—just not ones with internal structures and capacities that have been well documented in the literature. As you will see as you progress through the next chapters, my nascent understanding evolved bit by bit—the formation of my understanding of these formations was forming throughout. During my literature review and pilot studies, I categorised the selected electoral wards as being relatively deprived, average or relatively privileged in terms of socio-demographics and the status of locality development.¹⁰ This changed to slums, gaothans, median and middle-class areas, and then to the slum, gaothan, and standard typology of formations discussed in Chapter 8. My level of appreciation for the role political society plays in these formations also developed between the articles written in 2010 and those written in 2013 and 2014.

This begs the question: how did I know a type of urban formation when I entered one? Following Latham and Sassen (2005: 10-11) there needs to be a sufficiently coherent configuration of organisation (rules, roles, vested interests, opportunity costs), of interaction (power-relations and coordination), of space (built environment) and shared meaning (people see this space as a place). Much work has established the connection between settlement type and quality of housing and basic services, and settlement type and how claims are made and to whom they are made (Harriss, 2007; ¹⁰ This was done in part by utilizing deprivation maps produced by Karin Pleffer (see Baud et al., 2008 for details of this process).
The importance of local leaders, landlords, municipal councillors (MCs) and political parties in drawing, co-opting, or blocking resources and interventions from entering their turf has been fairly well established (Hansen and Stepput, 2001; van Dijk, 2006; de Wit, 2010; Berenschot, 2009; Witsoe, 2011). Thus this analysis began with selecting locations diverse in terms of locality development, socio-demographics of residents, and the presumed legal status of residents. The official political and administrative boundary of each locality was the electoral ward boundary (formal jurisdiction of the elected MC)—another factor establishing coherence. Both those inside and outside these locations connect these places with shared patterns of behaviour, and they are sources of identification from within and without. Initial field visits observed indications of institutions and practices that cohere around those living within these wards. They exhibited sufficient organisational, spatial, material, practical, and imagined coherence to be considered social-spatial formations. Figure 2, at the end of this chapter, includes maps of the cities and the locations of the 11 cases.

2.3 Research Design

I spent a total of 13 months engaged in fieldwork over a two and half year period between January 2009 and June 2011. Seven months were focused on Kalyan-Dombivli, four months on Mira-Bhayandar, and two months were spent interviewing people in Mumbai, Thane, and Delhi from various state and parastatal agencies.

Exploring and Gaining Access within Subaltern Cities

Besides a few master student projects, no academic work in English was found on these two cities. In this way, they are already subaltern because they represent gaps in our archival, codified, and peer-reviewed knowledge on Indian cities (pace Spivak, 1998). This situation required an initial phase of exploration using a flexible and opportunistic qualitative research approach. First there was a trust-building phase with informal discussions and exploratory site visits with actors usually associated with political society, such as MCs, political party offices and workers, lower level bureaucrats, and municipal engineers and staff. Before this process began, my research assistant introduced me to the chief municipal commissioner, the mayor and the heads of opposition parties. During these initial exchanges we would explain my research in terms of wanting to understand how the municipality manages issues of increasing demand, limited resources and state policies that often do not match up well with circumstances on the ground. Basically, how do their cities work in practice to provide basic infrastructure and services to a growing and diverse population was the topic. I normally answered more questions than I asked in this initial phase, and a few times meetings ended with me having my picture taken for local newspapers. Luckily everyone gave their verbal permission and the municipal commissioners of both cities signed a letter saying that they were aware of our research, and that their subordinates should help us to complete our study. These letters proved helpful in making respondents and interlocutors feel at ease given that I was the first foreign
researcher they had met; thus there were concerns about why I was coming to them and uncertainty regarding how this interaction should play-out. Whenever possible during these first discussions we tried to manage a tour of their area of operation in the city. This proved instrumental for picking up on less formalised aspects of occupancy and locality development. In this manner we were also able to see who came up to actors, how and for what. What these actors tended to point out in these tours, and to whom or what they placed responsibility became analytically useful as the research progressed. These site tours were a catalyst for discussions on the practices and power-relations in different formations. These tours also gave residents and local notables a chance to see us with municipal actors and politicians, and to hear about my research. Often people would ask to talk to us later over tea or lunch on our own. These unplanned and largely unstructured exchanges proved valuable for getting a feel for the different areas of the city. When tours were not applicable or possible, we tried to stay by the respondent as long as possible. We did not mind at all when visits or phone calls demanded their time and attention. Many times we were not asked to leave; this gave us opportunities to observe practices and interactions in real time. Key informants emerged in this phase and came in two types: people very knowledgeable or active in local politics that we sought ought, and key informants who sought us out. Those who sought us out were either curious about us, interested in venting their frustrations, or gatekeepers. Access of any kind needs to be utilised and we met regularly with key informants to discuss what general findings were emerging to note their reactions and advice—keeping in mind possible biases. There were three assistant municipal commissioners, six MCs, three party workers, one MLA, two local builders, two heads of self-help groups, one slum-lord, two real estate brokers, and one goonda\textsuperscript{11} who became key informants. This variety also helped to offset biases. Being a novelty in the city and endeavouring to be as social as possible, we often accepted invitations for lunch or dinner and to participate in cultural activities, which allowed us to capture some of everyday life via participant observation.

\textit{Case Studies and Institutional Ethnography}

Given the lack of prior academic work in these cities, the necessity to account for as many contextual factors as possible, the prevalence of informality, and because statistical analysis was not a priority, case-studies were carried out in 11 electoral wards. Institutional ethnography focuses on the actualities of people’s experiences and practices related to specific issues and problems (see Smith, 2005). Actors are seen as practitioners who know how to do things related to their everyday lives. What people do and how they experience what happens is the first step. Next, one looks for what people are doing, and how they experience the effects of practices and social relations stemming from multiple sites. The goal is to have a better idea, for example,

\textsuperscript{11} Local strongman, mafia type.
of how the actions and regular experiences of a MC are connected to other actors and contexts, many of which the councillor is likely unaware:

Our everyday worlds are not self-contained, although we do have intimate knowledge of them. They are coordinated with unknown others who are acting elsewhere and at other times. This is the problematic of institutional ethnography (Smith, 2002: 18).

The focus of my interaction and observation within electoral wards was on what people did when dealing with issues regarding locality development and occupancy. By prompting people to recount what they did, in particular where, with who and why, the social organisation and power structures of these activities began to take shape. As my understanding of this organisation evolved, the questions I asked and what I focused on observationally shifted accordingly. Data was collected via observation, interviews, semi-structured informal discussions, and focus group discussions. From this data composite standpoints were abstracted in terms of how these processes are experienced and engaged by different actors, such as: resident standpoint, administrative standpoint, landlord standpoint, builder standpoint. Lastly, important physical sites where coordination related to specific issues tend to cluster were discerned. For these cases, the MC's office was one such site.

Weekly visits were made to the electoral wards. We spent the most time with MCs, party workers, residents who befriended us and other key informants. Whenever possible we devised reasons for walking around the ward. We always stopped by the MC's local office first before going about our business out of respect, and because these are hubs of coordination. Often these courtesy calls stretched out for 2 hours giving us regular opportunities for observation and for impromptu discussions with a variety of actors. Initially every MC in our sample and their top party-worker were given the same interview. Subsequent discussions developed organically. The goal was to understand processes and to discern key actors and conditions, rather than asking similar actors the same questions.

Once it seemed that the spatial-political organisation of occupancy and locality development within these formations had been grasped. I prepared talking points to go over with pertinent external officials and actors. Semi-structured interviews were carried out with officials at the Mumbai Metropolitan Regional Development Authority, the Directorate of Municipal Affairs, the Ministry of Urban Poverty and Housing, two lawyers and two plaintiffs in Public Interest Litigations (PILs) related to unauthorised construction in these cities, three officials of housing society federations/associations, two real estate developers, and the first chief municipal commissioner of Mira-Bhayandar. We also collected three years of local newspaper archives from municipal public relations officers, and I searched several online archives of English language newspapers looking for articles referencing key themes of this study.
The last phase of research included a household survey administered to 550 households, 50 from each ward in our sample. The surveys were inputted into SPSS and analysed using cross tabs to compare responses within and between formations.

**Data Analysis and Interpretation**

During lunch and at the end of the day Nutan and I compared notes and interpretations of the days’ events. I would first write these in my field journal, and then type them up more formally in the evening. Process diagrams were used and revised throughout based on different standpoints. Almost every weekend I combined and refined my daily field notes to send them to my supervisors for feedback. All my primary and secondary data were inputted into NiVivo for more systematic coding and analysis. PDF files can be uploaded and coded in this program; this allowed me to incorporate scholarly literature and keep an on-going dialogue with relevant debates and established conceptualisations. Original, secondary and bibliographical data sources were colour coded differently.

The database was approached both deductively and inductively via coding, abstraction, and dimensionalisation. Data was coded by attaching a label to sections of text in terms of what phenomena it is thought to belong, represent or be an instance of. Most of my codes were related to actors/roles, practices, rationale or motivations, and the direct and indirect links between these to discern how occupancy and locality development are organised. This process is the beginning of generating meaning and locating patterns in data. It also allows one to separate out extraneous details and to retool your data collection accordingly. Abstraction is where you combine codes in terms of shared properties. For example, I combined: fixer, broker, gatekeeper, middleman, party-worker, and tout under ‘mediators’ and these practices under ‘mediating’. Going forward, I looked for incidents where these came up to see differences and similarities. This process offered directionality in terms of focusing on how mediation and mediators changed or not in the formations being studied. This comparative process brought out the dimensionality of ‘mediators’ and ‘mediating’ in terms of their properties and capacities. It was this process that brought out the typology of slum, gaothan and standard formations as an important contextual factor shaping who mediates with whom, how, and for what. Coding, abstraction, comparison and dimensionalisation are iterative processes. The data record needs to be re-read every time a new abstraction or dimensionality emerges, which can of course cause previous codes to be deleted, recoded, or to be added or removed from abstractions. For example, a year after my fieldwork ended, I realised that mediating needed to be separated into mediating and intermediating.

Moving from analytical work to interpretation requires integration, were I worked to flesh out if and how my conceptualisations (abstractions) were co-productive of the uneven development between the different types of urban formations. This was done by looking for which actors, roles, practices, relationships and situations tend to
conjoin or form governing networks or configurations (however loosely) within these formations, and between these formations and the municipality.

**Ethical Considerations**

Some of what was observed and shared is technically illegal, and for some ethically problematic. This type of information was shared willingly, without any direct solicitation. However, when key informants began to see Nutan and myself as people who understood ‘how things really work,’ this prompted even greater sharing and elaboration. A few slum and gaothan residences, who became worried that they had spoken too freely, asked specifically that I their names not be mentioned. This was, of course, complied with.

Everyone knew that I was doing research for my PhD, and that I was not working for the government or for the press. I made it regularly clear that I was not a route for funding or for pressuring government actors and agencies. To give back, three workshops were organised, one targeting MCs, one targeting leaders of women’s self-help groups, and one targeting kids. They were on how one could use tools available for free on the internet to collect and analyse information on your localities and included an overview of municipal governance. A report based on my thesis will be sent to respondents and others who expressed interest.

**Limitations**

More than the methods chosen to collect data and the instruments we use to process data, the researcher/writer—what they look for and how, their predispositions for certain theories and arguments, and the composition of their sociological and geographical imagination—is the centre of gravity. By the end of data collection and analysis, there are many colours available on our palette and the canvas has certain parameters, so to speak, but how we put it all together is still significantly a creative process. This creative process is rooted in scholarly literature, ethnographic and survey data, and systematic analysis with the purpose of providing insights into actual situations, but remains, nonetheless, a product of my observations, inclinations, choices, and interpretations. So the main limitations of this study must therefore lie with me.

I do not speak Marathi or Hindi and almost always worked with my research assistant Nutan Shivtare. Even when English was not an issue, I worked with Nutan to give people a choice and because four eyes are better than two. Nutan has a MSW and a background in slum advocacy. She also worked with me during my fieldwork in Mumbai for my master’s thesis, and we have remained friends since. In the mornings we discussed our schedule and strategy for the day to make sure we understood the ‘why’ behind the questions being asked and the people we were tracking down, and to share our thoughts and concerns. This allowed us to be on the same page and reduced what can get lost in translation in the field.
Validity issues with government data, particularly where slums and unauthorised development are concerned, are another limitation. Lack of computerisation, non-compliance with protocols, and issues of politicisation figure in here, such as practices of paying people to fill in forms rather than paying people to carry out surveys (to save money and/or shape results) and the reliance of administrators on the local knowledge of politicians and other local leaders. Ideas of risk and reward figure in to how government agencies define and collect data on slums, inequality, and unauthorised development. This was offset by triangulation with other data sources when available.
Figure 2: Mira-Bhayandar and Kalyan-Dombivli Maps, Boundaries and Cases (Source: Author used Scribblemaps.com)
CHAPTER 3: KALYAN-DOMBIVLI & MIRA-BHAYANDAR

Chapter 1 reviewed explanations for why the configuration of decentralisation, liberalisation, and democratisation and economic growth did not deliver on the potential to enable significant reductions in urban inequalities and poverty. If these powers were not actualised towards these ends, this poses a counterfactual problem of capacities remaining dormant. If forms of decentralisation, liberalisation and democratisation were actualised, but are not resulting in what they could, given their capacities, this becomes a transfactual situation. Both types of conditions direct us to look for what intervening phenomena are at work. This chapter has two purposes. The first is to give a focused sketch of the structure and potential capacities of formal urban governance in Maharashtra, and to discuss the intervening factors resulting in counterfactual and/or transfactual situations. Part two presents development profiles of the urban formations studied for descriptive purposes. Part three compares socio-economic profiles of residents and their perceptions on inequality in the city to demonstrate how these cases are in some ways counterfactual in relation to received knowledge from previous social analyses on urban inequalities.

3.1 Profiles of Kalyan-Dombivli and Mira-Bhayandar

Kalyan-Dombivli (KD) is part of the Mumbai Metropolitan Region. As of the 2011 census, it is the 28th largest city in India with a population of 1,246,381. Kalyan was once an active port along with ferry building, sand dredging, agricultural, smuggling and fishing industries. The Agris and Kolis castes (now both scheduled castes) were the majority and there was a sizeable Muslim minority that settled here after the partition. Given the fishing livelihoods of the Kolis, they never acquired much land and do not benefit from the urbanisation of KD (like the landholding Agris agricultural caste) and their livelihood space has shrunk. Since the late 1970s Kalyan has attracted poorer migrants from Utter Pradesh and Bihar and ‘business types’ from Gujarat. Dombivli is newer and most of its inhabitants are middle-class Brahmins who sold their flats and moved from Mumbai when real estate values spiked. Dombivli is spoken locally as being the more modern, middle-classed, and cultured of the two. Most of the landowners remain Agris, but most of the inhabitants of Dombivli are not. In order to secure their political power, many Agris encouraged other Agris from rural Maharashtra to settle in slums and gaothans in KD to procure the votes they need to dominate the municipality and ward offices. Most of the employed in Dombivli commute to Mumbai whereas a significant portion of Kalyan’s population works locally in informal sectors. However, more middle and elite class residential and consumption areas are starting to come up in Kalyan in response to changes made to the development codes. Large to small scale real estate developments and speculation increased dramatically over the last 15 years. The City Development Plan (KDMC, 2007) labels 30 percent of the population as working-class—which they use to cover those who report having full-time work. Forty-three
percent are said to be living in ‘slum-like’ conditions (KDMC, 2007), and there are 24 gaothans.

Mira-Bhayandar, currently the 61st largest city in India, changed from a rural area on the edge of Mumbai to a city with over 800,000 inhabitants over the last 20 years. Originally, agricultural, fishing, saltpan, and smuggling activities prevailed here before the development of townships, and the creation of the municipality (along with increasing costs of living in Mumbai) caused its population to surge. Agris and the original Christian settlers own or control most of the land. One Christian family, led by MLA Barbosa, is widely believed to enjoy de facto control over the local state. Real estate development and associated sectors are the fastest growing sector in MB. While most ‘middle-class’ residents work in Mumbai or own businesses in town, economically weaker sections cater to the rest in various micro and owner operated enterprises/services, or they work in the areas remaining saltpan operations. Approximately 28 percent of MB lives in ‘slum-like’ conditions (MB, 2008), and their development plan notes 15 gaothans.

Prior to 1987 the Mira Road area was mostly marshy land filled with salt water, with a few tiled and asbestos sheds and makeshift offices for selling salt. Electricity connections, sewerage, phones and piped water were not available. In 1987 the Shanti Nagar Township, the first of four large and planned residential townships (650 ground plus four buildings in total) that transformed this area, broke ground, even though this area was still rural in every dimension. Given the total lack of above and below ground infrastructure and their relationship with the now MLA Barbosa (who was at that time president of the panchayat), Shanti Star Builders only paid 50 rupees per square foot. Another reason for the low price was that some of the buildings were to be reserved for economically weaker sections. In practice, this did not happen. From when the first residents took possession in 1987 until the 12th sector completed in 2007, Shanti Star Builders organised all basic services. In 1991 the construction of the main water lines were sanctioned, and since then builders continue to build on every piece of land they can.

A complex political and administrative geography criss-crosses MB and KD. Often the ruling party at the ward-level differs from those in power at the city, state and central level. Additionally, there are many central, state, and parastatal agencies that can intervene—especially where land development and other high profile and big-ticket policies are concerned. Power struggles and knowledge gaps between and within the political and bureaucratic wings of the different tiers of government come at the expense of professional and coordinated governance. The big picture of ‘the city’ or ‘the region’ or development in general, are often obscured by parochial politics. Importantly, parochial politics and uncoordinated planning and administration can block or slow down the inequality reducing capacities of formal institutional reforms.
Both cities’ City Development Plans state the desire to become hi-tech and slum-free cities to attract knowledge-based and tourism related industries. This desire cannot be taken for granted as reflecting the actual interests of the political and economic powers in these cities. These reports (and other reports required to access central or international development funds) are put together either by urban infrastructure management and consultancy firms, or by real estate development consultancies comprised mainly of architects, planners, and engineers. These firms know the rhetoric funding authorities and agencies want to hear, and they experience most city officials as only being interested in accessing funds; they do not take this as a capacity building or a knowledge generating activity. Unsurprisingly, these consultancies are often part of larger consortiums that include real estate development firms. This points towards issues of capacity and motivations of local governance actors limiting efficacy of these reforms.

3.2 Urbanisation, Decentralisation and Municipalisation

Ambiguity marks the formal process for constituting a municipality, and in law, it is completely state driven. According to the Bombay Provincial Municipal Corporations Act, the state can, ‘from time to time’ constitute an area as a city by an order recorded in the Official Gazette, and they can ‘from time to time’ change the borders of the city (Section 2). The only specified criterion is that an area notified as a city cannot have a population less than 15,000. Other issues, such as the local economic structure and the local capacity for greater self-governance may also be considered (Aijaz, 2008). When an area becomes part of a municipality all previous appointments, notifications, notices, taxes, orders, schemes, licenses, permissions, rules, bye-laws shall stand superseded (Section 3A). The state’s intention to incorporate areas within a municipality or combine municipalities is announced in the Gazette, posted in conspicuous areas, and appears in at least one local language newspaper. Already existing governing bodies can vote on whether they want to be included or combined. These votes and objections are first submitted to the Collector for villages and to the Directorate of Municipal Administration for municipal councils, and then forwarded to the Department of Urban Development. These motions and objections are to be taken under advisement, but are not formally binding on the state, who adjudicates

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13 The Government of Maharashtra through the Directorate of Municipal Administration supervises the functioning of the municipalities. The Directorate has the responsibility to supervise the function of the municipalities, work out suitable human resource policies, exercise disciplinary control over the staff of municipalities, monitor the tax collection of ULBs (urban local bodies), lay down policies for transparency in expenditures, hear appeals against the decisions of municipalities, release the Government transfers to the municipalities and municipal councils, as well as implement schemes like SJSRY (for urban poverty alleviation), and ratify the Below Poverty Line lists. The Directorate also collects statistics from ULBs and helps in the preparation of municipal statistics. The Directorate may also inspect municipalities, interacts with both elected representatives and the employees to find out both genuine and specific problems of urban administration and urban municipal services and work out the solutions for those problems.
itself as to the merit of these objections. The various transitions including: appointing officials, hiring staff, selection of interim municipal councillor's (MCs), how to incorporate existing structures and actors—basically the transfer and absorption of authority—are to be managed by the state via the Directorate of Municipal Administration.

Within two years of municipal incorporation the municipality should develop byelaws and submit them to the state for approval. Bye-laws become important mechanisms for formally allowing some flexibility in how norms and protocols of municipal administration are operationalised. Regarding directing the future development of the city, municipalities should prepare, in cooperation with district and regional planning authorities, a city development plan that reserves plots for public amenities and infrastructure development, and zones for industrial, commercial, and residential use. Once ratified by the Government of Maharashtra (GoM), this plan differentiates between authorised, non-formal and unauthorised sections of the city, plots, individual buildings, and land uses. It could be argued that the more the municipality succeeds in matching reality to this map, the stronger the rule of the municipality in areas of land management has become. To this end, municipalities are empowered to both authorise new constructions (or additions) with an important criteria being infrastructure and service feasibility, and they can penalise, stop, and remove unauthorised development (MRTP, sections 52, 53, 54).

For converting land plots and existing developments that are not up to code, obsolete, or are in some other way not suitable for the requirements of producing serviced urban land, two mechanisms are available to municipalities: state mandated land acquisition or market-based land acquisition. Land acquisition requires buying the land needed for road widening, trunk infrastructure, or other public amenities. This can be ordered by the state, in which case the landowner must give up the land and accept the price offered by the government. Land acquisition can also be privately negotiated with landowners. The costs of either route are prohibitive for the municipality, and most landowners think they will get more by keeping their plots in their entirety and selling or leasing them later when land or housing prices go up. To thwart land acquisition, landowners often mobilise political influence and the courts to drag it out long enough for the municipality to give up. In order to produce ‘serviceable urban land’ many plots need to be reconstituted as their size, borders and discontinuities are not conducive to above and below ground urban infrastructures (India Infrastructure Report, 2008). Town planning schemes allow the municipality to make changes to plot sizes and build amenities and trunk infrastructure without taking ownership. The owners who pooled their land receive better-serviced areas that will increase their use value and exchange-value, thereby offsetting the percentage of land they gave up (usually around 20 percent) (ibid.) From beginning to end, this is a long deliberative and fairly bureaucratic process with many stakeholders. However, areas taken up in town planning schemes are some of the best functioning urban areas (Gurumukhi, 2003). Nonetheless town-planning schemes have been practically abandoned since the early 1990s in Maharashtra, because they often take more than
10 years to complete due to holdouts and tenure disputes (Mumbai Metropolitan Regional Plan, 1994: 225). A retired city planner I spoke with argued that while the procedure was complex that the real reasons this approach was dropped was that those who benefit from the status quo opposed it because well functioning areas cut into 'vote-bank politics' and informal markets of services and housing. In practice many years after municipal incorporation urban development remains largely laissez-faire:

Sometimes, a minimal attempt is made to plan or regulate the development [by road networks] or to levy charges. Once an area is built up and if the residents are able to bring sufficient political pressure to bear on the administration, rudimentary infrastructure facilities such as streets, water supply and drainage are provided to the extent that it is physically possible. Letting things be is easy, it requires little foresight and effort on the part of public authorities (India Infrastructure Report, 2008: 191).

Both MD and KD easily fall under the category of laissez-faire urban development with piecemeal intermittent periods of planned development. Figure 3\(^4\) is of Bhayandar. Starting at the left is a slum, and then there is a planned development. The area on the right is unauthorised apartment blocks, and the bottom area is comprised of chawls in a gaothan. Individual adjacent plots can be very different in

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\(^4\) Source: Google Earth, Image date: 16-12-2013, 19°18'48.50" N 72°51'10.44" E
terms of housing (i.e., hut, chawl, apartment block) and in terms of the space between buildings for people, sidewalks, gutters and other above and below ground amenities.

Both these cities reached populations over 500,000 by the time Municipal Corporations were formed (MB in 2001 and KD in 1983). Both de jure and de facto landowners and builders, and their political and administrative ties, steered development prior to municipalisation. These municipalities came on-line in territories dominated by informal development and an infrastructural and basic service hodgepodge (see figure 4). The powers and mechanisms at their disposal for reforming what exists and regulating future development tend to be underfunded, marked by bureaucratic ambiguity, vulnerable to court actions that can last years, and easily thwarted by entrenched interests and compromises worked out with state level actors in the form of regularisation and exemptions both formal and informal (cf. Sivam, 2002). This set of interrelated factors also contributes to the transfactual status of urban governance.

Municipalisation did not change their interests dominating development, however it makes regular negotiations with municipal officials and staff necessary as intentional and default coordination needs tending to and conflicts do arise. Builder and landowner driven development results in an uncoordinated, ad hoc, plot-by-plot or project-by-project form of “creeping urbanisation” (India Infrastructure Report, 2009: 191). This creates a mishmash of infrastructures and suboptimal levels of basic service provision. Plot reconstitution and development that takes into account above and below ground infrastructure within plots and between them, not to mention at a locality or zonal level, are the exception. MCs are of the opinion that the amount of resources put into development varies along with the risks associated with different types of land. Unauthorised or unregulated development on government land are slum-like because de facto landlords, and tenants do not invest resources beyond what is necessary because eviction and/or demolition are possibilities. Development on private land that has been reserved in some plan for a ‘public purpose’ or that is vulnerable to government acquisition for other reasons, tends to be in a chawl type set-up or very basic apartment blocks accompanied by rudimentary infrastructure development, whereas development on private land not susceptible to state acquisition tends to invest more in infrastructure and to target more middle-class buyers. Another factor lowering the incentives for landowners to develop (or to allow the government to develop) more optimal infrastructure is the ever-growing demand for urban land. When location is the main attribute, the degree the land is already serviced or serviceable does not affect the price significantly during speculative periods. The pre-existing conditions of plots and development not conducive to producing serviced urban land needs to be taken into consideration when assessing the progress these municipalities have made on reaching basic services and public works benchmarks.
Figure 4: Mismatch of Serviced & Serviceable Land
While there has been disappointing progress in terms of acquiring land necessary to bring areas in line with development plans and plot reconstitution, larger and more profitable private developments acquire land more successfully. These projects were designed with infrastructure needs in mind, at least within the borders of these developments. However, given that the municipal system they are to be eventually hooked up to, along with adjoining areas, are plagued by decades of laissez-faire development, where coordinated infrastructure and services were afterthoughts left to local government to sort out, the knock-off effects of laissez-faire development, over time, negatively affect developments, like Shanti Nagar, when they become dependent on municipal provision. In many areas you end up with nice tall buildings surrounded by low-grade infrastructure and poor services (cf. Nambiar, 2011). Housing complexes with residents willing to pay for groundskeepers manage to maintain their internal areas, but given the properties of the external system this requires consistent efforts. In many complexes or colonies, over time, the internal shared areas deteriorate as well. Figure 5 shows the skyline of Khadakpada, an area in Kalyan (West) that experienced many residential real estate developments over the last 15 years. However, as we can see from the next two photos, at the street level, amenities and plot issues remain.

Municipal formation, like state formation takes time. It is not conflict free, nor mainly an administrative exercise. This takes on multiple dimensions in India when state governments sway between being indifferent to the needs of residents in urbanising areas, to being very interested in various development projects. Whereas the discussion about the need of self-government institutions in villages began prior to independence, the need for these institutions in urban areas has not been taken up as a core political project of political parties, voters, social movements, or a consortium of civil society organisations and NGOs (Ramanathan, 2007). Every Financial Commission Report (and contributions made to the report by the Ministry of Urban Development and the Ministry of Urban Housing and Poverty Alleviation) since the early 1990s offers a long list of the aspects and spirit of the 74th Amendment (and consequent state legislation) yet to materialise or that only exist on paper (eg. Coelho et al., 2013). The percentage of expenditure tied to the local tier of government continues to go down (Oomen, 2010). In 2004 it was only 1.7 percent of GDP (Oomen, 2006). In the Ministry of Urban Development’s official memorandum to the Fourteenth Finance Commission, it states:

While there are no nationally-accepted expenditure norms for municipal services, and it would be extremely helpful if the 14th FC could prescribe one, a comparison of the current levels of spending (appropriately adjusted to identify the operations and maintenance component) with the operations and maintenance expenditure norms used by the High-Powered Expert Committee (HPEC) suggest that ULBs [Urban Local Bodies] in India spend about 27-28 percent of what they need for efficient delivery and management of services. This single fact speaks of the extremely poor conditions of services in India’s cities and towns (2014: 5).
Figure 5: Khadakpada, Kalyan (West)
The State of Maharashtra seems particularly hesitant to devolve powers and finances related to social, economic and spatial development and planning. Where State Financial Commissions and Metropolitan Development Committees have been established, they are non-functioning or their recommendations ignored (Srivastave, 2013). The jurisdictions and powers of state directed agencies like the Mumbai Metropolitan Development Authority and The Directorate of Municipal Administration have not been reduced or brought into productive or coherent arrangements with municipalities. In sum, financially municipalities remain dependent on the state and central governments.

Some argue that decentralisation tends to manifest in a weakened and compromised form because decentralisation is perceived as a Trojan horse for centralisation: a way for central government actors and large private firms to bypass state governments when shaping and benefiting from urbanisation.15 This concern finds echoes in academic circles. De Sousa Santos (2005) discusses how the term ‘good governance’ of which decentralisation is a central component, is a neo-liberal ideology of efficiency, rational (in terms of capitalist) administration, deliberative stakeholders, and public-private partnerships that effectively masks the class and social relations that are redistributing wealth, income and thus power via a networked and decentralised, but organised, system of political-economic power. Harvey (2009) argues that:

Decentralisation of political power becomes an important adjunct to neo-liberal projects. If municipalities, cities, regions function more or less as autonomous, self-contained, entrepreneurial units, then the intensification of competition between them encourages them to offer more and more in the way of a good business climate to capital in order to sustain or attract investments (66).

Harvey focuses on private capital. However, the more municipalities are perceived as autonomous units the more funds coming from the state and central government can be tied to their performance in implementing reforms and projects, rather than tied to the needs of the city and its residents. While on the surface it seems odd for anyone to be against good-governance and decentralisation, when one considers the extent to which these allow the state and federal government to treat unevenly developed areas the same in terms of grant and loan conditionalities tied to ‘good-governance’ reforms, and if one considers the extent to which these reforms reduce the reach of political institutions (parliaments, assemblies, and councils) and extend the powers of executive, administrative, and judicial actors and institutions (cf. Sassen, 2006), the reasons for formally or informally thwarting or weakening these processes become more clear and rational.

Presently, actual administrative decentralisation related to planning and development comes in the form of de-concentration, when the state government posts people at

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15 Interview, MLA Barbosa and MC Shaikh March 2011.
the municipal level, but retains authority, or in the form of delegation, when projects or schemes are transferred to municipalities to implement. Political decentralisation in Maharashtra has resulted in a MC being elected from every electoral ward to represent that ward at the city level. In MD there is one elected MC for every 8,575 residents, and in KD there is one for every 11,658 residents. Ward committees were constituted in 2006 in MB in different administrative wards (six in MB and seven in KD). MCs represent their area at the ward committee level and at the municipal level. The formal mandate of MCs does not include their participation in planning and development, nor their vote on these matters. The Ward Committee’s official powers and responsibilities are: to give administrative approval to the plans and estimates up to Rs. 5 lakhs\(^{16}\) for civic works in the area of the Ward Committee for which certain budget provisions are sanctioned by the Corporation, to consider proposals of expenditure on different Heads of Budget provisions relating to the Ward Committee, recommend the same and forward to Corporation, to dispose of expeditiously matters of citizens relating to water supply, drainage, cleanliness and storm water drains and other basic amenities and local civic amenities, the renaming of roads and crossroads, and to meet officially at least once a month. However, one administrative ward officer lamented that, “in practice we are no more than places for meetings, office space for councillors...citizens can register a complaint here, but we can’t do anything but pass it along to the municipal office...we have buildings, cars, computers, and support staff, but no authority.”

The official responsibilities of individual MCs are: to be the main interface between the local government and the public as such they are to be available to their constituency at least three hours per working day (MC 3, 2009, Personal Interview), tend to citizen complaints or issues with municipal services, and offer suggestions for proposals for: keeping and promoting area cleanliness, repairing of market yards (informal markets), for road repairs, for municipal buildings such as public schools (limited to infrastructure and uses, not towards quality and type of education), for improvements of gardens, for composting, for municipal health clinics and hospitals maintenance, for beautification of roads, and for repairing of foot paths and pathways. They are also required to attend Ward Committee meetings and the meetings of the other municipal committees they are assigned to, and to spend their councillor fund/electoral ward allotment of 20 lakhs in their electoral ward. While, the formal mandate of MCs does not include their participation (or vote) in urban planning or social and economic development schemes and projects, they can make a difference in the built environment through lobbying for municipal works which improve water, sanitation, drainage and other basic amenities, and through their use of their locality development fund.

Maharashtra also complied with reserving MC seats for women and scheduled castes. However, considering councillors and municipalities’ limited formal mandate, this too

\(^{16}\) 1 lakh = 100,000 rupees.
is unlikely to contribute to substantive changes in terms of reduced inequalities. These issues point to a counterfactual situation. The potential for municipalities to become autonomous or self-governing have not been actualised because the GoM does not want them to, and the Government of India (GoI) wants them to be autonomous from state level interference and open to theirs. Some state level government actors argue that most municipalities lack the capacity and culture to be given too much autonomy at this time, one put it as “their capacity for capacity building is low.” Issues of corruption, uncollected tax and arrears, and political capture are pointed out as reasons why the state needs to maintain authority over issues of planning and economic and social development. Here the reasons for self-governance not being achieved are put on the municipality and cast as a transfactual problem. It must be noted how what is inferred by notions that some areas lack the capacity for capacity building or certain other attributes considered requisite before more room for self-governance is bequeathed, rings more than a little familiar with civilizational rationalisations for colonialism and with modernisation rationalisations for imperialism.\textsuperscript{17} Research in Mumbai, Delhi, Calcutta and Chennai shows that middle-class organisations like Advanced Locality Management, Resident Welfare Associations, and Housing Society Federations are the groups who make use of the opportunities to shape city governance in their neighbourhoods opened up by decentralisation. This points to issues of elite-capture, and thus towards a counterfactual condition.

Table 1 covers the parts, powers and susceptibilities of municipal corporations in Maharashtra. The powers listed in the Twelfth Schedule of the 74th Constitutional Amendment became guidelines that state governments should devolve with apt consideration of the local context. The powers underlined in the table have not been decentralised to municipalities, beyond them being directed to implement certain phases of certain projects and schemes. The others have, but given the small percentage of revenues that the state gives to municipalities, and the limits put upon their own revenue generation, the state figures in here as well in terms of fiscal constraints. The italicised susceptibilities are considered as reasons for counterfactual aspects of urban governance (in terms of inequality reduction) in these cities, whereas the others are considered contributors to transfactual aspects of urban governance in these cities. In practice the line between these two is likely blurred, but for analytical reasons this distinction is important. Referring back to chapter 1, both the counterfactual and transfactual intervening factors can be logically associated to political society’s dimensions of mediation, occupancy urbanism, salutary neglect, and secret clauses. The degree they are actually seized upon, or in part constituted through political society, will be fleshed out in chapters 5 through 8.

\textsuperscript{17} See Chakrabarty 2000; Mehta 1999; and Mohanty 2006 on how the colonial and imperial are still present in postcolonial societies, states, and feminism.
### Table 1: Parts, Powers, and Susceptibilities of Municipal Corporations in Maharashtra

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<tr>
<td><strong>Staff</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td>Tax Evasion</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>High Arrears</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

This thesis explores forms of occupancy (informal claims or rights to residency) and locality development to better understand the contours of civic politics in these two cities. Regulating land development and residency are two issues municipalities can mobilise statutory authority over. Given that the Chief Municipal Commissioner is appointed by the GoM and is formally accountable to his superiors at the Department of Urban Development and the Chief Minister of Maharashtra, given that several other officers (transportation officer and chief engineer among others) must be approved by the GoM, and given that the Directorate of Municipal Administration is supposed to oversee and guide municipalities to ensure compliance with administrative processes and protocols, these actors figure in to transfactual issues in terms of principal-agent relations. No Advanced Locality Management Committees, Resident Welfare Associations or mobilised Housing Society Federations were found in these two cities, and during fieldwork there were no indications of ‘new middle-
class activism’ extending beyond their own residences. The capacity, interests, and level of politicisation or political capture of municipal officials, staff and departments is key given that political society capacities and actual functionings are directly related to these factors. Previous research has highlighted the significant role that MCs play in street-level governance, particularly in slums. They are a focal unit of analysis along with other, less written about, political operators in this thesis.

The roles that comprise political society in these cities: netas, babus, brokers, touts, fixers, real estate ‘agents’ have both positive and negative connotations. Big-men or netas are different from other local elites in that they mediate and intermediate between their localities and various state and capital agendas and projects. Neta can be a term of respect (big brother, leader, or guide) or it can be derogatory and refer to politicians and political operators who are self-serving and corrupt. Babu refers to mid to low level bureaucrats and also has a double meaning. It means sir, boss, or father, and also is used to refer to lazy, corrupt, and poorly educated bureaucrats who only do something if bribed or continuously pressured. Tout also refers to various activities. It can refer to a government clerk or ‘paper-pusher’ who is able to commodify the process of transferring a document to the next desk or office, and it can refer to those who trade in ‘inside’ information between the public works department and contractors, for example. Tout also refers to lower level ‘party workers’ who canvass for votes, information, and patronage opportunities. They also run errands and take care of small problems for netas and politicians. They often run money and information between different actors—reducing paper trails.

For a variety of reasons, such as: unresponsiveness, opaque and ever changing procedures, and document requirements, engaging the state at all levels is perceived as difficult and unpleasant. Additionally, brokering and fixing can a yield a decent income; something appealing given the tight job markets for adequately paid employment. Together these factors, along with the questionable legality of many people’s residences and certain livelihood practices, gives rise to brokers and fixers who, in part, live off rents generated from both helping people get access to government resources they qualify for (fixing) and access to resources they do not qualify for if qualification is in practice negotiable (brokerage). Various actors can fill these roles, and actors can take on more than one. They are fairly ubiquitous, with the highest traffic being at local party offices, MC offices, the water department, public works department, and buildings department. It took us some time to discern between staff and brokers and fixers, who also refer to themselves as contractors, consultants, or social workers. Some are loyal to particular politicians or big-men, and some remain free-lance with ties based mostly on exchange. These actors and political society in general are rarely specifically researched to unpack the role they play in transfactual urban governance conditions. This thesis contributes to this knowledge gap.
3.3 Municipal Performance

Table 2 lists the performance of KD and MB in several parameters related to this study. Except for KD’s reported provision of water, they remain far from meeting benchmarks, with MB further away than KD. The blame gets passed around in an endless cycle. The state can site capacity issues and vulnerability to rent seeking, corruption and capture. The municipality can cite lack of funds and mechanisms for acquiring the permission for landowners or trustees (public and private) to expand the sewerage system, for example, and citizens can blame both the GoM and the municipality. Within the municipality politicians lay the blame on 'lazy and greedy' administration and the administration lays the blame on 'corrupt' politicians and the pressure they put upon them. Residents also figure in here, in terms of littering, wasting water, illegal sewerage disposal, unauthorised construction, and encroachment. Many who lament the lack of the rule of law in municipal matters often break or bend it. In contexts where informality is the rule, the opportunity costs of not participating are high and the costs of contesting even more prohibitive. These factors indicate a collective action problem (cf. Persson et al., 2012). Actors are averse to be one of the very few trying to act in line with formal rules and norms. Trying to go against informal processes was often described to us as foolish or pointless in informal discussions. The rationalisation that everyone does it (takes bribes, breaks rules, negotiates with fixers and brokers) is expressed across socio-economic groups, and within both the political and administrative wings of government. Whether one goes along willingly, begrudgingly or cynically, it all contributes to the informalisation of government, and its transfactual functioning, to being both a collective action problem as well as a principal-agent problem. The status quo should not be attributed only to the powers and practices of state and municipal officials or elected politicians. This does not mean that the figure of a ‘Big Man’ attributed with much power does not contribute to informalisation being a collective action problem. They are central, but not because their influence is unambiguous. Many respondents could not back up their perception of the Chief Commissioner, MLA or Chief Minister of Maharashtra’s reach and powers with detailed examples. However, the widespread belief in their ability to shape governance produces inducements to: defer to their (perceived) will and power, be loath to question current practices, and to generally disavow plausible alternatives. They become a de facto receptacle of agency in these matters that blocks change and reflection. The agency and powers attributed to them enable their subordinates to rationalise their complicity in informalisation processes. What elites do, and what they are imagined as doing, is an important structuring component of informalisation (Davis & de Duren, 2011). This points to the problem of seeing informalisation or corruption as a standard principal-agent issue, when the likelihood of there being “principled principals is unlikely” (Persson et al., 2012: 2). If the principals are actively participating in informalisation processes, or arbitrarily ignoring some while targeting others for ambiguous reasons, then it becomes problematic to expect them to keep their agents from breaking rules or for their agents to expect them to. Residents also tend to be less principled in their actions than what is commonly
### Table 2: Municipal Performance

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Benchmark</th>
<th>KD</th>
<th>MB</th>
<th>Comments</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Water</td>
<td>150lpcd</td>
<td>188 lpcd</td>
<td>90 lpcd</td>
<td>Coverage based on primary lines, secondary lines</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Piped-system 100%</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td>50%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sewerage</td>
<td>85% Coverage</td>
<td>19%</td>
<td>Only 4 residential complexes</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Drainage System</td>
<td>100% coverage</td>
<td>City Centre 90% Periphery 5%</td>
<td>No centralize d or regulated drainage</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SWM</td>
<td>5 workers per 1,000 residents</td>
<td>1.5 workers per 1,000 residents</td>
<td>no data</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Space between bins 100 meters</td>
<td>300 meters</td>
<td></td>
<td>KD: buffalo stables, informal dumping sites, no separation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>MB: unplanned landfills door-to-door collection</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gutters</td>
<td>Broken and uncovered in poor areas</td>
<td>Broken and uncovered in poor areas</td>
<td>Stolen tiles, low quality materials often used</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Living in 'Slum-Like' Conditions</td>
<td>Slum-Free</td>
<td>44%</td>
<td>28%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Toilet Blocks: 1 seat for every 30 residents</td>
<td>Toilet Blocks: 1 seat for every 160 residents</td>
<td>Toilet Block: 1 seat for every 100 residents</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unauthorised Development</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>50% (Guess)</td>
<td>50% (Guess)</td>
<td>Non-municipal informants put it closer to 75%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Source: based on interviews with Municipal Officials and City Development Plans

assumed in more formalised situations, when informal negotiations are perceived as the norm (e.g. Chabol and Daloz, 1999; Persson et al., 2012). Issues of corruption, rent-seeking, rule breaking and bending, politicisation, lack of principled principals and agents committed in practice to professionalism and the rule of law all enabling
low-risk engagement in ostensibly corrupt activities, are indicative of a context where political society has considerable presence and influence. Going up one level of abstraction, these aspects indicate mediatory institutions, occupancy urbanism, and salutary neglect dimensions of political society, thus making formations within these two cities good cases through which to explore the structure and agency of political society in formally municipal matters and civic politics more generally.

While the status and opinion on all municipal services were inquired on, water was chosen for closer analysis (see chapter 7). Water has a history of capture and commodification in urbanising areas by ‘water-mafias’ thought to be in connivance with local authorities (Gandy, 2008; Ranganathan, 2014). Both these cities have sizeable slum populations and large numbers of unauthorised developments. The vast majority has access to municipal water, making this a rich intersection of informality to investigate the inner-workings of political society and the roles they take on in different formations.

3.4 Development Profiles of Case-studies

In this section I will briefly describe the development status of the formations studied. According to the water departments, each area within the territory of the municipality is sent municipal water for one to two hours, depending on supply. In MB 'authorised' areas not hooked up to the piped system receive water by municipal tankers. Power outages are scheduled to be two hours in the afternoon, or morning. However, during the hottest parts of the year two scheduled outages a day are sometimes necessary. It is also common, a week before and after elections, for outages to be reduced.18 In MB municipal garbage collection has yet to be organised by the municipal corporation.

**Standard Formation: Maxus Mall Area, Electoral Ward 35 MB**19

What is now known as the ‘Maxus Mall’ area (figure 6), changed from agricultural land to an area marked by quality four lane roads, a shopping and entertainment complex (blue), and locally considered ‘upper middle-class’ complexes. The lobbying and support of the MLA, whose family members are investors in some of these projects, facilitated this transformation. Also his family’s cement and water tanker companies were given no-bid supply contracts. The developments in pink are those that the MLA and his family are directly tied to. These residential complexes have full-time grounds keepers who organise solid waste management by hiring people to go door-

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18 When I was in the field I noticed that for a week power-outages or 'load-shedding' went from two hours to one hour and on that weekend there was none. During a lunch meeting with MLA Barbosa, I asked him about this and he replied that it's a 'gift' to the voters.

19 Google Earth, Image date 16-12-2013, 19°17'47.26" N 72°50'56.86" E.
to-door to collect waste. Tankers, both municipal and private, provide water. They have back-up generators, so they have 24-hour power. The MC is the MLA’s daughter, and work in her ward is given a priority in terms of gutters, drains, streetlights, potholes and etc. Each complex has septic tanks, which are maintained by private contractors. Sewerage disposal is in practice not regulated and many of these removal trucks dump in vacant fields in the periphery of the city or in the river.

**Figure 6: Maxus Mall Area**

![Image of Maxus Mall Area](image)

**Standard Formation: Shanti Nagar, Electoral Ward 65, MB**

Shanti Nagar Sectors 3 and 7 are part of the first planned township developed in MB. They still have yet to be hooked up to the municipal piped water system. Tankers, both municipal and private, deliver water. Solid waste management is handled privately. Each building hires someone to come by each day to collect the dry waste. Some buildings have back up generators for the whole building, while others leave it up to individual residents to buy personal generators. Most of the drains and gutters within residential areas are covered, but around half the ones along streets and sidewalks are uncovered and become clogged.

Litter is a problem as informal dumping is prevalent by those who go door-to-door to collect the rubbish. Footpaths and pathways are often partially occupied by stalls, store displays, hawkers, and rickshaws. Roads are wide enough for emergency service access. These sectors have septic tanks that are managed by the housing societies in terms of hiring trucks to periodically empty them. There are some open hazards like open drains, potholes, and hanging wires, but relatively minimal compared to most slums and gaothans.
**Standard Formation: Ghandi Chowk, Electoral Ward 21 KD**

This is considered a slum free ward that was originally settled by a few Muslim families who still own and operate sand-dredging businesses along the nearby river. Many buildings date back 50 or more years, with newer buildings coming up on individual plots. Families that can afford it are redeveloping their homes in the form of ground plus 4-7 floor buildings. Each married son normally has a floor. Around half the drains are covered and unlogged, and there is a chronic litter problem. Many streets are narrow and when a truck or large car uses it there is no room for pedestrians. This causes concern over the safety of children and elderly using the roads and pathways. There are also hanging wires and some uncovered drains that can be hazardous. Water provision is regular, and except for a few times a year, it is sufficient. Sewerage disposal is not organised or regulated, some buildings have septic tanks, and others do not. Public infrastructure was not taken into consideration when developing this area.

**Standard Formations: Pensde Nagar and Savarkar Road, Electoral Wards 96 & 97, Dombivli**

Agris originally settled this area. In the 1980s they started to build ground plus 4 or more floor buildings, with flats being sold predominantly to upper-caste buyers wanting to relocate from Mumbai. It is considered a ‘middle-class’ area, however, in many areas insufficient space was left for adequate trunk infrastructure development beyond the main roads. Public water provision is regular and adequate. The last remaining slum pocket was resettled in 2008, and these areas are considered to be slum free, with upwards of 90 percent living in ownership flat buildings. Most residential buildings have their own septic tanks and the majority of gutters and drains are covered and not clogged. There are few visible hazards, beyond often having to walk on the road because the sidewalks on shopping streets are used for hawking or store displays.

**Gaathan: Jagtapwadi, Electoral Ward 42, Kalyan**

Most of the original inhabitants have moved out of this area and have leased out chawls on their property. The municipal councillor’s family, who is the main landowner, still lives in the gaathan. Normally there is only enough room to walk between the rows of chawls. Most have individual water connections, but it is rare that all are receiving adequate pressure. There are no modern indoor toilets and the landowners have blocked attempts to build community toilet blocks here. Most of the gutters and drains are open and many are clogged. Litter is a constant problem, and there are many hazards here such as: hanging wires, open drains, and stagnant dirty water in gutters.

**Murdha Gaathan, Electoral Ward 27, Mira-Bhayandar**

Saltapan businesses are active here. The slum (outlined in yellow in figure 7) developed as housing for the saltpan workers and their families. The landowners live in the area outlined in orange. Both areas are not planned in terms of the development code.
regulations, but they are very well managed and maintained. The slum residents do not have indoor toilets but there is a community toilet block. The landowning residents’ sewerage drains into a vacant field. Electricity connections are legal and their municipal water connections are metered, and every unit has an address. There are streetlights, and the gutters and drains are open but unclelogged. It is a very beautiful area.

Four slum formations were included in this study, three from KD and one from MB.

**Slum: Anandwadi, Electoral Ward 36 KD**

According to the residents the land belongs to the railroad, but according to the city development plan maps, around half the land is private property. Around 80 percent of the houses are made of mud brick and 20 percent are made out of scrap materials. Drains and gutters are uncovered and clogged. Pathways, footpaths and roads are of poor quality, too narrow, and used for other purposes. This makes them inaccessible for emergency services. There is lots of litter and no organised solid waste management. The few public toilet blocks are very unsanitary, and they often are not receiving water. Most residents use open defecation areas. Municipal water is provided, but timings are irregular and frequently inadequate. There are many hazards such as: open drains, stagnant and dirty water, hanging wires, and water pipes running above ground.

**Slum: Ashok Nagar, Electoral Ward 37, KD**

This slum is located on private property, but the owner has not been seen or heard from in many years. Ninety percent of the houses are made of mud brick and 10 percent are made out of concrete. Most drains and gutters are uncovered and clogged; pathways, footpaths and roads are of poor quality and used for other purposes. However, emergency services would be able to reach most residents. The amount of litter varies, but there is no organised solid waste management. There are four toilet blocks, with two being adequately maintained. Municipal water is provided and timings are regular, but seasonally inadequate. There are many hazards such as: open drains, stagnant and dirty water, hanging wires, and water pipes running above ground.

**Slum: Indira Nagar, Electoral Ward 98, KD**

According to the residents the land belongs to the railroad, but according to the city development plan maps this area is private property. Eighty percent of the houses are made of mud brick and 20 percent made out of scrap materials. Drains and gutters are uncovered and clogged, pathways, footpaths and roads are of poor quality, too narrow, and used for other purposes. This makes walking around challenging and emergency service from access is very limited. Litter is a big problem, and there is no organised solid waste management. Municipal water is provided but water timings are irregular and frequently inadequate. There are no individual toilets, and the two public
toilet blocks often do not have water and are very unsanitary. Open defecation is common. There are many hazards such as: open drains, stagnant, dirty water, hanging wires, and water pipes running above ground.

**Slum: Jai Ambe Nagar, Electoral Ward 2, MB**

This slum is located on railroad land next to the saltpan area where many of the residents work. Eighty percent of the houses are made of mud brick and 20 percent are concrete. Drains and gutters are uncovered and clogged, pathways, footpaths and roads are of poor quality and used for other purposes, but emergency services would be able to access most residents. Litter is strewn throughout, and there is no organised solid waste management. Municipal water is provided, but water timings are irregular, and often inadequate. There are two toilet blocks, however, the water is often cut off, reportedly because the municipal councillor has many enemies at the municipality. There are many hazards such as: open drains, stagnant and dirty water, hanging wires, and water pipes running above ground.
Figure 7: Gaotan Formation, Mira-Bhayandar

Google Earth, Image date: 16-12-2013, 19°17'55.02" N
72°49'48.49" E

The middle row of pictures is of the lavender area where landowners live and the last row is of the yellow slum area.
3.5 Socio-Economic Sketch of Formation Residents

Urban development inequalities are often attributed to social inequalities such as caste and ethnicity based discrimination. Residents’ occupations and education (in other words their class) are also logically viewed as underpinning uneven development. Local power imbalances can also stem from the differences between newcomers, who do not know the cultural scripts and political codes, and established elites. The caste make up of standard formations do differ from the gaothans and slums, where the majority are scheduled or backward castes (see figure 8).20 Forward caste residents are the largest group (43 percent) in standard formations, followed by Muslim households at 20 percent. However, the majority of landowners in both cities come from the Agri caste (backward caste) and there are more Agri MCs than any other particular caste (37 in MB, and 53 in KD). Regarding the newcomer issue, the majority from all formations report living there for more than 10 years, with 64 percent of slums residents living there for more than 15 years (see figure 9). In that amount of time, people become fluent enough with local norms.

To measure differences in income security we asked if household members had regular income of an amount they could reasonably rely on. Fieldwork carried out in phase one showed that locals considered those with salaried jobs, pensions, regular wages, those who owned a shop or stall, or those who worked as a rickshaw or taxi driver as having relative economic security. Thirty percent of standard formations residents report not having access to regular income. Somewhat unexpectedly, figure 10 shows that more residents in gaothans reported not having regular monthly income (46 percent), than those from slum formations (37 percent). Given the shortcomings of this indicator we also asked what type of school their children attend(ed) (see figure 11). It was discerned during fieldwork that kids go to public schools only if there is no other affordable option. Private English schools are the most expensive. Regarding educational achievement, figure 12 shows that slums report the largest percentage of respondents with 6 standard or lower as the highest level of household education achieved, and 71 percent of families must send their kids to public schools. This situation, as expected, is better in gaothans with 42 percent in public schools and only three percent reporting 6th standard or less, and much better in standard formations, with two percent sending children to public schools and no households with the highest level of education at 6th or less.

In terms of caste, education, and income these three areas differ as expected, but do residents associate these differences with differences in occupancy relations, locality development, and citizenship? Regarding discrimination there is a marked difference in directly experienced discrimination verses perceived discrimination based on beliefs

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20 Scheduled castes are those officially recognised as being a historically extremely disadvantaged group. The constitution lists at special provision to improve their situation, namely affirmative action measures and laws against untouchability practices and hate crimes. Other backward classes (OBC) is a term used by the government to classify castes who are socially and economically weak. Forward castes are those not labeled scheduled or backward.
and effects (i.e., visible differences in development). Only eight out of 550 respondents reported personally being discriminated against. However, when asked why people like them experience discrimination and about whether someone’s social and economic status affects access, there were considerably more affirmative responses (see figures 13 and 14). It must be noted that it is commonly expressed by open caste people that there is much reverse discrimination, especially when it comes to school admissions and access to public sector employment. However, 95 percent of standard residents and 75 percent of gaothan respondents (see figure 15) said that the government should do more to help the poor and to develop slums.

**Discussion**

The difference between direct discrimination and perceived discrimination, along with the objective differences in development, points to processes and factors not directly related to ascribed or achieved social-economic status. Discussions with municipal officials and staff and with MCs also reported that caste and other ascribed statuses do not consciously play a role in differential access to public services and infrastructure development. Logically, how much money households have plays a role, both in the range of housing they can afford, and the extent they can supplement public provision with private. Socio-economic differences definitely exist between these formations, but they do not seem to be at the core of spatial inequalities.

Several municipal staff and officials point to issues of population growth, lack of funds, ‘land mafias,’ lack of authority to acquire land and to reconstitute plots, and uncooperative landowners and their political ‘connections,’ being the drivers of uneven and unsound development. This points to a class issue, but not one between residents of different formations. It points to the class relations among those with vested interests in land development. As already discussed in sections 3.1 and 3.2, land development occurs largely in and through political society. All together these direct us to also look for how this class dynamic plays out in occupancy and locality development across these formations, to see to what extent the vulnerabilities of residents and spatial inequalities are actually collateral damage of the localised second circuit of capital accumulation and its key players.
Figure 8: Caste Demographics By Formation

![Caste Demographics By Formation](image)

Figure 9: Length of Residence

![Length of Residence](image)
Figure 10: Regular Income - Type of Employment

![Regular Monthly Income Graph]

Figure 11: Private, Public or English School

![Children's School Type Graph]
Figure 12: Highest Level of Education in Household

Highest Level of Education in Household

![Bar chart showing the distribution of highest level of education by household formation.](chart)

- University
- College
- 11 to 12
- 7 to 10
- 6 standard or less

Percentage by Formation

Figure 13: Perception of Institutional Inequalities

Inequalities Present in Access to:

- Housing
- Party and Politicians
- Municipality
- Govt. Schemes
- Basic Services

![Bar chart showing the percentage who agree by formation.](chart)

Percentage Who Agree By Formation

- Standard
- Gaothan
- Slum
Figure 14: Reasons for discrimination

**Why are people like you discriminated against here?**

- Neighborhood
- Education
- Religion
- Economic Activities
- Migrant
- Caste

Figure 15: Opinions on the poor and slums

**Opinions about the poor and slums**

- Standard
- Gaotan
- Slum

- Govt should do more to
- People live in slums out
- Poor should be ashamed

Percentage Who Agree By Formation
CHAPTER 4: THE CAPACITIES AND FUNCTIONINGS OF LIVELIHOOD CAPITALS: A SOCIO-SPATIAL CONCEPTUALISATION²¹

Livelihoods approaches (see figure 16) offer a people-centred, forward looking, and holistic way of looking at urban inequalities (Moser, 1998). They are people-centred and holistic because they do not only measure income based poverty lines or economic growth. Rather the focus is on household assets or ‘capitals’ and what they are able to do with these in their present situation. These approaches tend to focus less on what families do not have and more on what they do have. The goal is to make household assets more secure, and perhaps more productive, by reducing vulnerability to asset losses (Moser, 2007). The livelihoods framework has proven to be a powerful tool for illustrating the diversity of deprivations households face, and for guiding development objectives and targets (Rakodi & Lloyd-Jones, 2002). Livelihoods frameworks include boxes for institutions, processes, structures, and vulnerability contexts that shape individual or household strategies and outcomes. However, in practice both often become telescopic and focused on discreet or presumably fixed attributes of individuals or households. Most studies leveraging it tend to atomise households by casting their ‘strategies’ as voluntaristic and glossing over how their actions and their ‘capitals’ are embedded in social-spatial relations that limit choices and efficacy over time (Cole, 2006; Du Toit, 2005; Green & Hulme, 2005). For example, poverty is conceived as a lack of ‘capitals’ (a condition) rather than as an absence of entitlements (a deontic relation). This implies that capitals can increase in an incremental and consistent fashion with little conflict or contradiction within or between groups, and that capitals tend to hold their value or utility over social and geographic space, and indeed presumably independent of the status of the bearer as well. The “vulnerability context” of livelihoods analysis attempts to account for context, but the focus is on resilience of livelihood practices in relation to ‘shocks’ and ‘hazards.’ This underpins the extent structural biases produce vulnerability (Hickey & Du Toit, 2006). In practice, operationalisations of livelihoods approaches are theoretically thin. Many who use livelihoods approaches acknowledge the ‘black box’ of social relations (Scoones, 2009; Newton, 2007). However, little progress has been made to open this black box due to practical constraints limiting time in the field, preferences for apolitical recommendations, and because most scholarly interventions remain at the level of theoretical arguments, rather than offering ways more institutionally and politically attuned research can be applied (Jackimow, 2013). Livelihoods approaches tend not to account for the difference geography, in particular territoriality, makes on one’s repertoire of choices and the capacities of their capitals to manifest achieved functionings. The issue remains of how to keep research

connected to the local level and relevant to people’s daily lives without the social, political and spatial determinations remaining known unknowns.

**Figure 16: DFID’s Sustainable Livelihoods Framework (1999)**

![DFID’s Sustainable Livelihoods Framework](image)

Sen’s Capability Approach (2001), while comprised of different terms, is quite similar to the livelihoods approach. His approach focuses on a person’s ability to convert resources into functionings (doings and beings) that together form the ‘capabilities’ they should be free to utilise to achieve functionings (valued outcomes like employment, health, adequate housing etc.). Similar to the household assets and strategies in the livelihoods framework, a person’s resources, ability to convert them into capabilities, and to choose and act on goals are perceived as being shaped by external factors. However, in practice this framework tends to produce lists of resources and current outcomes while glossing over how to conceptualise external influences to render their properties and capacities more visible.

This chapter injects a critical realist approach for the conceptualisation of social phenomena outlined by Sayer (1992 & 2000) and Searle (1995 and 2006) and Pierre Bourdieu’s analysis of structure and agency represented in his interrelated concepts of field, habitus and capital to the analysis of ‘achieved functionings’ or ‘livelihood outcomes’ to better conceive and study the socio-spatial determinants of resources available, their conversion into capabilities, and to finally with what functionings or ‘capitals’ achieved. The first step is to open up capitals and the related concepts of assets, resources, capabilities and functionings via the deceptively simple question: ‘what are these elements of livelihoods and why are they able to shape and be shaped by social and spatial processes and structures?’
4.1 Capitals, Assets and Resources (CARs)

Moser (2007) discussing ‘asset-based approaches’ writes:

Assets are a stock of financial, human, natural or social resources that can be acquired, developed, improved and transferred across generations. It generates flows or consumption, as well as additional stock. In the current poverty-related development debates, the concept of assets or capital endowments includes both tangible and intangible assets, with the capital assets of the poor commonly identified as natural, physical, social, financial and human capital (5).

The terms in this explanation implicitly serve the same function. But, does capital = asset = resource? What exactly are CARs in terms of their genesis, properties, capacities, maintenance, transferability, and magnitude? How and to what extent do assets differ from resources or from capitals and vice versa? What does the use of one over the other or in combination matter in terms of the qualification and quantification of human ‘capital’ and social ‘capital’ for example? An opportunity sampling of definitions shows that ‘capital’ normally refers to what financial assets are left over after mandatory debts have been paid and which remains under one’s ownership. But crucially, for remainder financial assets to become ‘capital’ they must be invested in such a way that allows for accumulation of more of the same (money for instance) or more of other assets of economic value (real estate or stocks for instance). Money in the bank is not capital, whereas money invested in a firm that can lead to a return on your investment is. However, many livelihoods approaches apply this term to non (directly) economic assets, such as education, to highlight that other things of value beyond financial assets can be deployed in ways that increase wellbeing. For the time being lets define ‘capital’ as something of value to one’s livelihood which is ownable, able to be deployed in such a manner that it accumulates more of itself or something else of value—thus it must be convertible as well. A sampling of definitions for ‘assets’ shows that they are things of value that are ownable. Usually an asset is a holder of value that can be exchanged for money or other holders of value. However, some (e.g., Alkire, 2002) expand this term to refer to things that can be claimed, but not owned, such as rights and status, that can impact one’s achieved functionings. For present purposes an asset is defined as: something of value that is alienable (car, skills) or claimable (entitlements; reciprocity) where value commonly implies to exchange value, but also refers to use values. Moving on to ‘resources,’ they are something that can be used towards completing a task or obligation, solving a problem, or achieving a goal. Of the three ‘resources’ is the least economic term. It does not imply or require ownership, but rather access, awareness and intention. In order for a resource to become of use someone must be aware of it, perceive it as useful, and be able and willing to utilise it.

Based on these definitions, the following issues should be taken into consideration when conceptualising CARs:

• Capital ≠ resources or assets.
Assets can be considered resources, but not all resources are assets. They can only become capital if they can be converted (in form or function) and invested (transferable) in a manner that allows for accumulation.

Resources can encompass both one’s capital and assets, but also refer to tangible and intangible things of use that one need not own, but does have knowledge of and access to.

Using these terms interchangeably without appropriate qualification and finer grained conceptualisation is problematic. Take for example education; if one’s education is of use to them then it easily qualifies as a resource. However, whether or not it can be deployed in a particular labour market (transferable) and lead to income (convertible) or increased income beyond what is needed for expenses (asset accumulation) cannot be assumed. Only time shows if the opportunity costs were worth it, and if it helped in accruing more CARs. A woman may be healthy and educated and wanting to work, but this is no guarantee that her family will allow it, or that those with work available will hire a woman if men are available. Perhaps she finds work, but must resign herself to accept lower pay or sexual harassment, because the state does not have or does not readily enforce laws prohibiting it, and her disposition restricts her from challenging these norms and structural biases. Thus her ability to convert education into the ‘functioning’ of a decent job is blocked by institutional constraints and structural domination.

Considering these contingencies, discussing sociability or solidarity in terms of social ‘capital’ or even as an asset becomes worrisome as both imply coherence, ownership and continuity. The transient tangible and intangible products of relationships cannot simply be exploited or converted at will (see Bathelt & Gluckler, 2005). Their contingent nature makes it difficult to classify them as a capital or asset. Relations and associations and the characteristics of one’s community (in terms of trust, reciprocity and demographics) can be resources that become capital, but this cannot be known a priori. Assuming capital status attributes to social resources qualities they may not have, or only have intermittently, thereby overestimating struggling households’ capabilities. Consider the resources some households garner from patron-client relations in political society. Some can manage their occupancy insecurity via these relations, but these operate in contexts of intermittency, dependency and exploitation (cf. Wood, 2003). Securing housing and informal services in this manner comes at the expense of autonomy. In other words, the cost of securing occupancy through clientelism is abridged citizenship. This makes it difficult to classify a tie to a patron as social capital.

The properties and capacities of CARs point to the need for better accounting. If shelter is an ‘asset’ then to accurately determine economic value you would first need to determine if it is owned, and if not, if the tenure is secure. If it is rented or a squatter settlement, it becomes more difficult to log it as an asset unless it is used for home-based economic activities and tenure is secure enough to consider it a relatively fixed component of production. The calculations do not end here. Basic accounting
logic dictates that if something costs more than its value it becomes a liability. If shelter costs more to maintain than it contributes then it is not an asset or a capital, but a liability in economic terms. Its resource status remains because it is a desired and necessary item. To remain positive and focused on what households have, most livelihoods and capability approaches neglect to figure in costs and to adequately differentiate between assets and liabilities. Looking at the properties and capacities of CARs strongly indicates that the achieved functionings of individual or collective CARs form in a process including many components: structural, institutional, geographical, and individual. This makes outcomes uncertain, and the likelihood of unintended or unforeseen consequences high. Processes shape whether some thing is a CAR via constraints and opportunities that can never be fully accounted for, and which shape what happens to actor’s CARs in terms of capabilities and particularly for achieved functionings. Resources can often be of limited supply, especially those that have the capacity to become assets and capitals. Processes of defining what is a CAR, their mode of production and acquire-ability are marked by direct and indirect, intentional and unintentional, and by visible and opaque conflict, contradiction, and coordination that result in socio-spatial stratification. This brings in power and politics.

Looking at processes and relations highlights the shortcomings of substantive approaches to CARs that tend to view them as stable and fixed categories with specific functions in systems of production and exchange (Fine, 2000). When CARs are given autonomy from context and bearer, then how they can be significantly reduced or amplified by one’s social or cultural position does not enter models. This type of understanding supports the practice of determining which households are poor or not based on fixed categories of CARs and thresholds that households can be measured against without exploring what effect social and situational contexts play in their value and acquire-ability. For example the Human Development Report seems to take the value of literacy as a given that exists separately from the structural position and social situation of those who are literate. The value and convertibility of this ‘capability’ of literacy apparently holds across social and geographic space. It neglects the embodied aspects that impact the utility of this capability, such as a literate woman’s cultural conservatism and structural aspects like the gendered labour market.

The discussion so far all builds up to the point that CARs, like people, are shaped by structures and institutions. Consequently, this thesis focuses on the context and institutions residents of different formations respond to rather than their stock of CARs. This requires a more robust explication of the structural and institutional susceptibilities of CARs.
4.2 Structural and Institutional Dimensions of CARs

Broadly speaking, social structures refer to the objective (i.e., subject independent) relations between, for example, men and women, employee and employer, client and patron, labour and capital, landlord and tenant in terms of authority, wealth and status and the related deontological relations. More specifically they refer to the range of existing roles present in different organisations and domains of social life and the type and proportion of positions available to groups vested with different levels of status and resources and the authority, as well as the capacities embedded in different positions. From the global level to the household level, coordinated actions and activities are necessary for the creation and distribution of material and non-material resources towards some agreed\textsuperscript{22} upon distribution or end(s) for structures to form and endure. This requires institutions as rules and norms regarding the functions and expectations for actors, objects and conditions in different contexts (Searle, 1995). Institutions do not make much sense in the absence of CARs to be created, distributed, and used in particular ways collectively accepted at some scale. Sufficiently established institutions serve as guidelines enabling one to recognise the functions of other actors and objects, and one’s own function and actions in different social scenarios. What are the properties of institutions that give them this capacity to facilitate coordinated perceptions and action? Following Searle, they are composed of collective intentionality (shared desires, goals, beliefs, or anxieties) from which more specific aims (collectively understood or accepted purposes) an institution develops around. In order to organise people around aims institutions assign functions; they have the capacity to attribute to objects, people, places, and conditions roles or representations that are not readily attributable to their innate properties. For example, a common collective goal is economic growth. Different institutions develop to shape actions and perceptions towards this goal, for example the institution of credit. The institution of credit attributes functions to money that it does not acquire from its intrinsic properties (paper, ink, foldable). Functions or roles are not randomly applied; rather they match up with culturally salient statuses. Where people are concerned, status functions determine who takes on what role (subordinate, superior, equal) in a given situation based on status attributes or status indicators. This means that institutions do not confer the same expectations, functions and duties to all the actors and objects covered. In the institution of credit, the expectations and rights of the moneylender are different from the borrower. Deontic dimensions involve what is commonly considered permitted, obligatory, or forbidden in a given context. They direct actors involved regarding what they may do, must do, and must not do in terms of relations of obligation to avoid social or formal sanctions. For example, under certain conditions defaulting on a loan is culturally permissible and in others it can be a grounds for one’s assets being seized or worse. Similarly there are socially acceptable and unacceptable manners of collecting on a debt. Aims, which are the raison- d’être for the genesis of institutions, require that

\textsuperscript{22} Agreements can be forced, tacit or consensual.
different deontics be assigned to coordinate actions toward their more likely achievement. Credit would not last long if more people defaulted than paid back their debt with interests, and this would negatively impact the collective goal or desire for economic development. These elements of institutions together give them the capacity to dispose people to engage in actions and behaviours that can be indifferent or even against their objective short or long term interests and subjective desires.

It is important to point out the dialectic relationship between status functions, rules, and norms. All institutions can be said to have the same basic logical structure: X becomes Y in context C. and by virtue of becoming Y in context C, X takes on certain powers and susceptibilities. For example, Mrs. Mahtre takes on the status of Municipal Councillor at the municipality, and through this status she has certain obligations, entitlements, and capacities. When Mrs. Mahtre is at her office in her electoral ward, she takes on the additional status of patron and broker. To be effective institutions have to be commonly accepted within the field of action they belong. However, the deontic dimensions of institutions can be and often are broken. However, they are broken, in different ways, by different people, with different consequences. These differences are related to status indicators related to which norms come into play when we try to capture cultural understandings regarding under which circumstances can those inhabiting certain roles bend or break a rule without being sanctioned. Norms here are as much about following rules as they are about implicit cultural sanctioning of rule bending or breaking (cf. Žižek, 2010). Identities and CARs without institutions would be uncertain in the extreme and society becomes impossible. Things made can be unmade and as an institution is contingent on the actions and perceptions of people, and vulnerable to shifts in other institutional domains as well as natural and human made crises, and changes in collective intentionality, they are not fixed phenomena.
CARs are objects and attributes that incur value and utility through processes guided by institutions that inform perceptions and prompt certain actions. The capacities of CARs in relation to bearer in different institutional domains need to be explored to adequately assess a household, community, or formation’s vulnerability and channels for increased achieved functionings. The more expansive socio-territorial logics such as: patriarchy, liberalism, capitalism, or caste systems shaping the generation, accumulation, and distribution of CARs variably filter in as well (cf. Massey, 2004). CARs have multiple overlapping contingencies such as: the bearer, other actors and their CARs, and the social-spatial context. Institutions are the mechanisms through which uncertainty is greatly, but not completely reduced. To extrapolate Searle’s equation: CARs associated to person X take on capacities Y in context C. The powers and susceptibilities of CARs fluctuate in magnitude, efficacy, and actualisation and institutions are what format these dimensions.

CARs are also amenable to individual choices and dispositions. For example, one can choose to learn Spanish and decide to keep up with it so that its magnitude does not depreciate. Powers and susceptibilities can also fluctuate in relation to the social-spatial environment. For example, the family moves to a city whose school system does not offer Spanish, or if the parents do not earn enough to hire a tutor. An autoworker in Detroit has the capacity to make cars and wants to; however financial woes and poor innovation mean that he/she cannot find work. Capabilities leading to actions leading to achieved functionings are then contingent on one’s practical orientations and contingent on the powers and susceptibilities of other things present. Capabilities may be, “blocked, overridden, modified, or reinforced” by institutions, actors, conditions and events (Sayer, 2004: 262). When MCs block certain slum
improvements to secure clientelism they reduce the potential capacity of the slum residents CARs, whether the slum population is aware of it or not. This double contingency shows CARs contain at least four dimensions—potential powers and susceptibilities and actual powers and susceptibilities. These dimensions settle differently in different institutions. For example, those with subprime mortgages are more susceptible to CAR losses because of the financial crisis than the CEOs of banks involved. The status functions assigned to the CEOs greatly reduce their personal susceptibility to risk gone wrong. Some classes tend to accumulate advantage (positive status functions) and others disadvantage (negative susceptibilities), some of which get passed on to the next generation in material and non-material CARs. Foregrounding processes that generate, distribute, (re)value, or destroy CARs and the institutions that enable them point towards causal configurations underpinning entrenched inequalities more so than focusing on the context and bearer independent attributes CARs. Indeed, one could argue that CARs independent of context and bearer have no social value, utility or force. Money, of course, is the penultimate example of the social construction of value and utility.

The institutions assigning functions and values to CARs often are part of scalar institutional structures that affect one another. Regarding social capital, research should differentiate between micro-level social capital and formal state social capital and the links between them. Wacquant (1998) argues that state (formal) social capital—made up of ties (both positive and negative and desirable or not) housed in formal state organisations where one is a member, client, or ward—must be looked at in relation to informal social capital—or social ties that are part of interpersonal networks of trust, exchange and obligations—because “states play a decisive role in the formation and distribution of both formal and informal social capital” (25-26). Determining the actual functionings (and thus resiliency) of community social capital requires looking at how the effects of state agencies and actors (present or not) shape social capital. For example, in India the SJSRY23 program addresses poverty by setting up community structures to decide collectively fund allocation. The guidelines are that women and children be targeted and that beneficiaries be BPL (below the poverty line). Initially, SHGs (self-help groups) are organised for the purposes of savings and to access bank loans with the help of the municipal Poverty Cell. SHGs were to elect a member to represent them at ‘neighbourhood welfare societies’ and these were to elect a member to represent them at the administrative ward level. When reaching this level of organisation ‘community development societies’ receive official NGO status and can decide collectively how to use funds targeted at this level. The funds can be used for various micro-level infrastructure projects, empowerment programs for women and children, and self-employment opportunities. This program assumes: objective and accurate BPL determination, community interest in participation, homogeneous slums, and dedicated and capable Poverty Cell staff.

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23Swarna Jayanti Shahari Rozgar Yojana (SJSRY) in India is a centrally sponsored scheme focused on providing gainful employment to the urban unemployed and underemployed poor, through encouraging the setting up of self-employment ventures by the urban poor (women in particular) living below the poverty line.
These assumptions shatter when they meet local realities. The BPL list includes many non-poor households;\(^{24}\) women are interested in accessing loans via SHGs, but not in participating in higher levels of community organisation because this is unpaid labour. Slums are stratified spaces with a better off and better-connected stratum able to capture most of the benefits. Community Development Officers employed by the city rarely go into the community, plus they are only interested in forming SHGs and not the higher scale level community organisations because as money, in the form of partially subsidised bank loans, targets SHGs. Poverty Cells demand “tribute” in the form of money or gifts to register SHGs and for helping with the loan process. SHGs report paying 10 percent of their loan to the Poverty Cell as ‘tribute.’ Community Development Societies at the Administrative Ward level were formed on paper, with the Poverty Cell selecting “guarantee ladies” who would go through the motions and leave budgeting decisions up to the staff. This discretionary behaviour and rent seeking is no secret—off the record many acknowledge this and dispositions of apathy dominate. This program at best has no effect on formal social capital and at worst increases inequalities within slums and supports clientelism which often bypasses those most in need. Following Searle, the logical format of this is that X (text of the SJSRY) is Y (poverty alleviation and empowerment program) in C (Ministry of Urban Housing and Poverty Alleviation). Y = X2 that becomes Y2 (task and rent seeking opportunity) in C2 (poverty cell). Y2 = X3 that becomes Y3 (clientelist structured access to credit) in C3 (slums).

Looking at the structural and institutional susceptibilities of CARs can help explain why a certain conjunction of factors affects the functionings of ostensibly similar set of CARs differently. For example, there are two poor households in India—one is lead by widow and one by a widower. How is their impoverishment tied to their widow(er)hood and is it tied in similar ways? For the man once his wife died he did not have the resources to attract another and covered himself the loss of her inputs. His household did not drop below the official poverty line, so he received no subsidies and had to sell assets and reduce food expenditure. Focusing on the loss of assets after the wife’s death, the lack of formal safety nets appears as the issue. For the widow her status plays a different role. Her impoverishment links institutions through which women can only access various kinds of rights via men. The husband’s death results in being placed in a category that strips her of functionings. She loses her status as wife to the head of the family and is likely relegated to a more dependent status. The construction of female widowhood and its processes of asset and status reduction cannot be discerned from looking at her stock of livelihood assets (see also Green & Hulme, 2005). Considering the SJSRY program again; how should participation in it be classified? It seems to be social capital (entitlement) turned into an alienable social resource available via clientelist channels. For the ladies who access loans, what characteristics does this money have? Loans in these two cities were never combined with marketing, business management and literacy training.

\(^{24}\) The lack of necessary documents and network ties exclude many poor families.
and most groups we spoke with are only making enough to make their payments, or are losing money. When the Poverty Cell labours to meet targets, SHGs are lobbied to take out loans regardless of business plans — they are told to “leave half in the bank to cover payments, give 10 percent for ‘distribution’ and spend the rest on whatever you want.” Accordingly these loans are either resources or liabilities and very rarely capital leading to longer-term economic security. When programs assuming equality, capability, and accountability hit the ground they can manifest the opposite of what was intended. Treating the access to credit this program offers as an institutional independent CAR misses these constitutive factors and results in spurious findings.

4.3 Embodied Dimension

Institutional advantage and disadvantage transfer in objects and in socially inscribed minds and bodies indicative of different statuses. Well-to-do parents leave economic CARs to their children, rewarding them with social and cultural distinctions. One’s body can be a CAR. However, the race, gender, class, caste, family position, size, and beauty influence its value vis-à-vis other bodies depending on the institutional domain. Further, the socio-spatial practices of the middle-class often become the norm or collective intentions for societies (Harvey, 1995; Deshpande, 2003; Fernandes, 2004). While their manner of dress, social mannerisms, speech, and tastes can be acquired if one has the time and economic resources, class distinctions are also the product of generational transmission—uneared, embodied privilege or disadvantage. Racial privileges and culturally valued competencies are forms of “accumulated human labour” (Bourdieu, 1984). My whiteness in most situations, endows me with uneared privilege, because it represents the practices of distinction and subjugation—and the consequent advantages and privileges—of ‘whites’ that came before. Values and functions attached to embodied characteristics get transferred through time in people’s orientations, and in the implicit and explicit biases of institutions. I may be unaware that my whiteness can be a CAR, but that does not mean that being white does not affect how I present myself and how others regard me, while also often reducing my susceptibility to negative discrimination.

Embodied status indicators show the importance culture plays in everyday practices and politics and thus on the possible and achieved functionings of CARs. It shapes social capital and vice versa. Those who attend university and participate in organisations like the honour society make ties—bonding, bridging, and linking. However, expressive indicators of cultural capital (speech, dress, physical comportment or mannerisms) affect the development and maintenance of bridging and linking ties (Bourdieu 1984, 1990). To use the honour society example again, the person serving food garners different and arguably limited contact with the attendees, and it is unlikely that he or she will form deontic ties with them. However, social capital can enable the accumulation of more cultural capital. In schools where there is diversity, and knowledge acquisition differs from what learned previously, these performative barriers can shift, thereby enabling deontic connections with people one
would not have otherwise connected with. However, normative dispositions or “moral world views,” meaning the established feelings people have about different types of people and what is appropriate, prove resilient against reflexivity and change (Cleaver, 2007). Also investments made into cultural or social CARs do not guarantee a return. One may endeavour to take on the attributes of the dominant group, for example a women vying for election may show that she can be as aggressive and goal oriented as her male opponent. However, there is no guarantee that this will disconfirm stereotypes or not backfire resulting in her being viewed negatively for not following the prevalent institutional scripts.

Social structures rooted in logics of cultural esteem and distinction, such as patriarchy or caste, are also forms of intergenerational capital accumulation that prove highly invulnerable to redistribution policies such as affirmative action or progressive taxation (cf. Holte, 2008: 232). However, gendered or caste dispositions come into being differently depending on the concrete situation—not every backward caste woman experiences or performs her identities the same across time and space. People’s identities often intersect and take contingent forms; making it difficult to determine covering laws about socially salient identities and their impact on CARs. Societies have many structures and institutions that can be contingently complementary, contradictory, conflicting or parallel to each other. Internalisations of the prevalent norms about one’s caste or class are not linear processes completed by age five. Rather these are iterative processes, which are susceptible to a mix of strategic action and unintended change. But spaces for negotiation or contestation are not equally accessibly particularly where wealth, status, and authority are at stake (Jessop 2001).

The argument to this point focused on the social ontology of CARs, capacities, and achievable functionings. Given this ontology, inquiry needs to look at the institution(s) assigning status and thus functions and capacities to people, places, and CARs. Perhaps, I have abused your patience to argue something most readers likely acknowledge. The more pressing issue is how to account for the different forms and functionings CARs take on in relation to the bearers in different institutional frameworks in order to better understand the opportunity costs and opportunities for conversion and accumulation related to livelihood development. How can we avoid infinite regress, overwhelming complexity, and irrelevance at a practical and political level? In the next section I present Pierre Bourdieu’s conceptual nexus of capital, habitus and field as a viable approach to meso-level analysis of concrete situations with acute sensitivity to the social ontology of function, value, and capabilities.

4.4 Bourdieu’s Economy of Practice

Bourdieu’s interrelated concepts of capital, habitus and field—conceptualised with a critical realist method—can contribute to an understanding of the logic behind an economy of practices in concrete settings. In this approach practices are the outcome of the relationship between habitus, capital and field. Habitus refers generally to
one’s practical orientation, habits or tacit ways of knowing automatically what is expected and what to do in different institutional settings. Capital refers to what has efficacy or force in relation to particular situations, and field refers to the configuration of institutions that guide the efficacy of different capitals, as well as the capacities of different actors involved in meeting or achieving certain aims such as water provision or capital accumulation through the informal housing market. Now I will operationalize these concepts in more detail.

**Capital**

According to Bourdieu, objects of value and thus efficacy (power, force) in social life, are forms of “accumulated human labour” (2002: p. 280) and thus are forms of capital, or surplus values of human activity that have been objectified (commodities, cash, property), inscribed in bodies (presentation, comportment) and minds (dispositions, tastes) or embedded in the biases of social structures, groups, and networks (status functions, deontic connections). He argued that an economy of practices at any level needs to account for capital and status in all its forms, and to look for institutions and struggles (thus history) that shape their distribution and conversion from one form to another, and their capacities in different concrete situations (Bourdieu 1990, introduction). Social fields guide these situations. We cannot accurately capture the possible and achieved functionings of capital without looking at what happens to bearers in different concrete situations across different fields.

**Field**

Bourdieu focused on the multiple and variably autonomous social fields of instituted action. Analytically fields are configurations or networks of objective deontic or simply power relations based on different configurations of capital endowments. They are defined by their impact on occupants (individuals, groups or organisations), meaning by their affect on occupants actions and the efficacy of their capitals. This ‘field effect’ shapes how they can access the benefits constituted and/or accumulated by the field of action, and how they may negotiate their deontic position relative to others. Field effects are inferred by the structure of positions among actors and by the practices and perceptions of those occupying different positions (or status functions). “Both spaces, that of objective positions and that of subjective stances, must be analysed together, treated as ‘two translations of the same sentence’ (Bourdieu and Wacquant 1992, 105). Fields consist of practices of cooperation, resignation and contestation over the institutions enabling the accumulation and distribution of capitals. “Empirically it is one and the same thing to determine what the field is, where its limits lie, and to determine the species of capital at play with what [functional] limits” (Bourdieu and Wacquant, 1993: 98-99). Resources that are not limited by nature or design and which cannot become so, do not become capitals in the Bourdieuan sense.

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25 Bourdieu tends to discuss capitals in terms of economic, cultural, and social species
Established fields exert status functions on any actor and the capitals they bear. If a person wants to be fielded by a political party during the next election they will need to display the dispositions and capacities associated with a viable candidate. A politician can only be recognised and act as such within an instituted political field. The capitals that have value and denote status and capacity in a political party may have little value, or different values, in different fields. The crucial point here is that capital’s efficacy and form are constituted in relation to fields (Bourdieu and Wacquant 1992: 101). For example, chess players are constrained by the field (the powers of each piece in terms of how they can move). However, the power of each piece at a given place and time is also affected by how the other player moves. Meaningful action is rule bound and shaped by power distributions (thus structured), yet outcomes cannot be reduced either to the rules or to the capacities of individual pieces. Efficacy is shaped significantly by subsequent successions of actions of both players over time. It is structured, relational and embodied.

The structure of the field and the succession of struggles and coordination overtime produce different vested interests and opportunity costs in regards to the status quo of field operations. Altering instituted practices is not simply a matter of choice, but more likely a matter of conflict and extrication from established deontic relations, which carry risks. Vested interests refer to the objective requirements and aversions rooted in the quantity and structure of capitals in different structural positions.26 Vested interests are constituted by the field because of real or perceived scarcity and past unequal distributions. These produce certain demands to be dealt with and certain benefits to be retained. Both activities come with risks that are not equally distributed across positions. Opportunity costs—what is likely to be risked or gained by a course of action—influence what vested interests are addressed and in what order. These two effects effectively pre-group actors into categories of varying degrees of predisposition to accrue advantage, stasis or disadvantage from a field. Unequal endowments of capitals leading to different vested interests and opportunity costs are three ways fields influence actors’ abilities to acquire capitals and to convert them into functionings. The word “influence” is important because people can misdiagnose or ignore these situational factors or be thwarted by the actions of others. By way of summing up the relation of field and capital, I quote Bourdieu at length:

Thus the capital, in the sense of the means of appropriating the product of accumulated labour in the objectified state which is held by a given agent, depends for its real efficacy on the form of the distribution of the means of appropriating the accumulated and objectively available resources; and the relationship of appropriation between an agent and the resources objectively available, and hence the profits they produce, is mediated by the relationship of (objective and/or subjective) competition between himself and the other possessors of capital competing for the same goods, in which scarcity — and through it

26 For example, it is a vested interest of the owners of the means of production to protect this resource from being appropriated by others and to be averse to increased unionisation or peasant movements in their area. It is a vested interest of brand stores to be averse to informal markets and hawkers.
social value — is generated. The structure of the field, i.e., the unequal distribution of capital, is the source of the specific effects of capital, i.e., the appropriation of profits and the power to impose the laws of functioning of the field most favourable to capital and its reproduction (Bourdieu, 2008: 284).

Referring back to the general logic of institutions: X becomes Y in context C; X functioning as Y can do or perform A, B, and C. Moving down to a meso-level analysis we can state: X becomes Capital (Y) in Field (F); X functioning as Y with Bearer (B) has value set A, and utility set B, and susceptibility set C. Status functions of bearer and capital are based upon status indicators (cultural capitals and liabilities) that are collectively accepted by those acting within a particular field.

A field is not a fixed; it can be altered when distributions and efficacies of capitals shift in line with shifts in field aims, status functions, or status indicators. Fields are not closed-off from external forces; they can be altered, colonised, or quashed by other fields (Woolford and Curran, 2011: 586). For example, the Government of Indian’s Jawaharlal Nehru National Urban Renewal Mission (JNNURM) fund conditionalities are an attempt by the central state to restructure certain fields of municipal governance. Implementing e-governance and one stop ‘customer facilitation centres’ in municipalities is an attempt to overtime kill-off fields operating within municipal service provision that require discretion, opacity and multiple transactions.

**Habitus**

So far actors have been reduced to ‘bearers of capital.’ For example, Bourdieu and Wacquant (1992) argue that:

> People are at once founded and legitimised to enter the field by their possessing a definite configuration of properties [...] Social agents are bearers of capitals and depending on their position and trajectory in the field by virtue of their endowments (volume and structure of capital) they have a propensity to orient themselves toward the preservation or subversion of distributions (108).

The concept of habitus softens this structuralism. Bourdieu and Norbert Elias argued that the majority of human activity are guided by one’s habitus—the taken for-granted, habitual, or second nature capability of interpreting and acting within one’s instituted lifeworld instantaneously:

> Both Bourdieu and Elias Saw that the responses generated from ‘within’ by the habitus tend not to be the responses of thinking (let alone calculating) subjects standing apart from explicitly conceptualised objects. Both rejected the view that real-time actions of living agents require the mediation of self-contained and explicit mental representations [...] The practical appraisals of the habitus-in-action tended to be those of the ‘open’ or ‘exposed’ person who has gradually come to feel so at home in (or at least non-discursively absorbed by) an objective situation that time- and energy-consuming explicit mental representations might only get in the way (Pau1le et al., 2012: 72).
Cognition theorists argue that it would take too much cognitive capacity for people to be always thinking and rationally calculating (Swindler, 2001). People do not have the cognitive capacity to internalise complex symbolic systems. We are normally unable to give coherent and detailed accounts for why we did what we did, how we know what we know, and why things turned out they way they did (Lizardo and Strand, 2010). One’s habitus incorporates from social fields sets of templates, intuitions and practices (formatting) that facilitate navigation within and across different fields of their everyday social-material world in real time. The external forms the cognitive and corporeal, not only by face-to-face and discursive based interactions, rather the world is also sensed through practical and tacit non-propositional knowledge stored in objects, places and social fields (Harvey, 2005; quoted in Lizardo and Strand, 2010). These types of knowledge shape cognition because we are encompassed in experiential and material (in addition to discursive) environments. Recurrent experiences, over time, shape our perceptions, bodily conduct, and or impulsive and compulsive tendencies (Bourdieu, 1990). Rather than acquiring a total culture in its symbolic complexity, institutions become embodied, i.e., stored in procedural memory or practical consciousness which manifest as perceptions and practices in real-time social action (Lizardo and Strand, 2010). However, if our practices are based significantly on practical consciousness and tacit knowledge, and if we do not have the cognitive capacity to store and process cultural systems and complete discourses--then where does the perception of coherence come from? How are we able to produce and maintain complex phenomena like corporations, municipalities, or states over time? We have this capacity because our habitus is susceptible to both the institutional and ambient aspects of the world. Cues and coherence come from the external social-spatial environment (Swindler, 2001). They function as catalysts or guideposts that call up particular practices and expectations. In this way they make up for gaps and incongruities in our discursive and symbolic knowledge. We are able to navigate (with variable agility) interactions with agents of organisations or institutions that are not of our own making and fairly opaque to us, because our habitus is the mechanism that responds to cues from our material and social contexts. Bourdieu sees agency as the interplay between habitus, capitals, and field that is necessary for the continuation and alteration of practice.

We have all experienced feeling out of place. For example, when I first started taking the local trains in Mumbai my experience taking trains in Holland was not transferable. I had to learn how to move my body, how to negotiate getting a ticket, the implicit norms for getting on and off the train and how to shift my position in relation to the exits en route. Overtime this required less and less thought to where I could manage on autopilot. I developed a habitus for Mumbai local train travel. Habitus does not have the same efficacy across different fields. Aspects of it can become a cultural capital in one field and a liability in another. A Dalit’s bodily comportment and cognitive disposition can be a capital within fields where actors are also Dalits, and a liability in fields where they are not. This points to the ‘systematicity’ that the habitus’s of those with similar backgrounds can form, a practical unity, the is-ness of the everyday. Habitus accounts for how social context
and situations work in and through us, as well as on us (Bourdieu, 1990: 63-66). The status quo does not require informed consent to endure, but rather a lack of active refusal in the form of reformatory or transformative practices.

When one’s habitus does not work well in a particular field this causes anxiety, uncertainty and confusion. These events of context habitus mismatch can cause one’s social context or concrete situation to become a site for evaluation and calculation. While in a reflexive mode, people have the capacity to analyse fields in terms of biases and reflect on their own taken-for-granted habitus to rationally design strategies and/or carry out tactics to alter arrangements between status indicators and status functions. However, it is mistaken to take this type of agent to be the norm. Actors are not equally disposed and resourced to be able to strategically engage how field, capital and habitus are functioning in prolonged, successive and organised actions.

Habitus becomes an important regulative principle for researchers as it highlights that one’s reflexive and calculative modes cannot be presumed to be the most active and efficacious. It also reminds us of the limited knowledge of any individual. We are all alienated from the workings of large parts of the social worlds we inhabit, and the conscious self is alienated from understanding many aspects of its own behaviour and inclinations. This makes observation of concrete situations crucial to provisionally fill in some of these gaps.

4.5 Geography of Fields

While Bourdieu emphasised the instituted or social space of fields, less time was spent on how material space and instituted fields are dialectically linked. Empirically, fields are geographically grounded by the location of actors who constitute the field and the spatiality or reach of their influence. The extent to which the practices and stakes of a field intentionally and unintentionally shape material and social geographies is another significant field effect on the actors and spaces within its reach. Following Soja (1989) and Harvey (1996) this effect circles back and has the capacity to influence the trajectories of fields. Issues of location, territoriality and territorialisation practices are important for finding and mapping fields on the ground and discussing how they affect and are affected by geography. Locational aspects are the easiest to study: attributes of the built environment, population demographics, relevant state statutes and policies, and other fields present. Beyond locational attributes, it becomes more complex.

Territoriality

Homologous with the structure-agency dynamic, territoriality refers to a set of spatial attributes and relations guiding actors’ interests and practices of territorialisation. Geographer Raffestin (1984: 141), argued that, “the limit of one’s territory is the limit of one’s mediators.” John Allen’s push for a topological, rather than topographic
view, of power argues that issues of reach, proximity, and presence are functions of configurations of social-spatial relationships not of physical distance:

Power relationships, in topological terms, are not so much located in space or extended across it, as compose the spaces of which they are a part...it’s the structure of the adjoining relationship between actors, not their actual distance from on another, that produces spatialities of power (Allen, 2009: 206).

Relatedly, actor-network theory is about accounting for the reach of influence, of how the work and resources of actants are coordinated and kept in sync enough to regularly achieve certain ends or goals. According to Bruno Latour (2005), social phenomena need continuation not reproduction. Central to the continuation of a social form is the work of intermediaries and mediaries that get things (for instance, authority, CARs, and people) from A to B to C, and so on. Intermediaries are conduits where input and output are fairly similar. Mediaries need to be looked for when we note regularly occurring differences between input and output, i.e., when what actant A signalled, sent or relayed to B is not the same as what B carries on to C in some significant way. The ratio of intermediaries to mediaries is important in all areas of social-spatial inquiry. The more intermediaries, the more institutionalised a social form or process is. Latour (2005) argues:

Action is not done under the full control of consciousness; action should rather be felt as a node, a knot, and a conglomerate of many surprising sets of agencies that have to be slowly disentangled. It is this venerated source of uncertainty that we wish to render vivid again in the odd expression of actor-network [...] an actor is made to act by many others...By definition, action is dislocated. Action is borrowed, distributed, suggested, influenced, dominated, betrayed, translated...Work-nets could allow one to see the labour that goes on in laying down net-works: the first as an active mediator, the second as a stabilised set of intermediaries (44 & 46).

The intensive and extensive resonances of actor-networks do not cover or fill-in the areas of things and people they attempt to coordinate. The idea that state authority and laws saturate a consolidated state’s formal territory is, empirically, a fantasy, albeit a productive one. On this Latour argues that:

Contrary to substance, surface, spheres, and domains that fill every centimetre of what they bind and delineate, nets, networks, and work-nets leave everything they don’t connect simply unconnected. Is not a net made-up, first and foremost, out of empty space? (ibid.: 242).

Actor-networks of the state, for example, have topological and uneven reach and presence in the lives and places of its subjects or citizens. Comparing what happens on the ground in centrally designed and funded poverty programs highlights this. After observing numerous discrepancies between the SJSRY programme and how it had been taken up at the local level in three municipalities in the Mumbai Metropolitan Region, I interviewed a high-ranking officer of the Ministry of Urban Housing and Poverty Alleviation to discuss these findings.
He responded that these are known and widespread issues but that:

If state governments don’t care enough about helping the poor to keep local officials and staff in line that’s not the fault of our programmes... We design programs, guidelines and secure funds... we cannot be everywhere (Mohanty, Personal Interview, Feb. 2010).

True enough, they cannot be everywhere. Importantly the institutions of law and professionalism in the bureaucratic field tied to neutrality and efficient implementation are things thought to compensate for the problem of governing at a distance. This case points to a lack of functioning intermediating institutions. The funds and the programs (at least in name and rhetoric) reach the ground, where another logic or agency takes over ‘formatting’ or ‘programming’ how these resources move and are used, not used, or miss-used. The mediaries (or fields in the language of Bourdieu) shaping this shift in status functions become phenomena in need of inquiry. Despite concepts that indicate coverage and saturation like globalisation, jurisdiction, and territory, there are many structural and cultural holes. Structural holes refer to informational, legal, administrative, political gaps within and between: divisions, scale-levels, fields, networks, classes etc. Cultural holes refer to gaps or differences in regulative and constitutive rules, discourses, or practices (Pachucki and Breiger, 2010). These holes become important stakes or foci both for those mediating and intermediating external and internal reach and influence. Mediaries and intermediaries presuppose structural and cultural gaps or in-congruencies within an institutional configuration like government, for example. In principle, one expects to find intermediation, rather than mediation between the different scales of government and between the different departments or divisions within the different scale-levels in settled states with what Michael Mann refers to as strong, ‘infrastructural power’ (2008). Occupying these gaps is a type of meta-capital or capacity constitutive of the social-territorial limits of field effects. Mediators and intermediaries shape the status functions assigned to capitals and the bearers of capital, and trace the limits of autonomy, reach and presence (in terms of effect) of principals and agents. Mediators give state territoriality, for example, its various social, political, and cultural vernaculars or heterogeneity, “that too easily become treated as little more than ‘noise’ in a model that seeks to identify generalised attributes” (Murphy, 2012: 166).

Territorialisation

Territorial practices or technologies of dominant actors, intermediaries and mediators target and shape both extensive relations of maintaining strategic distances (social, cultural, political economic) between other actors for logistical27 interests, and for purposes of policy and project implementation or thwarting. They are forms of borders and border-work (Paasi, 2009; Berghenti, 2010). They also target and shape intensive relations of (inter) dependence and affect. They have the capacity to bind

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27 Logistics is the management of the flow of resources between the point of origin and the point of consumption in order to meet some requirements.
and separate. Borders (both institutional and material) have the capacity to shape the speed, reach and magnitudes of projects (instigated elsewhere) such as: decentralisation, democratation, privatisation, digitisation, informationalisation, eviction, and gentrification. Boundaries are reinforced by territoriality; they are derivative of past inscriptions or formatting effects of previous sequences of territorialisation. However, to remain effective and affective they need to be regularly tended to, performed, and enacted. Territorialisation entails different forms of social efficacy (capital/habitus combinations) as the point is to shape the organisation and capacities of things and people in a particular location to align enough with the stakes or goals of a field. Not every territorialisation is an intentional act or institution. For example, the extent prior distributions of capitals shape vested interests and opportunity costs, and thus future action, have a territorialising capacity beyond the intentionality of actors involved in these distributions. Actors are always rationally or habitually interpreting, negotiating, enacting, subverting or ignoring borders. Borderwork requires knowledge of people, places and processes to shape them. Spaces or fields of interest need to be rendered “calculable” or legible enough to become intervene-able. Information gathering, mobilisation, categorisation, and processing are as foundational to securing territory as practices of violence and sovereignty (Hannah, 2009). Legibility is produced by inscribing areas with references that allow information about people, CARs, and activities to be tied to specific locations. Information makes interventions possible. Influencing the process of information gathering and knowledge production (i.e., of mediation and intermediation) is a central stake in any field. Following Hannah (2009), it would be near impossible to govern—to put powers into practice in ways that come to be perceived as legitimate—in any capacity without the step of making territory calculable in ways conducive to certain ends. Fields only achieve semi-permanence or quasi-territorial autonomy. Fields can and do directly or indirectly impact each other. Territorialisation causes turbulences that can become the impetus of politics, policies, or resistance of varying degrees of visibility and formality. To sum-up, mediators and intermediaries on both sides of a boundary or structural or cultural hole, and the media (capitals) at their disposal to do something within or across fields becomes the conceptual core of tracing the territoriability and territorialising practices and effects of fields. Different fields, thus different territorialities, can exist in the same physical space with variable reach, presence, and complementarity.

The difference space makes in activating capitals and achievable functionings

To keep the difference between potential and achieved functionings of capital and the relation between topographical and topological spatialities of power, we need to reinforce the critical realist distinction between the potential causal powers or capacities of all objects and what becomes exercised and actualised in different sequences of action. Mediators, given their composition or structure, have sets of powers and susceptibilities. These potential powers we will refer to as capitals. These under certain socio-spatial conditions become active or exercised via assigning of status functions, practices and deontic relations. Active capacities will be referred to
as capital$_2$. Active capacities are also shaped by other objects (or if you prefer actants) with reach or presence in a field of action. This means that individual intentions or plans rarely match trajectory and outcomes with a high degree of accuracy. A game of chess illustrates this point. At the beginning each side has the same objective amount of capital$_1$. Both presumably intend to win and have some strategy for this. However, this tells us nothing about the conversion of $C_1$ to $C_2$ during the game.

Capital$_1$ is both spatially diffuse and unevenly acquired and thereby suitable for topographical approaches looking for distributions, holdings, or concentrations. Here social-spatial context makes a significant difference, particularly for capital$_2$ and eventual outcomes or achieved functionings. Capital$_2$ and its effects (or if you prefer achieved functionings) are more topological. There is a mix of resistance and complicity during these successions of deontic relations and actions. Andrew Sayer, in Seeking the Geographies of Power (2004) argues:

In order for B to be dominated, seduced, manipulated by A or to submit to the authority of A, B must have the properties or susceptibilities — which may derive from its location within wider structures or networks — that make this possible, for not just any object can be dominated (265).

This is another way of saying that status functions and status indicators necessary for $C_1$ to become $C_2$, endowed to particular bearers, is derived from the field or fields governing this process. All this is to labour the point that $C_1$ is necessary, but not sufficient for achieved functionings at any scale level from person to planet.

The above insights from Allen, Latour and Sayer, help develop the latent spatialities of Bourdieu’s field, capital, and habitus nexus by shining more light on mediation and intermediation. Capital, as instituted formations of social efficacy, can be seen as media that carry different configurations of information, materiality and meaning. Their status attributes circumscribe the ways they can be converted, transported, accumulated, or distributed within various processes and projects by different bearers. The efficacy of the deployment or use of capital$_2$ is shaped by the fields assigning status functions and switching them from capital$_1$. Fields are a type of aggregate or collective mediator or intermediator of status indicators and status functions of capitals pursuant to its aims. Fields are territorial to the extent that they shape what is included or excluded and how in the areas within reach of their activities and aims. They are territorial in that intense processes of producing and reproducing field specific capitals and the stakes they play a role in achieving, leave marks on the places fields operates within or across. These spatial inscriptions can be physical in terms of housing, services, and infrastructure. They can be social in terms of mobility or immobility—how some people and practices are more bounded than others (see Savage, 2011). They can be economic in terms of their impact on the distribution of field specific capitals, rates of conversion, and modes of transmission (Bourdieu, 2008). Together this enables an analysis of what Paasi (2009, 226) refers to as spatial socialisation, i.e., the processes by which people, arrangements and practices come to be seen and to work in a localised spatial systematicity. Importantly, the ‘gravity’ of a
field (Wacquant, 1992: 17) or the way they mediate or ‘draw in’ (Hakli, 2013) others is by shared intentionalities, or the capacity to understand the rules and stakes of the field. This pull factor helps us to avoid overly circumscribed formal or accepted territorial, topographical or scalar ‘traps’ when looking for traces of associations and brokered relationships through which activity is coordinated, built-up, relayed and deployed—or in other words how activities and status functions across time and space are converted into capabilities of various forms and resonance. Field level autonomy from other fields (law enforcement for example) become to what extent field specific institutions are drawn in, refabricated or worked-around by mediators. Table 4 lists the territoriality and territorialising dimensions of fields.

Table 4: Territoriality and Territorialisation

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Fields</th>
<th>Influence on Space</th>
<th>Influence on Actor</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Territoriality Effects</strong></td>
<td>Structural and Cultural Holes</td>
<td>Vested interests, Opportunity costs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Calculated territory</td>
<td>Perceived opportunities and obstacles—realm of the possible</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Distributions of ( C_1 )</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Rules and stakes of the fields</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Territorialisatio n Practices</strong></td>
<td>Border-work Mediating and intermediation</td>
<td>Practices of engagement or avoidance (( C_2 ))</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Interventions and tactics of capture, control, or</td>
<td>Political subjectivity and avenues</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>occupying</td>
<td>for claims-making (chains of mediaries, mediaries)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**4.6 Practical Relevance**

Applying Bourdieu’s economy of practice (capital/habitus + field = logic of practice) to livelihoods or capabilities approaches highlights several factors crucial for understanding the social-spatial dynamics shaping achieved functionings of capital endowments. First, capital cannot be adequately labelled, quantified or qualified accurately outside of field effects beyond \( C_1 \). Second, the logic of practice informing choices and activities, and the determinations of processes and eventual outcomes derives from the interplay of capital, habitus, and field that activates some of \( C_1 \) into \( C_2 \) and which continues to shape capital2 into certain achieved functionings. Third, those living in the same social-spatial conditions likely have a similar habitus resulting in a generalised style or systematicity of practice, a sort of encompassing, but not totalising, lifeworld that exerts a stabilising force of its own.

Taking the force social-spatial contexts and fields in particular have on the form and capacities of capitals problematise a priori categorisation and assessment of capabilities. Education normally is categorised as human capital in livelihoods
approaches, because it adds skills and certifications that should increase the market value of labour. However, it can also be a form of cultural capital—an indicator of status and certain dispositions. Both these values and possible functionings are intimately connected to the context: in terms of job market, influence of ascribed status over achieved, and the extent formal higher education is seen as sign of distinction that has positive spill over effects in other fields. An actor’s ability to convert capital that is no longer very viable or valuable in one field to another is another contingency related to the volume and structure of social and cultural capital in terms of status functions. This moves us from capital1 to capital2. Achieved or accumulated functionings overtime are also intertwined with successions of deontic relations and the tangle of activities significantly mediated and intermediated by others. These two circuits of contingency are what people-centred livelihoods and capabilities approaches have yet to incorporate sufficiently. Bourdieu’s conceptual nexus, refracted through critical realism and enhanced by a selective incorporation of topological geography, will not bring everything out of the dark in terms of social-spatial directional guidance and activators of capital1 and steerers of capital2, but it can decrease the ratio between accounted and unaccounted determinations. Figure 17 displays this heuristic model.

For example, only focusing on the material attributes of slums in Indian cities leads to the conclusion that they are the result of deprivation, lack of affordable housing, and inefficient cash-strapped municipalities. If we look at the context shaping urban inequality/duality through an institutional ethnography of concrete situations a more robust and tangled causal configuration forms. Available C1 and habitus can be seen as reasons for why many slum residents do not for a regularised flat or fret about area cleanliness. Adaptive preferences and practices over time cause people to accept what they do not perceive as changeable given their social-spatial context. The absence of viable alternatives, combined with poor public education systems, can make accepting the status quo the more logical route. The desire for a "world-class" is not yet a collective intentionality that has encompassed these cities. The slum residents I spent time with want better water pressure/duration and tenure security. Beyond this most will “if they have 1000 rupees will spend 1000 rupees, they don’t want to save and have to pay more and on set dates”29. Priya, a cleaning lady makes around 8,000 a month and her household has two other earners, so they make on average around 20,000 rupees each month, but they are not compelled to leave the slum. "When we can we buy chicken and expensive food [...] travel to our village [...] the men drink and enjoy [...] that is the way". Some slum residents could afford better-serviced flats—this problematises an easy association between slums and individual economic deprivation.

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28 See Jeffrey 2009 for how highly educated men in India, who could not find employment related to their degrees, have turned to political fixing and brokering for a good example.

29 Informal discussion, March 2010, Self Help Group
Figure 17: Heuristic Model for Field Effects

No doubt, sizeable numbers live in slums out of economic necessity, but it is likely that fairly sizeable minorities have other viable options. Their relatively okay perception of their lifestyle in addition to inequalities obstructs development because too little dissatisfaction impedes motivation to acquire more capital or better services (see Schwartz, 2004). Middle classes and elites tend to see different livelihood and lifestyle choices as possible and thus desirable goals—hence their increasingly active Resident Welfare Associations in many large Indian Cities (the turning of C₁ into C₂). ³⁰ Capitalists and financiers are often dissatisfied with present socio-spatial setups. They want to restructure the city in ways that allow for more capital circulation and accumulation. The habitus and capital differences combined with urban development policies that privilege the needs of professionals and finance capital together account for dualising cities. Lower satisfaction plus adequate or surplus capital, and discipline = being able to mount an effort (capital) to remake the city in your heart’s and (pocket’s) desire (an achieved functioning). This means that shifting development towards strengthening poor and working class wellbeing

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³⁰ Ghertner 2011b
requires cultivating a habitus with what Tania Murray Li terms the “will to improve” here referring to the discipline to engage in processes of capital accumulation.

Animating the livelihoods or capabilities approach with Bourdieu’s economy of practice, directs us to the relational and embodied susceptibilities of citizenship when gauging achieved/able functionings of slum household’s capitals, when, for example, they want to acquire a water connection. Chatterjee’s (2004) argues that government actors regard the urban poor as ‘populations’ with different normative status attributes that indicate degrees of deviance and deservedness. The real-time sorting of one as a citizen or population, in the language of Chatterjee, stems both from one’s neighbourhood and from their appearance and behaviour. If this household becomes perceived as squatters (i.e., X becomes Y in context C) who are not entitled to request a connection, and they end up going through broker to deal with the water department, then whether or not a water connection is achieved no longer only, or even mainly, can be attributable to this household’s capital. The resolution, or achieved functioning, is also the product of successions of actions, guided by deontic relations, which cannot be reduced to the household, but rather more to the field of political society.

Distinguishing between C1 and C2 of relatively deprived areas and households and coming up with plans to increase them, to make them more resilient to negative susceptibilities and open to positive processes of change to increase achieved functionings, requires changing our approach to match up better with the social ontology of these phenomena. Habitus and the field constitute the form and efficacy of C2. They are not context or actor independent inputs and outputs. The succession of actions, relations, and thus numerable contingencies involved in shifts from C1 to C2, conversions of C2 into achieved functionings, and to more or less C1 means that causation is over-determined and unlikely to be linear or transparent. This conceptualisation shifts the focus to the field or fields engaged in the production, distribution, and/or the deployment and accumulation of capitals related to key or essential livelihood functionings such as: housing, basic services and infrastructure, citizenship and employment. How and to what extent the fields present in a household or localities situational context are susceptible to dominant or formalised logics and practices present in the broader social-spatial context need to be traced to reveal mismatches between policies and local social-spatial realities. For example, considering chapter 3, it can be argued that political society is prevalent at the local level and that issue of salutary neglect and decades of laissez-faire urbanism strengthen the immunity of local fields to federal policies and projects. This method begins by determining the field that seems to have cornered the market, so to speak, on whatever capital or capitals necessary to achieve the livelihood functioning one is studying or trying to strengthen. Then the perceptions, and more importantly the practices, of field occupants are observed and catalogued to better understand the power relations and stakes of this field. The next step is to look for actors or other fields, which given their properties and authority, could be or should be regulating this field or, indeed, perhaps carrying out its functions. To the degree this is not
happening in practice, we need to look for mediations to account for this. Given that mediations or mediators and intermediations or intermediaries are key actors and ‘processes points’ steering capital into sequences shaping achieved functionings; these actors and processes need to be located post-haste. Together programming livelihoods or capabilities approaches in this manner, offers a grounded approach for examining the capacities of capitals and the social-spatial structure and logic constitutive of these capacities. This approach can also offer a more realistic assessment of how accountable or susceptible a field is to residents and other authorities.

4.7 Chapter-wise Elaboration

Looking at urban livelihoods with Bourdieu's conceptual nexus shows ‘livelihood capitals’ or ‘capability sets’ to be largely derivative on their own. They are not good candidates from which to infer future actions, agency and outcomes, or for explicating past ones. The C₁ residents bear and what happens when they engage in activities and arrangements to convert these into necessary or desired functionings (C₂), and with what eventual achieved functionings or livelihood outcomes cannot be sufficiently deduced from a survey of their present endowment. This chapter justifies my choice to look at the social-spatial context and the deontic livelihood arrangements residents in different formations live in and respond to (rather than the attributes of residents themselves) to better understand forms of occupancy, locality development and municipal citizenship. Residents will always generate aggregate effects on their habitat and those attempting to govern it. For example, if an area starts to draw more middle-class residents then their lifestyle and level of disposable income can affect the cost of living and the types of services (and service providers) available there. Aggregate effects are related to but different from intentional and organised activities directly targeting how urban formations change or not in order to accommodate particular political, economic, or cultural vested interests.

Each chapter of this thesis relates to a section of this framework. Chapter 1 fills in the context of context by looking at different political, economic, policy and academic factors argued to be contributing to the rise of urban inequalities. Chapter 2 reviews the critical realist method of conceptualisation that helps capture how and why C₁ becomes C₂. Chapter 3 discusses the governance context by elaborating upon the relationship between municipal capacities, the Government of Maharashtra’s decentralisation processes, and the Government of India’s interests in the tempo and form urbanisation takes with the finding that political society is the dominant institutional form of governance in Mira-Bhayandar and Kalyan-Dombivli. Chapter 6 focuses on MCs and how they can be both agents of development and are present in every ‘network of urbanisation’ and in related fields of service provision and protection from eviction or demolition. Their relations with residents and their relations and roles within the local state, and how they intermediate and mediate the relations and engagements between residents and the local state are shown to play a
structuring role on residents $C_1$ and the capacities of their $C_2$ related to housing and basic services. Chapter 5 describes the political society networks operating in the field of urbanisation, in terms of housing and the morphology of serviced and serviceable municipal territory. It discusses these in terms of the actors and the relations among them, and in terms of territorial aspects, namely the cultural and structural holes present between the local state and different urban formations and how these are instrumentalised. Chapter 7 explores the field of water provision by mapping the vested actors, their interconnections, and how their practices cohere into the capability to politically capture the municipal water department in Mira-Bhayandar. Chapter 8 leverages the previous findings to argue how the production of different urban formations can be traced back to the institutions and practices of political society. Through political society certain networks of actors are able to compromise or circumvent municipal authority through the de facto control of land and its development. Together these give a richer and more nuanced understanding of the situations and social-spatial contexts shaping the capacities of residents capitals, and their achieved functionings in terms of occupancy security and locality development.
CHAPTER 5: AGENTS OF CHANGE AND OBSTRUCTION: MUNICIPAL COUNCILLORS AND URBAN D/DEVELOPMENT

5.1 Municipal Councillors and Urban D/development

Municipal Councillors (MCs) are elected to represent the residents of their electoral ward at both the administrative ward level in ward committees and at the city level in the legislative wing of municipal corporations. While their official mandate is small,\(^{32}\) this chapter will show that in practice MCs play a constitutive role in locality development and forms of occupancy and civic politics. To add more depth and nuance to the role MCs play in the development of these cities it is useful to divide development, following Hart 2009, into its two differently packaged but interrelated parts—little ‘d’ and big ‘D’ development. Little ‘d’ development in this case refers to the creative destruction required for capitalist urbanisation—i.e. increased capital circulation and accumulation through real estate and the built environment. Big ‘D’ development refers to social programs and interventions targeting people and areas yet to benefit from economic growth or who have been negatively impacted by the socio-spatial and economic shifts it necessitates. India’s neo-liberal\(^{33}\) leaning urban Development policies designed at the federal level and implemented at the local level focus on infrastructure development, micro-credit, self-help, self-employment and staple subsidies for those below the poverty line. These actions are supposed to bring about inclusive growth. Development serves both to tide people and places over until the benefits of (neo) liberal capitalism reach them, and to pacify them enough to not cause problems (Hart 2009). The legitimacy of urban development hinges upon urban Development in addition to macro and international economic policies (Porter and Craig 2004).

At the macro-level policies focusing upon liberalising markets, privatisation and decentralisation dominate (Chandra, 2010; Patnaik et al., 2010). Cities are encouraged


\(^{32}\) Others have assessed Maharashtra’s compliance legislation for the 74th Constitutional Amendment, which mandated decentralisation, in detail (cf. Baud & de Wit, 2008; Palshikar, 2002; NCRMC, 2000). The state holds sway both financially and administratively over urban local bodies. By legislating but not enacting, and by holding decisions in permanent states of being “under consideration,” the state undermines self-government. The State keeps de facto control over local matters concerning D/development funds and decisions. The consensus is that too few formal fiscal, political, or administrative powers have been devolved.

\(^{33}\) This paper uses Wacquant’s 2009 definition of neo-liberal as a, “political project aiming to remake the nexus of market, state and citizenship from above.” While this project has met differential reception and adaptation, four specific logics remain ubiquitous: (1) economic deregulation and the avowal of market-mechanisms for organising more and more human activities, (2) welfare state devolution, retraction and recomposition to expand and support the intensification of the reification of labor, land, and public goods, (3) articulation of the trope of individual responsibility in all spheres of one’s livelihood, and (4) and expansive, intrusive, and proactive penal apparatus to deal with those who resort to illicit activities or who are associated with blight or obsolescence (306-307).
to focus on FIRE (finance, insurance and real estate) sectors (Nachane, 2006). Planners, developers, elite urbanites, and their partners in government want Mumbai to transform into Shanghai with Indian characteristics and the rest of the region to become sufficiently ‘world-class’ and ‘slum free.’ According to the Chief Secretary of the Ministry of Urban Housing and Poverty Reduction the economic growth this restructuring brings will trickle down:

Once India reaches double digit growth backward linkages (trickle down) begins and all those benefiting from growth in more formal high-skilled sectors will need more: drivers, peons, and domestics plus will be able to support more of the vendors/hawkers etc. in the informal low-skilled sector. Those left out of these linkages (Dalits, low-caste women, and Adivasis) will be propped up with government subsidies (Mohanty, personal interview, 2010).

Rehabilitation and redevelopment programs manage to gloss over housing deprivations. Slums and other struggling areas with overwrought basic services and infrastructure remain prevalent. High levels of inequality remain the norm rather than the exception. Dreams of producing world-class inclusive cities often shatter when they meet the human and political geography. Much has been written about the shift from government to governance—i.e. from a focus on citizens to a focus on creating a good business climate—that neoliberal urban strategies in India attempt to embed and the injustice issues these raise (cf. Chopra, 2003; Chatterjee, 2004 & 2008; Banerjee-Guha, 2002 & 2009). However, few focus on the agents or obstructors of urban D/development—the street-level actors upon whom the promise and folly of interventions often rest. D/development rests significantly on local-level actors because while the policy-sphere presumes a Weberian like liberal democratic republic, on the ground informality (practices and institutions not instituted or regulated by law) prevails. Informality in governance, occupancy and work is the norm rather than the exception in urban India (Harriss, 2006; Roy, 2005; Benjamin, 2008; Harriss-White, 2010). The majority of land development violates one or more building laws or master plans (Roy, 2009; Bhan, 2009) and some recent studies put the percentage of people at work in the informal “unorganised” sector as high as 90 percent (Sammadar, 2009). These two aspects together mean that urban governance—defined broadly as the organising of social, political, economic, spatial, and environmental relations, and requisite classification of people and places to set entitlements, responsibilities and modes of discipline—is largely guided by informal institutions. In practice application of laws and codes is flexible and negotiable depending on the capacity and legitimacy of those attempting to govern economic and spatial practices and those attempting to thwart or alter these actions. Informal does

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34 While I find the goal of inclusivity problematic as it does not require better ‘rights to the city’ in terms of access and a say in how it should be shifted and shaped going forward, it is the term used by both those focused on urban Development and urban development in India and as such I will not dispute the legitimacy of it in this article.

35 Some notable exceptions are: Anjaria, 2009; and de Wri & Bemers, 2009.

36 Discipline should be understood here in the Foucaultian biopolitical/governmentality sense. It refers to how governance actors create the types of places and people their interests, visions, and desires require.
not mean ungoverned or unstructured, and MCs alternate between mediating (brokering, gatekeeping, blocking parts of interventions or reforms) and intermediating (fixing bottlenecks and monitoring implementation) when D/development projects and policies reach the city in general and their electoral ward in particular.

This paper focuses on MCs—an actor too often demeaned, minimised or left out entirely in urban D/development studies. Both flat conceptions of MCs (that they only ‘thugs’ interested in exploiting the poor and government coffers for their personal gain, or that their official mandate is too small to bother with) are rebuked by this chapter that shows how the regular activities of MCs both facilitate and obstruct D/development and structure the contours of occupancy and citizenship in their wards.

5.2 Theoretical Framework

Lipsky (1980) argued that policy implementation and success comes down to the street-level bureaucrats in street-level bureaucracies who actually enact it on the ground. “Policy is not best understood as made in legislatures or by top-level administrators, because in important ways it is made in the daily encounters people have with street-level actors” (Lipsky, 1980, p. xii). Their practices construct the forms policies and projects take on during implementation and daily operations. People do not experience urban D/development policies directly rather they experience them via interactions at the municipality, ward offices, MC offices and in their homes and neighbourhoods via social workers, party workers, tax/fee collectors, demolitions crews and developers. These players influence how policies and interventions manifest and thus how people perceive the D/development in two ways. First, the coping strategies they take up in relation to situational pressures, such as limited resources, skyrocketing demand and powerful vested interests affect how services and resources are allocated and how different people are processed. Secondly, opportunities for personal or political gain (given levels of discretion) impact the degree implementation goes as designed. While MCs are elected politicians, fieldwork reveals that they in many ways act as street-level bureaucrats (SLBs). Most junior and executive engineers, as well as assistant and district municipal commissioners, in the municipality often rely on MCs’ street-level knowledge either because they do not know the ground realities very well, or because they are too apathetic or overworked to find out for themselves (cf. Pellissery, 2007; SARC, 2007; van Dijk, 2007). By default and out of interest to deliver patronage to accumulate political capital, MCs often decide who gets what in terms of urban Development in their electoral wards. As such, they can be considered to be SLBs as well as politicians. This makes them important actors to include when looking at the capacity of individual or household capitals related to housing and locality development. To avoid the erasure of stratified and informalised governance society concepts of civil society and citizen need to be divided in two; into civil and political society and
citizens and populations (following Chatterjee, 2004). Analytically, citizens refer to residents who seem to comply with norms of propertied citizenship, obey laws, pay taxes, and thus can have rights-based interactions within the market, the state and civil society. ‘Populations’ refer to those whose residence and livelihood activities contravene formal norms private property, valued work, and bourgeois aesthetics. Therefore state, market and civil society actors do not regard them and their associations as having the same rights or ability to participate in governance as civil society. Populations rest upon negative normative bases implying deviance and degrees of (un)deservingness which codifies and rationalises the exclusion and adverse incorporation of certain groups when it comes to tending to their spatial and civic needs. This makes civil society primarily the domain of middle and elite classes able to comply with private property regimes, tax responsibilities, and participate in the professional economy—a situation where the links between civil society, the state, and the market are clear and reinforcing. Political society—understood in this paper as including the MCs, local leaders, party-workers, street-level bureaucrats and service providers—is the civic political domain residents from formations considered to be slums engage with to access state controlled or regulated services and resources. ‘Populations’ relations with patrons, politicians, landlords, and employers are favour-based, and their relation with the state and civil society is fickle. It can be argued that political society constitutes the sphere of informal governance responsible for dealing with those rendered superfluous or inimical to ‘world-class city’ centric urban development. Its present form and functioning can be seen as an outcome of D/development process. The truncated growth and present retreat of the social arm of the state in the context of intensified marketisation, monetisation and commodification creates an ever increasing governance gap between what the formal state is willing and able to do which necessitates and empowers political society. In my fieldwork MCs emerge as slum residents key contact in political society. Key because they occupy structural holes or the gaps between the formal channels of Development and basic services and those who live and work informally—extra-legally—with few statutory entitlements (cf. Pellisser, 2007). Political society is definitely not egalitarian and has predatory tendencies. However, many MCs feel responsible for their poorer constituents and help them if they can. Ironically those who support neoliberal D/development and attempts to disempower “local politics” end up strengthening its raison d’être—structural holes between populations, the state, and D/development.

37 Chatterjee sees ‘populations’ as having no normative base. However, Baud (2009 personal communication) drew my attention to how it is more accurately described as having a negative normative base based on ideas around who is deserving and who is not.
38 Referring to the actual person who hooks up the electricity or water, or who de-clogs drains, etc.
39 Burt’s (1992) structural hole argument posits that social capital is created in networks where nodes can facilitate connections between two or more detached sections. A person or organisation occupies a structural hole, if they are perceived to be a viable access point to what would otherwise be closed off to the rest of their network.
Methodology

The arguments made in this paper began with informal discussions with the 11 MCs as well as with municipal officials and staff, three slum leaders, and three ‘middle class’ housing societies. Next each of these actors was given semi-structured interviews focused on governance processes and key actors at this level. Many subsequent visits to MC offices and wards followed allowing for valuable observational data of real time interaction and practice. Through this process MCs’ Street-level bureaucrat and political society activities emerged, and this resulted in giving them a time-use survey to see which activities took up most of their time and attention. I also probed these issues more fully with key informants—those most willing to go into the details of both their statutory and extra-statutory activities. Additionally, fieldwork does not only take place during scheduled meetings. I tried to engage in conversation regarding people’s views on and experiences with local governance and D/development on the train, in cafes, and in markets and malls. Findings were triangulated with secondary sources and previous fieldwork I carried out on MCs in Mumbai.40

5.3 Broader Political-Economic Context

Understanding the overlapping roles MCs (i.e. SLBs, nodes in political society, and occupiers of structural holes) helps frame where and how MCs can be expected to be conduits, partners, barriers, or indifferent in D/development processes. We also need to know what conditions MCs work in to know what can be reasonably expected of them in struggles over creating world-class cities and to determine which responsibilities lies with them and which lie more with the “compulsions of social structure” (Parekh, 2009: 327). Key contextual forces constraining and enabling MCs are: the conflicts and contradictions of neoliberal D/development and the normative expectations of public office holders.

Neoliberal D/development, Contradictions and Democratic Deficits

Neoliberal development requires entrepreneurial urban governance. This mode of governance gives primacy to creating a “good business climate” (Harvey 1996). Cities view themselves as being in competition for capital and model (middle-class) urbanites hence the interest in world-classing cities. The shift from government to governance makes it easier for elites to access formerly public assets (land especially) and gives business interests (developers in particular) a larger say in development plans and building/land regulations (Noor & Baud, 2009). City and regional development plans and discussions with high-level bureaucrats and planners show that the urban development regime’s top priority is to render itself desirable to middle-class professionals and to draw capital intensive businesses in the finance,

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40 van Dijk 2006.
insurance, education, and real estate development sectors that require highly-skilled labor. This focus creates more intervention in urban real estate markets (Weinstein, 2008; Nanain, 2009) and spatial organisation as a mode of capital accumulation (Roy, 2009). The probability of integrating the majority of the urban population—who are non-skilled or low-skilled workers in micro-enterprises—into this growth model becomes nonsensical and we can reasonably forecast dualising cities with stratified citizenship. Primitive accumulation and/or ‘accumulation by dispossession’ (Harvey, 2006) have not been at all sufficiently mitigated by adequate & regular wages or redistribution policies (Harriss-White, 2009). Regardless, economic policies and city development plans continue to be dominated by a corporate market logic and a desire to fashion world-class, and thus slum-free cities.

Neoliberal norms of personal responsibility and entrepreneurialism dominate urban Development policies and interventions. There is a focus on infrastructure via the BSUP (Basic Services for the Urban Poor) and a focus on self-help groups, self-employment, and micro-credit. This presumes that the liberalised market and the poor will meet if more money is spent on infrastructure to facilitate mobility and exchange of people, products, and services, and the poor realise their entrepreneurial potential with a dash of social capital and a little micro credit. This focus points to the state and capital abdicating their responsibility for decent job creation, and functioning built environments, and placing it on the shoulders of vulnerable communities. It also privileges the market over other mechanisms for Development and avoids power relations that can make the market quite a precarious place for the poorly positioned and resource deprived. Conversations with planners at the Mumbai Metropolitan Regional Development Authority, developers, and what Fernandes calls the ‘New Indian Middle-Class’ made it became clear that the optimism that cities like MB an KD should and can be ‘world-class’ is wide-spread. While there is nothing intrinsically wrong with this vision, the poor and slums are absent except for being the implicit targets of bio-political interventions focused on entrepreneurial behaviours and beautification projects respectively. Direct ways of integrating poorer groups and places into these processes, somewhat in line with their socio-spatial needs, are absent.

Entrepreneurial governance suits middle and elite classes oriented to the future, enamoured with world-classing cities, and who can compete in the professional job-market, live in a legitimate flat, and secure needed services. The ethos of self-responsibility and entrepreneurialism mixed with consumerism and faith in technology position them as the implied ‘good’ citizen large-scale urban renewal projects imply. They are the citizens who will benefit from the malls, business districts, and leisure facilities. If the government “cleans up its act” they are happy

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41 “The New Indian Middle Class represents a specific social category that has emerged in the context of economic policies of liberalisation. The boundaries of this class are defined by practices of consumption associated with the newly available consumer goods in liberalising India,” (Fernandes, 2006: 2415). This group’s lifestyle is glorified by the media and held up by proponents of liberalisation as a sort of Indian Horatio Alger story as they represent what young urbanites can achieve in Mumbai.
about the market and individual effort doing the rest. They can problem-solve quite well and profitably within neoliberalism as their associations can work directly with the government in the form of private-public partnerships for the purposes of tackling urban blight or to be granted space for self-regulation of their settlement and leisure space. While closer scrutiny reveals informal aspects of formations dominated by middle-class residents—their access to services and land are sometimes managed through political society arrangements—these practices are almost never the focus of Public Interest litigation, media attention, or state eviction/demolition drives.

The poorer resident’s experience of neoliberal D/development appears precarious and punitive. The stunted growth of redistribution programs and the opening of markets have increased their economic insecurity (Samaddar, 2009) at the same time it has made them vulnerable to punitive measures targeting urban blight and obsolescence (Ramanathan, 2006). Argawala’s (2008) cites the following statements from an informal workers organisation: “We don’t even fight for a minimum wage because it created so much unemployment. Instead we fight for the right to live. We don’t want to rebel anymore [we] want a job” (393-394). The poor may have little reason to trust a political society that benefits from their insecurities. However, development often results in them being stigmatised, shifted around, or targeted for removal, while the state and NGOs only offer them self-help provision, the rhetoric of entrepreneurialism, and micro-credit. Thus the urban poor still see political society (and MCs in particular) as their best bet at obtaining a manageable level of insecurity (see Wood, 2004; Harriss, 2005).

Urban D/development policies do not address conflicts and contradictions regarding the use value, exchange value, and claims to land in cities. Officially, services should only be provided to registered slums on city or state land. The local government does not provide services to slums on privately owned land or on land owned by the central government unless the owner or the central government request it which rarely happens. The majority of residents in MD and KD acquired shelter and basic services through informal housing and amenities sector in part financed via what can be termed the ‘informal second circuit of capital.’ Officially the built environment, land-use and access are supposed to conform to government codes and plans. In India informality is the dominant mode of urbanisation from squatters to elites (Roy, 2009). Therefore the interesting distinction is between degrees of legitimacy and which places get targeted as urban blight or obsolete in D/development interventions. The link between capitalism, bourgeois culture and urbanisation has been well established (Harvey, 1990 & 2006; Chatterjee, 2004). These links should be kept in mind when viewing present conflicts over urban space and the utility ‘illegitimate occupancy’ plays in both the middle class goals to reduce urban blight, and in facilitating capital accumulation via world-classing and slum-freeing cities. In mega-

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42 Slums that have proof of existence from no later than 1995 presently can go through the process of being registered by the government and then can legally access public services government and some form of legal entitlement to their home (the structure, not the land).
cities like Mumbai, Delhi, Calcutta, and Chennai, the middle-class’s aggregate and intentional impact on urban space is increasing (Baud and Nanain, 2008; Anjara, 2009; Ghernter, 2011). This positions them in a structural antagonism with slum residents and their presumed “vote-bank politics” (Benjamin, 2008). Once distinguished by its lack of engagement, some middle-class associations are activating civil society in the name of beautification, authoritative morality, and citizenship rights—to push officials to give their demands priority over those viewed as ‘encroachers’ and the ‘land mafia.’ (cf. Chatterjee 2004). At the neighbourhood level this takes the form of residents or developers lobbying officials to focus on improving their locality development and cleanliness. At higher levels, it takes the form of filing Public Interest Litigations that while directly targeting public officials, who are not enforcing rules and regulations, often result in punitive measures being taken against residents and the livelihoods of poorer inhabitants.

Actors in the formal ‘second circuit of capital’ and the bureaucrats and politicians friendly to their cause leverage arguments of obsolescence and rent gaps\textsuperscript{43} to justify which areas get targeted for renewal. These arguments—blight, rent gaps and obsolescence—are mutually reinforcing and antagonistic with livelihood practices and spaces of poorer residents. They both tend to aestheticize anti-poor politics and D\textsubscript{development}, to elevate exchange value over use-value, and to elevate the demands of citizens over the needs of ‘populations’ (cf. Ghertner, 2011a). Considering the middle-class’s expressed disdain of political society in combination with the profits, and rents possible from development; turf battles and competing claims can be reasonably expected to increase along with democratic deficits. Adept MCs are manipulating these tensions and contradictions to their political and economic benefit. Contradictory land and livelihood needs and desires make populations more dependent on MCs, allowing them to garner votes for less patronage. These contradictions and speculation opportunities push developers and higher-level officials to engage with MCs in order to manage some of what they seek in terms of facilitating land acquisition, power of attorney, evictions, demolitions, resettlement processes, and locality development (eg. Shatkin, 2014).

These contradictions also make it difficult for MCs (when they were so inclined) to mobilise sufficient support for making cities more inclusive. They also perpetuate the need and scope of MCs capacities in political society. Importantly, most MCs are not ideologues; they are interested in political survival and mobility. Plus many demonstrate genuine concerns for their poorer constituents. It is not inconceivable that targeted mobilisation of voters, and a few key constituents, combined with a push to focus on increasing the ‘rights to the city’ for those with informal residence and work could decrease present democratic deficits surrounding urban development processes. This becomes more likely the more MCs come to associate their political

\textsuperscript{43} Whitehead and More (2007) discuss how projects of urban redevelopment in the Mumbai Region are being significantly determined by the gap between existing rents and rent that could be accumulated if land was put to “higher and better use.” (2429).
survival and future as being related to increasing, rather than thwarting or stalling, the poor and other vulnerable groups access to basic needs and services.

Normative Expectations of Municipal Councillors

In liberal democratic theory the political community of which every citizen is apart is comprised of autonomous individuals equal in terms of moral and legal status. Officials, both elected and appointed, are expected to orient their duties to the public interest and without prejudice. In India the situation contradicts these principles (Corbridge et al., 2005; Gupta, 2007). Individuals are more enmeshed in family, kinship and caste relations and are in practice expected to place obligations to these connections over and above official or professional modern dictates. This goes to explain why ‘corrupt’ politicians and bureaucrats are so pervasive. While those outside a politicians or bureaucrat’s core constituency are not happy about preferential treatment and the scope for rent-seeking \(^{44}\) it creates, they lobby for preferential treatment when “one of their own” occupies a resource rich position or is in close proximity to an occupier. Currently meeting the socio-cultural obligations carries more weight than complying with norms of liberal political and civic communities (Parekh, 2009). The statement I often heard by slum residents currently not in the favoured group of the MC reflects this understood structural obligation. “It is okay if they eat a lot [play favourites and skim funds] as long as we don’t starve.” MCs with the highest status are those who provide the most for their core constituents; those who are best able to bend or break the most rules in this regard.

The local pressure to put private obligations before official ones also obliges MCs to take on a Street-level bureaucrat role. Bureaucrats are also predisposed to favouritism and MCs need to take an active (albeit informal) role in project implementation, targeting, and tendering to direct some of the resources to their wards. This obligation also underpins and reproduces the client-patron relationship that dominates MCs political work. Presently voters almost never express interest in what MCs are doing for the good of the city or region, but rather on what material benefit or protection they have personally delivered to key constituencies in their ward.\(^{45}\) Bureaucrats expect MCs to allow them to direct enough resources to meet their personal and professional obligations and to fill in their street-level knowledge gaps. Higher-level politicians and party leaders expect MCs to deliver votes and rents via whatever means culturally tolerable. National and International level D/development policy makers seem to expect MCs to adhere to a liberal democratic ideal that runs counter to prevailing social structures and common practices.

These conditions complicate MCs’ abilities to act in line with mainstream D/development. The push to ‘world-class’ these cites makes programs that primarily

\(^{44}\) Those outside the core will need to pay tribute or a bribe of some sort to get access/attention.

\(^{45}\) See also Keefer and Suti (2004)
benefit slum dwellers less en vogue than building upscale shopping malls and apartment complexes, business districts, fly overs, and expressways. The contradictions and inequalities between middle-classes and the poorer classes and between political society and civil society pose serious obstacles to creating an inclusive, let alone more equitable, urban environment. These combined with the gargantuan task of improving housing and amenities in the context of an embedded informal housing market and decades of laissez-faire development, and social obligations to engage in favouritism and rule-breaking all contribute to make world-class, inclusive cities unlikely without significant structural and cultural shifts. Most important for this thesis in general, there is much more than ‘vote-bank politics’ and corruption propelling inequalities—aspects of D/development can also perpetuate and deepen inequalities.

5.4 Work

This section condenses numerous observations of MCs at work and informal discussions to describe their formal MC role, their street-level bureaucrat role, and the structural holes in urban governance they occupy.

MCs on Ward Committee

Ward Committees\(^{46}\) should consist of: the MCs representing the electoral wards within the administrative ward, the Assistant Municipal Commissioner in charge of administration, and no more than three appointed representatives to be selected from NGOs registered with the Municipal Corporation who specialise in social welfare activities within the administrative ward. These appointed MCs do not possess voting privileges. There are no registered social welfare NGOs in KD and MB, and in both cities appointed members were political appointees, ‘friends’ of powerful MCs. Officials and politicians are hesitant to partner up with NGOs that are not directly or indirectly tied to their party. Nonaligned NGOs are perceived as political adversaries who likely will turn their constituents against them. Decision making power still sits with the elected and appointed officials as formal citizen participation is not present (beyond voting in elections) and civil society organisations are not present. While in theory ward works are to be debated and then voted on in ward committees, all proposals presented to the ward committee meet with approval. If money is there, the work will eventually be sanctioned. No system of prioritisation that facilitates areas of greatest need being targeted first is in place. MCs stay out of each other’s

\(^{46}\) The Ward Committee’s official powers and responsibilities are: to give administrative approval to the plans & estimates up to Rs. 5 lakhs for civic works in the areas for which certain budget provisions are sanctioned by the municipal corporations, to consider proposals of expenditure on different Heads of Budget provisions relating to the said Wards, to dispose of expeditiously matters of citizens relating to: water supply, drainage, cleanliness and storm water drains and other basic amenities and local civic amenities, the renaming of roads and crossroads, and to meet officially at least once a month.
business. If they want to get their works through the committee, it is best to approve other’s works.

However, much intermediation is needed to make sure works get designed sanctioned and carried out. Figure 18 diagrams the intermediary functions of MCs related to getting works sanctioned and carried out. I will use a case shared with me by a MC to illustrate this process. The ground level column represents channels of information. Her political workers and many residents share with her the need for a formal drainage system. She inquires with the public works engineer, but is told it is not possible expand the drainage system without an NOC from the owner and that given the locational issues that money would have to come from the city level budget. She then does her own research by looking into similar localities that have better drainage, and she inquires into city-level funds availability. Since the cost of this project goes beyond what can be done at the Ward Committee level (i.e., exceeds 5 lakhs) and there is the issue of the NOC, she goes to the Assistant Municipal Commissioner to lobby him to forward her work request to the municipal level. It is decided to check that the NOC from the landlord was given and if it comes up to suggest that it must have fallen out of the file. The rationale was that since the landlord had not been heard from in many years, it is best to handle it this way than to file a formal request to this effect.

MC priorities and those of bureaucrats can differ, and heavy workloads or poor work ethics play a role. MCs often complained that if you do not “follow the file” along the chain it will likely not be acted on in a timely manner, if at all. This seemed to be more pervasive in MBMC, where the MCs reported that, “you have to sit on their (touts, babus) heads to get any work done.” As such, she continues to follow up by letter, phone, via party-workers, and in person. This eventually pays off and the proposal finally makes its way to the Standing Committee. Now she must continue to apply pressure for weeks to months. Endurance, information, and intermediation skills are key to getting works through the system.
Figure 18: Intermediation work: pushing sanctioned work through the system
The official responsibilities of MCs are: to be the main interface between the local government and the public. They are responsible for the quick redressal of citizen complaints and/or issues with municipal services, and for offering suggestions for proposals for: keeping and promoting area cleanliness, repairing of market yards (informal markets), for road repairs, for municipal building upkeep, for improvements of gardens, for composting, for road beautification, and for repairing of footpaths and pathways. They are also required to attend ward committee meetings and the meetings of the other municipal committees they are assigned to, and to spend their Councillor Development Fund of 20 lakhs47 in their electoral ward. A MC is a part-time position, the salary is 4,000 rupees/month (around 80 euros), and the official jurisdiction is low. However, the time-use survey shows that many work full-time. The reasons for this extra effort are (1) if they do not do it no one will and (2) the political capital they can build by undertaking such activities. Their efforts garner them political capital with voters who see them as caring, and political capital with their political party hierarchy who will be more inclined to put them up for re-election or field them for higher office. Several MCs said that in practice they are available “24 hours a day to their constituency,” and that late night phone calls by a frantic constituent are common.

MCs control a 20 lakhs/year development fund. These funds are to facilitate the devolution of Development money and allow elected representatives to distribute some Development directly to their constituencies. MCs speak of needing to spread the money evenly to get as much exposure as possible from their small fund. This need for exposure pushes MCs to opt for more visible works (such as pathways, community centres, statues) rather than less visible, while perhaps more necessary, needs like underground sewerage. One BJP MC in Dombivli, under the budget heading of ‘ward beautification,’ erected a statue of Ambedkar during election season in the slum in his ward.

Poorer residents and their “community leaders” lobby the most and the middle-class and elites the least. The poor come for “every little thing,” while the middle-class and elites usually only come to report encroachments and basic service grievances. Contractors and developers also maintain good connections so that their applications for building permits are sanctioned and properties are serviced. It is commonly expressed that a core group of politically and bureaucratically connected builders steer the direction of development. These clandestine, exchange-based connections are conflicts of interest when it comes to acting to promote the public good of the city or one’s ward. MCs are expected to push through contracts and turn a blind eye to sub-standard work and illegal constructions for favoured developers and contractors. In exchange MCs receive payments, payments which some reinvest in contractor/developer projects (eg. Nainan, 2006; van Dijk, 2006). Their investments also compel them to act in ways that facilitate capital accumulation within

47 Lahk = 100,000 rupees
the informal second circuit. Most MCs in these cities belong to the
contractor/developer lobby directly via family construction and real estate related
ventures. The reach and capacity of this group needs to be addressed more in future
policies and interventions aimed at promoting inclusive D/development given the
extent that profit and rents from land development can come at the expense of
poorer residents who are either priced out or forced out. Additionally, areas not
targeted in these ventures suffer indirect neglected by resources being eaten up by
projects with larger profit margins and rent-seeking opportunities (cf. Benjamin,
2004).

Informal institutions also influence the choosing and sanctioning of civic works. The
most prevalent are influence fees (kick-backs) provided by contractors and developers
and rents collected from those who want to access a service or resource they are
legally or in practice excluded from. These sources of income are made possible and
flow through a nexus of MCs, municipal officials, and municipal staff and
subcontractors. It is an open secret that officials and staff are able to acquire
influence fees. Anyone who ‘touches’48 a proposal that ends up being tendered to a
private contractor becomes entitled to a kickback. Apparently fixed amounts are
kicked-back to those involved, and it is widely assumed that all contractors participate
in this system to remain eligible for government contracts. Influence fees can affect
what work is done, because different works result in different kickbacks. Works that
do not require private contractors may not be as desirable. Work with a short shelf-
life, i.e., pathways, which can be repaired every three years and thus money made off
of again, tends to be more popular than those that last longer. This institution also
contributes to the use of substandard materials.

Influence fees offer MCs and municipal officials and staff reasons to spend more time
on getting sanctions and licensing for larger scale-development projects, rather than
projects that solicit less or no influence fees. Candid MCs rationalise this system by
citing the lack of remuneration they receive, and by citing how influence money
makes the process move. Some argue that this system is institutionalised to the point
that if one opts not to participate they will be regarded as a fool, treated with
suspicion, and they will find it very difficult to get any work done. The current rates
of influence payments for a MC were reported to be five percent of all civic works
and private building (formal and informal) carried out in his or her ward, with another
25 percent divided among others attached to the process.49 This implicates MCs in
both the informal and more formalised second circuit of capital accumulation
dependent on the built environment.

In general, bureaucrats are seen as being overly concerned about norms and rules and
MCs are seen as being pushy and uninformed or dismissive about proper procedure.

48 Involved in the sanctioning process.
49 These figures come from what was expressed to me during informal discussions with MCs, developers, and
contractors.
Sometimes they operate at cross-purposes. Before the 74th Amendment cities were officially ran by bureaucrats and some residual resentment exists about sharing official power with MCs. However, the nature of the influence payment system produces incentives for them to collaborate. For example, ward engineers approach MCs to suggest that they start pushing for proposals for road widening or footpath repair, because of the budget available for such projects, and thus kickbacks. Both sides earn from these channels of income and this creates common cause and cooperation between MCs, municipal officials and staff.

**Municipal Councillor’s as Street-Level Bureaucrats**

The previous discussion shows several mechanism’s obliging MCs to take on the street-level bureaucrat role: personalised execution of work and/or apathetic bureaucrats, clientelism, money, and status. To highlight this role I will discuss the part they play in implementing a community toilet block project.

A popular way of dealing with slum sanitation issues has been toilet blocks. The latest version of this scheme directs the municipality to partner up with NGOs for the purpose of creating community toilets.\(^{50}\) A CBO (community based organisation) is formed from the community and officially recognised by the municipality to manage the toilet block (i.e. fee collections, bill payment, and upkeep). This is supposed to result in communities feeling greater ownership of the toilet block, via rights to exclude outsiders and the duty to pay. NGOs were brought in to both organise and train CBOs and to oversee the construction of the blocks. The public works department previously carried out these activities. However, as previous toilet block schemes in slums became means for garnering influence fees and quickly fell in to disrepair, the World Bank and the Mumbai Metropolitan Development Authority made NGO participation mandatory in this latest scheme viewed blocks.

While MCs are not mentioned in the program, they play an active role in its implementation. MCs are centrally placed in the social-political networks of poor communities. These communities were unwilling to work with a NGO if their MC disapproved. NGOs quickly realised that if they wanted meet the basic requirements of their contracts with the municipalities, they must allow MCs to co-opt the project to a large extent. MCs were allowed to use it as a patronage generator via site and CBO selection, and to earn kickbacks from labour providers and contractors. In these communities, toilet blocks are associated more with MCs than they are with the municipality or NGOs. MCs made (or signed-off on) site and community selection, labour/contractor selection, and CBO designation. When NGOs leave toilet blocks only partially built, or when water and electricity issues come up, it is the MC rather than the NGO or public works department that is expected to help. It was not only

\(^{50}\) Community toilet blocks are different from past public ones in two main ways. First, they are not open to everyone – only the community they have been built for. Secondly, participating community members pay a monthly fee around 50 rupees/household.
the power of MC in his or her electoral ward, but also the preferences of the public works officer (some of whom are responsible for the oversight of 200 plus toilet blocks) that push MCs into their Street-level bureaucrat role. City employees are more comfortable working with MCs, especially those they have close ties with via party, caste, or kin group and who participate in the same influence fee institution.

**MCs in Political Society and Gatekeepers to Development**

To both mitigate poorer voters’ exclusion from private and collective provision of basic services and infrastructure and to keep tabs on them, political parties setup service delivery organisations that run parallel to formal government institutions. Local political party offices, “try to fulfil what the state promised but did not deliver: infrastructural measures, such as garbage collection, water connection, public toilets […] they also initiate, youth activities, and cultural activities and festivals” (Eckert, 2002: 5-6). However, MCs and party offices have limited resources and can play favourites, so these services are unevenly provided. This level of contact and service delivery seems positive, but this embedding can also promote “perverse accountability,” (Stokes, 2005) a situation where parties and politicians can monitor members and clients’ loyalties and then reward or sanction accordingly. Too little space between the governed and those who govern is problematic, especially for the poor whose level of insecurity makes angering one’s patrons or brokers problematic. Those outside clientelist politics often judge it as being antithetical to ‘good’ governance because it is based on relations of domination perpetuated by entrenched inequalities. Slum residents offer more varied views of MCs. Some view them as exploitive and corrupt, while others speak of them as “caring and helpful” authority figures who fix drains and pathways, and who also mediate disputes and offer advice. Figure 19 depicts how the interrelationships and hierarchical structure of ward-level political society in the slum formations studied. The pyramid shape is on purpose as power flows upwards and resources pass downwards with each level taking a portion and with the portions being spread across more people. MCs normally are on the top patron at the electoral ward level in slums. In some cases the MC is also the de facto landlord or the de facto landlord is a friend or family member. They occupy structural holes between slum residents, local government, other service providers and d/Development projects. Their status and preferences impact the degree slums and other illegal constructions are tolerated and the coverage of informal service provision. Their status and preferences also impact the level and quality of Development funds and projects their area receives. A high-level officer at the Mumbai Metropolitan Region Development Authority said it succinctly, “the difference between slums of despair and slums of progress are the differences in interests and ‘muscle and money power’ between MCs.” Below the MC are his or her ‘fixers’ who represent the MC’s inner-circle. They get sent to handle important issues on behalf of the MC and can also act as brokers between the MC and inhabitants of the electoral ward who do not have direct ties. Next is the ‘entourage.’ Every local party office has a group of young men who call themselves party-workers, ‘consultants,’ or ‘social-workers,’ but who have not been officially hired by the party. They first have to demonstrate their ability to navigate micro-politics. The brokers are
mentors of sorts to these young men, and the entourage has loose ties with the MC. They help “solve” the everyday issues of slum residents and mobilise them when necessary for protests and campaign rallies as instructed. They also are responsible for collecting the various rents or fees for ‘services.’ At the bottom are voters participating as clients, customers, or wannabe clients or customers (if they have no direct ties to the MCs, Brokers, or entourage). Residents bring their problem or request to the person within this network they have the closest tie. In exchange for the client’s loyalty and/or a fee their issue is addressed if possible, and, or course, if the contact is inclined to follow through.

**Figure 19: Slum Formation Political Society**

![Diagram](attachment:image.png)

**Role in Informal Housing Market and Conflict Mediation**

Most MCs operate in the informal housing market and provide counselling or mediation services to their poorer clients across a variety of needs. Figure 20 gives an overview of this process and highlights the structural holes MCs tend to occupy. The formal housing market is unable to provide adequate levels of affordable housing, so an informal system evolved to match supply with demand. Landlords (legal and de facto), MCs, various municipal offers and staff, and the police govern the informal housing market. Demand, patronage, and rent seeking forge the links between these groups. This system both complements the official system by providing shelter to those it prices out, and competes with it over space and the problems it poses for producing serviced land. Those looking for shelter, who cannot afford more formal
options, will look to a member of ward-level political society for information about available space and prices. While the state cannot officially condone encroachment and unauthorised development, its agents can facilitate it by turning a blind eye and keeping up plausible deniability of direct involvement. This does not happen automatically and requires mediation and rent extraction and distribution that the MC is central in arranging. The slum resident also requires electricity, water, and perhaps cable TV. These services on unregistered slums are provided via informal arrangements with service providers. Arrangements in terms of access and rates are often mediated by MCs if conflicts arise.

MCs report and were observed addressing issues for their constituents that run the gamut from basic services to sexual harassment to housing issues which Table 5 demonstrates. Most have an open door policy and a willingness to (at least) listen to any issue. During one MC interview, a woman came to seek his advice about what to do about her youngest daughter who had ran off to marry her boyfriend. When asked if this type of personal issue was something people often brought to him he responded, “day and night.” During another discussion with a different male MC, a lady ran in bloody having been beaten by her husband. She pleaded for protection and advice. It would be unusual for a woman in this situation to go alone to the police, or to decide on her own to go to a shelter. It terms of social and protective services for slum residents—women in particular—MCs also occupy structural holes.

The relation between MCs and their constituents is not only the formal one dealing with civic amenities. People go to them with all sorts of issues looking for assistance or advice. Often poorer constituents bend down to kiss the feet of a MC.

\[51\] A few candid MCs shared the going rates MCs receive for informal settlements in their areas: 2000 rupees for every new illegal construction of hutments or add-ons, 5000 rupees per chawl room, and 20,000 rupees per flat in an illegal apartment building. The price to be paid to build in a slum is not standardised and likely varies depending on the strength of the tie between the builder and the Broker or MC.

\[52\] See van Dijk (2007) for the results of a similar survey given to a Mumbai ward committee consisting of 15 MCs.
Figure 20: Acquiring Informal Housing in Slums
They often call them ‘father’ or ‘mother’ out of respect and to compel MCs to enter into patron-client relations. The intimacy level and frequency of interaction that MCs have with slum residents, in particular, highlights an important relational issue to inclusive D/development—while clientelist relationships provide the poor with some level of access to services and resources they do so on a foundation of inequality and dependence. D/development programs must deal with this, “Faustian Bargain…the trade-off between the freedom to act independently in the pursuit of improved livelihoods and the necessity of dependent security” (Wood, 2003: 455). The process of turning clients into citizens and patrons into representatives is complex. It becomes even more complex considering that neoliberal D/development policies do very little to reduce the poor’s dependency on political society. These policies presuppose people willing and able to act like ‘consumer citizens,’ which in this context would likely increase poorer residents’ dependency on political society in general, and on MCs in particular.

Table 5: Counselling and Mediation Work

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Counselling &amp; Mediation Areas</th>
<th>Yes</th>
<th>No</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Domestic Violence</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sexual Harassment</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dowry</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Divorce</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Abandonment</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rape</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Police</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Goonda Harassment</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Housing</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Locality Improvements</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Basic Services</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conflicts between neighbours</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Debt Disputes</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

N= 11, 7 MCs from KD and 4 from MB
The effect informal governance activities have on formal activities can only be supposed. Time constraints did not allow for collecting evidence of knock-off effects. However, it can be said that the majority of a MC’s interactions with the residents of his or her electoral ward are patron-client in practice. MC governance activities expand way beyond their official mandate and this expansion is supported by the actions of MCs, their constituents, and the processes and contradictions of D/development.

5.5 Discussion

Given the political geographies of MCs, one would expect them to be included officially in D/development discussions and practices. Unfortunately both higher-level government agencies, INGOs and NGOs targeting urban inequalities view MCs as competitors for clients or problems. When possible they endeavour to operate under their radar to avoid sabotage.\textsuperscript{53} This raises the issue of how to get actors to collaborate, or to at least not sabotage each other at the expense of Development better reaching the poor and vulnerable.

Focusing on MCs brings up critical information for urban D/development. The governance context in MB and KD is not very fertile ground for producing inclusive world-class cities. This highlights the need for those engaged in these causes to take the governance setting into consideration when deciding on interventions or targeting barriers to implementation. The relationship between MCs and their constituency are not very susceptible to formal institutional reforms rooted in liberalism or neoliberalism. MCs rarely take on the representative role as they rarely interact with citizens with rights-based demands. Some who share the vision of making a world-class city—both for development reasons and for capturing of higher rents—are shifting to alliances with the city’s ‘modernisers’ and developers. However, most MCs still spend most of their time attending to poorer residents in clientelist exchanges. This relationship strengthens the likelihood of poorer resident’s capital\textsuperscript{2} to bring about achieved functionings because MCs occupy key structural holes between those dependent upon political society and access to tolerance, services and Development available from the state and its partners. This relationship becomes even more important when you consider the visions held by upper-levels of government and their private sector partners, where poorer residents are mostly absent. If there were no MCs and political society for who would the livelihood issues of slum residents be of any priority? MCs are both agents for and against D/development. They emerge as obstructionists because many engage in corrupt activities that allow them to benefit personally from public office and pervasive inequalities. However, they also mediate

\textsuperscript{53}Several NGOs and heads of centrally planned poverty alleviation schemes I spoke with mentioned that WCGs see them as wanting to break-up their vote bank and inform citizens of their rights and thus they attempt to undermine the organisation’s or scheme’s reputation in the slum communities.
and intermediate access to services, occupany and safety. They emerge as central intervening actors whose actions and capacities affect the capacity and achieved functionings of resident’s capitals related to housing and locality development. They are Janus-face both from the point of view of slum residents, and from the point of view of those wanting to world-class these cities. They are agents of obstruction for those wanting to slum-free the city because of their role in slum creation and maintenance, and at times agents of change. Some see the “embourgeoisement” (Chatterjee, 2004) of the city as inevitable and position themselves strategically between developers and the land and building codes they covet to solicit higher rents. The capacity of poorer residents to contest D/development processes is linked to how MCs make use of the structural holes they occupy in relation to these processes.

MCs are firmly embedded in the street-level realities that maintain political society and they are intimately involved in the livelihood issues of slum residents. Those interested in designing and implementing agendas that can world-class the city, while reducing inequalities and not excluding poorer residents, should not take MCs for-granted. These agents of change and obstruction need to be brought on board to benefit from their local knowledge and to influence and to perchance minimise their regressive tendencies.
CHAPTER 6: NETWORKS OF URBANISATION

6.1 Inclusive Cities, World-Class Cities, or Subaltern Cities?

The Government of India’s urban development discourses (see Roy, 2013) and City Development Plans (KD, 2007; MB, 2008) encourage us to focus on how economic liberalisation, decentralisation, and the shift from government to governance will lead to ‘inclusive cities’ where every ‘citizen’ can comfortably live, work, and consume. Some scholars and activists see these processes as evidence of exclusionary or splintering cities, with the ‘new middle-classes’ taking over the city to reflect their spatial needs and aesthetic sensibilities (Zerah, 2008; Chatterjee, 2004; Ghertner, 2011a). For them inclusive cities = world-class cities = slum free bourgeois cities. Others, on the same theme, focus on how higher-level bureaucrats within the local state are formally creating spaces to give the ‘propertied-classes’ of ‘civil society’ more access and oversight to the local state thereby shrinking the space the poor ‘populations’ and their associates in ‘political society’ can access (cf. Baud and Nanain, 2008; Ghertner, 2011b). Those working within a subaltern urbanism frame focus on either the positives of political society, i.e., stealth democracy, patronage democracy, or occupancy urbanism—and the economic and political prowess of the poor given the categorical and spatial inequalities present to highlight the economic and political agency of slums and their residents (Benjamin, 2008; Appadurai, 2002; Weinstein, 2009), or they discuss how the concepts and epistemologies distilled from western processes of urbanisation need to be put aside when assessing ‘subaltern cities’ realistically on their own terms rather than as dystopias or spaces of historical agency poised to deepen democracy (Roy, 2011). Roy (ibid; 2009) purports informality, contradiction, and uneven state penetration as central to understanding postcolonial cities. However, whether one sees an inclusive city, an exclusive city, or a subaltern city depends on where you look and how you look. Additionally, which actors, scales, or domains one sees as presently winning or losing (spatially and politically) depends on where you look and how you look. Most approaches restrict themselves to either the poor or the middle-class and to either the formal or the informal. They tend to assume either a zero sum game—for example, if the middle class is gaining ground that must mean that the poor and politicians are losing ground (cf. Ghertner, 2011b) or a non-zero sum game where spatial and/or economic gains do not have to result in, or result from class struggles (cf. World Bank, 2002). These all implicitly treat the city as a socio-organisational object that can be reduced and categorised as ‘world-class’ or ‘subaltern.’ This paper follows Harvey (1996: 51) and conceptualises the city as a “production of specific and quite heterogeneous spatio-temporal forms embedded within different kinds of social action… [an] urbanisation constitutive of

and by social processes” (52). Kalyan-Dombivli and Mira-Bhayandar are taken to be two social-material forms emerging from urbanisation processes in India and in the ‘world of cities’ (Robinson, 2005). Urbanisation processes are represented in this article by the networks of urbanisation (related to housing and basic services) different collectivities—tied to particular urban forms—are embedded in. The focus is not a general epistemological question of which label to use for these cities. Regarding the actors present in these networks, such as municipal councillors (MCs), the focus is also not epistemological in terms of how best to categorise them. The point was to look at the ‘how of different formations’ what conditions and what types of practices and operative institutional logics do these different formations develop from? Starting with the how, rather than the who, this chapter also shows how actors in KD and MB are not homogenous blocks relegated to one area or mode of operation—they can be, and often are, involved in different, and at times contradictory, networks of urbanisation.

This chapter outlines a method developed to detect the mediating and multiple-domain actors and their practices in various networks of urbanisation—as well as the context directing them when it comes to how different collectivities act to secure, protect or increase locality development in situations marked by categorical inequalities and informality. Empirically, I sketch and compare the ways three networks of urbanisation occupy the structural and cultural holes between different collectivities and the local state. The evidence presented calls into question the usefulness of categorising Indian cities as being ‘inclusive,’ ‘bourgeois’ or ‘subaltern,’ and problematises easy categorisation of the actors and practices constitutive of these urbanisations. First, I will sketch out a structural and cultural holes analytical understanding of the mediated state and then flesh out my method for seeing and exploring these networks. Section 6.3 outlines these networks and discusses both how these make it difficult to achieve inclusive cities in any linear fashion, and how they unsettle the categorisation of Indian Cities.56

6.2 Analytical Framework—Structural and Cultural Holes

The democratic norms and institutions outlined in the Indian Constitution have yet to be meaningfully embedded at the state and municipal levels of government (Heller and Evans, 2010: 439). It has been theoretically argued and empirically demonstrated

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55 Collectivity refers to a structural grouping of those with similar vested interests and opportunity costs, i.e., shared social-material conditions (see also Archer, 1995).

56 This chapter is based upon fieldwork in the Mumbai Metropolitan Region (2007 to the present) based on participant observation, formal and informal interviews, focus groups, key informants and secondary sources. The sample included: 14 MCs, three MLAs, 15 Municipal Officers, six middlemen, four NGOs, six real estate promoters, eight cooperative housing societies, one city level and one district level cooperative housing federations, and numerous informal and semi-structured discussions with inhabitants across MB and KD. Findings were also compared with secondary resources from other Indian Cities including author’s MA Thesis (van Dijk, 2006).
that engagements between citizens and the state are often brokered or filtered by various levels of mediaries and intermediaries (see Chapter 1, Section 3). Berenschot, (2010: 885) framed urban politics in terms of ‘the mediated state’ where state-citizen interactions are ‘monopolised by networks whose political (and often financial) success depends on their capacity to manipulate the state’s policies and legislation.’ The various institutions and networks of urbanisation are not equal and evidence suggests that these are governed by categorical inequalities (cf. Zerah, 2008; Harriss, 2006) meaning that the benefits and safeguards of municipal citizenship are unevenly accessible.

The status of citizenship and its consequences in terms of basic services and housing inequities can be tied to the active trust networks57 mediating society-state and inter-group relations within the city—what I refer to as ‘networks of urbanisation.’ They integrate and exclude groups and places within the city; they manage the ways different areas or collectivities engage with the local state. The democratic discrepancies present in Indian cities are also sustained by the government’s level of infrastructural power—Mann’s (2008) term for the State’s capacity or willingness to enter its various departments, civil society and the private sector and to use its authority to effectively design, implement and regulate projects and policies. The paper proceeds upon the hypothesis that when the local state has sufficient levels of infrastructural power (i.e., a type of sovereignty) then the scope for mediation and the significance of categorical social inequalities would be low. Given the high level of political mediation in Indian cities, the logical inference is that the infrastructural power of the state is low. In this context many structural and cultural holes emerge that adept mediators within networks of urbanisation can occupy for various reasons and rewards. Each network occupies structural holes. Burt’s (1992) structural hole argument posits that social capital is created in networks where nodes can facilitate connections between two or more detached sections. A person or organisation can be said to occupy a structural hole if they are perceived to be a viable access point to what would otherwise be closed off to the rest of their network. Here structural holes refer to the gaps between both the formal and informal channels of entitlement actualisation and between these channels and different formations and collectivities. There are also indications of cultural holes, the “contingencies [and ruptures] of meanings, practices, and discourses” (Pachucki and Breiger, 2010: 206). Structural holes reinforced by cultural holes are likely more difficult to bridge without mediators and provide more resources for those occupying them. The liberal democratic philosophy underpinning India’s constitution, laws and system of government is not endemic in the lifeworlds of most urbanites (Chatterjee, 2004; Gupta, 2007). Many contradictions exist between every day social life and the norms implicit in the formal-legal structures and institutions. These contradictions in combination with low infrastructural powers produce structural and/or cultural holes between residents and the state authority and resources. Actors with knowledge and connections in different

57 Tilly discusses networks in terms of trust because members “put various enterprises at risk to the malfeasance, mistakes, or failure of others.” (Tilly 2010: 271)
domains can act as mediaries between those who struggle in one or more spheres. For example, MCs do not broker between slum residents and the municipalities only because of the illegality of their settlements. They also do so because the practices and discourses operating in the municipality and higher levels of government seem fairly inscrutable.

**Methodology**

Demographic structural analysis—distributions of past material and social resources—reveals profiles of inequality and concentration of resources and deprivation (Archer, 1995). “The degree of concentration helps determine the volume and kinds of demands which can be transacted from different parts of society” (ibid: 298). It points out collectivities—those bound together by their similar objective (structural and spatial) vested interests and opportunity costs. This approach allows for the grouping of collectivities (and actors within these) in terms of those relatively benefiting from the status quo and those relatively deprived by it. The mediated nature of the local state has been discussed in previous chapters, and spatial and demographic analysis shows profiles of inequality and heterogeneity of locality development with in KD and MB. To understand the social and political contingencies of mediation, and of the inequalities present, this chapter looks at both the networks of urbanisation constitutive of these different formations and the structural and cultural holes they occupy. Together these aspects are theorised to produce directional guidance (or the good reasons) for the tactics taken up by these networks and for the different socio-spatial formations that these practices assemble. Demographic structural analysis was done utilising the following sources: deprivation maps, Google Earth, key informants, official data, and site visits. Deprivation maps (Baud et al., 2008) based on census data corresponding to social, physical, and economic capital disaggregated to the electoral ward level were overlaid on Google Earth images of the cities.

Figure 21 gives you an idea of the kind of built environment differences you can see from satellite images. This enabled the initial selection of possible electoral wards for case studies ranging from very deprived to well developed wards. These initial selections were triangulated with information from key informants, municipal data, and site visits that together indicate the past uneven distributions and development of resources and capacities related to locality development. The collectivities selected were bound by shared-objective vested interests and opportunity costs embedded in their structural-spatial situations (i.e., living in the same formation with the same elected representative and governance structures). Subsequent ethnographic work focused on the patterns of relations and practices that existed between residents, the municipality, and other service providers. Once networks of urbanisation were sketched, semi-structured interviews, informal discussions, and observations added more substance to these sketches in terms of vested interests and meaning.

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58 Google Earth image date: 16-12-2013 19°13'03.01" N 73°05'58.77"
Relationship mapping and analysis require looking at the relationships in terms of power and resource exchanges, and also in terms of the actors the relation ties together. When possible this chapter endeavours to separate out contingent relations and actors from necessary ones to focus on which relations and relata the basic structure and usefulness of the network depend upon (Sayer, 1992). This information clustered around three types of networks of urbanisation, which I label as: clientelist, unauthorised, and corporate.

**Figure 21: Ward 97 (Left) and Ward 98, Kalyan-Dombivli**

![Image of Ward 97 and 98](image)

### 6.3 Networks of Urbanisation

**Clientelist**

Clientelism requires clients and patrons and the relations between them. Additionally, if there were nothing to be gained (resources) via this relationship than it would likely become extinct. Clientelism in KD and MB includes clients, patrons, municipal officials and staff, middlemen and structural domination. Externally we find weak formal citizenship rights, inequalities in resource access, and norms rationalising this activity. Clientelism requires categorical inequalities to function; it is in the vested interests of patrons in these cities to maintain high levels of inequality particularly where access to basic services, housing, and credit are concerned. Resources are not
distributed based mainly on clients needs, thus areas with high rates of clientelism are marked by internal inequalities. Clientship is also particularised in these cities. There are also contingent intervening relationships to consider. Many patrons do not go themselves to problem-solve, complain or to negotiate ‘informal’ service provision. They often send a broker or middleman—whose rapport with clients, municipal staff and officials and whose discretion also impacts the quality and quantity of resources and power that flow within this network. This points to the dispositions and discretion of municipal officials also playing an intervening role. Middlemen depend upon both officials and patrons to stay in business and to graduate to higher levels of mediation or possibly to a patron or official position themselves. The power relations between the different actors in these networks is an empirical question that can be answered by looking at who is monopolising structural and/or cultural holes and what the characteristics of these holes are. Clients in this network are slum residents and residents in urban villages or gaothans. They are those with informal to illegal settlements and livelihoods thus the structural gap is the one between the informal slum or urban village governance and the formal sphere of the municipality—that by law should not provide services to encroachments or unauthorised developments. This collectivity can offer votes, loyalty, labour and/or a fee in the hopes that the patron will tend to them. The informality and insecurity of their livelihoods and settlements, combined with the stigma often associated with these groups and places, constitute a social force that pushes them towards clientship rather than citizenship. Patrons dealing with material realities and needs of slums and gaothan residents tend to be MCs, but sometimes MLAs, municipal officials or retired government officials, and landlords take up practices associated with patronage. Middlemen, both between patrons and the municipality and between clients and patrons, are also political party workers, slumlords and/or landlords. Cultural holes exist between these collectivities and the government both because the lack of information about schemes, rights and responsibilities and because so called ‘village’ culture predominates in these areas—meaning hierarchy and the significance of de facto sovereigns is strong—thus it is habitual to plead one’s case to the local patron and to accept that what does or does not happen is up to his or her discretion. Regarding benefits, supply-side actors (i.e., patrons, middlemen, and municipal actors) can accumulate social and political capital from dispensing favours and generating rents, and successful clients can manage a level of manageable insecurity.

More macro-level actors also take on roles in this network. MLAs and MPs (Members of Parliament) also rely upon the votes and other forms of capital generated by this network of urbanisation. Additionally, often land ownership or interest can be traced back to higher-level politicians, officials and their close allies. These actors—for the purposes of maximising rents and profits from the real estate market—are interested in maintaining the slums and gaothans to both protect them

59 Gaothans were rural settlements that became surrounded by the city. Most of the land is designated as agricultural however most have tenements and commercial structures on them. Gaathans are considered organic not illegal (Risbud, 2002) and landlords can largely develop these villages as they like.

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from being subject to land ceiling acts and appropriation for ‘public use’ until such time they think they can extract the most economic and political benefits from them being brought into a different network of urbanisation. Additionally, the NGOs involved in the community toilet block scheme were aware of the precarious position of slum and gaothan residents vis-à-vis the local state work. This prompted them to work with this network rather than against it when it suited their purposes—i.e., allows them to finish their project and/or reach targets more easily than going only through the formal governance apparatus (van Dijk et al., 2012).

**Unauthorised Housing Network**

The acquiring of rents from the unauthorised housing market networks require actors and relations between them that generate rents, which can then be appropriated from this arrangement. An environment conducive to the creation of rents is necessary but not sufficient for the actual realisation and appropriation of rents—these take sufficiently coordinated practices and interests. In KD and MB it consists of consumers and renters (of flats), builders, ‘real estate brokers’ and other intermediaries landowners, municipal actors, private service providers whose coordinated actions produce and distribute rents from unauthorised housing. Nationwide upwards of 90 percent of land titles are estimated as being ambiguous (Zasloff, 2011: 2). An estimated 70 percent of residences in KD and MB are ‘unauthorised’ in part or entirely as per development plans and codes (Court Proceedings pursuant to PIL Case Bombay 14-2007). It is cheaper and faster to build, organise services, and sell an unauthorised flat or building than it is an authorised one. According to several builders, buyers, local politicians and municipal officials, the price per square meter is reduced between 30 to 50 percent and municipal and ward office officials and staff tend to their basic service and infrastructure needs faster than authorised flats. This is because the network connecting flat owners/renters to municipality is streamlined and produces rents for everyone involved. The flat owner, lessee, or renter saves money, the builders and contractors save money by not getting all the permits and by organising their rights to the land informally with the landowner (via force and/or cooperation), the middlemen who function as the circuits mediating and intermediating actions and resources between the nodes of this networks receive ‘fees’ for their efforts, and local state and private sector service providers receive ‘speed/influence’ money for turning a blind eye to the unauthorised status of the building and organising services quickly. Speed is of the essence because while the nodes of this network all benefit for this process, given the unauthorised nature of the building and thus extra-legal nature of service provision, promoters and local state staff and officials are in a hurry for all the flats to be sold so that responsibility can be placed upon the purchaser. This allows plausible denialability for local state actors who can blame the builder for forged or false documents, the landowner can also plead ignorance, harassment or become unreachable, thus leaving the current flat or chawl residents as the only target that can be easily located and possibly fined or kicked-out. If the structures are demolished this process can start over. This is one way were the informal housing market becomes a informal second circuit of capital accumulation in these cities.  Rents generated from the production and sale of unauthorised housing
in space and time X are then invested in the production and sale of unauthorised housing in space and time Y. Rents become capital for the production of more rents in this market. In practice the only capital or resources that are destroyed in the demolition of unauthorised housing are those of the residents; those of the builders, landowners, and other stakeholders are often not affected.

The builder is central to this network because it is his ‘money and muscle power’ and political connections that provide the start up capital and conditions needed for the creation and extraction of rents. However, the builder needs the coordinated actions of the landowner or a building-level mediator (i.e., the one who manages present and prospective residents’ demands and suspicions) and upon those who organise basic services with local state and private sector. These brokers are often party workers, current or former MCs, or street-level bureaucrats. The structural holes this network bridges are between the informal sphere of unauthorised development and government regulations and public and private sector service providers. Given the illegal or extra-legal nature of these arrangements, this network also spans a cultural hole as most flat or chawl owners or lease-holders are unaware who the ‘go-to’ people are further up the network and are not aware of the informal rules and norms that bind this network together past their building level mediator. The structural and cultural holes that were being managed by this network become painfully obvious when the builder and landowner are no longer reachable, when staff changes occur in municipality and administrative wards who are not aligned with this network, or when external authorities begin to crackdown on unauthorised constructions. State and Central level politicians and officials often possess or controls large land holdings in these newly urbanising areas, or they are politically or economically beholden to those who do. This makes them interested in this network for two main reasons. They want the largely risk-free rents and profits unauthorised construction brings now, and the right to the ones created by ‘re-development’ or urban renewal that comes later—i.e., during processes of ‘world-classing’ or ‘slum-freeing’ for instance. Current flat owners—who want a good price for their unauthorised flat and/or a new flat in a now authorised building (when development codes change) have common cause with land owners and builders when regulations and schemes more favourable to their economic interests emerge. Residents of unauthorised housing mostly work in higher levels of the informal sector (small to medium scale enterprises, artisans, and shop owners) or lower sectors of the formal economy (local government employees, service sector workers, teachers). They tend be better educated and skilled then those living in slums or gaathans and enjoy better economic and social status. However, the unauthorised nature of their housing compels them to engage in political society where housing and basic services are concerned.

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60 This is often difficult to empirically trace because they put the deeds/titles in family members or friends’ names (several personal communications).
**Corporate Housing Network**

Corporate networks require internal and external stakeholders, an entity to be governed that impacts both groups, and a formalised set rules and protocols. In regard to housing in KD and MB, this type of network consists of: residents, promoters, housing society, company, or trust leadership, municipal actors and regulations and processes instituted by district and state level federations of cooperative housing societies operating under the purview of the Maharashtra Cooperative Societies Act of 1960 and the Maharashtra Ownership of Flats Act of 1963. The official purpose of this network is to produce law abiding and well-serviced and maintained housing societies to the direct benefit of the residents and the indirect benefit to the neighbourhoods and the city as whole (in terms of cleanliness, reduced encroachments, and property values). Residents in housing organised by corporate networks tend to be relatively economically well off, highly educated and more likely to have professional employment or to own a small to medium size business.

Incorporating housing societies into neighbourhood management both steers their conduct (encourages responsible, law abiding residents invested in the upkeep and development of the surrounding area) and encourages them, to use Foucault's oft quoted phrase, to 'conduct the conduct' of others who may want to encroach or build unauthorised additions. State recognised housing societies are perceived as having more direct contact with the local state and to deal with administrators rather than politicians. A closer look reveals that this is the exception rather than the norm for several reasons. Firstly, most members of housing societies are only members because they have to be and most are very ‘ignorant’ when it comes to what their rights and responsibilities are. This leads to constant problems of members not paying their fees and not wanting to abide by the rules set down by the Act. Normally the secretary or president of the housing society has some knowledge of the official rules or regulations. Some try to enforce the rules with legal sanctions. However, some use the structural and cultural holes (between the residents and service providers for example) they occupy to play favourites, to embezzle funds, or to make executive decisions about improvements and maintenance that should have been decided by a vote. Secondly, in complexes with multiple buildings there is often a campus wide level housing society. The relationship between this society and building level societies is marked by the same issues as just above. Plus, since the budget of this level is separate and to head it is a status position a personalised and politicised campaign often ensues to lead it. However, many who obtain this position soon

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61 The Maharashtra Ownership of Flats (Regulation of the Promotions of Construction Sale, Management and Transfer) Act defines the “promoter” as the person who constructs or causes to be constructed a block or building of flats or apartments for the purpose of selling some or all of them to other persons, or to a company, co-operative society or other association of persons, and includes his assignees; and where the person who builds and the person who sells are different persons, the term includes both. Available online: MOFAMOFA_1963.pdf.

62 File an official complaint in the local court or have a lawyer draft an official request for the past-due fees, to demolish the illegal addition, or for the extra family to vacate (most societies have rules regarding how many people can live in each flat).
regret it as individual owners bring all sorts of issues and personal complaints to them and hold them responsible if things are not tended to their liking. If the campus level president is at fault, so be it, but there are often other factors involved. The first being that everyone wants the campus to be maintained, but many do not pay fees regularly (or at all). Also there are always issues of societies who keep their area cleaner than others raising collective action problems. Another common conflict is the amount of budgets spent on religious specific cultural events. Muslim and Christian members feel exploited when much more money goes to Hindu related events than towards theirs. Additionally, if conveyance did not occur—i.e., the transfer of ownership from promoter to individual societies and of common areas to the campus level society—then the promoter still plays an important role in services, use privileges, and upkeep. The head of the campus society can have connections to local MCs or MLAs, which can produce conflicts of interest. For example, most new developments receive water by tanker trucks until the underground infrastructure is complete and they can be ‘hooked up’ to the piped water system. Many times, sometimes long after the infrastructure is complete, the campuses still receive water by tanker companies (sometimes private sometimes public). This situation is more common in societies where conveyance has not been given leaving these matters largely up to the promoter’s discretion. Many promoters also own water tanker companies or are linked with someone who does making it in their interest to drag out the transition from tanker to piped water as long as possible. In this situation it is not uncommon for campus that needs 12 tankers to be billed for 14, or the tankers will sell 25 percent of the water informally and still charge the housing societies for the full rate. Much of the rents generated go to the promoter. Sometimes even if conveyance has been given tanker trucks are still used, however this time some of the rents go to the campus level housing society leadership. In one case, two building level housing society presidents decided to fight against this corruption and demanded that they get water from the municipality. They were subjected to threats and rumours, both by those who benefit from the status quo and who were intimidated by the ‘muscle-power’ of the ‘water-mafia.’ It took almost a year, but the combined efforts of these two societies forced the ‘water-mafia’ out and secured municipal water provision reducing the water bills by 30 percent.

Housing societies, free from promoter’s interests, do not always deal with local state officials and politicians face-to-face. Many consider the workings of the local state and politics to be tedious and too corrupt to deal with, so they often employ their own middleman to navigate the cultural holes between them and the informal practices, norms, and games of the local government and political society. However, if a retired politician or bureaucrat—or the spouse of one—heads the society they report dealing directly (often by phone) with the local politicians and officials when problems arise. The dealings between housing societies and promoters, housing

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63 Either because housing societies neglected to get it, promoters are dragging their feet, or something was found problematic with all the paperwork and it is now unclear the original agreement between the original landowner and the promoter—if the land was legally transferred or not.
societies and the local state, and internal housing society relations can also be mediated by city and district level Cooperative Housing Society Federations – who are responsible for apprising the various official actors of this network of the Cooperative Housing Acts and Amendments. These offices sell copies of the acts and amendments, and they offer workshops to train societies and their members about their rights and responsibilities and how to obtain conveyance. They also employ an advocate specialising in cooperative law who gives free legal advice (to dues paying members) two nights per week. The secretary and president of the district federation noted that while the act is comprehensive and strong that most people are not aware of it, or they are not interested in changing how they currently manage internal conflicts within the society. Many societies are not predisposed to act how the acts require them to for the act to function. They are comfortable handling relations and conflicts with the local state and promoters informally via relations and middlemen and are hesitant to use the law and their citizenship to expose wrongdoings or to push for conveyance—often because they cannot (or cannot be bothered to) mobilise the consensus and support to do this. One indicator of this is that in order to use the services and support of these federations a society has to pay a fee of 1600 rupees/year and only around 25 percent comply with this. However, there are some housing societies that make full use of the acts and their citizenship to hold the local state and promoters accountable—but these are a small minority and not enough exist in MB or KD to consider the local state or the city en masse as becoming ‘gentrified’ by middle-class citizens (see Ghertner, 2011b). Contingent macro-level actors involved include state-level cooperative housing federations and state and federal policymakers. For instance, an amendment was added to the 1960 Act that makes it easier for societies to be granted conveyance in spite of promoters who are dragging their feet or who are unreachable. This amendment allows societies who have been around for at least five years to use a special court to receive ‘one sided’ conveyance—if they are so inclined. However, as of 2014 very few societies have taken this route because of the numerous documents required and the possible conflicts and complications that could arise (email communications with Cooperative Law Advocate, April 2014). Figure 22 shows the roles and connections constitutive of these three networks of urbanisation.

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64 Turning one’s water or power off until they pay or just letting it be because it is too much of a headache to fight them and their allies who are less interested in area cleanliness or the regulations of the housing society.

65 See also Deshmukh 2013.
Figure 22: Networks of Urbanisation
6.4 Discussion

There are points of overlap and areas of distinction between these networks. Some of the actors involved are important points of overlap: local politicians and local state officials and staff appear in each three. However, MCs and party workers, while being central in the clientelist network, are secondary or middlemen actors in the other two. Government officials and staff sometimes only occupy service provision roles, but can also be promoters, middlemen, or patrons as well. While promoters are central in the unauthorised housing network they take on contingent—while still important status—in the corporate network. Macro-level politicians and officials are present (contingently) in all three networks, meaning that they are not necessary to the functioning of these networks. Counterintuitive to arguments that set-up political and civil society as domains only open to certain categories of people and places, we see that political society—in terms of informal extra or paralegal arrangements and negotiations between residents and promoters or patrons and between residents and the state—is present in all three networks of urbanisation. Civil society is also operable in all three networks. It is quite dormant in the clientelist network—but there is no reason why it must stay that way. Collectivities placed within the unauthorised housing network are not stigmatised like those living in slums and have both (1) an easier time operating within a liberal-democratic framework as citizens then those compelled to rely on clientship, and (2) they have less success activating their citizenship to secure and improve their housing and surrounding area than those positioned in the corporate network. Collectivities in the corporate network have livelihoods and settlements most inline with the formal regulations and appear the most capable of having rights-based interactions with promoters and local government. However, they are also inclined to utilise political society channels when it suits their purposes. But for them it seems to be more of a choice than a structural necessity.

The most noticeable difference between these networks is the characteristics of the collectivities linked to them. Another area of difference is both the nature of the structural and cultural holes and those who bridge and monopolise them. While these gaps come from the same structural conjuncture (i.e., low infrastructural power, growing middle-class, categorical inequalities, housing shortages, and the ‘world-class’ slum-free city paradigm of urban development) they manifest differently across these different socio-economic groups embedded in different networks of urbanisation. For example, the cultural gap between clients and the formal state is not a case of purposeful distance, the way it is for citizens in corporate networks. The managing of structural-cultural holes that housing societies and their hired middlemen partake in (with all the shortcomings) is less exploitive than what occurs in the clientelist and unauthorised housing networks. Looking at structural-cultural holes foregrounds the contextual factors shaping the modes and interests of mediation and intermediation present in these operative networks of urbanisation.
The agendas and practices of local politicians, party workers, local state officials and staff, and state and central level politicians and officials are more interdependent than current governance discussions can account for. Networks of Urbanisation are not judged by their commitment to the public good, but by their commitment to particular groups and their ability to deliver. There are few reasons to see this context as amenable to ‘good governance’ approaches. It is not in the interest of those with prominent roles in these networks (and the segments of society tied to them who benefit from the patronage, rents and influence the present situation affords) to implement substantive reforms. These are all ‘open secrets’ and there are no consistent pushes within political society or civil society to transform this political culture or to totally unmediate the local state. These networks of urbanisation do function. They do not work developmentally (i.e., in concert with inclusive cities or world-class cities), but they do work for enough people for these networks to reproduce themselves and the territorialisation of the unauthorised housing network has been expanding. These networks also function as an established filter or clearing house of requests, needs and grievances, both formal and informal, of an increasingly diverse population. These filters are not based on “pursuit of collective interests” (Peters and Pierre, 1998) but they do function to limit the burden of increasing demand and ostensibly limited supply put on formal political and administrative structures. The roles MCs, MLAs, promoters, housing society leadership and others take on and the structural and cultural holes they broker highlight the mediated nature of state-society relations structured by weak infrastructural powers and on-going categorical inequalities. The media and civil society responses to this often focus on politicians and clientelism. They neglect to discuss the structural factors, and how the related categorical inequalities, especially those between ‘slum dwellers’ and ‘citizens,’ keep universal, democratic and rights-based local citizenship at bay. They also neglect to look for how collectivities all along the socio-economic ladder engage with political society.

Finally, these different networks of urbanisation within the same city make labelling the type of city MB and KD are difficult. If one focuses on formal processes and the middle-class it is easier to see a bourgeois (Chatterjee, 2004) or gentrified city (Ghertner, 2011) and local state taking shape. However, if one focuses on informal practices across different groups then a more ‘subaltern’ city (Roy, 2011a) emerges. Those focusing on the ends rather than the means of these networks may be able to make the argument that a more inclusive city is in the making. When these factors are considered together, no category seems sufficient. It makes more analytical sense to conceive of these two cities as two social-material assemblages or accomplishments of variously and contingently integrated networks of urbanisation marked by power-relations and capacity differences.

CHAPTER 7: CAPTURING THE MUNICIPAL WATER DEPARTMENT: ORGANISED POLITICAL ENCROACHMENT IN MIRA-BHAYANDAR

Studies across Indian cities areas show a very uneven geography of water provision (Gandy, 2006; Alankar, 2013; Graham et al., 2013). Government officials attribute this unevenness (in terms of quality, quantity, and modality) to infrastructure not keeping pace with population growth, growth that is compounded by local politicians enabling slums and other unauthorised formations to access water. This contradiction of illegal residences obtaining municipal water is often looked at as an effect of ‘patron-client’ relations, which are seen as the nucleus of ‘vote-bank’ politics where local politicians facilitate access to municipal services in exchange for votes and other expressions of loyalty. Some researchers have drawn attention to the dependency these exchanges rest upon, and how they push the poor to enter into Faustian Bargains given how the informality or illegality of their livelihoods and settlements limits their exercise of voice within this institution and their exit options from it. Benjamin’s ‘occupancy urbanism’ argument (2008) focuses on the political agency and awareness of so-called ‘clients.’ He sees them as exercising a form of ‘anarchic citizenship’ by purposefully embedding municipal government into political society—the terrain of ad hoc or informal negotiations of claims to land, services, and markets (ibid.: 724-726). Occupancy urbanism offers a sort of demand-side foray into the politics and practices of informal appropriation of land and services. Whereas approaches targeting clientelism reduce the demand-side of occupancy urbanism to exploitable voters easily placated, occupancy urbanism seems to reduce supply-side actors to facilitators. Cases exist suggestive of both scenarios, which make the power relations supporting occupancy urbanism, in any particular area, an open question. Why supply-side actors in occupancy urbanism participate needs to be explored more, as well as how and to what extent are they held accountable by residents. The entry point of this chapter is municipal water provision in Mira-Bhayandar.

This chapter is based on 6 months of fieldwork. Primary interview data from Higgler (2012) pertaining to the study of formal and informal water tanker operators which was collected during the same time period under my supervision is also leveraged. This city was chosen because of its chronic water shortage issues and because of its continuing dependence on private water tanker companies. Its urban status is relatively new, making the dynamics of municipal water provision easier to grasp. Secondary or satellite cities are usually ignored, making research findings mega-city centric. Exploring occupancy urbanism in a city of over 800,000, which does not yet have the intense spatial pressures of mega-cities, will also add more nuances to these

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67 Article version has been submitted for review.  
68 Securing manageable insecurity instead of longer-term development of livelihoods and localities.
debates. The majority of the residences in Mira-Bhayandar are likely illegal either administratively (lack of documentation) or technically (flout codes and regulations), including the bulk of residents in living in locally perceived ‘middle-class’ or standard localities. Formally, if a residence does do not have occupancy certificates issued from the municipality, or an official exemption, residents cannot legally make use of municipal water. However all areas within this city receive some water, albeit of variable quality, quantity, and modality. This city allows us to explore the informal distribution of services, a central component of occupancy urbanism, in and beyond slums, to see if and how supply-side actors dominate this process. Next, the approaches for looking at power-relations in contexts of unsettled state-society relations are reviewed. Then a Pierre Bourdieu informed field approach is sketched out before we enter into the field of municipal water provision.

7.1 Informality, Appropriation and Power-Relations

Informality in accessing water is normally characterised as a claims making (Jha and Woolcock, 2007), an appropriation strategy (Bayart, 2006) or both (Benjamin, 2008) of the poor in particular. Roy (2009) discusses how the state deals with the informalities associated with different social groups in an uneven and calculative manner. Some practices are ignored, while others are regularised or criminalised, depending on state actor’s political and economic calculations. Chatterjee’s distinction between political society and civil society and populations and citizen’s examines how the state’s calculated informality plays out in state-society relations at an everyday material needs level. A main function of a liberal state is to protect and regulate public and private property rights. Many urban residents’ livelihoods and settlements encroach upon public and private property or contravene statutory requirements and administrative procedures. Given their numbers they cannot be summarily excluded or penalised, rather their places in the city and the resources they acquire are managed in various para-legal ad hoc arrangements worked out in ‘political society.’ In political society those who cannot comply with private property regimes are treated as ‘populations’ who make claims that are unevenly managed or disciplined by local state actors (Chatterjee, 2004: Chapter 1). Citizens, those who seem to comply with property laws and administrative procedures, can engage with state actors on a terrain of rights granted to civil society, rather than claims and favours worked out in political society. These understandings of informality in state-society relations imply that the urban poor and the state are autonomous entities. The poor try to appropriate land and services. The state tolerates political society and the spaces it enables to maintain sufficient social cohesion in a situation of marked inequality. What falls out of focus here are the intervening or internal encroachments by local state actors themselves and their associates who I conceive of as constituting the supply-side of political society.

Hackenbroch and Hossain (2012) argued that the terrain of informal negotiations to water supply also provide a fertile ground for domination and appropriation strategies of local elites. They introduced the concept of ‘the organised encroachment of the
powerful’ to account for local power-relations structuring informal access to public water in Dhaka, Bangladesh. Twelve years earlier Chabol and Daloz in Africa Works (1999) offered an analogous argument focussed on how the “instrumentalising of disorder” can be a key resource for the reproduction of political power particularly at the local level. They defined this process as, “the day-to-day instrumentalisation of what is a shifting and ill-defined political realm; it is the political instrumentalisation of seemingly non-political issues,” such as municipal water provision (17-18). Keeping access informalised allows local leaders to occupy gaps (i.e., structural or cultural holes) or contradictions between resources and their localities. This ability to distribute across these gaps and manage contradictions links their constituents and localities to them. Occupying these gaps is arguably the foundation of their political, economic and cultural powers. In particular, encroachment and occupation practices allow informality to be instrumentalised towards certain goals. The extent these practices lead to a de facto democratisation of access or to capture is an open question. By encroachment, I am referring to the extending beyond the limits of one’s property, authority, territory, and/or status via practices of intrusion, infiltration, mimicry, or obstruction. By occupying, I am referring to: taking up or filling up a space, to take possession and maintain control, or to fill a vacant position or role. Encroachment implies occupancy, but occupancy does not require encroachment. Occupancy in this context indicates the incompleteness or unevenness of municipal authority: statutory, administrative, political, or spatial within its territory and jurisdiction.

A latent theme in these discussions is political capture and political entrepreneurship. Whereas elite capture refers to a higher class or caste having privileged influence over a public office or authority, political capture refers to a situation when politicians are able to direct allocation and distribution in line with their interests (Khenmani, 2010). Political capture can coincide with benefits to poorer citizens, such as the ones discussed in Benjamin’s Occupancy Urbanism (2008). However, ad hoc, particularistic provision comes at the expense of investment in capital projects, such as a piped water system that covers the whole city, that are not easily divisible (Khenmani, 2010: 3). The difference between ‘socially embedded’ public servants or elected representatives and political entrepreneurs is important for assessing the longevity of ostensibly pro-poor aspects of supply-side activities in occupancy urbanism. Entrepreneurs look for opportunities for gains and then pursue them. Political entrepreneurs look for ways to maximise private value or welfare through taking advantage of institutional opportunities and steering institutional changes to their relative advantage (Feiock and Carr, 2001). The degree their “selective interests” complement or enable the interests of poorer citizens or the city as a whole may be coincidental or interim becomes key to understanding power dynamics within occupancy urbanism. While encroachment and occupancy are tactics of political entrepreneurialism, used by both the powerful and the relatively powerless, domination is a structural effect. It is the ability to make decisions and take actions that impact others who are legally, socially or practically unable to challenge them. The degree the encroachment and occupancy practices of those organising the
provision of water give them structural dominance over residents is an important issue.

Focusing on de facto sovereignties, Hansen and Stepputat (2005) illustrate how various and competing forms of authority, variously entangled with the state institutions and agencies are functioning within state territory. They argue that, “the informal fragmented sovereignties of hierarchies of ‘big men’ in India are the ‘elementary units’ of local politics, social work, and cultural organisation for many inhabitants” (ibid. 173). Public authority, as the ability to make decisions and enforce them collectively on parts of society, is not limited to the government and in some places is mostly not excised by formalised state institutions (Lund, 2006: 685). Others have discussed this in-between layer of local elites or netas as being the “hinge group” (Mitra, 1992) who intermediates between the localities and the state, especially in rural or peri-urban areas (Craig, 2000 & 2002; Leiten and Srivastava, 1999). They gate-keep and broker the transfer of information and resources both up and down scales of public authority. Their significance for development trajectories in more rural areas has been well documented (Mitra, 1992; Pelissery, 2005, Corbridge et al., 2005; Witsoe, 2011). In more urban contexts the relationship these actors have with the poor has been addressed (see de Wit, 2010; Berenschot, 2009), but the relationship they have within the local state and the role they play in how informal services take shape receives less detailed exploration. Focusing at the point of contact, where the resident (often poor) meets the face of the state (in their lives) in the form of a broker, fixer, local politician, or neta, attributes to both sides’ capacities (such as successfully obtaining an illegal water connection) that requires many other moving parts. Other actors sufficiently coordinated or coerced to manage this task are required. This paper endeavours to map the supply-side of municipal water provision in the context of occupancy urbanism.

The Mira-Bhayandar Municipal Corporation (here after referred to as the Municipality) is mandated to provide 150 litres per capita daily. An audit of the Municipality covering 2005-2010 by the Comptroller and Auditor General of the Government of India reported that deficiencies in planning, mostly non-existent internal controls, and failure to take up new water supply schemes caused a shortfall in meeting demand by 34 to 44 percent (Golb, 2011: 62). In 2008-2009 only 52 percent of billings were paid.69 Also, “out of 29,015 consumers, in 5,056 cases, the water reading was shown as zero for more than three quarters with bills being issued based on average meter readings. No report was prepared nor action initiated to change the defective meters or disconnect the supply” (ibid.: 73). The general assessment of all the departments audited was that internal controls are either non-existent or only irregularly enforced. Additionally, the Municipality has not framed its own rules and bylaws in accordance with relevant acts as per the order given by the Government of Maharashtra in 2002. The ratio of unauthorised to authorised

construction is estimated to be around 10:3 (Yeshwantrao, 2012). However, all areas within the city were found to receive municipal water albeit of varying quality, quantity, and modality of provision. Given that legally the municipality should only be providing water to structures with ‘occupancy certificates,’ while most do not have these, this indicates that provision across the city requires informal negotiations and understandings. At this point its fair to say that the municipality exhibits signs of low capacity to meet its statutory and public obligations and that the legality of residence is not necessary to access municipal water.

7.2 A Field Approach

Bourdieu (1990) refers to social fields as “historically constituted areas of activity with their own institutions and laws of functioning” (87). Objective power relations in fields are constituted by possession and control of ‘capitals’, which refer to resources or capacities that have value or utility in a field. Each field is oriented to the production of field specific capitals, with the stakes of the field being the appropriation of these capitals. Social fields presume competitive and unequal situations where insiders and outsiders, incumbents and challengers, the weak and the powerful are affected differently by the current rules and practices. These contradictions, and thus potential for conflict, make fields dynamic. Fields are both spaces of collaboration (shared: rules, stakes, logics, and practices) and arenas of conflict over how capitals are generated, deployed and distributed. Organised fields can become unsettled and in such times fields can become reconstituted. For example, chess players are constrained by the field (the power of each piece). However, the power of each piece at a given place and time is also affected by how the other player moves. Meaningful action is rule bound and shaped by power distributions (thus structured), yet outcomes cannot be reduced to the rules, or to the capacities of individual pieces. Utility is shaped significantly by subsequent actions of both players over time. Utility is trans-(en)acted as it is contingent on the actions of others and thus is vulnerable to bottlenecks and obstruction. Importantly, since the ‘gravity’ of a field (Wacquant, 1992: 17) or the way they ‘draw in’ (Hakli, 2013) others is by shared practices and recognition of the rules and stakes of the field, we can avoid formal territorial or scalar ‘traps’ when looking at actors, logics and practices that do not match up well with formal institutional jurisdictions and norms. A field is not a fixed system; it can be altered when internal distributions or values of capitals shift. A social field is not a closed system; it can be shaped or even colonised by other fields attempting to restructure the power-relations often by introducing different organisational logics, rules, or practices (Woolford and Curran, 2011: 586). Stakes refer to the purposes the field is structured around in practice. The actors involved and the reach of their activity geographically ground fields. They are socially bound by

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70 Bourdieu distinguished between three species of capital: cultural, economic, and social. In this case I do not use these meta-categories and stick with what gives one power/capacity in this field.
the network of coordinated actors/actions necessary for utility and value to be realised. This makes them topological phenomena amenable to empirical research.

Applying a field approach to this inquiry of municipal water provision generated the following questions: (1) Who are the actors in this field and what are the relations between them? (2) Who are the incumbents and challengers in this field? (3) What are the stakes and how are they cultivated and appropriated? (4) To what extent is this field accountable to citizens? This field analysis began with a reputational approach for indicating which actors account for the present functioning of the field of municipal water provision and the relations between them. First we discussed issues of water management and water inequalities with city officials, engineers, local politicians, and residents from different urban formations. The actors that came up in these discussions were then sought out and interviewed. This process continued until no new actors came up. Next, the stakes and which actors seem to set these and the rules in use for obtaining them were explored. In addition to interview data, a detailed field journal was kept to better extrapolate field-specific capitals by paying particular attention to which actors powers were attributed to and what capitals their powers were linked to. Through this process there were many opportunities to observe these actors in real time. Key players were visited multiple times after the initial interview for less structured discussions as the analysis developed.

7.2 Field of Water Provision

Actors, Relations, and Practices

Whenever I inquired into the contradiction between potential development (given benchmarks, policies, and resources) and the actual status of water provision or rampant unauthorised construction the suggestion was always the same, “go talk to Barbosa.” MLA (Member of Legislative Assembly) Barbosa was the sarpanch (leader) of the village panchayat (council) in 1978 and later became the pradhan (leader) of the municipal council. He was elected MLA in 2009 and is the only Christian MLA in Maharashtra, and he is one of the senior leaders of the National Congress Party. His family enjoys large land holdings in the area and have been local elites here for as long as anyone can remember. By all accounts he has evolved from a local traditional leader, whose wealth came mostly from agriculture and smuggling, to becoming a MLA whose wealth comes mainly from real estate and real estate related businesses. This transition was managed by (1) placing family members in strategic positions within the local state and local economy, (2) political appointees at the Municipality, (3) linkage politics between his locality and government agencies and (4) his ability to put together a diverse coalition of local elites. His wife was the first mayor of the city, and his sister, brother, cousin, two daughters and one son are municipal councillors (MCs). His daughter just won re-election and is currently the mayor. On the business end, one daughter runs the family’s construction materials business and his son runs their water tanker business. Aside from family members, a large number of
lower and middle level staff at the Municipality are connected to his network, i.e., they gain their job security more from their connection to him than from performance directly related to their official job responsibilities.\textsuperscript{71} He and those close to him enjoy strong linkages with the police. These linkages are offered as why the multiple charges against him over the years rarely result in convictions.\textsuperscript{72} The linkages he developed with various state agencies and actors since 1978 helped him to secure his position locally and his MLA seat. This process corresponds with research that focuses on struggles between different rural classes/castes to dominate local government to achieve privileged access to government contracts and grants and to be able to broker between weaker sections of their localities and various state agencies and projects (cf. Mitra, 1992; Pelissery, 2005; Dutta, 2012). To both appease local elites and to ease the administrative burden of surveying local areas and determining targets or beneficiaries themselves, government officers often relied on Barbosa’s ‘local knowledge’ when distributing funds and implementing programs. These linkages helped him to expand his standing when the village council became a municipal council and when the municipal council became a municipality. The coalition of local elites Barbosa manages takes a great deal of material and symbolic exchanges and occasional violence. Barbosa uses a tactic of co-optation, violence, then another offer to ‘work with him rather than against him.’\textsuperscript{73} For example, appointed Municipal Councillor Shaihk, who was the ‘head goonda’\textsuperscript{74} in the 1990s said that first he had no interest in power-sharing with Barbosa. Instead, he engaged in turf battles, one of which resulted in him being stabbed by one of Barbosa’s uncles. Rather than opting to amp up the violence, another offer was extended that there was more to be made working together than working against each other. "Now we are very close allies...if you are a loyal friend he is willing to share regardless of caste or religious differences.”\textsuperscript{75} In addition to the material tactics of sharing rents, monopolising markets, and other privileges, Barbosa’s lake house estate is an important place for bonding. Being invited to the lake house to enjoy good food, drink and tobacco is a coveted honour. We had three meetings with Barbosa at his lake house and saw a diverse group of local politicians, contractors, civil servants, brokers and goondas enjoying themselves while discussing all sorts of opportunities and conflicts. Beyond the men’s club\textsuperscript{76} of the lake house, Barbosa sponsors many cultural and entertainment events throughout the city and surrounding village areas. His formal, social, money, and muscle capitals (powers) together with the geographical reach of his official position and his more informal social and political connections allow him to guide the field of water provision in line with his goals. Maintaining the scarcity and dragging

\footnotesize{\textsuperscript{71} Even entry-level government jobs come to those who can both mobilise connections in the municipality and who can mobilise the money necessary to be hired. Barbosa often provides both in exchange for loyalty. The GOI(b) also reported that the Municipality continues to hire and promote unqualified persons (78).

\textsuperscript{72} To protect anonymity corroborating evidence will not be cited

\textsuperscript{73} Interview with Barbosa, February 2011.

\textsuperscript{74} Strongman, mafia type

\textsuperscript{75} Interview, MC Shaihk March 2011

\textsuperscript{76} There are women in his network but certain cultural norms prohibit them from participating in these modes of bonding.}
out the development of piped water infrastructure protects the market for tankers, while keeping water access informalised is useful for binding residents of informal and unauthorised settlements to local politicians. In practice, he is able to encroach on the powers of the municipality by way of influencing recruitment, fielding candidates from his family, and from facilitating rent and profit sharing. His occupation of structural and cultural holes between different actors and his reputation as a neta or ‘big-man’ stemming from before municipal incorporation strengthen his capacity to encroach on formally municipal matters.

**Chief Municipal Commissioner**

The Chief Municipal Commissioner (CM) is the highest-ranking official at the Municipality. This post is formally held accountable by the State, specifically by the Head Secretary of the Urban Development Department. Administratively the CM is to carry out the duties prescribed in the Bombay Provincial Municipal Act and to ensure that development within the city corresponds with the Maharashtra Regional Town Planning Act. CMs are not locals and usually have three-year terms. The first three CMs did not take on local politics, nor did they push for the municipality to run more in line with acts and codes. This spared them the headache of taking on entrenched powers and habits, and it allows them to benefit financially. The CMs opting not to mobilise the formal powers available helps this field to function at cross-purposes with official development goals and service benchmarks.

**Municipal Water Department**

The water department is formally responsible for the distribution of water once it reaches the city’s administrative border. The zones and the timings are also decided here. Their formal mandate is to work toward reaching the benchmarks set by the state and central government. The benchmarks for water provision in metropolitan areas are: 150 litres per capita daily (LPCD). Currently they provide approximately 80 LPCD during the summer season and 90 during the rest of the year, and 24x7 water supply is not yet met anywhere in the city. The goal is for 100 percent piped water, currently 50 percent of water is distributed via the underground system. The department reports that every year times are allotted to the different zones of the city based on population and system pressure (Higglar, 2012). However, all zones of the city report that timings and duration are highly irregular. This points to this timetable being negotiable. Presently the department is not able to check if the amount of water allotted to each zone reaches its destination. While the Municipality reported budget surpluses from 2007-2010 in excess of 97 crores (GOIa, 2011: 109), only 7 out of 10 pumping stations are operational and most are understaffed, and the

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77 It is beyond the scope this paper to outline the official structure of municipal governance. Please see Aijaz (2008) for a complete overview.

78 Each zone is to receive between 1 to 2 hours of water per day.


80 1 crore = 10 million
department still relies on rented tanker trucks to distribute around half of municipal water.

In practice they manage the system in line with the demands of politicians and netas. Engineers in the water department are important in terms of both maintenance and expansion of the piped water system. When a problem is reported they are to go into the field and file a report about the extent of the problem and what can be done within codes and system capacity. If there is a proposal to add another main line or sub-line, then an engineer’s technical report is also needed to show that the addition falls within the rules and capacity of the system. This means that engineers are important connections for those wanting to either expand the distribution system and for those wanting to limit it as influence is applied to both rush reports or to delay them. The department relies heavily on complaints from MCs and other brokers or fixers regarding shorter intervals or pressure problems to assess how the system is operating. At the ground level are the valve-men who actually open and close different valves according to the schedule given to them by the water department. The practice of going to valve-men and offering presents or money to get an extra 15 minutes on special occasions or to get bumped up in line in times of greater scarcity were also reported to be common place.

While the water department should only be extending their services to authorised or regularised residences in practice all types manage some sort of water provision from them. This is managed via the linkages between the actors in this field and facilitated by ‘speed money,’ and fears of reprisals (harassment, holding up transfers or promotions) if they do not cooperate. One assistant municipal commissioner commented that, “illegal connections are easier to manage than legal ones.” The department’s formal jurisdiction over water, technical skill, and capacity for discretion are capitals central to the functioning of this field.

**MCs**

MCs (MCs) are important gatekeepers between their constituencies and the local state. Gatekeeping here is the instrumentalisation of cultural or structural holes between different populations or localities and the state, or between different state actors to accrue political, social, and economic capital from acting as mediators in trans-actions between residents and officials, local leaders and elites, and the police (cf. Berenschot, 2010). Following Pattenden (2011) gatekeeping is broken down into “fixing” and “brokering.” Fixing refers to getting someone access to something they are entitled to. The fixer helps with getting and filling out the appropriate papers and helping to jump in line by using their relationship to encourage the official or line worker to attend to a claim or request (ibid. p. 166). Brokering refers to negotiating distribution of public resources in ways that go against or around regulations and established protocols, for example, obtaining a water line for an illegal slum or organising an unauthorised third connection for a housing society. In slums and gaothans, MCs function as brokers, with the amount and regularity of water perceived as being a function of the powers of the MC. MCs who do not appear as being interested in or
capable of arranging sufficient water for their areas will be in trouble during re-election, if other viable candidates are present. For residents of unauthorised buildings MCs are key in securing water connections from the city. For those living in authorised housing societies MCs have more of a fixer role; they are expected to use their influence to speed up repairs, to push the water department for longer intervals, or to send a tanker. Since their settlement is not illegal or unauthorised the MC does not enjoy the brokerage position he or she does in other areas. Also more powerful MCs are able to make sure municipal tankers service their areas. Relatively weak MCs will not be given much attention by the water department. Also those who find themselves in conflict with Barbosa or his network find themselves marginalised in this field. MCs’ elected position, broker position, connections with the water department, and their capacity for discretion are important field specific capitals.

**Other ‘Fixers’**

MCs are not the only fixers in this field. There are others (contractors, goondas, self-described ‘social workers,’ retired municipal staff, plumbers, and political party-workers) who make part of their living by trying to obtain services or protection of existing arrangements for their clients. The majority of contact between the water department and residents are mediated. The degree one is dependent on one fixer or has the choice among multiple fixers, or sees this as one institution among others does seem to coincide with socio-economic status. The cost and accessibility of fixing services are not uniform. These are susceptible to the standing of the client and the political organisation of the formation he or she resides. Also not all fixers enjoy the same access to the water department—which depends on their standing (i.e., their reputation and who they are linked to). These actors’ connections, intermediations skills, and reputations are important field specific capitals.

**Plumbers**

While the municipality is responsible for the main underground water system, developers or inhabitants themselves have to pay for the piping that goes from their building to the nearest available municipal water line. Plumbers are supposed to do this work in accordance with municipal regulations however those working on unauthorised, illegal, or non-formal settlements will often do the work with a signed or verbal confirmation from the MC or the landlord. Also most MCs only allow certain plumbers to work in their area—those with ties to them and who are familiar with the ‘payment sharing’ arrangements. Plumbers’ technical ability and knowledge of the piped system, plus their discretion is valued in this field.

**Private Tanker Companies**

“The tanker operators are the most powerful political lobby in Mira Road. They have divided up the tanker routes among themselves and prevent the municipality from laying new pipes, which would eliminate their business” (Mehta, 2004: 498). While this lobby remains powerful, it coordinates its interests with the Municipality at a cost of no longer having monopoly control over provision. Today all the tanker
companies in Mira-Bhayandar are represented by Da Souza Water Transportation, which is the same company under contract to rent tankers to the Municipality to reach areas that are currently not receiving water (or enough water) from the piped system. Entering the tanker lobby is not easy. The lobby must allow you in, and access to the privately owned or controlled wells and lakes is required. In total there are approximately 150 (10,000 litre) large tankers in operation. Officially 75 tankers are hired to deliver municipal water, however security personnel at the gate reported that it often runs closer to 90 to 100 tankers per day (Higgler, 2012: 42). There are no protocols in place to track the water after it leaves, and trucks that were not on the list were seen being allowed to fill up after handing their cell to the supervisor presumably with someone of influence on the line (ibid.). Private tankers service construction sites, malls, hotels, and high-rise apartment blocks regularly. Slums and other economically weak areas do not order tankers because they do not have the storage capacity, extra income, or the roads are too narrow. There were reports from several local politicians and a few officials that many areas that depend on tanker companies could be getting water from the city for less money. According to them, the infrastructural capacity is there, but the switch has not been made. The two main reasons offered for this was that the expansion of the underground grid is not formally announced to housing societies so they do not know, or that the president of the housing society does know, but receives kick-backs to leave things the way they are. Additionally, there is the theory that the water department maintains that the system is not ready, when many sections are because of the money they receive from tanker companies. In sum, the monopoly the tanker lobby enjoys and their political connections allow them to slow down the phasing out of tankers as the piped system expands. These are capitals central to the reproduction of this field. Also their history of resorting to violence becomes a capital in this field as it makes people loath to challenge this setup.

**Informal Tankers** (500 to 1,000 litres carrying capacity)

These non-licensed small tankers fill up from private tanker drivers during roadside transactions. There are certain areas where these tankers wait for large tankers to buy water directly from them. The watchmen at housing societies or commercial properties that receive the larger tankers are given small bribes or gifts not to mention that the tanker delivered 8,000 litres instead of 10,000. Informal tankers tend to service individuals rather than whole housing societies and are easily reached by cell. Their willingness to access water by corrupt means becomes a capital in this field because this practice helps make up for the shortcomings of the piped system by providing extra water to those without the storage facilities or road connectivity to order a licensed tanker.

**7.3 Field Structure**

Table 6 lists the actors starting with the most powerful, in terms of setting the stakes (political capture) and rules of this field. While the first three actors use the same
types of capital, the quantities and qualities of these differ. A common theme is that formal resources are co-opted for informal stakes rather than the other way around. Another common theme is that one’s social standing in their localities is strengthened by one’s access to money and muscle power (bribery and violence). When it is believed that one will resort to violence when necessary, this adds to the magnitude of one’s social capital, both with clients/residents and with other actors.

Table 6: Actor - Capital Structure of the Field of Water Provision

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Formal Jurisdiction</th>
<th>Informal Jurisdiction</th>
<th>$</th>
<th>Technical Discretion</th>
<th>Practices</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>MLA</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>x</td>
<td></td>
<td>x</td>
<td>Linking, bonding, bridging actors within and across fields by mix of consent and coercion</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MCs</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>x</td>
<td></td>
<td>x</td>
<td>Brokering and fixing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tanker Lobby</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>x</td>
<td></td>
<td>x</td>
<td>Mobilize political connections to protect their monopoly</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CMC</td>
<td>x</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>x</td>
<td>Salutary neglect - strategic abdication</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Water Dept.</td>
<td>x</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>x</td>
<td>Ignores illegalities, provides connections to unauthorized residences, stalls expansion/capacity of piped systems</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fixers</td>
<td>x</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>x</td>
<td>Facilitates access</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Plumbers</td>
<td></td>
<td>x</td>
<td></td>
<td>x</td>
<td>Repair and add connections</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Informal Tankers</td>
<td>x</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>x</td>
<td>Informally procure water from formal tanker drivers, supplement supply in slums and gaothans</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

in this field. Several other claims can be drawn from this empirical sketch. First there is a lack of formal regulation from the Municipality to the street or house level. Rather informal arrangements (often fixed or brokered) are the norm resulting in municipal actors in this field relying on subjective assessments of the relative power of those making demands. Requests or demands from Barbosa, the tanker lobby and/or well positioned MCs (and other brokers and fixers affiliated with them) are not adjudicated based on objective needs on the ground, but by these actors’ relative influence. By this metric the Water Department can be considered captured. It functions more towards achieving the interests of field incumbents than meeting development goals and service benchmarks. The lack of interest in maintaining meters, collecting arrears, and the slow progress of linking areas up to the piped system are also indicative of political capture.
The Chief Municipal Commissioner is the top legal authority of the Municipality. In principle, he could mobilise connections at the state level and leverage municipal statutes to push those under his authority to operate more in line with codes and regulations, and he could push for more of the piped system to be completed and used to its capacity. This has yet to happen as officials opt to go along rather than face the professional and personal turmoil of restructuring this field. These findings point towards a municipality that abdicates some of its authority for three interrelated reasons. One is the sharing of ‘speed money’ and other rents. The second concerns over transfers and other ways local politics can cause problems for officials by way of political recruits within departments engaging in both obvious and stealth obstructionism. The second directly relates to the third of municipal incapacity by design. The notion of incapable local government agencies helps rationalise the status quo of encroachment upon municipal authority from within, which perpetuates structural and cultural holes between residents and the municipality that can be occupied. Complaints regarding the tactics and powers of politicians, other brokers and fixers, and the tanker lobby are common, but sustained actions to reform these practices and relations are not.

**Who are the Incumbents and Challengers?**

Incumbents refer to actors with significant influence over the stakes and whose interests are most met by the organisation and functioning of the field (Fligstein and McAdam, 2011: 6). Here the incumbents are Barbosa and the tanker lobby. Engineers, MCs and officers come and go but these actors remain to sustain this field. Some engineers or appointed officials complain about the strength of the tanker lobby or ‘water mafia,’ but no actions are taken given the “headache” that would ensue. Personally (in the form of extra money and no harassment) and professionally (in terms of transfers or promotions not being blocked, and the fees for these not being punitively inflated) it is better to go along with the status quo. Some fixers or brokers have ambitions to become MCs one day. Their goal is not to change the field, but to have a better position within it. MCs are often challenged at election, but those running, especially from slum or gaothan formations, do not run on formalising this field. Plumbers and informal tankers provide needed services in this field but do not influence the stakes. It would be against their self-interest to push for universal piped water coverage in the city. No internal challengers to the stakes and consequent functioning of this field were found.

**Stakes of Instrumentalisation of Informality via Encroachment and Occupation**

What is the logic underpinning these practices? It is not providing equitable and sufficient water. Rather it seems to be both: (1) the generation of economic rents and social power that comes from connecting different urban formations to municipal water services and (2) constructing scarcity to secure profit-seeking from maintaining
a market for licensed tanker companies in relatively well-off areas. On the topic of rents, Harvey (2002) discusses how:

[Rents arise] because social actors control some special quality resource, commodity or location which, in relation to a certain kind of activity, enables them to extract monopoly rents from those desiring to use it...It is not [only] the land, resource or location of unique qualities which is traded but also the commodity or service produced through their use (94).

Water is provided by the state. This gives those in the water department and those with influence over it the ability to coordinate their actions to extract rents from those dependent upon this water source. Fixers and brokers and municipal staff enjoy a steady stream of economic rents (fees, tribute, bribes, kickbacks). Politicians (and other brokers and fixers) gain political and social capital from gatekeeping given the extent the regulatory function of this field is seen as being more legible and powerful than formal statutes and protocols. This field’s instrumentalising (i.e., its structuring of informality) produces rents through the mediation and intermediation of structural and cultural gaps in municipal authority and local governance more generally.

Withholding resources or thwarting their development can create scarcity. Before 1986 there was no piped drinking water in this area. Poorer people depended on bore-wells, while those who could afford it and store it depended on tankers. When the municipality was formed in 2002, the work of expanding the infrastructure was publicly prioritised. Today around 50 percent of municipal water is still distributed by tankers (Nair 2011)—arguably because the stakes of this field block against pushing for the underground system to be fully operational. Perpetuating scarcity is important both for the tanker lobby and for those accruing rents through this field. Sufficient incentives for becoming a tanker free city are missing. This is also indicated by how the chief municipal commissioners, MCs and MLA Barbosa have not pushed for more water resources from the state, nor have they followed through on tentative deals made with other authorities. Over the past 12 years deals have been negotiated with the Maharashtra Industrial Development Authority, Navi Mumbai Municipal Corporation, and with the Surya Dam Water Authority. At present the Municipality can only receive 30 million litres of the 50 allotted to them from the MIDA, and the water allotted to them from Navi Mumbai cannot be given until a feasibility study is carried out to see if the Municipality can actually distribute the extra water. Surya Dam is 120 kilometres away, the pipelines will take at least 4 years to complete, and it remains unclear who is responsible for the costs and who the private sector partner is going to be (Athalye, 2012). Field incumbents are interested in the press coverage these arrangements generate, which give the impression that work is being done and that soon water shortages will be handled. However, in practice very little time and resources are used to push agreements to fruition. This situation also indicates encroachment by obstruction.

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81 middle-class housing societies and commercial properties
The reproduction of cultural and structural holes between different settlements and the municipality is a pivotal or meta-stake upon which the rest depend. A person, network, or organisation can be said to occupy a structural or cultural hole if they are perceived to be a viable access point to what would otherwise be closed off. When structural holes overlap with cultural holes they are more difficult to bridge without mediators and provide more rents and resources for those occupying or bridging them (cf. Pachucki & Breiger, 2010). Arguably an important aspect of local state formation is the ability to bridge the structural and cultural divides between formally established practices and principles and the different social-spatial formations within its borders. The ubiquity of fixing and brokering activities and the extent the water department has been captured point to this field working against structural and cultural holes being closed, and thus against informality being de-instrumentalised in municipal water provision.

**Accountability to Citizens**

There were no advocacy NGOs present in the city. The local media does regularly report on water problems, but they are attributed to population growth. Barbosa and his network maintain good contacts with the local newspapers. They know the editors and the reporters assigned to cover governance issues. It is not uncommon for money to be paid to a reporter in exchange for an article to be dropped or altered.

There is little organised citizen action around this issue, even though almost all of the 200 households surveyed reported that lack of regular, clean and adequate water was their number one grievance with local politicians and the municipality. Surprisingly silent are ‘middle-class’ citizens who are the most dependent on tanker water, and whose costs would go down if they could make more use of the municipal system. While it is not uncommon for a group of residents to visit the Municipality with their MC and demand to see the Commissioner to plead for more water, these have yet to develop into a political sequence, nor have they manifested into public interest litigation or organised targeting of the stakes or rules of this field. The only pressures coming from the residents are small-scale, one-off events, often coordinated by a MC or they are aggregate stresses, such as population and lifestyle changes influencing demand. The majority of residents from all socio-economic backgrounds vote in municipal elections, and land lack of water is their main concern. Yet, capital investments in the water infrastructure and securing access to more sources of water remain perpetually in the works, but have yet to come to fruition. Perhaps if more residents knew how complicit the field of water provision is in maintaining the status quo their politics would change.
7.4 Discussion

Through applying a field approach to municipal water provision this paper charted supply-side actors and the relations between them. Looking at practices and field-specific capitals that constitute the field of municipal water provision allowed us to situate incumbents and challengers and to interpret the extent to which this field is accountable to citizens. These findings indicate that this field instrumentalises informality through capture of the Municipal Water Department. The capturing of this department is largely a result of organised encroachment from the inside out, facilitated by supply-side actors. Municipal authority, in this case, is more aptly described as selectively abdicated, rather than stealthy infringed upon by popular society as intimated by Benjamin (2008). A government agency or department is captured to the degree that it functions in line with meeting the interests of particular groups, rather than in accordance with their official or public mandate. This case suggests that the water department functions in line with the rules and stakes of the field of water provision and not in line with meeting development goals or benchmarks. For many years promises of more water have not been met with building a system that can receive and distribute it adequately. Those in the field of water provision are accountable to each other more than to higher levels of state authority or to the citizenry. The decisions taken by these actors, and the coordination among them, impact all residents. However, these are opaque processes not open to review or media scrutiny. This situation indicates supply-side actors achieving structural dominance in occupancy urbanism in Mira-Bhayandar.

Water is provided in a manner that suits their interests of maintaining scarcity and brokering and fixing access to municipal water. This is accomplished by the instrumentalisation of informality made possible by infringing upon municipal authority. Instead of suturing the cultural or structural gaps that block residents from municipal water, actors in this field broker and gate-keep them for economic and political benefit. Coordination is managed mostly through informal or social authority. The water department and the Chief Municipal Commissioner act like their job security is tied more to complying with the rules of this field than it is to complying with official responsibilities. The mechanisms supporting this authority are sharing of rents, being invited to the lake house and other bonding opportunities, payments for government jobs, the threat of being (or not) being transferred, and the threat of harassment or violence for non-compliance. This form of social authority with the figure of a ‘Big Man’ at the helm is not new. Accommodating local elites in exchange for their support has been common in state formation since before independence (cf. Jeffrey, 2000 & 2002; Witsoe, 2013; Mitra, 1992).

The field of water provision has successfully embedded their rules and practices within the various changes in the political and administrative geography in a manner that sustains the instrumentalisation of informality to their benefit. In practice, municipal-society relations regarding water are mediated by social and spatial differences and inequalities, and beliefs that elites like Barbosa are in control. This
situation produces a context of structural and cultural gaps to be instrumentalised by those in the field of water provision for various gains and with various costs to sustainable development of municipal water provision and accountability. This field works well for the incumbents and okay enough for residents to suppress collective or judicial actions so far. In theory, if all the municipal statutes were enforced, many would lose their access to municipal water. In this way the field benefits those with illegal or unauthorised homes. However, this case suggests that this is a contingent positive effect, rather than an outcome of ‘anarchic citizenship’ being exercised by popular society. In Mira-Bhayandar supply-side actors in the field of water provision coordinate and collude to encroach upon municipal authority, and in effect they have captured the water department. This allows them to accumulate rents, profits and political capital in ways that give them structural domination over residents.
CHAPTER 8: OCCUPANCY URBANISM BEYOND THE MEGA-CITY
SLUM: OCCUPANCY, DEVELOPMENT, AND MUNICIPAL CITIZENSHIP

Many studies of spatial politics and practices in Indian cities focus on slums or gentrification in the context of policy strategies towards ‘world-classing’ and ‘slum-freeing’ cities. Such studies place the contradictions and conflicts between subaltern urbanism and neoliberal urbanisation as key for understanding the contested terrain of spatial authority in urban(ising) India (Roy, 2011a). The aspirations of capital interests, ‘bourgeois’ middle-classes and the increasingly entrepreneurial state’s planning, disciplining, public-private-partnering its way to a modern and slum-free city (cf. Bannerjee, 2013; Ghertner, 2011b; and Goldman, 2011) are variably countered by subaltern spaces (i.e., slums) and spatial politics (i.e., vote-banks) attributed mostly to the creativity, endurance, and resourcefulness of the urban poor. Chatterjee’s (2004) ‘political society’ is an account of the civic politics of those whose livelihoods and residences are illegal or unsettle the vision that modern and orderly cities are within reach. These ‘populations’ must negotiate informally with local government for contingent arrangements to draw piecemeal and ad hoc locality development and to guard their occupancy in the city. Chatterjee argues that political society persists both because the majority of Indians cannot participate as “autonomous and deliberative citizens” within civil society because of their lack of resources, and because many aspects of their livelihoods and residences contravene private property relations and development codes. Benjamin’s (2008) “occupancy urbanism” refers to the informal to illegal appropriation of services, land, and markets by the poor, which is managed through negotiating for local political and bureaucratic facilitations of services and protection against intermittent threats of service removal, demolitions and evictions in exchange for votes and fees. In the urban drama outlined by Benjamin (2008), the urban poor engage political society to build up and protect claims with a ‘socially embedded’ local state, and on the other side the middle-class and elite citizens, developers, and financiers engage higher-level state actors in the ‘policy arena’ to build-up and protect property rights and to accumulate exchange value. ‘Vote-bank politics,’ where the poor can offer ‘guaranteed voter lists’ in exchange for protection of their ‘occupied terrain' become obstacles to modernisation from the purview of urban planning, real estate developers, citizens desiring orderly cities, and more recently the courts (ibid.).

Occupancy urbanism describes poor settlements as, “autonomous but engaging the state” (ibid.: 726). However, it does not go into how and why formations develop as enclaves with the capacity to engage the state from an ‘autonomous outside.’ Subaltern urbanism, in general, seems to imply that this autonomy is an aggregate

82 A journal article based on this chapter has been submitted for review.
effect of the poor’s livelihood tactics and micro-subversions that overtime creates these enclaves ostensibly insulated from elites, statutes, and civil society norms (Sheppard et al., 2013: 897). Local power-relations, which shape both practices within political society and forms of occupancy urbanism, are marginalised. Formations, like slums, are constituted from multiple material, social, and political processes and practices (cf. McFarlane, 2011a). ‘Vote-bank politics’ and the resilience of the poor should not be given a priori significance. The extent to which political actors, who deal with residents through political society institutions, may have their own spatial projects and power plays, and how these come to bear upon formations, have the capacity to contest, subvert, or enable state and capital projects. This chapter focuses on comparing the political institutions and material processes shaping forms of occupancy and differences in locality development across three types of urban formations: slum, gaothan, and standard. Locality development refers to the combination of housing, along with the basic services and infrastructure associated with serviced urban land. The goal is to gather insights into the ways in which dealings between supply-side governance actors and residents in political society shape municipal spatial authority and municipal citizenship.

Practices associated with occupancy urbanism are not limited to the poor (see Roy, 2009). People from various socio-economic backgrounds leverage contacts, relations of reciprocity, status, and/or the ability to pay along with rights and formal procedures when dealing with state authorities and functionaries (cf. Ranganathan, 2013; Nainan, 2012). The majority of buildings in Indian cities are ‘unauthorised’ and the majority of spaces ‘non-planned,’ i.e., they do not comply with tenure, layout, construction, services, zoning or other statutory requirements set by various state acts and agencies (Bhan, 2013). Roy (2009) argues that informality is a mode of urbanisation, with both land acquisition and regulation processes rooted in illegality, ambiguity and exceptionality that is used by the state to reproduce ‘flexible territorialisation.’ For ownership and regulation to remain flexible, cities must be kept sufficiently, “unmapped…a context marked by the absence of centralised, agreed upon, knowable, and locatable land records, an absence that makes it impossible to fix land ownership and thus land appropriation and transfer” (Roy, 2011b: 100). This indicates that the state’s flexible territorialisation is in dialectical relation with occupancy urbanism. On this theme Shatkin et al., (2014) argue that since:

The state has frustrated the ambitions of corporations, consumer citizens, and others who covet a vision of global urban transformation and the commodification of urban space...these goals have progressed through a second channel...a multitude of localised mutations of state-society relations, which have emerged as local actors have looked for opportunities in the fissures of power at the municipal level to gain pockets of urban political influence, and to reshape urban space and infrastructure (emphasis mine: 5).

An interesting question is to what extent this ‘second channel’ differs from the occupancy urbanism associated with slums and facilitated through political society? If political society refers to informal, ad hoc, contingent negotiations and arrangements with the local or localised authorities around securing land, development, and
occasional efforts to reshape urban spaces more extensive and intensively, it becomes a layer of spatial and civic politics that extends beyond slums. In this context, subaltern urbanism becomes the various ways individuals or groups appropriate, occupy, negotiate, or encroach to establish themselves in the city. These processes require entreating municipal officials and staff to either ignore transgressions, or to stealthily facilitate them, thereby implicating government in subaltern urbanisation and subaltern urbanism. How thick or extensive this layer of civic politics is (i.e., in how many sectors or domains is it found and with what capacity and function) within different types of formations, and between formations and the municipality, along with the conditions that enable this, needs to be examined.

8.1 Municipal Citizenship: Residency and Access to Services

To legally qualify for the benefits of municipal citizenship, namely serviced land and tenure or occupancy protection, one should dwell in an authorised residence. In Maharashtra this is evidenced by possession of an ‘occupancy certificate’ issued by the local civic body once a building is ready for habitation and approved to access municipal services (see box to the right). It is proof that the building is a legal construction with all the requisite approvals from government authorities. Use of municipal services without this document is illegal, and the building is then considered unauthorised. This criterion is clearly not universal. All areas within the territorial jurisdiction of the two municipalities studied access municipal services (albeit of varying quality) while most are not in possession of legitimate occupancy certificates.

In a governance context where occupancy certificates have not been issued for most structures, and where the granting of exceptions seems to be prevalent but not formalised or transparent, then the sovereignty of the municipality, while formally dominant, is not prevalent across its territory nor uniformly articulated. Sovereignty, in general, is the capacity to take decisions and to implement them collectively—to govern

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Section 263 of the Bombay Provincial Municipal Incorporation Act</th>
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<td>Completion certificates: permission to occupy or use; (1) Every person shall, within one month after the completion of the erection of a building or the execution of any such work as is described in section 254, deliver or send or cause to be delivered or sent to the Commissioner at his office, notice in writing of such completion, accompanied by a certificate in the form prescribed in the by-laws signed and subscribed in the manner so prescribed, and shall give to the Commissioner all necessary facilities for the inspection of such building or of such work and shall apply for permission to occupy the building.</td>
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<tr>
<td>(2) No person shall occupy or permit to be occupied any such building, or use or permit to be used the building or part thereof affected by any work, until permission has been received from the Commissioner in this behalf.</td>
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We are interested in both the territorial basis of different sovereignty arrangements related to the granting of occupancy and structuring of locality development in practice, and the political institutions that mediate between the governed and those who govern occupancy and locality development in three common urban residential formations: slum, gaothan, and standard. Following Lund (2011) establishing occupancy and accessing basic services indicate operative political institutions, because these acts rest upon claims, whether rights-based, exchange-based, or morally-based, on local authorities, which, when met, imply recognition of the claimant’s political subjectivity as being that of, for example, citizen, client, serf, denizen, or consumer.

Local authorities in this chapter are any actor (individual or collective) that exercises sovereignty over occupancy and locality development. This suggests that different types or degrees of occupancy urbanism exist, under different sovereignty arrangements within the city. These arrangements become spatially articulated in forms of occupancy and forms of locality development. This chapter looks at to what extent political society actors, by what bases of authority and by which practices, are effectively structuring and granting occupancy and governing locality development within these three types of formations. Stated differently we are interested in mapping the de facto political geography constituting forms of occupancy, municipal citizenship and locality development. Figure 23 shows how occupancy urbanism was operationalised for this study. To explore this we focus on:

- What aspects of municipal formation enable political society, and to what extent do political society actors compromise the spatial authority of the municipality?
- How and to what extent are occupancy arrangements and locality development being governed by political society?
- Through which political institutions and practices are political society actors connected to residents in different formations?
- Do political society actors have their own spatial interests or projects, and how do these come to bear upon formations in terms of the power dynamics of civic politics?

The rest of this chapter proceeds as follows. First we trace the process of municipal formation that enables an expansive territorialisation by political society actors. Then we move to how occupancy is structured and locality development governed in slum, gaothan, and standard formations to both see to what extent such formations can be considered enclaves (autonomous) within the municipality, to trace the sovereignty arrangements and political institutions that produce this distance (to the extent it exists), and to discern how these shape civic politics, municipal citizenship in particular. In conclusion, the three types of formations are conceived in terms of
their occupancy urbanism properties, and findings are discussed in reference to subaltern urbanism and urbanisation more generally.

Figure 23: Occupancy Urbanism Operationalised

8.2 Municipal Formation

Thirteen years after the establishment of the Mira-Bhayandar Municipal Corporation and 20 years later for the Kalyan-Dombivli Municipal Corporation, many municipal services and responsibilities are not closing in on established benchmarks (KDMC, 2007; MBMC, 2008; Ganesh, 2009) or following established directives or protocols. MB has yet to submit its by-laws to the state government for ratification. A recent audit by the Comptroller General of India noted the complete absence of internal checks in the departments audited (GoIb, 2011). When discussing why this with our municipal contacts, we were shown, on three occasions, internal memos or letters to officials at the Department of Urban Development or the Directorate of Municipal Affairs asking for waivers due to local conditions and capacity issues. For example, when inquiring why a slum notification process never happened, and how it was that while JNNURM-BSUP (Basic Services for the Urban Poor) funds are for notified
slums, both municipalities are set to embark on slum redevelopment projects, a document like this was briefly shown to us. Another condition of the JNNURM is that each family in slums slated for development is only allowed one resettlement flat, and occupancy rights are to be in the name of an adult female. These protocols are not followed. One of the de facto landlords of a slum in our study, showed us 15 promissory slips his family had received, given that they ‘own’ many of the shops and residences in the slum. When told to look at the biometric surveys carried out for project-affected-people, only two women (widows) were listed as beneficiaries of resettlement flats. When discussing this issue with the municipal official responsible for overseeing BSUP related plans, another sort of internal waiver was presented briefly. While these waivers may not hold up under legal scrutiny, they function in practice to enable flexible implementation.

As discussed in chapter 3, the official mechanisms for converting plots and areas to be in line with plans, codes, and benchmarks received very limited use in these two cities. Rather, the process of aligning existing formations with plans and statutes is worked out within a setting of fragmented sovereignties. Most formations came under the jurisdiction of formal urban government structures quite some time after their initial development. The actors and institutions exercising spatial authority in these areas are separate from, or only intermittently integrated, with the state. This means that regularisation, the process of turning unauthorised constructions or non-master planned areas into authorised areas and structures, is also a mechanism for establishing municipal sovereignty, by interjecting it into the materialities of residents and into pre-existing sovereignty arrangements. In both our case cities many netas and landowners did not willingly abdicate their authority, but rather saw the establishment of municipalities as opportunities to strengthen their position. They acted on such opportunities by positioning themselves as gatekeepers or brokers between Municipal Commissioners and other state appointed officials, municipal officials, residents and other local interests, by running for municipal councillor or fielding a candidate loyal to them, and by fixing recruitment so that many lower to mid-level staff positions within the municipality are filled by people tied to them by choice or necessity. Those who managed de facto authority over laissez-faire urbanisation and the distribution of its profits, rents, and other values have been important actors within municipal incorporation from the beginning. This amorphous group of netas, local politicians, builders, contractors, land owners/controllers, and various small-time political operators, become known locally as the ‘land mafia’ after municipal notification and become known academically as ‘political society.’ For government officials, the colloquial construct of ‘mafia’ allows the blame of past and present laissez-faire development to be externalised from state institutions and actors. This offers another level of meaning to the admonishment we received from an Assistant Municipal Commissioner, who said, “you are looking for lines that don’t exist in practice! There is no line between the land mafia, developers, politicians, and

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83 local elite who brokers information and resources between his locality and various government agencies and actors
bureaucrats…” For him the lines do not exist because there is a revolving door between ‘land-mafia’ actors and the elected and hired posts of the municipalities. The establishment of the municipality did not thwart these actors significance in civic politics, but, somewhat paradoxically, increased it.

 Officials appointed by the state, like the chief municipal commissioner, chief city engineer, and transport officer, normally carry out three-year terms, during which they are rarely incentivised to bring the everyday entrenched practices in line with protocols and statutes. Figure 24 lists some of the powers vested at the municipal level relevant to our study. The municipality can enforce new and existing plots to meet standards, if they choose to initiate this process.

**Figure 24: Powers Vested in the Chief Municipal Commissioner**

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<tr>
<th>Some of the Powers Vested in the Commissioner from The Bombay Provincial Municipal Incorporation Act</th>
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<tr>
<td>164. Commissioner may enforce drainage of undrained premises situate within hundred feet of municipal drain</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>165. Commissioner may enforce drainage of undrained premises not situate within hundred feet of municipal drain. New building not to be erected without drains</td>
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<tr>
<td>178 A. Power of Commissioner to require owner to provide water-closet or privy accommodation</td>
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<tr>
<td>185A. Power of Commissioner to provide house drain, water connections, etc. in premises where owner is not willing to do so</td>
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<tr>
<td>200. Prohibition of fraudulent and unauthorised use of water (1) No person shall fraudulently dispose of any water supplied to him by the Corporation. (2) No person to whom a private supply of water is furnished by the Corporation shall, except when the water supplied is charged for by measurement, permit any person who does not reside on premises in respect of which water-tax is paid to carry away water from the premises to which it is supplied (3) No person who does not reside on premises in respect of which water-tax is paid shall carry away water from any premises to which a private supply its furnished by the Corporation, unless, in any case in which such supply is charged for by measurement, he does so with the permission of the person to whom such supply is furnished.</td>
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The territoriality of municipal sovereignty is kept flexible and uneven not only by political and economic calculations of state actors (as argued by Roy 2009) but also by localised control of resources and structures of access that influence the pace and magnitude of municipal consolidation of spatial authority over its territory.

However, there are times when the level of ‘corruption’ enabling laissez-faire development pushes the GoM to act. In 1999 the Municipal Council of Mira-Bhayandar was dissolved and officials from the District Collectorate of Thane took
over temporarily. During that time they demolished approximately 200 unauthorised buildings. In 2006 the GoM’s Urban Development Department (UDD) issued a directive to KDMC to charge owners of illegal buildings or flats 500 rupees per square foot to become regularised. The directive also stated that instead of eviction and cutting off services, double the property tax could be levied as well as double water tariffs to deter future unauthorised development. Ostensibly, the point of this was to dissuade future buyers from purchasing unauthorised properties. Pressure to act presumably came from the Bombay High Court in response to a Public Interest Litigation (PIL) related to rampant illegal construction in the city. The UDD took their directive verbatim from the 1988 Kakodar Committee Report, which discussed in detail how ‘the entire KDMC machinery worked in collusion with developers and builders to construct more than 2,500 illegal buildings’ (Varghese 2006). These efforts to discipline MBMC and KDMC, builders, and flat purchasers were in vain, and unauthorised development on private land and encroachments on public land continue largely unabated (cf. Nair 2011b). Another PIL filed in 2007 (originally targeting unauthorised construction in the Vasai-Virar area of the Mumbai Metro Region) prompted the Bombay High Court to demand surveys of unauthorised construction and encroachments in all municipalities within the Thane District. The court also ordered statements from relevant authorities regarding their plans to address this issue. Through this process, and the media attention it attracted, it came to light that unauthorised construction and encroachment are still the norm in these cities and that municipalities remain unable or unwilling to stop these practices. Estimates range widely from 25 percent to 75 percent of development in KDMC and MBMC being unauthorised.

Labelling a flat, building, floor or entire plot unauthorised reveals as much as it conceals. It can apply to:

- structures missing some required documents and permissions (administrative irregularities),
- structures with documentation, but that do not actually adhere to the plan sanctioned by the buildings department (technical/physical infractions),
- structures on areas clearly reserved or zoned for something else, thus illegal both procedurally and geographically, and
- those structures where some of the documents are contradictory, fraudulent, missing or rubber-stamped (issues of corruption, institutional fragmentation and staff capacity).

Surveys submitted to the High Court (pursuant to the 2007 PIL Case 14-2007 mentioned above) were either internally produced or internally sanctioned. After a few years of the blame game and creating plausible deniability, for example: residents blaming municipal authorities and developers; municipal authorities blaming purchasers, developers or the ‘land mafia’; politicians blaming bureaucrats and vice versa; appointed officials blaming municipal hires and vice versa; authorities claiming ignorance or capacity issues; and developers conducting business as usual—all the
authorities in question, according to the statements included in the resolution of the 2007 PIL Case 14-2007, opted for demolition over regularisation. Municipal Commissioners have requested special courts and police offices to more quickly carry out a demolition and eviction campaign. This means that owners or leasers will be punished, rather than civic authorities, builders, developers and landowners. If the smattering of demolitions, so far, are any indication, if residents cannot produce their ‘occupancy certificate’ this is grounds enough for the municipal authority to demolish under the MRTP. If the owner or occupant wants to sue the developer, original flat owner, or landowner for damages, this is a separate issue that need not stall the demolition. The lawyer representing the petitioner of the 2007 PIL is surprised at this ‘sea change.’ He thought that the state would opt again for wide-ranging regularisation. However, he is not surprised, that at the end, ranks were closed and a path chosen that largely spares officials, politicians, builders, and developers. Most important for our argument here, this situation indicates that the occupancy of non-poor, non-slum dwelling residents in the city is not nearly as settled as discussions of subaltern urbanism implies. The legality of residents across different formations can become tenuous and susceptible to intervening factors, such as a PIL, increased media coverage, or changes in development code regulations. Most buildings consist of ownership flats, most of which did not register their cooperative housing societies, companies, or trusts because they lack all of the necessary documents (cf. Nair, 2009). Although it is impossible to know actual numbers, given the lack of integrated digitisation and computerisation in the buildings department, an engineer at KDMC disclosed that in the past seven years he issued many 'Intimations of Disapproval' and 'Commencement Certificates,' but very few 'Occupancy Certificates,' and he does not remember issuing any 'Building Completion Certificates.' Officials of the Thane District Office of Housing Societies and the MB and KD Housing Society Associations said that majority of residents of flats likely do not possess occupancy certificates. Most residents think that the contract between them and the promoter\(^{85}\) or original owner suffices. When owners want to track down developers or builders years later in order to demand title conveyance, or in order to make use of FSI changes for redevelopment, or because they risk possible demolition, because of lack of occupancy certificates, many cannot be reached or cannot be bothered. The result is that many may find their municipal citizenship on precarious ground.

According to the last census slum households have increased 159 percent over the last decade in KDMC and 59 percent in MBMC (Indian Express, 2013). Slums in addition to being viewed as encroachments on the property of others (state or private)

\(^{84}\) Evidence on these issues in Mumbai confirm these contradictions with a RTI query showing perhaps only 48% of buildings whose building permits were approved went on to obtain occupancy certificates Suryawanshi 2013). Also, for 90 percent of cooperative housing societies in Mumbai, the actual holder of title is uncertain (Rao 2012).

\(^{85}\) The Maharashtra Ownership of Flats Regulation of the Promotions of Construction Sale, Management and Transfer) Act defines the “promoter” as the person who constructs or causes to be constructed a block or building of flats or apartments for the purpose of selling some or all of them to other persons, or to a company, co-operative society or other association of persons, and includes his assignees; and where the person who builds and the person who sells are different persons, the term includes both.
are also considered to be areas of deprivation and haphazard structures unsuitable for habitation. Gaothans (urban villages) that were present before municipal incorporation are labelled non-formal. What developments landowners are allowed to carry out in gaothans remains fairly unregulated, and it is not uncommon for parts of gaothans to be identified as slums due to status of structures and services. Where the recognised gaothan begins and ends remains in practice negotiable. Gaothans in areas notified as urban technically refer to the portion of the land of the village, which was used for housing as determined by section 122 of Maharashtra Land Revenue Code. During site visits and interviews, it became clear that the areas recognised in practice as part of a gaothan, and thus mainly under the control of landlords, extended beyond the areas originally built up.

Both municipalities show many signs of incomplete consolidation of authority over their territory as evidenced by the following: level of unauthorised construction, increasing slum population, creeping gaothans, limited progress or no progress in reaching benchmarks and service protocols, rampant rule breaking, bending or non-utilisation, and hiring irregularities. How political actors occupy these governance gaps (or structural and cultural holes) and lapses in regards to occupancy and locality development is the focus of the next section.

8.3 Occupancy and Basic Services in Slum, Gaothan, and Standard Formations

Each formation reported the same top three basic service concerns: water, garbage, and gutters and drainage. However, as figure 25 shows, few people reported going directly to the municipal department responsible. The majority of survey respondents in all formations go through fixers and brokers. Contrary to prior research on state-society relationships across classes, the municipal councillor (MC) was the top channel for municipal services and grievances in gaothan and standard formations, but not in slums. This prompted further inquiry.

86 In total 550 households were surveyed: 200 slum residents, 100 gaothan residents and 250 standard residents.
Figure 25: Pivotal Actor for Basis Service Issues

**Slum**

- Councillor: 21
- Middleman: 42
- Partyworker: 14
- Municipal Contact: 11
- N/A: 12

**Goathan**

- Councillor: 95
- Municipal Contact: 2
- Middlemen: 3
Slums

The MCs in three out of the four slums included in our sample failed in the minds of residents. In slum (98) they opted for the candidate who was offering the most money for votes. He ended up only being interested in using his position to benefit his family’s construction business. In slum (36) they decided to vote for ‘one of them’ (i.e., a man from a backward caste who lives in the ward). He proved ineffectual in dealing with internal conflicts within the ward and in developing connections with municipal departments. Being the only BSP councillor elected, no one bothered networking with him, making it difficult for him to motivate officials or staff to act on his requests. When one section of his ward went from getting one hour of decent water pressure a day to barely 30 minutes, they discovered that he had okayed an additional line to a different part of the ward. When they approached him he told them to contact the plumber to arrange another connection. When this did nothing to address the pressure problem, they returned, but at this point he washed his hands of it. Over his term, he came less and less to his office. Residents with good relations to the de facto landlord (whose father is said to have founded the settlement) in the formation, go to him for advice, conflict resolution, and to leverage influence. The rest approach party workers who live there, or to the few residents of the slum who work or know someone who works at the municipality or one of its administrative ward offices. During two focus group discussions it came up that the residents of ward 98 and 36 would not make the mistake again of voting for someone outside the ranks of one of the established political parties.
The MC of slum (2) disappointed his constituents for quite a different reason. They feel that he spends too much time working on city-level issues and on challenging the local machinations of MLA Barbosa. He worked to bring an additional fire station and crematorium to the city, and he claims he thwarted the MLA’s plans to develop upper-scale housing and shopping on land reserved for a public hospital. During this conflict, he alleges that one of the MLA’s goondas stabbed him. The residents of this slum want him to focus on improving their immediate living situation. A few commented that the slum suffers because of his confrontations with the MLA. Many reported that they would not vote for him next time, even if he distributes more money than the other candidates.

The third term MC of slum (37) sees the ward as her main priority. However, in recent years, the work she 'attracts' does not match the priorities expressed by residents. She managed to draw the construction of two new toilet blocks and three community halls into the ward. Those unhappy that she has not used her position to improve water, garbage or drainage systems, claim that she only wants works that earn her the most kick-backs and that function as monuments to herself—noting how it is not possible to put your name on footpaths, pipes, or unclogged drains. One way of determining the influence of a MC is to see what happens when the municipal crew comes to unclg the drains. If they remove what was dredged up, rather than simply leaving it by the side of the gutters and drains, this indicates a MC with standing in the municipality. The waste was disposed of in slum 37, but not in the other three. A councillor’s ability to get better slots and durations of water during times of shortages is another sign. Slum 37 receives better water in times of increased scarcity than the other slums surveyed.

Residents, along with many municipal staff and officials, say that when you are looking for the difference between slums look for differences between MCs. Given that these two cities did not formally notify slums, development hinges upon councillors and landlords. Occupancy certificates are not issued for properties in slums; occupancy in slum formations is worked out between renter or leasers, landlords and MCs. Most legal landowners of slums on private property are absent or unknown. In these cases, the original encroacher or ‘founder’ and their descendants become de facto landlords, because it was strategic to encourage others to settle there. Since the creation of the municipality, it is common for a share of the rent or sale of a property in the slum to go the councillor to strengthen the connection between them and the locality. These two actors, de facto landlord(s) and the councillor, can combine efforts to enable incremental development, if they have the connections or ‘money and muscle power,’ plus an interest in improving locality development. If they do not, these areas languish. For example, the head officer of the Poverty Cell in KDMC said that even though she is from the same caste as the councillor from slum 98, he had no interest in her cell carrying out projects (organising women’s groups for

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87 He also showed us his scar and the police report he filed.
micro-credit and training seminars) in his ward. Consequently, the poverty cell is not active at all in slum 98 even though, formally, these projects have nothing do with councillors and certainly do not require their permission. There is an added layer of complexity in slums located in part or totally on state or central land, where the possibility exists that the Collector or the Railroad Ministry could accuse the municipality and councillor of aiding and abetting slum development. Collectors are easier to manage with shares of rents, but the railroad is more difficult. De facto landlords and MCs, with varying levels of coordination between them, govern occupancy in slums. These also shape locality development. The importance the signature, visiting card, call or text from a councillor or connected landlord possesses indicates their authority as well. Many residents come to local offices of MCs to ask for their signature on various documents, or a note on the back of their visiting card asking for the person’s issue to be addressed or document processed, and in some cases a phone call to whoever is holding up the process or to who could facilitate it. All of the above function as vouchers of residence and claims to municipal services among other things.

Does this situation indicate ‘vote-bank politics’ as guaranteed voter roles in exchange for occupancy protection and locality development? The political parties with leverage in the KDMC and MBMC are: Shiv Sena, Congress, National Congress Party, and the BJP. Except slum 37, whose municipal councillor is part of the NCP, the rest are not affiliated with these parities. Figure 26 shows that no party with leverage at the city level has a firm hold of any slum formation in our sample.

Figure 26: Political Party Membership Slums

Source: Household Surveys in KD and MB
The vote-bank thesis is further weakened because the municipal councillor parties do not enjoy a sizeable majority either, in terms of official party affiliation.88 Many residents are not affiliated, or at least do not openly display their loyalty, to a particular party to be able to receive money from all candidates running during elections. These slums do not mobilised themselves, nor have they been mobilised as ‘vote-banks.’ However, except for slum 2, where only half reported voting in the last municipal election, all respondents voted in the last election. Besides those who vote along party lines, others vote because they believe that the parties are tracking the percentage of registered voters who vote. The concern is that if candidates distribute cash or cash in kind to areas, and there is a poor turnout, then that may lower the amounts of cash distributed during the next election cycle. While there is not strong evidence of ‘vote-bank politics,’ there is evidence of clientelism, given the dependence on certain actors to protect occupancy and to facilitate locality development. Rather than being a type of grass-roots democratisation of access to services, the political institution dominant in these slums is a sort of negotiated authoritarianism.89 The power-relations between slum residents and councillors and landlords are accepted. What puts a councillor out of favour is not whether they have too much power over area development, but whether they are too indifferent to the needs of their ‘clients’ to use it to improve their localities.

**Gaothans**

In gaothan (42) the municipal councillor is also the primary landowner in the ward and landlord to the majority of its residents. In gaothan (27) a slum was allowed to come up on around 30 percent of the land with the rest, literally on the other side of the main road, remains inhabited by families of the original village formation. Since the establishment of the municipal council, the councillor in gaothan 42 has been someone tied to the landowning family. First, it was the current councillor’s husband. When he died she took over. This makes the councillor important on two fronts. They can draw development to their areas, and as landowners their approval is needed before the municipality will carry out works in gaothans. The Bombay Provincial Municipal Corporations Act vests with chief municipal commissioners the power to carry out works on private land, if it is shown to be necessary for the proper functioning of services and infrastructure for the plot in question and for adjoining plots. However, in practice if the landowners, or those with power of attorney, do not push for these developments, they do not happen. The councillor’s authority over residents is proprietary (landlord) and personal (broker and fixer). In practice the authority landowners in gaothans exercise over locality development and residents is greater than that of the local state. If they do not actively try to expand or improve infrastructure and service development in their area, nothing will happen. In gaothan

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88 MC for 36: BSP, MC for 37: NCP, MC for 2: India Socialist Party, MC for 98: RPI
89 Taylor (2004) in relation to clientelism defines negotiated authoritarianism as a political system where the power relations between parties are acknowledged and accepted as being unequal but each needs the other in order to further their cause, thus the subaltern has a little power (214).
the residents do not have indoor, individual toilets and they did not benefit from The World Bank and Mumbai Metropolitan Regional Development Authority’s scheme to build toilet blocks, because “Nanny” the landowner and councillor refused to give up any land or sign ‘no objection orders’ for these purposes. No residents in gaothans have occupancy certificates. Granting de facto occupancy lies with the landlord. In gaothan (27) the MC is a lady from a landowning family, but she has been very diligent in developing ‘her slum,’ which compared to those on public land seems very well planned and maintained. The gutters are covered and the drains are regularly cleaned. Each residence has a number and a meter for electricity. The lines of dwellings adhere to a grid type layout, and she walks around her area once a day to monitor cleanliness. Paraphrasing her own words and those of her political mentor, she knows how to manage the babus, touts, and netas. She speaks directly, but respectfully, and stays on ‘their heads’ until the work is completed. They know she is working for the people, and not her pocket, so they tend to her work. The authority to grant occupancy lies with the landlord and locality development rests with them as well, and the municipal councillor, who in both these cases is the same person.

**Figure 27: Political Party Membership Gaothan Formations**

![Diagram showing political party membership in gaothans](image)

Source: Household Survey KD and MB

To what extent does this arrangement match up with ‘vote-bank politics’? When these areas first started urbanising, landowners became concerned about their future status. Many began to encourage unauthorised development, to both protect them from imminent domain and to procure votes for candidates of their choosing. Figure 27 shows expressed party affiliation. In gaothan 42 the councillor is from Shiv Sena and in 27 she is from BSP. Neither coincides with a majority party membership in the formation. Both candidates were uncontested in the last election. However, 40 out 50
respondents voted for their incumbent in gaothan 27 as a show of respect, but only 2 out 50 voted for their incumbent in 42. They do have some vote-bank characteristics, but supporting a candidate that is not supported by the landowners is unlikely. To do so would be risking eviction or other sanctions. In a Kalyan gaothan we did not survey, when the councillor found out only 25 percent of the registered voters in ‘his’ slum voted, he cut their cable and electricity connections. The scope for holding the councillor to account is more limited, and it is unlikely that some external authority would protect their right to occupancy and services. The only exit option is moving.

The power-relations between residents and those who determine access to municipal services and development in general are not challenged. However, the political institution functioning here seems more indicative of manorialism than clientelism considering the monopoly landowners currently wield over municipal councillor candidates and how locality developments are at their discretion. In feudal times the lord of the manor was vested with legal and economic power over the serfs or peasants living on his property. Lords wielded almost complete jurisdictional dominion over their manor, which consisted of three types of land: the section directly occupied by the lord and his family, the land holdings where peasants had obligations to the lord, and land which was rented or leased with no other obligations other than making rent or lease payments (Comninel, 2000). In gaothan 27 around half of the male slum residents work for the landowners on the salt pans, and part of their remuneration is lodging in the slum in the gaothan. Gaothan 42 was originally dominated by agricultural activity, but no longer. Many residents entered into 99-year lease agreements with Nanny’s family. While legally the landowner should not infringe upon the civic and political rights of residents, in practice this happens given their monopoly over residents’ occupancy security and locality development. Landowners in effect appropriate residents’ votes. Municipal officials, in practice, abdicate spatial authority and obligations in gaothans by deferring to the authority of landowners. Politically and civically, they are still ‘lords of the manor.’ Controlling the office of municipal councillor compounds their power in civic politics.

*Standard*

Four or more story buildings consisting of ownership flats populate standard formations.\(^9\) Under section 10 of the Maharashtra Ownership Flats Act flat owners must form and register cooperative housing societies, trusts or companies. Buildings constructed by a promoter for the purpose of selling the flats should register societies once 60 percent of the flats have been purchased. Societies of flat owners become responsible for the maintenance of the property and for managing basic service issues. However, only 9 percent of standard formation residents surveyed report their housing society as handling basic service issues, with 61 percent going through MCs,

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\(^9\) The flat is owned by the purchaser, but the land its on is not. The promoter or the housing society, colony, or company owns it.
12 percent going through middlemen, and 17 percent using personal contacts who work in the municipality (see figure 25). This contradicts previous research on the differences between how the urban poor and more middle-class citizens engage the local state and prompted further investigation.

According to local cooperative housing advocates, few housing societies register with the state. Registering a housing society requires submission of 22 documents to vouch that protocols for the forming and functioning of the society are there on paper, and that the building is legal with the title in order. If the promoter fails to comply with protocols and to pass on the necessary documents, housing society registration technically is not possible. Acquiring the appropriate permissions and sanctions to construct a building from start to finish becomes a long and bureaucratic process. The promoter must provide evidence that they have the right to develop this property, which normally comes in the form of a land search report (7/12 extract) and a title certification from a property advocate to show due diligence. Then they must submit a plan made by a licensed architect for approval by the buildings department, who then sends a junior engineer to conduct a feasibility report concerning civic infrastructure and services. A licensed structural engineer, hired by the promoter, must approve the structural plans. If the building layout is approved, then a building permit is issued with an Intimation of Disapproval that lists the various ‘No Objection Certificates’ (NOCs) the promoter must acquire from various municipal departments and other government agencies. For some plots over 40 NOCs may be required. Once all the NOCs are obtained the promoter will be issued a commencement certificate and may begin construction. Before purchasers can take up residence an occupancy certificate must be issued. This requires a formal letter of request stating that the building has been constructed in accordance with the sanctioned plan, and the licensed architect, structural engineer and site construction manager must sign it. If the municipality is satisfied that there are no deviations or irregularities, they issue the occupancy certificate. The promoters should also apply for the building completion certificate, which is necessary for title to be transferred to registered societies.

In reality, most residential buildings in standard formations do not have occupancy certificates and title conveyance rarely happens. Real estate is booming and ‘vacant’ land is practically non-existent in Mumbai, and prices are prohibitive for many people looking to buy or rent a flat there. This drives suburbanisation and sprawl in the region as well as the market for unauthorised housing. Some promoters utilise local contacts (i.e., self proclaimed ‘real estate brokers’) in these cities to help them determine what land can be easily acquired. Sometimes these real estate agents initiate contact with possible promoters, if they think an area is ‘developable,’ meaning that it will be easy to build and sell the flats before any troubles arise, such as absentee owners showing up or court orders to cease construction. A common practice is to find land occupied by leasers where the landowner lives far away, preferably in a different state or country. Given that no land will actually be purchased the profit margin is very good, and the leaser(s) and real estate broker will receive a nice
percentage. We witnessed an absentee landlord, an NRI from Canada, discuss this very issue with an assistant municipal commissioner via a cousin residing in Mumbai. The cousin tried to lay blame on the municipality for not scrutinising the documents more and for not bothering to check whether the person paying property tax and the person claiming be the owner were different. The advice was to avoid all these headaches and to accept a cash offer: ‘If you go to court, perhaps his son will still be alive when it's finally resolved, better to sell now or extend leases to the tenants of the new buildings.’ Creating a situation of a ‘forced choice’ to sell or not make problems after the fact is a common tactic. Needless to say, these new buildings were not issued occupancy certificates. This case shows how the actions and capacities of real estate brokers, builders, and leasers can reduce the value and efficacy of private property rights.

Promoters with adequate resources, and who are concerned with their reputation, try to follow protocols and to only leverage intermediaries and pay ‘speed-money’ to move the process along. When confident that their building plans and development rights are legitimate, many begin construction before the commencement certificate is issued. Given the extent the Buildings Department has been politicised, i.e., the extent MLAs and MCs’ permissions are sought before plans are sanctioned and NOCs given, and the extent competing builder-politician alliances can use their influence to sabotage each other by recruiting engineers to drag their feet, to find irregularities, or to demand exorbitant extra ‘fees,’ starting construction before being issued a commencement certificate is risky.91 However, promoters want to complete buildings enough for buyers to submit final payments as quickly as possible, and buyers are anxious to take possession. Thus, it is not uncommon for building completion certificates and occupancy certificates to be overlooked if the municipality is uncooperative. Other promoters, because of resource restrictions or reliance on ‘money and muscle,’ intentionally construct unauthorised buildings. Some opt for the forged document option and buy building permits and commencement certificates to put potential buyers at ease. Those with ties to nodal politicians, officials and engineers can, for a fee, acquire rubber-stamped documents and permits with irregularities and informalities being actively ignored. However, completion certificates and occupancy certificates are rarely secured in this manner. These are issued after, rather than before, the building is constructed and notarised signatures of licensed professionals (architect, structural engineer, site manager) are required. Explaining why occupancy certificates and completion certificates are issued for buildings with clear irregularities or illegalities proves more difficult, and signatories could lose their license or be blacklisted if they sign off on illegal buildings. Some builders obtain occupancy certificates, but neglect to convey title so they can utilise additional floor space index (FSI) when development regulation codes change.

91 see also Yeshwantrao 2013
The reasons residents offer for missing documents range from ignorance, to developers refusing or disappearing. Some also blame original housing society members for conniving with promoters to keep prices lower in order to hoard benefits of future redevelopment opportunities and to charge larger fees when transferring ownership of flats. Another factor is the belief, based on the past predicting the future, that regularisation will be possible if problems arise as, “this is an industry [real estate] where every irregularity is eventually regularised” (Kapoor, 2012). Occupancy takes place when the buyer is satisfied enough with the status of the property to pay and take possession. Often possession is taken when the building is still dependent on tanker water and with other services in fairly ambiguous stages. Most purchasers claim they were assured that these issues were due to backlog at the municipality and that soon everything would be worked out.

Whereas de facto landlords and local politicians grant occupancy in slums and gaothans, occupancy in standard formations begins with promoters. While development trajectories of basic services and infrastructure are placed upon de facto landlords and local politicians in slums, and in the hands of landowners in gaothans, in standard areas it begins (and also incurs path dependencies) with promoters and how and to what extent they complied with statutes and protocols. Whether they secured services (water connections, drainage etc.), or whether they only do what is necessary to sell flats and then become unreachable when problems arise, shape how services can be acquired and maintained in the future. If occupants cannot reach or entreat the builder to lobby the municipality on their behalf, they need to try other channels. Rights to municipal services in unauthorised buildings rest upon the extent the irregularities and illegalities remain undetected or not utilised by competing stakeholders in urban land (re)development. This helps interpret why 90 percent of residents surveyed from standard areas leverage municipal councillor or other intermediaries for assistance, and why hardly any legal or collective actions occur regarding municipal irregularities or their slow progress towards meeting service and coverage benchmarks in standard formations. Official procedures exist for resolving or avoiding the majority of issues that arise within housing societies and between them, promoters and the municipality. The advocate, who donates his time twice a week at the Mira-Bhayandar Cooperative Housing Society Association, claims that few people pursue formal procedures for conflict resolution because they lack the required documents, or because they worry about the legitimacy of the ones they have. When the realisation sets in that the promoter lied or was mistaken about things working out in terms of services, the safest option is either to arrange private provisions or to have someone 'fix' access to public provision for you.

While the responsibility for the large number of unauthorised flats lies significantly with the municipality, in practice the uncertainty of title and the status of buildings, in terms of statutory violations, is a weapon that can be wielded by municipal actors. This also helps explain why residents of standard formations, who are not normally expected to depend upon political society actors, leverage MCs. Bringing rights-based claims can backfire given the chance their ownership flat may be deemed
unauthorised. Recent events in Mumbai point to this. Residents of a housing society in a well-developed area of Mumbai were demanding municipal water services. The municipality responded that the approved building plan was for ground plus four while many of the buildings in their complex are ground plus seven to ten floors, and ordered that the illegal floors be demolished (Deshpande, 2013). The Supreme Court recently upheld this decision. There are similar cases of unauthorised buildings or floors being demolished in both our case cities. Concerned residents express frustration at the arbitrariness by which properties are demolished, and they are dismayed by having to bear all the consequences. Residents in standard formations equate paying for the flat, for taxes, for duties and services as evidence of fulfilling their citizenship obligations. Now, some find themselves in the ironic position of the stereotypical slum dweller: their home being declared illegal, set to be demolished, and in the words of one lady set to lose her home, “we have become refugees in our own city” (Ram, 2013).

KDMC recently announced that they plan to utilise the powers vested in them through the MRTP to arrest occupants of unauthorised buildings (Singh 2013). Officials defending the decision to take a demolition approach claim that if sustained and not diluted by political pressures, it will bring relief to the residents of these cities in terms of better water supply and less congestion. Perhaps, but this implies that those having their homes demolished are not residents. Standard formation residents considered MCs to be important contacts for dealing with basic service issues and local area cleanliness. However, few thought that they needed to be cultivating relationships to protect themselves against eviction or demolition. Many councilors are trying to stall the development of special courts and police stations dedicated to eviction and demolition, and make public statements of solidarity with residents. However, the official position of state officials remains that, while they sympathise with people who perhaps unknowingly purchased unauthorised flats, there is nothing that can be done legally because they are not entitled to regularisation opportunities in this scenario (Marpakwar, 2013; Deshpande, 2013). In the past, after the spotlight faded, it was back to business as usual. However, this time cluster redevelopment, FSI opportunities tied to expected changes to the development codes for these cities might outweigh the electoral backlash politicians risk, and the political backlash bureaucrats risk. Housing societies or individual flat owners without occupancy certificates cannot claim legal rights to compensation to a flat, if the promoter opts for cluster redevelopment opportunities. Housing societies that were not conveyed

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93 In practice complaints filed with the police are rarely pushed through or followed up on. Political pressures/power relations on the ground mean that in practice often only small parts of constructions are torn down. Calls are still made to the MLA or MCs before construction plans are approved or NOCs given. Some unauthorised buildings that were torn down when they reached the first floor have been rebuilt under different names on the same plots (email communication MC Mahre). Competing builders and the local politicians they are affiliated with often instigate the threat of demolition or eviction. Also a few bandhs (strikes) were called for by local politicians across municipalities in the Thane district to protest against demolitions being organised by state officials (Nair 2013b). Additionally, MBMC Councillors recently all voted to allow electricity connections to all unauthorised buildings (Nair 2013c).
title are not legally entitled to benefit from additional FSI possible in cluster redevelopment. Thus, if the promoter redevelops they will be compensated with a similar flat, but they are not entitled to share in the profits from the extra FSI.

In these conditions, residents of standard formations cannot easily be placed in either side of Chatterjee’s understanding of civic politics. Surface appearances place them in the citizen/civil society slot, and they have a sort of spectral citizenship. However, municipalities and other government authorities are allowing them to be scapegoated now that the unauthorised aspects of their homes and services have surfaced. Given their relatively high educational status and economic resources, they cannot draw easily on scripts slum dwellers can when facing demolition. One could look at this as the underside of consumer-citizenship and market rule. They are being constructed as having made the choice to buy these flats and having chosen not to be vigilant, and now they are paying a price for their poor choices. Opportunities for investment and speculation in the real estate market manifest as changes in development codes that then guide municipalities and other state authorities to opt for demolition rather than regularisation. In this way, the market can undermine occupancy security in standard formations as well as in slums. The informal to illegal practices of promoters, often in consort with municipal actors, emerge as central to occupancy security and access to municipal services in standard formations past the point of purchase. Residents have a limited temporal relationship with promoters based on exchange, rather than the cyclical dependency politicians have with slum and gaothan residences during election cycles, and the everyday dependency relations slum and gaothan residents have with local politicians and landlords. In this situation their consumer citizen status makes them more vulnerable when their occupancy, and thus municipal citizenship, come into question. Given this situation, billboards like the one shown in figure 28 are becoming quite common.

**Figure 28: Buyer Beware Notices**
8.4 Dimensions and Forms of Occupancy Urbanism

The findings presented in this chapter contradict other studies that compared the civic politics and state-society relations of the urban poor, middle-class and elites in large metros like Mumbai or Delhi. In KD and MB, residents from all socio-economic groups reported relying on or leveraging MCs and other fixers and brokers when establishing, building up, and maintaining locality development. The vast majority of all surveyed residents (89 percent) know their electoral ward number, the name of their municipal councillor, and they can speak of him or her at least in general terms. A large majority of respondents from standard formations reported voting in municipal elections. The presence of occupancy urbanism in each formation helps to explain why these findings contradict established knowledge in this area. Using the indicators of authorised residency and rights-based access to municipal services, all three urban formations can be considered forms of occupancy urbanism. Encroachment on public and private property, as well as the informal or unauthorised use of municipal services are enabled and governed by key political society actors who are able to exercise authority over occupancy within these formations and encroach upon the sovereignty of the municipality. Consequently, municipal services become club goods, rather than public goods. All together this produces an informal and unsettled municipal denizenship for slum residents, a manorialism in gaothans, and a brokered form of consumer citizenship in standard formations (see table 7). These findings add to our understanding of subaltern urbanism as being a set of culturally instituted practices and relationships not limited to the poor or to slums. In KD and MB it is through formation-based political institutions, at the level of occupancy, and in the domain of locality development that civic politics is constituted in its political society configuration.

The rationales and interests of political society actors facilitating these forms of occupancy urbanism will only intermittently and contingently benefit residents. When the political-economic calculus changes there is no reason to presume that they would not use their position to facilitate eviction or the cutting off of services.94 Demolitions of ostensibly standard residential building, likely undertaken by those who facilitated their construction, is indicative of this. Also, de facto landlords of slums being able to hoard most of the resettlement flats at the expense of current leasers being dispossessed, indicates this contingency as well. These mediators too often become ‘vanishing mediators’95 that many discussions of subaltern politics and spaces (both positive and negative) miss, given their focus on the poor and the nominal aspects of their settlements and livelihoods. In the case of standard

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94 See Weinstein 2008 and Jeffrey 2009 for discussions of how political society actors (development mafias and well educated unemployed men respectively) use these arrangements to reproduce privilege and to accumulate economic and political power.

95 A vanishing mediator is one that disappears after facilitating the passage from one situation to another, which after the transition becomes a sort of absent presence (Jameson 1973).
formations, the promoter mediates between flat purchasers and the municipality in ways that unsettle perceptions of promoters as only builders and sellers of flats. They co-produce with municipal officers and staff, MCs and purchasers a spectrally legal occupancy. Without the practices of the promoter (i.e., playing on the ignorance and desires of buyers, forging, acquiring ‘rubber-stamped’ permissions and certifications, and faith in the avenues to regularisation) purchasers could not take on the identity of municipal citizens. Once buyers take possession this change is complete in the minds of the occupant, which is reinforced by people assuming or acting as if their residence is authorised. At this point promoters, in matters of occupancy and locality development, become ‘vanishing mediators.’ The trend towards a ‘buyer beware’ policy reinforces the vanishing as does research which misses or marginalises their role in who occupies the city and development in general. Following Jameson (1973) they become an “absent presence” more palpable during times when authorities are compelled to acknowledge and address unauthorised construction by targeting those easiest to find and the least able to mobilise power relations to their advantage—flat owners and occupants. 

Table 7: Forms of Occupancy Urbanism

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Occupancy</th>
<th>Law based access to Services</th>
<th>Political Institution Political Subject</th>
<th>Key Actors</th>
<th>Form of Municipal Citizenship</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Slum</td>
<td>Informal</td>
<td>Negotiated Authoritarianism Clients</td>
<td>De facto landlord and councillor</td>
<td>Informal, brokered, and unsettled</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gaotthan</td>
<td>Non-formal</td>
<td>Negotiated Authoritarianism Serf or Vassal</td>
<td>Landlord and councillor</td>
<td>Manorial</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Standard</td>
<td>Spectral formality</td>
<td>Exchange-Consumer or Purchaser</td>
<td>Promoter</td>
<td>Brokered Consumer-Citizenship</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

While promoters become vanishing mediators of legal and spectrally legal occupancy at every level, landlords and MCs are visible mediators between the residents of slums and gaothans and the municipality. These political society actors are central to the

96 The recently passed Maharashtra Housing Development and Regulation Act protects developers from criminal prosecution and consumer court cases thus solidifying in legislation that the burden of making sure properties are in order falls mostly on the buyer (email communication, July 2013).
production and reproduction of informal and non-formal occupancies and municipal service provision. The manner in which water and other municipal services are perceived as expanding and contracting in line with the capacities and interests of these actors indicates their significance. The way residents see them as being essential for transactions between themselves and other authorities also indicates their constitutive role in these processes. They do not only take on essential mediating and intermediating functions for residents, but for municipal departments as well who often default to them when determining beneficiaries for programs and projects and for handling the local politics of implementation (see Chapter 6). In the Government of India’s Second Administrative Reforms Commission report, it also states:

**Politicians at times tend to act as ‘executives,’ intervening in transfers, postings, sanctioning of local bodies’ contracts and tenders, crime investigation and prosecution — all of which are therefore often at the mercy of the local legislator. Given the compulsions of survival, the State Government, which depends on the goodwill and support of legislators, does not usually intervene except where the Constitution specifically and unambiguously directs it (2008: 22).**

Landlords and MCs also gate-keep between the municipality and slums and gaothans. Unlike most promoters, they live in their localities and are regular fixtures. They are not vanishing mediators to residents and municipal officials and staff. However, they tend to vanish in many official urban development policies, plans and projects. Being at the interstices and interface of local and extra-local dynamics, opportunities and risks, they are Janus-faced mediators. They facilitate occupancy and services for a variety of reasons that only contingently coalesce with buttressing the footing of poor and other subordinate groups in the city. If the likely scenario of developable land becoming scarce in these cities, land prices rising, development code regulations changing, and slums increasing, then the positive spill over effects or relatively positive aspects of obligation relations in different formations could quickly slip away. For example, Nanni, the landlord and councillor in gaothan 42, has been leveraging money and muscle power to ‘encourage’ residents to vacate before their 99-year leases terminate. Thirty years ago, building and leasing chawls was the best way to protect land from being acquired by the state, to make some money, and to secure votes. Now that official development regulations for gaothans are being negotiated, and the area has urbanised allowing for higher rent; Nanni wants to build ownership flats.

Our focus on the formation-level political institutions granting occupancy and gatekeeping information and resources between the municipality and different formations offers a more realistic and nuanced discussion of the possibilities and trajectories of varieties of municipal citizenship. These cases show that the ‘autonomous but engaging’ status between slums and the state, for example, cannot be presumed to be the outcome of the quiet encroachments of the poor aggregating

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97 Mitra (1992) drew similar conclusions in her study of netas in rural villages.
into a ‘social non-movement.’

The uneven development of housing, infrastructure, services, and the existence of different formation-based political institutions (all arguably indicators of enclave urbanism) manifest significantly from the political and administrative entrepreneurialism of visible and vanishing mediators operating through political society. They accomplish this by occupying structural and cultural holes between these formations and the local state. Their facilitation or indifference to unauthorised occupancies and services is also a means to the ends of reproducing domination and securing benefits from land development opportunities—both legal and illegal. Slums are not the only form of spatial occupation facilitated by political society actors to safeguard or construct benefits from future real estate opportunities. Structural domination exists when actors making decisions or taking actions which effect you cannot reasonably be held to account in practice. Slum residents can vote for a different councillor, but they do not vote on whether or not ward development hinges upon his or her capacities and interests. Renters or leasers in gaothans could vote for a candidate that claims to put their interests above the landowner’s, but the likelihood of this candidate being fielded by a political party and voted for are highly unlikely given possible sanctions. The organised or tacit arrangements between promoters and municipal actors are not accountable to the flat owners, some of whose occupancy status is coming undone. These actors impact the capacity and achieved functioning of residents’ capitals in the fields housing, development and civic politics in general. Presently, residents do not feel they can do much to reduce the influence of these actors.

Occupancy urbanism discusses the importance of a ‘socially embedded municipality’ with whom the poor can negotiate informal occupancy rights and access to services. However, in these cases, all data points to ‘lawful’ residents being a minority, even in standard formations. There is evidence that code and law bending and breaking can be more about benefiting from the unauthorised housing market, than a derivative of vote-bank politics or certain municipal actors being more socially motivated rather than neutral administrative arbiters. Several municipal mid and lower level officials and staff grew up and reside in these cities. However, there is more going on here than placating the masses, or exceptions being granted because of social or cultural ties. Acquiring profits and rents from the informal second circuit of capital figures prominently here, as do local elites adapting and manoeuvring to hold on to their privileges.

These cases challenge the position that municipalities are ‘socially embedded’ and therefore inclined by definition, to recognise the claims of the urban poor and other marginalised groups as ones that need to be met in some fashion. Rather whether a municipality, in this context, is utilised as a platform to build up or to dismantle the claims and spaces of various informal, non-formal, or spectral consumer-citizens is

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98 Quiet encroachment refers to the incremental, stealth, intentionally not politicised encroachment on the property of the state and capital. These individual, largely un-coordinated actions over time become social non-movement given the impact of aggregate effects (Bayart, 2006).
bound up in power relations, with loyalties and alliances likely more contingent than what is implied in discussions of occupancy urbanism in particular and subaltern urbanism in general. The power relations, most crucial here, are the ones between political society actors with the social authority to grant occupancy and shape access to services and locality development in general. If political and landed local elites’ interests and values are conflictual, then garnering votes for MCs and MLAs aligned with them become crucial. If cohesion dominates among local elites, in terms of interests and values, then mobilising ‘vote-banks’ or other types of populist constituencies becomes unnecessary to use the municipality to reinforce their political dominance, by using it to carry out developments that suit their interests. This is not to say that no disputes or rivalries come up between this set. However, the informal institutions and practices for accumulating advantages from the de facto control of land and the structural domination of occupants are not contested. Disputes concern distribution of surpluses; they are not over how political or economic surpluses are created.

So far the establishing of municipal corporations adds mainly to the complexity of governing urbanisation in these cities, but not much in the way of reforming political and spatial practices of laissez-faire development. The reach and form of municipal authority is mediated by de facto sovereignty arrangements among actors vested in different types of urban residential formations. In this context, it becomes very difficult to maintain that slums, or any other form of occupancy urbanism, are protean forms of self-determination by the residents. In MB and KD, they are more accurately described as forms of spatial occupation, facilitated by local elites through political society to safeguard or increase political dominance, profits and rents from maintaining control of land, who occupies it, in what manner, and for how long.
CHAPTER 9: SYNTHESIS, CONTRIBUTIONS AND EXTENSION

This chapter will summarise the main motivation for this study and its findings before discussing the extensive and intensive reach of political society within the civic politics of Mira-Bhayandar and Kalyan-Dombivli, the degree of municipal compromise and capture, and the democratisations and dominations of political society in relation to occupancy and locality development. This will be followed by a reflection on the conceptual and methodological contributions. In closing, I will take the findings and insights and extend them to the theoretical challenge of this project, which was to think through how these urban formations become generative of in addition to generated through political society.

9.1 Why are there forms of occupancy urbanism?

Embedded in this thesis is a variation of Heidegger’s question: “Why are there beings at all instead of nothing?” My embedded question is why are there slums and other configurations of unauthorised or non-formal urban formations? How do these formations come to be, how are they made and why? This point of departure differs from those who view urban inequalities as deriving from neo-liberal statecraft, financialisation, structural under-employment, inappropriate measurements of poverty, or the capacity of the local level government to implement reforms and schemes. These are factors that affect inequality, but on their own cannot carry out the work and conduct the practices and perceptions of the actors doing the work that make different formations. This is likely even more so in conditions of unsettled or informalised state-society relations, and social relations marked by pronounced civic inequalities, which Chatterjee’s distinction between citizens and populations highlights. This study leveraged concepts from subaltern urbanism, namely political society and occupancy urbanism. However, most scholars working within this nascent paradigm focus more on epistemological issues regarding what can be regarded as valid knowledge of cities in the Global South and how the epistemologies of western urban studies—its standard issue theories, concepts and units of analysis—are not well suited for analysing or theorising urban processes in the Global South. This epistemological focus, in part, accounts for the blind spots of subaltern urbanism discussed in the introduction, namely: the privileging of the activities of the urban poor, the focus on the democratising aspects of political society and the informal economy, and the focus on the slum. It was argued that to better understand how urban formations are made we need to connect constitutive practices and processes to the institutions that guide them. Chapter 1 argued and chapter 3 demonstrated how political society is the most prevalent institutional configuration in Kalyan-Dombivli and Mira-Bhayandar in the domain of civic politics. So the answer as to why formations of occupancy urbanism exist is because of political society’s dominance in these cities. Chapter 4 developed an approach for examining how social-spatial
contexts and fields shape the capacity of resident’s livelihood capitals. Each subsequent chapter of this thesis looks at how urban formations are made by way of looking at the role political society actors play in occupancy dynamics and development morphologies of slum, gaonan and standard formations. The practical relevance is that better understanding of how these formations are made on the ground, whose interests they serve, and what broader contextual conditions enable them will be of political and empirical value to those engaged in creating more just institutions of civic politics.

A Descriptive Summary of Subaltern Urbanism and Urbanisation in Mira-Bhayandar and Kalyan-Dombivli

The current official urban development goals coming from the Government of India cohere around the vision of world-class and slum-free cities. These are to be achieved through a mix of infrastructural development, low-income housing, good-governance reforms, public-private partnerships and credit worthy municipalities. The incentives for city government to comply with these plans come in the form of funds being attached to long lists of conditionalities. The programs, on paper, have no mechanisms for addressing the pitfalls of past programs in terms of how to acquire the land necessary for these improvements and the extent municipalities are politically compromised or captured by other forms of public authority. This is particularly the case between the state and the municipality and the municipality and networks present in the field of urbanisation. Between the State of Maharashtra and the municipality and between the superiors in the municipality and their subordinates principle-agent issues are prevalent, as is the issue of a lack of ‘principled-principals’ for reasons of indifference, wanting to avoid the headaches and harassment of trying to alter entrenched practices and norms, and because they too have stakes in political society in general, and the second circuit of capital accumulation that circulates through the unauthorised housing market. Formal issues of relatively minuscule investments in social welfare and the small amount of revenues targeted at the municipal level also point to political society and occupancy urbanism being a practical local solution to low capacity and resource strapped formal institutions of local government. Lastly, the categorical inequalities between ‘populations’ dependent on political society and ‘citizens’ who presumably can deal with the state in rights-based exchanges with clear obligations and entitlements also contribute to spatial inequalities.

Supply side political-society actors involved in occupancy urbanism work seemingly more often than not with municipal officers and staff. Indeed, some of these political actors also have elected, appointed or contracted positions with the state. This zone or layer of civic politics is populated with MLAs, MCs, landowners, landlords, promoters, builders and contractors, and other fixers and brokers (eg. ubiquitous party workers, ‘social workers’, ‘consultants,’ ‘real estate brokers’) and their connections in various municipal departments. However, the position and practices (eg. arbitrage, brokering, gatekeeping, or fixing) is not the same across different networks of urbanisation or formation based political institutions.
At the level of residents in different urban formations, issues of the illegality, or possible illegality of their residence, perceptions of a corrupt and opaque local state, collective action problems, and/or deontic relations that have formed within formation based political institutions (for example, between resident and landlord or between resident and the municipal councillor) limit the capacity of their endowments of capital to achieve functionings of more secure occupancy, better serviced land, and rights-based civic politics and municipal citizenship.

9.2. Analytical Findings

Intensity and extensity of Political Society

Chatterjee describes political society as a form of governmental regulation where those whose livelihoods require the violation of laws and regulations (i.e., squatting or encroaching, unauthorised or unlicensed economic activity, pilfering of municipal water and so on) have some of their claims met by the government in ways that require government agencies to violate their own protocols and regulations—as such the way claims are met are not codified and rarely turn into rights. Claims making and claims meeting remain mostly ad hoc, insecure, and contingent; thus these processes remain in the realm of the political. In contrast, those Indians who have (or at least appear to have) livelihoods and lifestyles that do not violate laws and norms of a modern citizenry belong to civil society who have rights and obligations that have been politically settled and formally institutionalised. While arguably all government agencies at the state and local level have ‘populations’ whose claims are addressed via political society institutions, the way claims are filtered and met are not uniform given the differences in the political calculus that includes: resident’s moral or political claims to resources or protection, social stability, formal agendas, and elite interests and powers. Political society has been taken up by many researchers and theorists to explain the political dynamics and disjunctures of variously fragmenting or dualising cities in India and debates are on-going over whether political society should be seen as deriving from state governmental requirements (Chatterjee, 2004; 2008b) or as primarily a domain of local power structures and ‘netas’ or bosses who, after decades of salutary or benign neglect from colonial and then state and central governments, are embedded local sovereigns, or (less strongly) local mediators in terms of distribution of state resources, the deployment of state disciplinary power, and local conflicts of all sorts (cf. Chandavakar, 2007; Witsoe, 2013; Berenschot, 2011). Another issue of debate is if the informality and illegality of middle and elite classes are differences of kind or degree relative to the politics and practices of the poorer classes in Indian cities (cf. Roy, 2004; Chandavakar, 2007; Sundaram, 2004; Goldman, 2008). If politics and power trump the law across classes in terms of what illegalities and informalities become criminalised, ignored, or regularised, the more state agencies and actors regulate via exception than via the rule of law, and then the more arbiters, brokers, fixers become constitutive of the civic realm and spatial politics of cities. To contribute to these discussions, this thesis explored the question: how and to what
extent is political society governing occupancy and development within different urban formations.

The evidence provided shows that political society actors are involved in the formation of occupancy, locality development, and civic politics more generally in the three types of urban formations studied. They accomplish this by occupying structural and cultural gaps, or in-congruencies, between these formations and government protocols, statutes, norms, and projects. This allows them to shape information, activities and resources in both directions. This impacts the capacity of residents ‘capitals’ to improve achieved functionings in these three domains, and this impacts the capacity of the municipality to bring development and occupancy more in-line with norms and protocols. Some of these gaps form outside the field of political society in these cities, such as propertied notions of citizenship, sanctioned development plans, or schemes that are ignorant or dismissive of local dynamics (eg. the World Bank MMRDA Community Toilet Block Scheme mentioned in Chapter 6 and the SJSRY program discussed in chapter 4). Some gaps have historical trajectories stemming from the years of laissez-faire urbanisation driven by landowners and builders and their political and bureaucratic ties discussed in chapter 3. Pre-municipalisation, decentralisation, and liberalisation de facto sovereignty arrangements in these areas, for the most part, did not abdicate their local power when these policies and acts came into legislative existence. Many actors adapted (eg. changing from a smuggler to a politician for example, or from a neta to a MLA) and worked to shape the formation of the municipal corporation to reinforce rather than minimise their economic, political, and cultural standings. Some gaps are actively reproduced, like the need for informalised municipal water provision and a contrived market for tanker companies in Mira-Bhayandar discussed in chapter 7. However, not all political actors are equally adept or interested in tending to these gaps or managing contradictions. The past two MCs in slum formation 98 did not mediate or intermediate these gaps, and the slum suffered as a result in terms of water shortages, no additional toilet blocks, and no poverty cell programs. However, the MC of gaothan 27 in MB, mediates these gaps diligently and adeptly and both the ‘slum’ and ‘gaothan’ part of her ward are relatively well developed and clean. Structural and cultural gaps also derive from mismatches between supply and demand in terms of affordable housing and adequately service land. Political society is involved in the supply of informal housing and amenities markets. Many ward-councillors and other fixers and brokers are also involved in informal housing, water, electricity, cable, and sewerage provision. This makes them even more valuable contacts for residents. However, these two domains of political society have contradictions that come out when, for example, changes in the real estate market and development code regulations make demolition rather than regularisation attractive. There is more of a ‘win-win’ logic in the mediating and intermediation of structural and cultural holes between residents and the municipality, albeit one that is not often symmetrical. Regarding real estate and the formal and informal second circuits of capital, more zero-sum contradictions emerges between political actors and residents—particularly residents with ambiguous tenure claims.
Chapter 5 and 8 showed how the configuration of political society actors, the relations between them, and the consistency and duration of their influence on locality development are not constant across these different formations. MCs and their ward-level political society network figure prominently and consistently in slums and gaothans in terms of their impact on locality development, and access to schemes. This has to do with the legality of slums, the non-formality of gaothans, and the tendency of many municipal officials and staff to defer to their discretion in these matters. An obvious difference is that in slums and lesar and renter areas of gaothans, infrastructure and services do not pre-exist occupancy like they do in standard formations, at least within the developed plot. There are political, legal, and physical intervening phenomena shaping the demand for these actors and the scope of their discretion and authority. This matches Chatterjee's argument regarding the ways legal rules and norms exclude many Indians from substantive citizenship, thereby stigmatising or criminalising aspects of their livelihoods and spaces, necessitates a political society, or in other words an informal, somewhat authoritarian, but negotiable local welfare regime. However, this study shows that political society is involved in the making of forms of occupancy urbanism beyond slums. MCs and their networks also exist in standard formations, but they play a supporting role in the initial developments of these formations, by helping push through building permits, or by cultivating the active ignoring of violations for builders and landowners they are connected with. Sometimes the MCs are also builders, for example the now MLA Barbosa, was a promoter while also being the sarpanche, and then later a municipal councillor. Promoters are critical from the beginning until the flats or buildings are sold. Their absence can open up structural or cultural gaps that MCs and other brokers or fixers have interests in tendering to when issues (or opportunities) arise. Many residents in standard formations have more disposable income and can also afford, up to a point, to deal with service shortfalls on their own.

In sum, political society is very much involved in the making of these three types of urban formations. While there are differences in the figuration of actors and practices that make up the networks of urbanisation and the structural and cultural gaps they occupy, they are all guided by and negotiated through political society, rather than by the law or civil society.

*Compromised and Captured Municipal Government*

Subaltern urbanism discussions tend to present municipal government as porous and socially embedded, or vernacularised. Government reports tend to portray it as weak. Chatterjee (2008b) demonstrates the primacy of the civic politics rooted in material needs, desires and status differences, and the dominance of the political over the legal in practice. Together these point to municipalities being vulnerable to capture and corruption and turned into platforms that consolidate local powers rather than disperse them. In policy circles this is discussed in terms of a combination of insufficient revenues, staff capacities, and elite capture. Elite capture refers to situations where special interests manage privileged status in terms of distribution of
resources or policy framing. For example, non-poor households benefiting from funds targeted to BPL families, or relatively well-off areas of the city receiving more investment and repair in utilities and infrastructure than relatively deprived areas. Elite capture can be formalised in policies, for example, one could argue that the ‘world-class’ and ‘slum free city’ strategies have built in privileges for property owners, developers, and consumer-classes. Elite capture can also be accomplished informally through mediating implementation processes at the local level, so as to privilege certain interests and places over others. The interests referred to by elite capture are those of non-state actors. Political capture or politicisation refers to elected politicians and by extension their party’s ability to politicise the administrative and executive functions of governmental agencies. According to the literature, the main motivation for political capture is to win or buy votes (Khemani, 2010; Benjamin, 2008; Berenschot, 2009). Both of these have been related to the capacity of municipal staff and officials to not fall prey or be corrupted by these pressures. Importantly, the compromising or capturing of municipal departments cannot be accomplished by the practices of residents alone, it requires mediators and sufficiently organised encroachment or occupation of municipal functions (cf. Hackenbrach and Hussein, 2012) and political institutions rationalising this mode of claims making and meeting and the relations of obligation that hold it together (cf. Lund, 2011). To contribute to these discussions and to explore the role political society plays this thesis examined how and to what extent are the formal functions and authority of the municipality compromised or captured and toward what discernible purposes. A Bourdieuan field approach was fashioned that posited the compromise or capture of municipal departments and authority as key stakes to networks needing to generate economic and political capital from processes that are legally under the purview of the municipality.

Given the high ratio of unauthorised to authorised development combined with evidence that vast majority of these access municipal services and infrastructure shows that these municipalities are clearly compromised. The ‘context of context’ needs to be kept in mind when evaluating the extent and causes of municipal capture. Chapter 3 reviewed how laissez-faire urbanisation and limited substantive formal decentralisation shape municipal state formation. This context affects the capacity of municipal actors to actualise their powers, but these conditions are not endogenous. The chief commissioner is the top authority of the Municipality. In principle, he could mobilise connections at the state level and municipal statutes to push those under his authority to operate more in line with codes and regulations. It is clearly within his potential powers to push for more of the piped system to be completed and used to its capacity. This has yet to happen, as officials opt to go along with these processes being worked out through political society arrangements, rather than face the professional and personal turmoil required to restructure or reprogram these fields or to formally sanction the actors involved. These findings point towards a municipality that abdicates some of its authority for three interrelated reasons. One reason being the share of ‘speed money’ and other rents. The second being concerns over transfers and the other ways local politics can cause ‘headaches’ for officials, by
way of non-gazetted civil servants (who are accountable to politicians and other local elites, rather than answerable to direct supervisors) engaging in both obvious and stealth forms of mediating processes to fit the goals of powerful political society actors. The second directly relates to third reason of municipal incapacity by design, which helps rationalise the status quo of encroachment upon municipal authority from within, which perpetuates structural and cultural gaps and contradictions between residents and the municipality to be occupied.

Casual complaints regarding the tactics and powers of politicians, babus, touts, the tanker lobby, builders, and other brokers and fixers are common, but sustained actions against them are not. Dispositions of indifference or resignation have taken root across the social-spatial spectrum. Also, criticising corruption often does not preclude one from engaging in ostensibly corrupt activities, such as paying for an illegal water connections, giving some ‘speed money’ to have your building permit processed sooner, or encroaching on someone else’s property or authority. If it is commonly believed that politicians and government officials and staff are corrupt and that ‘nothing will happen’ without bribes or connections, then dealing with the local state authority becomes gamed and creative solutions or collusions become de facto sanctioned, while remaining publicly condemned. This indicates what Žižek terms secret clauses—the unwritten rules that authorise engaging in legally or socially disavowed practices. Areas of municipal authority and practice become compromised or captured due to a mix of a lack of principled principals and principled agents Weberian notions of bureaucratic rationality require to function, salutary neglect at the state and municipal level, and a collective action problem supported by privately shared, but publicly criticised, political society practices. The perceived opportunity costs for actively challenging these norms and practices prohibit change.

Subaltern Democracy or Domination

Chatterjee’s (2008) argued that political society is a form of governmental regulation necessary to manage, however ungracefully, sufficient social stability in light of pronounced inequalities that given the structure of contemporary capitalism are likely to become even more pronounced. Others conceive of this layer as a more grass-roots, popular politics that both challenges the state through tactics of occupation and appropriation of that which poorer groups or morally entitled, but legally and socially excluded, and also performs functions associated with the welfare state (cf. Appadurai, 2004, van Dijk, 2007). Others (Anjaria, 2011; Jha et al., 2007; Corbridge et al., 2005) imply that political society is a more heterogeneous arena and that no internal organising logics can be attributed to a particular configuration of interest or social power. Rather, “they also produce multiple possibilities for and encountering and inhabiting power” (Anjaria, 2011: 67). Political society becomes a sort of political free market, where one finds all varieties of patronage, political entrepreneurism, chicanery, as well as forms of pragmatic politics or stealth democratisations (e.g., de Wit, 2008, Weinstein, 2013; Fung, 2006; Benjamin, 2004 respectively). Given the variety of forms attributed to political society, it becomes difficult to make normative
evaluations about the extent it is prone to democratisation, governmentatisation, or domination. To see which of these capacities (or configuration of these capacities) are actualised in MB and KD, this thesis examined to what extent the practices and interests prevalent in political society coalesce with strengthening or weakening residents occupancy and claims to municipal goods and services within different formations, and to what degree are these relations expressions of domination difficult to challenge or shift. This represents the ‘so what?’ part of the thesis; the normative evaluation of political society’s structure, practices, and spatial manifestations for the purpose of discussing the degree that ends justify means or the means, to the extent they can be construed as democratic to some degree, make the ends of less importance.

Supply-side political society actors structurally dominate residents across the three types of formations studied. The political institutions that have developed between residents and these actors differ in relation to what contextual configurations (i.e., the mix of legal, social and material conditions) are in these formations. For example, we saw a sort of manorial citizenship and negotiated authoritarianism in gaothans, and a clientelist citizenship tied to a negotiated authoritarianism in slums. These differences in citizenship, between slums and gaothans, correspond with the non-formal development status, and the additional power this offers landlords in gaothans. In standard formations, we found what can best be described as a brokered consumer citizenship, with the buyer having to assume all the risk.

While these actors have structural domination over residents in some key areas, this does not mean that residents do not benefit from these actors and political institutions. Some of the ways and some of the reasons structural and cultural gaps and contradictions are mediated and intermediated have (at least) short to mid-term benefits for residents. However, few functioning accountability mechanisms were found, and the ad hoc, informal domain these negotiations or arrangements are forged produces little evidence of value in more formalised domains of citizen-state and citizen-society relations. The level of cohesion among local elites, able to parlay control over development and occupancy into strengthening their political and economic standings, contributes to slums and other formations not being robustly organised as vote-banks or other types of populist constituencies. Dispositions of cynicism or resignation of residents towards the status quo also contribute to the level of structural domination present. The majority of residents expressed their frustration with activities and relations attributable to political society, but then, often in the same breath, expressed their acceptance, “what can we do; nothing…” or cynicism that politicians, babus and touts are all alike. Almost invariably supply-side political society actors were said to be the only ones slum and gaothan residents could go to for help in managing their insecurity, or when trying to secure better services from the city. If their connections in political society are not in the mood to help then they are out of luck. There is little perceived space for protest within political society given the central position MCs, landlords, and other brokers and fixers play in local governance. Also, for many who live in gaothans, the municipal councillor is
often either their landlord or a relative of their landlord. Thus, to mount any serious protest against power relations could result in harassment, violence or worse being cast out into what Agamben (1998) calls “homo-sacer” (bare-life) which is a situation of being a civic and political non-entity. To directly challenge the functioning of political society in these formations could be risking municipal citizenship altogether given that, “rights emerge not from humanity, but through inclusion in a political community—a place which makes opinions significant and actions effective” (Arendt 1979: 296). Thus to be in political society is not to be excluded, but to be differently included into the political community. If you are poor, it is much worse to be excluded with nothing but your own merit and tenacity to fall back on. We all need people, but the poor particularly risking “bare life” for a period of time is prohibitive of collective action at the level of informal and ‘secret’ norms and practices. They see how they are in some ways a means to an end, and how others benefit from their insecure occupancy and low-level development. Political cynicism rules the day here, and the poorer residents play their part—vote and sell their vote sometimes to more than one candidate, some campaign or attend local party meetings, and engage in party organised agitation or cultural activities, not because they see electoral politics as a way of getting their needs addressed within formal state structures and affirmed as rights, but for pragmatic material reasons—protection from eviction, protection from police harassment, help finding work, continued access to basic services, money during election time, and so on. On this theme Gooptu (2007) points out that, “this seemingly vigorous political engagement in their localities is not a form of enfranchisement or inclusion, but a strategy to grapple with their everyday material and legal difficulties” (1927). In these two cities, negotiated authoritarianism emerges as the dominant logic of formation level political society, this enables MCs and landlords to both cater to and exploit residents for the same reason—their unsettled, questionable, or illegal occupancy and thus insecure municipal citizenship status that is rooted in informal and ‘secret’ rules and norms more so than law and legal precedence.

Residents from standard formations and many politicians and civil servants at the municipal level also express dispositions marked by political cynicism—they often express that it is foolish to waste time on collective actions, electoral politics, or administrative reform as paths to more cohesive urban development. People abdicate their and the government’s responsibilities in general and cling to vague but gripping notions of economic growth and middle-class values that in practice disavow the forces and interests perpetuating the need and scope of political society within and beyond slums. Thus, they also perpetuate barriers to stronger accountability mechanisms. Given the dynamics and structures of de facto sovereignty arrangements within these different formations and between these formations and the municipality, occupancy urbanism does not present itself in these two cities as tilting towards more democratic processes of urbanisation and civic politics.

Contrary to Benjamin’s theses on occupancy urbanism, the slum, gaothan, and standard formations in Mira-Bhayandar and Kalyan-Dombivli are made primarily
from the practices and aims of what this thesis refers to as supply-side political society actors. Through their variably coordinated occupation of structural and cultural gaps and contradictions, and through their occupation of space and appropriation spatial authority they shape the development different formations. These occupations allow them to generate rents, profits, and social and political capital through their ability to shape how land is developed, who may reside there and for how long. This also variably obliges them to mediate on behalf of residents of these formations to manage various levels of locality development and protection from eviction or demolition, presumably until such time this no longer is socially or politically obligatory. For example, chapter 8 discussed how the ever hungry real estate market and changing development code regulations are showing signs of making eviction and demolition more likely than regularisation for those who hold tenure or power of attorney, their investors, and those who can appropriate rents from processes of ‘redevelopment’.

Table 8 lists the dimensions of political society different chapters contributed to the analysis of and which dimensions were contributed to robustly, moderately, or suggestively. Robustly, in this context, refers to dimensions that evidence and arguments contributed to directly and strongly. Moderately refers to ones that can be inferred from the evidence and argument provided, but with less certainty. Finally, suggestive refers to dimensions that evidence hints at, but where direct associations are not possible. The dimension of secret clauses, by definition, precludes definitive empirical evidence, and in the end, always rests on interpretation.

**Table 8: Dimensions of Political Society Covered in Different Chapters**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Chapter</th>
<th>Mediation or Mediatory Institutions</th>
<th>Salutary Neglect or Political Capture</th>
<th>Occupancy Urbanism</th>
<th>Secret Clauses</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Chapter 3</td>
<td>R</td>
<td>R</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>S</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chapter 4</td>
<td>R</td>
<td>S</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>S</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chapter 5</td>
<td>R</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>S</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chapter 6</td>
<td>R</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>R</td>
<td>S</td>
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<td>Chapter 7</td>
<td>R</td>
<td>R</td>
<td>R</td>
<td>S</td>
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<tr>
<td>Chapter 8</td>
<td>R</td>
<td>R</td>
<td>R</td>
<td>S</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Legend: R = Robust; M = Moderate; S = Suggestive.
9.3 Conceptual and Operational Contributions

**Political Society**

In this study political society was operationalised for institutional analysis and was found to be a domain or circuit of civic politics more encompassing than civil society and the law within the three types of formations studied. In brief, the historical antecedents of colonialism and incomplete and uneven transition to liberal-capitalist social relations led to the enabling conditions of structural and cultural gaps and pronounced material inequalities, and informal urbanisation that necessitate political society in order to maintain sufficient social cohesion, while not officially making changes in laws and regulations amidst political and economic disparities. Political society is argued to have 4 dimensions: mediatory institutions indicated by the presence of brokers, fixers, and netas, political encroachment (consensual and more coerced), and marked differences between policy discourse and schemes and what takes shape on the ground; occupancy urbanism indicated by levels of unauthorised development and illegal encroachments, in particular those receiving some level of public services, small-scale, punctuated demolition and eviction drives, and retroactive or de facto regularisation; salutary neglect indicated by non-utilised or followed through upon capacities, foot-dragging and legislation on paper only, high levels of non-gazetted civil servant posts being filled with ‘political appointees,’ and widespread principal-agent problems and vice-versa; and finally social institutions and local power structures guiding people’s behaviours in political society are also instituted by secret clauses and disavowed practices that are necessary for these cities to function amidst the geography of structural and cultural gaps and contradictions and pronounced inequalities, while at the same time maintaining the appearances of being sick of ‘corruption’ and calling for the rule of law. Table 9 presents antecedents, enabling conditions, dimensions, and indicators of political society elaborated upon in this thesis.
Table 9: Explication of Political Society

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>Contextualizing and Conceptualizing Political Society</strong></th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Historical Antecedents</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Colonialism</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• High levels of poverty and categorical inequality</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Incomplete bifurcated transition from feudal to capitalist class relations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Enabling Conditions</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Structural and Cultural Gaps and Contradictions between elite and popular political cultures</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Pronounced Material Inequalities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Laissez-Faire (informal) urbanisation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Dimensions &amp; Indicators</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Mediatory Institutions</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Fixers, brokers, netas</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Mismatch between discourse-policy and actual implementation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Politicians encroaching on administrative functions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Occupancy Urbanism</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Unauthorised developments and illegal encroachments</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Variable access to services/protection from eviction and demolition.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Retroactive or de facto regularisation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Informal second circuit of capital</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Salutary Neglect or Incapacity by Design</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Unutilised powers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• defaulting to de facto powers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Feet dragging, endless drawn out deliberation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Principal-agent problems non-gazetted civil servant posts filled by ‘political appointees’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Secret Clauses</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Formal institutions and norms of government not prevalent in practice</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Significant rule bending and breaking with little or no reprisals</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Public cynicism or resignation to ‘corruption’</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
**Occupancy Urbanism**

Normally associated with slums this study found that slum, gaothan, and standard urban formations could each be considered cases of occupancy urbanism. Regarding Benjamin’s (2008) theses of occupancy urbanism, this study shows that occupancy urbanism is only contingently tied to poverty and ‘vote bank’ politics. Additionally, the autonomy these forms of occupancy urbanism have from the state is more attributable to the practices and capacities of supply-side political society actors—in particular those of MCs, landlords, and promoters who too often become vanishing mediators in these debates. Occupancy urbanism, as a gradual mode of ‘quiet encroachment’ (Bayart, 2004), has also been conceived as a check or ‘blockade’ (see Roy, 2014) on global and national financial capital interested in real estate and gentrification in general. However, this study found evidence that occupancy urbanism can also be a process through which capital can be accumulated via the informal, more locally embedded, second circuit of capital. Basically, it is not only, or perhaps even mainly, a strategy or mode of establishment in the city for the urban poor.

**Capitals, Capabilities and Achieved Functionings**

Chapter 4 conceptualised Bourdieu’s conceptual nexus of capital, habitus, and field leveraging insights from topological human geography and a critical realist method of conceptualisation. This frame views capabilities and functions of capital as being constituted by the interlinked figuration of the bearer, other actors, and the status functions and deontic relations derived from social-spatial scenarios or fields. The potential capacities and actual capacities of capitals, and the achieved functionings that materialise, need to be analytically distinguished in livelihoods and capability approaches. This study also demonstrated that structural and cultural gaps, when occupied, become forms of meta-capital that many capitals of interest to political society’s field incumbents require. Attention to structural and cultural gaps can help reveal ‘vanishing mediators’ between capitals and achieved functionings. Figure 29 displays the logical social structure of achieved functionings.

**Figure 29: Structure of Relations Shaping Functionings**

\[
X \text{ becomes capital (Y) in field (F); } X \text{ functioning as Y with Bearer (B) has value set A, and utility set B, and susceptibility set C.}
\]  

99 See table 7 in chapter 8.
9.4 Suggestions for Future Research

The complementary and contradictory relations between what we can call, following Lefebvre, the formal and informal 'second circuits of capital accumulation' requires conceptual and empirical work. The significance of the formal second circuit has been argued concerning capitalist globalisation and the production of urban space. Gottdeiner and Hutchison (2011) argue in The New Urban Sociology that the property sector is the leading edge of uncoordinated and uneven spatial production of settlement space. However, these processes and relations receive little attention in studies on the informal economy or on political society.

Secondly, the process of municipal incorporation and annexation, and to what extent pre-municipalization laissez-faire urbanization sets in path dependencies that may make it very difficult for the municipal corporation to produce serviceable and serviced urban land, needs to be examined. While the creation of municipal corporations can significantly influence the political geography of the their region, as well as the already existing governing arrangements on the ground, this process has been almost completely ignored in the literature on decentralization, urban governance, real estate, and spatial inequalities. Why different state actors decide to push for incorporation where and when they do, who the local antagonists and protagonists are, and their motivations and political connections all need to be explored. Given the current focus on bringing land into the real estate market and altering development code regulations, the role of developers and landowners, and their political and bureaucratic ties, warrants particular attention. Both how and to what extent this process is governed via political society channels and institutions and to what extent it alters them should be a central focus.

Lastly, the practices of salutary neglect, incapacity by stealth, or seemingly willing abdication of powers, perhaps governed by the domain of secret clauses, call out for more ethnographic work.
EPILOGUE: POLITICAL SOCIETY AS A CHANGING BUT RECALCITRANT STATE CAPABILITY

As alluded to in the introduction, the theoretical challenge of this thesis would be to discuss the dialectic between how urban formations established through political society come back to shape politics and processes around occupancy and development. To do this, I will leverage Saskia Sassen's (2010) theory of change based on the premise that, “conditions x or capability y can shift organising logics and thereby actually change valence even if it may look the same” (25). By way of epilogue, I will look at occupancy urbanism as a condition and political society (as an arena of organised informality) as a capability in relation to managing the economic, spatial, and democratic contradictions implicit in the Government of India’s plans to have world-class and slum-free cities. Starting from the Nehruvian developmental period, political society and its manifestations derived from several interrelated factors: many people not yet being able to comply with the property relations and civic norms liberalism requires, the pragmatics of government agents and auxiliaries dealing with netas and other local interlocutors, the lack of affordable housing and services, and an incomplete and resource strapped welfare state apparatus. Rule breaking and bending, encroachment, and unauthorised development were tolerated and seen as necessary interim zones or domains of exception, until such time that economic growth and appropriate institutional reforms empowered citizens and the state to be able to comply fully in line with the word and spirit of the constitution. However, when these practices and places become obstacles to more powerful private or state interests, there are moves to criminalise or remove them. This is why informal or laissez-faire urbanisation is punctuated with demolition and eviction drives, but in general, carries on as the prevalent mode of spatial production. The informality that political society governs becomes important for deciphering the selectivities of state actors in terms of when laws and norms are enforced and how this changes over time regarding issues of urban development. Political society becomes an institutional mechanism of adverse inclusion for ‘populations’ and a mechanism of privilege for promoters and others vested in shaping the trajectories of development in the city. Political society, in this mode, is a constitutive circuit of the state, but not when it comes to formal economic policy or master plans (cf. Benjamin 2000). Those in the ‘policy sphere’ use political society when its capacities and actors become instrumental for to the implementation of governmental policies and projects aiming to discipline ‘populations’ or reign in laissez-faire development in various places. For many residents, political society is a mediating filter that fixes and brokers occupancy and locality development and as such, it constitutes a circuit of informal governance that is in practice responsible for dealing with those people and places rendered antithetical to processes and aesthetics associated with world-classing and slum-freeing and becoming a ‘rule of law’ civil society.

Political society today has historical origins, but it is not some pre-modern or backward social form that the neo-liberalising Indian State is trying to disempower in
order to achieve orderly cities rendered valuable to capital investment and accumulation and aesthetically pleasing to modern urbanites (although this is undoubtedly how some planners and much of the urban middle and elite classes see it). Rather its present form and functioning can be seen as an outcome of contemporary statecraft. Inadequate job creation, increasing investments in non-productive assets and capital intensive industries, combined with the switch from a welfare state model to a governmentality development model focused on entrepreneurialising the poor in a context of intensified marketisation, monetisation, and commodification creates an ever increasing governance gap—between what the formal state is willing and able to do and the needs of large sections of the population—which necessitates and empowers political society to occupy and manage these gaps. The horizon of an integrated liberal democratic society with rights based state-society relations and private sector-state relations holds no water within the current stages of capitalism and the related urban ‘spatial fixes’ of world-class and slum-free cities. However, as argued by Chatterjee (2008a) an electoral democratic state cannot write-off a large majority of the population, so various agencies and actors move between toleration and instrumentalisation of political society and the spaces it produces to help politically manage the contradictions between world-classing the city and the needs and future prospects of many urbanites. Returning to Sassen’s theory of change, political society and occupancy urbanism shifted from interim modes of politics and spatial production to being necessary for politically managing dualising cities. While political society and forms of occupancy urbanism do mitigate some of the vagaries, excesses, and limitations of the state, capitalism, and civil society, they have their own exclusions and are fraught with rent-seeking and structural dominations. To accept this as the best we can hope for, or to elevate it to a form of postcolonial democracy, is to accept second-class status and development standards for large parts of the urban population and enduring vulnerabilities.

This analysis of political society and different forms of occupancy urbanism present points towards how these might be taking on a different ‘valence’ to that of denoting an unofficial acceptance of unequal incorporation in cities. Shatkin et al. (2014: 3-4) label the situations described in this thesis as the “entrenchment of local politics” that continues to stymy ‘rational’ planning. Ironically, while the local state in India is the weakest formally, the de facto local state, when political society is included, seems relatively strong given the obstacles it is seen as producing to the urban plans and policies coming from higher scales of governance. However, the ‘flexible territorialisation’ indicated by which informalities become regularised and which ones become criminalised (Roy 2009) would be difficult to sustain if not for the power and practices of the pivotal and vanishing mediators operating through political society, who in effect, make it easier for the state to clear the way for another round of re-territorialisation in certain situations. Here it is warranted to quote Judith Butler (2006: 65 & 96) at length to help unsettle the distinction between local politics and the state with the former thwarting the plans of the latter:

They [petty sovereigns] are instrumentalised, deployed by tactics of power they do not control, and using it to reanimate a sovereignty that the governmentalized constellation of
power appeared to have foreclosed. These are petty sovereigns, unknowing, to a degree, about the work they do, but performing their acts unilaterally and with enormous consequence. Their acts are clearly conditioned, but their acts are judgments that are nevertheless unconditional in the sense that they are final, not subject to review, and not subject to appeal [...] The question is how does the production of space for unaccountable prerogatory power function as part of the general tactics of governmentality? In other words, under what conditions does governmentality produce a lawless sovereignty as part of its own operation of power?

When a municipal councillor facilitates more building in slums, when a promoter neglects to get an occupancy certificate, when the landowner in a gaothan refuses to widen an internal road so that emergency services can reach the tenant settlement, when the water department sanctions a second line to an unauthorised building, and when municipal officials pick and choose when to deploy laws as tactics (such as the occupancy certificate requirement), they are all exercising prerogatory power by taking decisions that are not legally sanctioned and which are in practice largely not subject to internal checks and balances, or external review. However, the context that allows for this power is not only of their making. The state practices of “unacknowledged urbanisation,” of being soft on the rule breaking and bending of promoters and the municipality, the increasing lack of affordable housing, and the overly bureaucratic process of building authorised housing, and the expectations of paths to regularisation, together produce a fertile political environment for petty sovereigns. At the constitutional level, Chatterjee has argued that instituted citizenship is linked to property relations that a large percentage of the population do not have the means participate. This too conditions the need for a political society, which allows for different formations of occupancy urbanism, which are made possible through the subaltern urbanisation structured by aggregate decisions of petty sovereigns. From a certain vantage point, this terrain looks to be at odds with official state goals of creating world-class and slum-free cities. From another it looks to be a situation that can be mobilised periodically, in certain contexts, as a state tactic for freeing up land that has been encroached upon or illegally developed. In theory, this allows upper echelons of state power to not have to go outside the law or enforce imminent domain to free up land. It is conceivable that allowing laws and procedures to be flouted by others gives them room to strategically decide when to make illegalities and irregularities at the municipal level a problem they must deal with; at times, that just happen to coincide with increased levels of demand in the real estate market in these areas. In this scenario, occupancy urbanism becomes a condition that rationalises state intervention in municipal matters. Following, Sassen's (2008; 2010) argument, the spaces produced through political society occupations and mediations become a capability for the state to expel those residents exposed in the unauthorised development dragnet. It can become a complex and recalcitrant capability for carrying out primitive accumulation or accumulation by dispossession. However, the territoriality-territorialisation dynamic of the field of political society over time produces complicated and opaque political geographies and vested interests for those

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100 See chapter 4: section 4
who live in formations forged through these dynamics, the supply-side political society actors, and their various state collaborators (whether willing or resigned). Navigating this terrain for the purpose of implementing the ‘world-class’ city related policies requires leveraging the same actors and channels, and practices that produced the ‘problems’ these policies want to remedy in order to negotiate through this thicket of vested interests and culpability. Regarding this hypothesis, it is worthwhile to repeat Shatkin et al.'s (2014) statement that:

The state has frustrated the ambitions of corporations, consumer citizens, and others who covet a vision of global urban transformation and the commodification of urban space...these goals have progressed through a second channel [...] a multitude of localised mutations of state-society relations, which have emerged as local actors have looked for opportunities in the fissures of power at the municipal level to gain pockets of urban political influence, and to reshape urban space and infrastructure (5).

This captures how spaces generated by political society come back to shape politics of development, requiring those who likely speak derogatorily of political society and view these processes as beneath them, having to engage with them in their attempts to order, modernise, and commodify the city. This thesis suggests that political society may be functioning as a recalcitrant capability of the state and calls for more conceptual and empirical attention to this process.
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Samenvatting

Verspreide ongelijkheden in de vorm van basis service, infrastructuur, huisvesting en leefomgeving blijven toenemen in veel steden ondanks formele processen van decentralisatie mechanismes voor een grotere privé sector en burgerparticipatie, en toenemende geografisch refererende database over de verschillende aspecten en schalen van stedelijke armoede en ongelijkheid de motivatie van dit doctoraat is om een beter begrip te verkrijgen hoe verspreide ongelijkheden ontstaan. Waarom wel in dit deel van de stad maar niet in een ander deel en welke acteurs zijn betrokken de steden bij deze verspreide ongelijkheden en waarom? Het oogpunt verschilt van zij die verspreide verschillen als een gevolg van neoliberale politiek, kapitalisme, bevolkingsgroei of armoede zien dit zijn allen belangrijke factoren die invloed hebben op verspreide verschillen, maar op zichzelf staand dit niet bewerkstellig. Om een beter begrip te verkrijgen hoe verspreide verschillen vormen in hun geologische plaats onderzoeken we de steden Kalyan-Dombivli en Mira-Bhayandar nabij Mumbai de stedelijke politiek en de lokale politieke rangorder. Die deze verspreide verschillen vormen stedelijke politici verwijzen naar hoe macht en zeggenschap worden ingesteld verdeeld en uitgevoerd in de stad in zaken die het welzijn goederen en service verlening alsmede de stads algemene ontwikkeling beïnvloeden (Davies, 2009). Om de stedelijke politiek te onderzoeken moeten we de plaatselijke politieke instructies hun bronnen en uitingen van zeggenschap over alledaagse en primaire behoeftes aan huisvesting basisservice veiligheid en de karakteristieken van gemeentelijke politiek in de praktijk bekijken. Het stedelijk domein behelst dus de plaatsen waar deze publice onderwerpen de machten relaties en de politieke cultuur dit begeleid vast staan dit is dus waar het recht op toegang en burgerschap en ook wie wat nodig heft en wil hebben dat krijgt (hoe) en hoe verder wordt overlegd in een manier die voldoet of tegenstrijdig is aan regels van de politici en plannen vast gelegd door de staat en op internationaal niveau.
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Tara van Dijk was born and raised in the Pacific Northwest of the United States. After graduating from university with a degree in sociology with minors in women's studies and literature studies, she worked abroad in Seoul, South Korea, Shanghai, China, and the Palestinian Territories before settling in the Netherlands in 2004. She resumed her studies with the MSc Programme in Human Geography at the University of Amsterdam, following the International Development track. During her graduate and doctoral studies, her focus turned to the links between geographies of urbanization, scalar politics, and local political institutions in Asia, Indian cities in particular. She is now working on developing a comparative political society research program.

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