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CHAPTER 4: THE CAPACITIES AND FUNCTIONINGS OF 
LIVELIHOOD CAPITALS: A SOCIO-SPATIAL 
CONCEPTUALISATION

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 underlays 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 forapolitical 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)**

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 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

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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.

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; 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.

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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—unearned, 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 unearned 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 an 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. 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 accrete 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 (Paulle 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 the 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 habits, 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 reformative 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 venerable 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 logistical 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, democratisation, 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. Border-work 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 interven-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 territoriality 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>
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<tr>
<th>Fields</th>
<th>Influence on Space</th>
<th>Influence on Actor</th>
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<tr>
<td>Territoriality Effects</td>
<td>Structural and Cultural Holes</td>
<td>Vested interests,</td>
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<td>Calculated territory</td>
<td>Opportunity costs</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Distributions of C₁</td>
<td>Perceived opportunities and obstacles—realm of the possible</td>
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<td>Rules and stakes of the fields</td>
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<tr>
<td>Territorialisatio Practices</td>
<td>Border-work</td>
<td>Practices of engagement or avoidance (C₂)</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Mediating and intermediation</td>
<td>Political subjectivity and avenues for claims-making</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Interventions and tactics of capture, control, or</td>
<td>(chains of mediaries, mediaries)</td>
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<td>occupying</td>
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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 C₁. 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 C₁ into C₂ 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. Bourdieus 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
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

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.