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

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CHAPTER 6: NETWORKS OF URBANISATION

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

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

and by social processes” (52). Kalyan-Dombivli and Mira-Bhayandar are taken to be two social-material forms emerging from urbanisation processes in India and in the ‘world of cities’ (Robinson, 2005). Urbanisation processes are represented in this article by the networks of urbanisation (related to housing and basic services) different collectivities55—tied to particular urban forms—are embedded in. The focus is not a general epistemological question of which label to use for these cities. Regarding the actors present in these networks, such as municipal councillors (MCs), the focus is also not epistemological in terms of how best to categorise them. The point was to look at the ‘how of different formations’ what conditions and what types of practices and operative institutional logics do these different formations develop from? Starting with the how, rather than the who, this chapter also shows how actors in KD and MB are not homogenous blocks relegated to one area or mode of operation—they can be, and often are, involved in different, and at times contradictory, networks of urbanisation.

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

6.2 Analytical Framework—Structural and Cultural Holes

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

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

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

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

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

**Methodology**

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

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

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

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

![Map of Ward 97 and Ward 98, Kalyan-Dombivli](image)

### 6.3 Networks of Urbanisation

**Clientelist**

Clientelism requires clients and patrons and the relations between them. Additionally, if there were nothing to be gained (resources) via this relationship than it would likely become extinct. Clientelism in KD and MB includes clients, patrons, municipal officials and staff, middlemen and structural domination. Externally we find weak formal citizenship rights, inequalities in resource access, and norms rationalising this activity. Clientelism requires categorical inequalities to function; it is in the vested interests of patrons in these cities to maintain high levels of inequality particularly where access to basic services, housing, and credit are concerned. Resources are not
distributed based mainly on clients needs, thus areas with high rates of clientelism are marked by internal inequalities. Clientship is also particularised in these cities. There are also contingent intervening relationships to consider. Many patrons do not go themselves to problem-solve, complain or to negotiate ‘informal’ service provision. They often send a broker or middleman—whose rapport with clients, municipal staff and officials and whose discretion also impacts the quality and quantity of resources and power that flow within this network. This points to the dispositions and discretion of municipal officials also playing an intervening role. Middlemen depend upon both officials and patrons to stay in business and to graduate to higher levels of mediation or possibly to a patron or official position themselves. The power relations between the different actors in these networks is an empirical question that can be answered by looking at who is monopolising structural and/or cultural holes and what the characteristics of these holes are. Clients in this network are slum residents and residents in urban villages or gaothans.\(^{59}\) They are those with informal to illegal settlements and livelihoods thus the structural gap is the one between the informal slum or urban village governance and the formal sphere of the municipality—that by law should not provide services to encroachments or unauthorised developments. This collectivity can offer votes, loyalty, labour and/or a fee in the hopes that the patron will tend to them. The informality and insecurity of their livelihoods and settlements, combined with the stigma often associated with these groups and places, constitute a social force that pushes them towards clientship rather than citizenship. Patrons dealing with material realities and needs of slums and gaothan residents tend to be MCs, but sometimes MLAs, municipal officials or retired government officials, and landlords take up practices associated with patronage. Middlemen, both between patrons and the municipality and between clients and patrons, are also political party workers, slumlords and/or landlords. Cultural holes exist between these collectivities and the government both because the lack of information about schemes, rights and responsibilities and because so called ‘village’ culture predominates in these areas—meaning hierarchy and the significance of de facto sovereigns is strong—thus it is habitual to plead one’s case to the local patron and to accept that what does or does not happen is up to his or her discretion. Regarding benefits, supply-side actors (i.e., patrons, middlemen, and municipal actors) can accumulate social and political capital from dispensing favours and generating rents, and successful clients can manage a level of manageable insecurity.

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

\(^{59}\) Gaothans were rural settlements that became surrounded by the city. Most of the land is designated as agricultural however most have tenements and commercial structures on them. Gaothans are considered organic not illegal (Risbud, 2002) and landlords can largely develop these villages as they like.
from being subject to land ceiling acts and appropriation for ‘public use’ until such time they think they can extract the most economic and political benefits from them being brought into a different network of urbanisation. Additionally, the NGOs involved in the community toilet block scheme were aware of the precarious position of slum and gaothan residents vis-à-vis the local state work. This prompted them to work with this network rather than against it when it suited their purposes—i.e., allows them to finish their project and/or reach targets more easily than going only through the formal governance apparatus (van Dijk et al., 2012).

**Unauthorised Housing Network**

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

The builder is central to this network because it is his ‘money and muscle power’ and political connections that provide the start up capital and conditions needed for the creation and extraction of rents. However, the builder needs the coordinated actions of the landowner or a building-level mediator (i.e., the one who manages present and prospective residents’ demands and suspicions) and upon those who organise basic services with local state and private sector. These brokers are often party workers, current or former MCs, or street-level bureaucrats. The structural holes this network bridges are between the informal sphere of unauthorised development and government regulations and public and private sector service providers. Given the illegal or extra-legal nature of these arrangements, this network also spans a cultural hole as most flat or chawl owners or lease-holders are unaware who the ‘go-to’ people are further up the network and are not aware of the informal rules and norms that bind this network together past their building level mediator. The structural and cultural holes that were being managed by this network become painfully obvious when the builder and landowner are no longer reachable, when staff changes occur in municipality and administrative wards who are not aligned with this network, or when external authorities begin to crackdown on unauthorised constructions. State and Central level politicians and officials often possess or controls large land holdings\(^\text{60}\) in these newly urbanising areas, or they are politically or economically beholden to those who do. This makes them interested in this network for two main reasons. They want the largely risk-free rents and profits unauthorised construction brings now, and the right to the ones created by ‘re-development’ or urban renewal that comes later—i.e., during processes of ‘world-classing’ or ‘slum-freeing’ for instance. Current flat owners—who want a good price for their unauthorised flat and/or a new flat in a now authorised building (when development codes change) have common cause with land owners and builders when regulations and schemes more favourable to their economic interests emerge. Residents of unauthorised housing mostly work in higher levels of the informal sector (small to medium scale enterprises, artisans, and shop owners) or lower sectors of the formal economy (local government employees, service sector workers, teachers). They tend be better educated and skilled then those living in slums or gaothans and enjoy better economic and social status. However, the unauthorised nature of their housing compels them to engage in political society where housing and basic services are concerned.

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

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

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

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61 The Maharashtra Ownership of Flats (Regulation of the Promotions of Construction Sale, Management and Transfer) Act defines the “promoter” as the person who constructs or causes to be constructed a block or building of flats or apartments for the purpose of selling some or all of them to other persons, or to a company, co-operative society or other association of persons, and includes his assignees; and where the person who builds and the person who sells are different persons, the term includes both. Available online: [MOFAMOFA_1963.pdf](https://example.com/mofamofa_1963.pdf).

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

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

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

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

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

Clientelist Network

Unauthorised Network

Corporate Network

Legend:
- Structural and/or cultural hole
- Contingent Actor or Relation
- Necessary Actor or Relation

Macro-Level, Brokers and Interests

Macro-Level, Interests and Housing Cooperative Organisations
6.4 Discussion

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

The most noticeable difference between these networks is the characteristics of the collectivities linked to them. Another area of difference is both the nature of the structural and cultural holes and those who bridge and/monopolise them. While these gaps come from the same structural conjuncture (i.e., low infrastructural power, growing middle-class, categorical inequalities, housing shortages, and the ‘world-class’ slum-free city paradigm of urban development) they manifest differently across these different socio-economic groups embedded in different networks of urbanisation. For example, the cultural gap between clients and the formal state is not a case of purposeful distance, the way it is for citizens in corporate networks. The managing of structural-cultural holes that housing societies and their hired middlemen partake in (with all the shortcomings) is less exploitive than what occurs in the clientelist and unauthorised housing networks. Looking at structural-cultural holes foregrounds the contextual factors shaping the modes and interests of mediation and intermediation present in these operative networks of urbanisation.
The agendas and practices of local politicians, party workers, local state officials and staff, and state and central level politicians and officials are more interdependent than current governance discussions can account for. Networks of Urbanisation are not judged by their commitment to the public good, but by their commitment to particular groups and their ability to deliver. There are few reasons to see this context as amenable to ‘good governance’ approaches. It is not in the interest of those with prominent roles in these networks (and the segments of society tied to them who benefit from the patronage, rents and influence the present situation affords) to implement substantive reforms. These are all ‘open secrets’ and there are no consistent pushes within political society or civil society to transform this political culture or to totally un-mediate the local state.66 These networks of urbanisation do function. They do not work developmentally (i.e., in concert with inclusive cities or world-class cities), but they do work for enough people for these networks to reproduce themselves and the territorialisation of the unauthorised housing network has been expanding. These networks also function as an established filter or clearing house of requests, needs and grievances, both formal and informal, of an increasingly diverse population. These filters are not based on “pursuit of collective interests” (Peters and Pierre, 1998) but they do function to limit the burden of increasing demand and ostensibly limited supply put on formal political and administrative structures. The roles MCs, MLAs, promoters, housing society leadership and others take on and the structural and cultural holes they broker highlight the mediated nature of state-society relations structured by weak infrastructural powers and on-going categorical inequalities. The media and civil society responses to this often focus on politicians and clientelism. They neglect to discuss the structural factors, and how the related categorical inequalities, especially those between ‘slum dwellers’ and ‘citizens,’ keep universal, democratic and rights-based local citizenship at bay. They also neglect to look for how collectivities all along the socio-economic ladder engage with political society.

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

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