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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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 Uttar 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, salt pan, 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 salt pan 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.\(^{12}\) 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\(^{13}\) 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\(^\text{14}\) 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

**Figure 3: Forms of Urbanization**

\(^{14}\) Source: Google Earth, Image date: 16-12-2013, 19º18’48.50”N 72º51’10.44”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 Shaihk 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 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 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. 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.

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>
<th>Structure</th>
<th>Powers</th>
<th>Susceptibilities</th>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Legal:</strong> Bombay Provincial Municipal Corporations Act</td>
<td><strong>Basic Services:</strong> Water, SWM, Sewerage, Drains</td>
<td>Conditionalities of Central Development Schemes and Plans</td>
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<td><strong>Public Works:</strong> Bridges, Streets, Street Lights, Parking</td>
<td>Mega-City Policy and Funding Biases</td>
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<td><strong>Regulate Land Use and Construction</strong></td>
<td><strong>State Agencies’ Jurisdiction</strong></td>
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<td><strong>Social Infrastructure:</strong> Establish and Maintain Health Posts &amp; Public Schools</td>
<td><strong>State Legislative or Administrative Inaction</strong></td>
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<td><strong>Administrative:</strong> budgets, reports, records</td>
<td><strong>Salutary Neglect</strong></td>
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<td><strong>Levy Taxes and Fees:</strong> Property, Development, Improvement, Basic Services</td>
<td><strong>Revenue Constraints (state)</strong></td>
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<td><strong>Slum Improvement Planning for economic, social and built environment</strong></td>
<td><strong>Principal-Agent Issues</strong> (corruption, work ethic/cultures)</td>
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<td><strong>Deliberative Wing:</strong> Municipal Councillors Nominated Councillors Ex Officios (MPs, MLAs, MLCs)</td>
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<td><strong>Staff Capacity and Motivation</strong></td>
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<td><strong>Pre-existing ad hoc and informal development</strong></td>
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<td><strong>High Arrears</strong></td>
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<td><strong>Executive Wing:</strong> Chief Municipal Commission</td>
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<td><strong>Staff</strong></td>
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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 transfectual 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><strong>Water</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Piped-system 100%</td>
<td>150 lpcd</td>
<td>188 lpcd</td>
<td>90 lpcd</td>
<td>Coverage based on primary lines, secondary lines</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Sewerage</strong></td>
<td>85% Coverage</td>
<td>19%</td>
<td>Only 4 residential complexes</td>
<td>No regulation of septic tanks, disposal in gutters, open fields, river</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Drainage System</strong></td>
<td>100% coverage</td>
<td>City Centre 90% Periphery 5%</td>
<td>No centralize d or regulated drainage</td>
<td>MB: No data tracking this system.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>SWM</strong></td>
<td>5 workers per 1,000 residents</td>
<td>1.5 workers per 1,000 residents</td>
<td>no data</td>
<td>KD: buffalo stables, informal dumping sites, no separation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Space between bins 100 meters</td>
<td>300 meters</td>
<td></td>
<td>MB: unplanned landfills door-to-door collection</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Gutters</strong></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><strong>Living in 'Slum-Like' Conditions</strong></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><strong>Unauthorised Development</strong></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 mediating 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°17'47.25" 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**

![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.

**Gaothan: 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 gaothan. 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 Gaothan, 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 unlogged. 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 salt pan 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: Gaothan 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). 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 versus 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

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Employment Type</th>
<th>% Standard</th>
<th>% Gaothan</th>
<th>% Slum</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>N/A</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rickshaw or Taxi</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stall/Shop Owner</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pension</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Salary</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wage</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Figure 11: Private, Public or English School

Children's School Type

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>School Type</th>
<th>% Standard</th>
<th>% Gaothan</th>
<th>% Slum</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Private</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Public</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Private English</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Figure 12: Highest Level of Education in Household

Highest Level of Education in Household

Percentage by Formation

Figure 13: Perception of Institutional Inequalities

Inequalities Present in Access to:

Percentage Who Agree By Formation
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
- Gaothan
- Slum

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

---

Percentage Who Agree By Formation