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Introduction

Contesting the Indian City:
Global Visions and the Politics of the Local

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India is experiencing a remarkable urban moment. At a historical juncture when the subversion of the Nehruvian project of state-sponsored modernism nears completion, the country faces dramatic changes with global economic integration and the emergence of new political coalitions around aspirations for an urban transformation. The period after the liberalization of the Indian economy in 1991 has seen the emergence of audacious schemes – plans for privately built new towns and special economic zones (SEZs), massive infrastructure projects, and the empowerment of corporate actors in urban governance – accompanied by drives to cleanse the streets of hawkers and to evict squatters on a very large scale. Yet such initiatives face daunting political obstacles in India, characterized as it is by a strong democratic framework in which the poor, strengthened by their numerical superiority and by a historical state rhetoric of grassroots empowerment, enjoy some success in contesting such initiatives and in defending their claims to urban space. The result is tension: tension between the egalitarian ethos inherited from traditions of socialism and Gandhian thinking and the hard driving utilitarianism of a globalizing business class; tension between the pluralist nature of Indian democracy and the allure of authoritarian models of urban governance; and tension between the modernist vision of a globally connected class and the daily incursions on the planned order of the city by the poor.

The collision of the seemingly unstoppable force of elite-driven visions of urban change and the seemingly immovable object of grassroots resistance plays out in numerous flare-ups and conflicts, the drift of which has yet to

make a decisive progress toward resolution. In West Bengal, the efforts of the ruling Communist Party of India-Marxist (CPI-M) to expropriate agricultural land in Singur and Nandigram for an automobile factory and for a Special Economic Zone resulted in violent protests that eventually scuttled both projects (although the automobile factory eventually moved to another state) (Roy, 2009). In Mumbai, efforts to develop a major real estate mega-project in Dharavi on land currently occupied by a settlement of about half a million low- and moderate-income people and countless small enterprises have consistently faltered on the inability of the project backers to mobilize sufficient political and financial support to tip the balance toward implementation (Weinstein, 2009). In other instances the forces of globally oriented redevelopment have enjoyed greater success. In Delhi, for example, government and developers were quite successful in utilizing the Commonwealth Games, held in 2010, as a pretext for large-scale evictions and relocations and for the realization of major infrastructure and real estate projects. According to Bhan (2009) 45,000 homes were demolished from 2004 to 2007 in the run-up to the Games. The coexistence of progression and subversion of state and developer efforts to transform Indian cities is indicative of the indeterminate nature of change.

This book examines the changing dynamics of political power in Indian cities and their implications for the spatial and social development. In doing so, it addresses a relative lack of academic attention to the political economy of post-liberalization Indian cities (examples of some works that have drawn attention to themes of post-liberalization urban political change include Roy, 2003; Gooptu, 2007; Weinstein, 2008 and Sami, 2013). This lacuna is particularly surprising given that India's urban population is projected to grow faster than that of any other country, more than doubling between 2010 and 2040 to reach 734 million (United Nations Population Division, 2007). This massive urbanization will almost certainly continue to be shaped profoundly by processes of integration into international networks of production, trade, and investment and by the impacts of the liberalization of city-building processes. Large cities will continue to be major sites of change – cities of 5 million inhabitants or more currently represent about a quarter of the country's urban population, and their total population, combined, will soon exceed 100 million (ibid.).

By bringing together a set of studies based on the empirical investigation of urban political change in a number of cities, this volume contributes to the urgent task of formulating new frameworks for explicating the political economy of post-liberalization Indian cities. In doing so it seeks to move debates about India's urban development beyond the polarization of two perspectives that are sometimes drawn in too sharp contrast. The first perspective focuses on the analytics of a convergence of India's urban political economy and spatial change with models of political and spatial

change prevalent in other capitalist societies. Researchers working within such frameworks focus on the adoption of neoliberal models of governance advocated by corporate interests and imposed or propagated through international and bilateral aid organizations. Studies have examined efforts to reengineer urban governance so as to foster capital accumulation, most notably through the re-scaling of the state and empowerment of capital within frameworks of entrepreneurial governance (Banerjee-Guha, 2002; Goldman, 2011; Gooptu, 2011). The second perspective emphasizes the contextual factors that render the social and political dynamics of Indian cities distinctive. Most notable are scholars operating within the frameworks of postcolonial theory, who focus their attention on cultural resistance to externally imposed political and social projects. These scholars tend to view the agenda of liberalization as a successor to the colonial project of modernization and its postcolonial successor in nationalist modernism. They characterize the Indian state as shot through with the contradictions of the postcolonial condition, and therefore inherently limited in its ability to impose its desired social vision. Evidence for such an interpretation is sought in the chronic street-level subversion of the Indian state's efforts to impose its visions of modernity on urban space, and in the prevalence of forces within the state that militate against any re-scaling of state power to empower municipal governments and the forces of capital (see for example Benjamin, 2008; Arabindoo, 2011; and Bandopadhyay, 2011). A notable recent example of such framings is Benjamin's (2008) provocative argument that "occupancy urbanism" – the urbanism created by the capacity of the poor to barter votes for political protection from street-level politicians and bureaucrats for claims to urban space, and particularly for extra-legal claims to urban land – has largely thwarted state and corporate visions of change.

The approach taken in this book is to step back from the either/or framing of these issues and to revisit the questions that underlie both perspectives: What kind of urban politics is the post-liberalization period producing? How have actors who have sought to maximize opportunities for capital accumulation – real estate developers, corporate actors, consumer citizens, land brokers, and some actors in municipal, state, and national government – attempted to overcome the particular obstacles to urban redevelopment in the Indian urban context? What new models of urban politics, and what dynamics of spatial change, have resulted? By bringing together recent research that has focused on the changing roles of urban actors in political and spatial change, the book seeks to understand the distinct form that urban politics is taking in the interaction between the dynamics of postcolonial politics and the push toward economic growth and the commodification of urban space. The volume's contributors approach these issues through the examination of different cities (Mumbai, Delhi, Jaipur, Mangalore, Bangalore) and of different facets

of urban governance and urban redevelopment. This examination is necessarily constrained, in its geographic and topical scope, by the limited number of contributions that can be made to fit into the volume. The shared focus of the studies on poorly understood questions about the shifting dynamics of power in Indian cities nonetheless provides useful insights toward rethinking our state of understanding these cities.

In this introduction we develop a framework for analyzing urban political change in India through a review of both India-specific and comparative literature on urban politics. We argue that analyses of Indian urban politics would benefit from the incorporation of recent theoretical work that has come to view the neoliberal project not as the top-down imposition of a coherent and homogenous ideology, but rather as a flexible and dynamic process, in which state actors at various scales apply market criteria to governance, in an effort to overcome context-specific obstacles to capital accumulation (Ong, 2007; Brenner, Peck, and Theodore, 2010a, 2010b). We argue that such a view of "neoliberalization" as a flexible and dynamic process helps to understand recent policy and planning experiments in India that have sought to overcome, or simply work around, the conditions of state incapacity to implement planning and regulation fostered by the postcolonial condition, to achieve goals of urban redevelopment and capital accumulation. This view helps to move beyond the assumption that "neoliberalism" is an inherently homogenizing force and to focus our attention on the distinct form that neoliberalizing processes might take in the Indian context and on the consequent specificity of the resulting politics and spatial forms.

Through a review of the studies in this volume and other recent literature on Indian cities, this introduction further argues that the process of neoliberalization of Indian urban politics has progressed, albeit tentatively and incompletely, through two channels. The first channel is that of national-level policy and planning initiatives. The national government's post-liberalization urban policy agenda, we argue, has represented an experimental, iterative process that has sought, through trial and error, to encourage the re-scaling of institutional power through the empowerment of metro-level institutions; the empowerment of elite actors in metropolitan governance; and the commodification of urban space through the empowerment of state and corporate actors in their efforts to gain control of urban land. Successive initiatives, including the passing of the 74th Constitutional Amendment and the formulation of the Jawaharlal Nehru Urban Renewal Mission (JNNURM), together with its successor program, the Rajiv Awas Yojana (RAY), have embodied reflexive efforts to draw a reform agenda designed to overcome the obstacles to market-driven redevelopment created by entrenched street-level politics.

This national state-driven project of urban reform has, however, experienced only sporadic and partial success and has left a continued state of institutional

fragility and instability at the municipal level. This state has frustrated the ambitions of corporations, consumer citizens, and others, who covet a vision of global urban transformation and the commodification of urban space. Hence we argue that these goals have progressed through a second channel – through a multitude of localized mutations in state–society relations, which have emerged as local actors have looked for opportunities in the fissures of power at the municipal level to gain pockets of urban political influence, and to reshape urban space and infrastructure. Such localized, grounded changes are perhaps the most pronounced and important finding of the studies in this volume. They have taken a number of forms, including the creation of project-focused coalitions aiming to achieve discrete redevelopment initiatives; the engagement of propertied actors in state-directed local collective action; the formation of public–private partnerships around urban governance and redevelopment and infrastructure projects; and the selective interpretation of certain aspects of urban political reform (such as reforms for political participation) in ways that favor the empowerment of the middle class and the elite. While provisional and incremental, these localized initiatives are nonetheless having a cumulative impact on urban space and political power. The studies in this volume provide tentative evidence that these grounded processes of political change – by facilitating the displacement of poor communities, the commodification of urban land, the increasing amount of urban spaces that are regulated by corporate interests, and the increasing scale of agencies of collective action of the wealthy – are bringing about a fundamental reallocation of access to space and power in Indian cities.

A further ambition of this volume, beyond developing frameworks for understanding urban change in contemporary India, is to explore the implications of India's case for comparative studies of urban politics. Indeed India provides a stark contrast with the more thoroughly studied case of China, where scholars have focused on the capacity of the central state (and more specifically the Communist Party) to drive processes of spatial and political change in a much more effective effort to reinforce its political hegemony (Zhang and Ong, 2008; Hsing, 2010). The comparative aspect of this study will be dealt with at greater length in the conclusion. Suffice to say here that the case of India highlights to a greater extent the complex interplay between national state efforts to impose neoliberal governance models, local processes of recalibration of power around the emergence of new economies and the commodification of urban land, and the dynamics of local resistance. India's case therefore advances our understanding of the dynamics of contestation that emerge as local agents – both those for and those against market-driven change – jockey for political influence at the local level. As a result, this case provides critical insight into questions that are central to debates about neoliberalization, particularly questions about the connection between processes of change in international and

national political ideology and about the translation of these ideals into the practice of politics at the local level.

Rethinking Understandings of Urban Politics in Post-Liberalization Indian Cities

Kushal Pal Singh (K. P. Singh), head of Delhi Land and Finance (DLF), India's largest developer, tells journalists who interview him a rather fantastic story about the founding of the company's landmark developments at Gurgaon, outside New Delhi (Bhandari, 2006). The story has Singh sitting under the shade of a tree, in May 1981, in the bucolic environs of pre-liberalization Gurgaon. A Jeep with an overheated engine stops, and, while the driver attends to the car, the passenger steps out for a drink of water at a nearby well. It is Rajiv Gandhi, son of Prime Minister Indira Gandhi, himself destined to become prime minister three and a half years later, following his mother's assassination. The two men begin talking, and soon a vision emerges of Gurgaon's predestined transformation – of a new model of urban development that would lead India into a new era of economic growth and global relevance. Within 20 years the envisioned transformation was proceeding full steam, unleashed by economic reforms enacted during Gandhi's seven years as prime minister; these included the liberalization of the property sector and marked the beginnings of India's economic transformation. Strategically located just across the border from the National Capital Region, in the neighboring state of Haryana, Gurgaon emerged as one of the most important centers of trade and investment in the country. Singh, who had spent much of the 1960s and 1970s painstakingly accumulating more than a thousand hectares in hopes that deregulation of the property industry would unleash the market potential of this land, saw the settlement grow into a city of more than 2 million – and one that has one of India's most impressive skylines. At DLF's pinnacle, the wealth that Gurgaon generated propelled the company to third place on the list of India's largest companies by market capitalization and made Singh the eighth wealthiest person in the world according to Forbes magazine (Forbes, 2008).

Some details of Singh's story are likely apocryphal. What is notable, however, is the story's interpretation that the vision of a transformed and globalized Gurgaon predated and anticipated the transformation of India's economy and that Singh's own vision of urban space had a direct impact on the direction of state power. This rendering of events highlights the fundamentally interdependent nature of the relationship between urbanization and state power. Cities are not simply acted upon and shaped by social and political processes that play out beyond their boundaries. They also shape those processes in their turn, through agencies that their own

growth engenders. In his early contribution to debates on urban entrepreneurialism, Harvey (1989: 5) highlighted this interdependence by insisting that cities must be conceived of as "spatially grounded social processes in which a wide range of different actors with quite different objectives and agendas interact through a particular configuration of spatial practices." The logics created by liberalization – the commodification of land, the corporate imperative to create new spaces for new forms of production and exchange, the desire of an increasingly wealthy consumer class to experience new types of space – have fostered shifting "configurations of spatial practices," which engender new forms of power and contestation across scale. Examples of the agency of spatial practices in reshaping social and political dynamics abound – from the impact of urban redevelopment coalitions on state and national-level economic development policy, to the influence of local public–private partnerships (most notably the Bangalore Agenda Task Force and affiliated institutions) on national urban governance initiatives, and to the role of public interest litigation around slum developments in Delhi in changing national law toward the poor (Ghertner, 2011b; Sami, 2013; Sami, this volume).

This point of theory leads to a point of research methodology. Urban political change cannot be understood through an examination of political ideologies or institutional arrangements alone. Researchers must also recognize the relationship between urban spatial relations and the formation of these ideologies and relations of power. As we will argue later, the dearth of explorations of the emerging agency of actors who have coalesced around new economic activities and land markets marks a significant gap in the study of contemporary urban politics in India. The review that follows will summarize the existing debates on urban politics in the context of liberalization-induced sociospatial and political change. It will highlight the need to develop new perspectives on state–society relations in Indian cities that better incorporate an understanding of the ways in which changes in the economy, in local politics, and in urban space lead to changes in state–society relations. The development of such perspectives involves a deeper interrogation about the roles of emergent political actors like real estate developers, about the restructuring of urban political power through political reform, and about the emergence of new forms of collective action around urban space.

A review of the recent history of post-liberalization urban development and urban planning and policy initiatives helps place the interrelationship between spatial and political change in context. A fundamental dynamic at the heart of the web of socioeconomic, political, and spatial transformations that occurred during this period has been the explosion of investment in new industrial and urban space. In 1991, faced with a balance of payments crisis, the Indian government undertook a significant deregulation

of the economy. The process involved reforms to the tax code, the lowering of tariff barriers, and the dismantling of regulatory restrictions on foreign trade and investment. India has seen steady and dramatic increases in international trade and investment ever since. Exports increased from $17.5 billion in 1991/2 to $157.7 billion in 2009/10, while imports increased from $19.4 billion to $303.7 billion (Government of India, 2011). Annual foreign direct investment (FDI) inflows into India have risen more than 200 times, from $165 million in the 1991/2 fiscal year to $37 billion in 2009/10 (Government of India, 2005, 2011). FDI in real estate and construction rose more rapidly still, from an amount so negligible that until 2005/6 it was not even recorded as a discrete sector (and government figures report a mere $38 million in investment for that initial year) to $2.84 billion in 2009/10, when it was the second largest source of investment. The latter figure represents more than three times the value of exports in computer hardware and software, indicating the degree to which real estate has become a central focus of foreign investment.

This surge in money has had a transformative impact on both spatial and political change, as politicians and real estate investors, mesmerized by projections of continued growth, have maneuvered to capitalize on the development opportunities this process presented. As detailed by Searle's contribution to this volume, reforms in the real estate sector have encouraged and enabled developers to play a central role in urban spatial development: foreign direct investment in townships was legalized in 2002; venture capital fund investment in real estate was allowed in 2004; and new incentives were provided for the development of Special Economic Zones in 2005. Developers have sought to build land banks in major Indian metropolitan areas, hoping that these holdings would put them in a position to deliver the kinds of large-scale planned developments and industrial complexes that cities are anticipated to require in order to respond to the projected demand for consumer housing and for office and commercial space. DLF, the country's largest developer, established a model for such efforts in its development of a major new office, retail and industrial center in Gurgaon (Karmail, 2006). By the mid-2000s many large developers that had remained confined to specific cities went national, and DLF, Unitech, Sahara Group and Emaar MGF have competed to expand land banks across many cities. For a period in the mid-2000s, as the real estate sector was growing at more than 20 percent per year, Indian developers experienced massive increases in valuation – these valuations being driven largely by landholdings (Gupta, 2006). This thrust toward the commodification of urban space has in turn rendered land – including both "slum" areas and land on the periphery of cities – the subject of a great deal of contestation and political maneuvering, as politicians, bureaucrats, corporate interests, land mafias, and in

some cases farmers and community actors have jockeyed to seize control of the value created in this process.

The surge of money has also created political imperatives, which have been signaled through the emergence of the trope of infrastructure deficiency as a central feature of Indian politics. A significant expression of this trope is a recent report by the multinational consulting firm McKinsey & Company (2010), which argues that, in order to realize the potential for a fivefold increase in GDP (gross domestic product) between 2010 and 2030, India must invest $1.2 trillion in infrastructure during this period and the real estate sector must respond by building a "new Chicago" every year to meet the demand for some 800 million square meters of commercial and residential space. At the latter date, if projections of growth hold true, the Indian "middle class" will expand from 22 million households to 91 million – an explosion in the market for commodity housing and commercial space. And of course cities will be central to this process, accounting for close to 70 percent of Indian GDP by the 2030 target date.

The economic transformations of the liberalization era and the opportunities for corporate profit and economic growth that they created have fostered a tremendous urge for reform, which has been loudly articulated by business and political leaders (Nilekani, 2009). Since the 1990s successive national governments have sought to push through the vision of urban-centered accumulation embodied in the liberalization reforms of 1991 and modeled through the examples of "successful" urban transformations in Shanghai, Singapore, and elsewhere (Nair, 2000). The reform agenda has permeated politics at the national level and has continued with changes in the political party in power. While the initial wave of liberalization was undertaken during Congress Party rule, the nationalist Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP), in power from 1998 to 2000, continued these reforms and initiated a wave of privatization of public enterprises. Chatterjee's chapter in this volume demonstrates how, in the case of the state of Gujarat, the BJP's agenda of economic growth through liberalization has been married to an aggressive agenda of Hindu pride – a twist on the liberalization process that, she argues, contributed to the horrific communal riots that seized Ahmedabad in 2002. Indeed the state-level adoption of liberalization reforms has led to curious politics in other cases. Under the CPI-M, the state government of West Bengal paradoxically undertook aggressive measures to create new technology hubs and to seize agricultural land for corporate investment, rationalizing these measures as a means to economic prosperity and mass employment (Roy, 2003). These efforts led to a backlash centered in the CPI-M's base constituency, the urban and the rural poor, and to the party being voted out in 2011, after more than three decades of leading the government.

A substantive focus of the project of urban growth undertaken through national government reform has been an effort to empower city-scale government and to render it more accountable and accessible both to capital and to (particularly property-owning) citizens, so that it can act more effectively in driving development forward. The post-independence constitution enacted in 1950 vested sovereign powers in national and state-level governments and left the powers of local governments undefined. Scholars have attributed this to the framers' concerns that local politics could be a seedbed for communalism and corruption. The governance framework that emerged under this framework will be examined in more detail in the chapter by Weinstein, Sami and Shatkin in this volume. Suffice to say here that power has for the most part remained vested in state-level government and in state-appointed municipal commissioners who are Indian Administrative Service (IAS) officers, and municipal governments have remained relatively powerless. This framework has fed critiques of many business and political leaders to the effect that stronger municipal government is needed to achieve infrastructure and urban development goals, since state governments are too beholden to rural constituents and do not have sufficient incentive to pursue a strong urban development agenda (Nilekani, 2009). Critics further argue that the weakness of urban governance and the often indifferent and bureaucratic mode of city administration that has prevailed in state governments have enabled the proliferation of informal occupations of land by the poor – and also by the wealthy, although this is less frequently acknowledged. Indeed critics have noted the tendency of state actors themselves to engage in illegal occupations of land (Ghertner, 2011b).

Many of the reforms of the post-liberalization era have consequently focused on empowering city-level government to wrest control of land from the poor and their allies among street- and ward-level politicians and bureaucrats and to employ it in infrastructure development and economic development initiatives. One of the most significant reforms is the 74th Constitutional Amendment, passed in 1992, which for the first time defines urban local bodies, devolves to them significant powers, responsibilities, and sources of revenue, and creates a democratic and de-centralized governance framework in which they should operate (Weinstein, 2009).[1] While critics argue that the 74th Amendment remains largely unimplemented due to the lack of a clear prescription for the process through which it should be realized and the lack of penalties for non-compliance by state governments, it nonetheless gives constitutional status to urban local bodies for the first time, thus providing an institutional and legal basis for them to play a strengthened role (Dupont, 2007). Another major reform effort was the national Jawaharlal Nehru National Urban Renewal Mission (JNNURM), aspects of which were notably modeled after experiments with public–private partnerships in

governance in Bangalore. Indeed, Nandan Nilekani, an information technology entrepreneur who was CEO of the Indian information technology company Infosys, played a formative role in developing program guidelines for the JNNURM on the basis of his central role in urban governance reforms in Bangalore (Sivaramakrishnan, 2011). Initiated in 2005, the JNNURM injected large amounts of infrastructure and local government capacity building funds into Indian cities (Mahadevia, 2011). As importantly, it imposed a number of conditions on states receiving grants that were focused on enabling urban redevelopment, including the modernization of accounting systems, improvements in property tax collection efficiency, a movement toward full cost recovery in infrastructure and service delivery, a more effective implementation of the 74th Amendment, and the repeal of the Urban Land Ceiling and Regulation Act, a 1976 act that had placed ceilings on private land ownership and had granted states the authority to acquire open land in excess (Mahadevia, 2006). The JNNURM was clearly intended not only to improve urban infrastructure, but also to overcome legal and institutional barriers to development and to incentivize local political actors to pursue large urban development projects.

As is detailed in the studies of this volume (see for example the chapter by Weinstein, Sami, and Shatkin) and in research reported elsewhere, these reforms have fallen short of full implementation and have only partially realized their objectives, in large measure due to state politicians' success in retaining their own privileges and powers by dragging their feet in the implementation of reforms and by maintaining control over funding. Yet these national initiatives have coincided with numerous state and local governance initiatives – some of them examined here in the chapters by Ghertner, Sami, and Searle – that have sought other means to empower municipal government and to assert an agenda of economic development. As will be detailed later in this chapter, these initiatives have created public–private partnerships in urban governance, have fostered mechanisms for the increased political participation of elite groups, and have stimulated private real estate investment in urban megaprojects.

The preceding review paints a broad picture of change in contemporary urban politics – change bred of shifting economic circumstances, new development pressures, and governance reform. These new conditions have led to a surge in the scholarship concerned with post-liberalization urban change. Yet, as alluded to at the beginning of this section, research has only begun to understand the ways in which changes in urban spatial relations are shifting the contours of political power – which leads to the empowerment of some actors and the disempowerment of others. A contrast with the much more thoroughly studied case of China is instructive. The past few years have seen the publication of dozens of books coming from a variety of disciplines (sociology, anthropology, geography, urban planning, and others) examining

the political economy of land development (e.g. Lin, 2010; Hsing, 2010); urban and regional restructuring (e.g. Ma and Wu, 2005; McGee et al., 2007); emergent patterns of urban poverty and social inequality (e.g. Wu et al., 2010; Zhang, 2001); and global influences in architecture and urban planning (e.g. Ren, 2011). In contrast, in the Indian case, Annapurna Shaw could credibly claim, in the introduction to a volume edited by her in 2007 and titled *Indian Cities in Transition*, to have produced the first multidisciplinary volume examining the dynamics of change in Indian cities in thirty years. There are of course numerous excellent volumes that have explored urban sociological, political, economic and anthropological issues, although these have generally not been framed around the dynamics of liberalization (see for example Hansen, 2001; De Neve and Donner, 2006; Nair, 2007; Ruet and Lama-Rewal, 2009). Some recent contributions begin to fill this gap. The volume *Urbanizing Citizenship*, edited by Desai and Sanyal (2012) analyzes contemporary urban change through the lens of citizenship, seeking to understand the changing experience of the city and changing access to the "right to the city" in a post-liberalization context. Anjaria and McFarlane's volume *Urban Navigations* also explores the dynamics of post-liberalization urban change, deploying a "street-level emphasis on urban space-making" to highlight the complexity and contingency of post-liberalization spatial change (2011: 2). The present book shares with both of these volumes an interest in developing the understanding of urban change through an assessment of recent research. What the current volume hopes to add to these interventions is an explicit focus on shifting structures of power within frameworks of governance in Indian cities that are emerging together with efforts at reform and sociospatial change.

Why has the relationship between urban sociospatial change and changing structures of power in urban governance received relatively scant attention? The factors are numerous and complex, but we argue that the prevalence of postcolonial frameworks in urban studies is a significant factor, in that the focus of these frameworks on historically rooted social and cultural dynamics has drawn attention away from the analysis of contemporary drivers of urbanization. Rooted in a critique of teleology in social science theorizing, postcolonial theorists have sought to 'provincialize' dominant strands of urban theory, which have tended to assume a necessary end state of modernization based on models of the West, and to instead root theories in the Indian experience (Chakrabarty, 2002). They have done so by focusing attention on the ideological and political underpinnings of the construction of knowledge about India by the colonial and postcolonial elites, and by seeking to redress distortions in such constructions by examining the actions and narratives of the subaltern in an effort to reconstruct lost histories as articulated by those who have historically lacked power and voice. Through these modes of analysis, subaltern studies scholars have focused on the distinct subjectivities

that emerged in colonial and postcolonial situations and on the nature of state–society relations and identity politics in these contexts.

Partha Chatterjee's (1993, 2004) analyses of the contradictions that emerged in the anti-colonialist national identity and of their implications for politics today have been particularly influential in framing studies of urban politics. From early on, Chatterjee (1993) argues, the formation of a nationalist identity in opposition to British colonial rule in India was founded on a distinction between an external domain, of the state and economy, which was dominated by the colonizers, and a "domain of sovereignty," which consisted of an inner, spiritual world of culture and was rooted in caste, community, religion, and family. In the period after India's independence in 1947, the state adopted a stridently modernist agenda of economic and political reform in its pursuit of political hegemony: the development of a secular political system based on civil society and the use of master planning to achieve goals of economic growth and social integration. Yet this modernist agenda coexisted and was in tension with identities springing from the "inner domain" – which continued to be perceived by a large part of the population as the essence of national identity, but which contradicted the modernist agenda in many ways. The resulting disjuncture between state narratives and practices and what Kaviraj (quoted in Harriss and Fuller, 2001: 8) refers to as the "vernacular everyday discourse" of a mass of the population has led to the gradual erosion of state legitimacy and to a chronic subversion of its modernist planning efforts.[2] The result is that such efforts are regularly "reinterpreted beyond recognition" at the grassroots (Harriss and Fuller, 2001). In the urban context this has been manifest in the massive appropriation of urban public space for a variety of structures (vendor stalls, houses, temples) and activities (religious worship, manufacturing, bathing, defecating) deemed "private" in modernist discourse. Hence India's deviation from the West in social and political development and in its urban form is not a manifestation of a pre-modern state that is ripe for transformation. Rather contemporary identities, social norms, and spatial practices have been precisely formed through India's interaction with modernity and are rooted in a critique of the same.

Chatterjee's (2004) recent work has focused on the idea of "political society," which he contrasts with the popular notion of a civil society. While the concept of civil society refers to collectivities of right-bearing citizens, the concept of political society refers to collectivities from that substantial majority of the population of India which – by virtue of its poverty and the limited reach of state planning and formal economy – is compelled to live, work, and access services in contravention of the law. While bereft of basic citizenship rights, poor voters derive some political clout from their sheer number. Their influence creates a gray area, where discourses of modernization and citizenship have little purchase and people make political claims for access to

land, water, electricity, and other necessities on the strength of identity-based mobilization and political bartering. Thus the "messy business of striking deals between municipal authorities, the police, property developers, criminal gangs, slum dwellers, and pavement hawkers" becomes a predominant force in shaping politics and space in the face of developmental state planning and middle-class civil society (ibid., 142).

Chatterjee's formulations have been the subject of extensive debate; scholars have particularly argued that his postulation of a "political society" is overly optimistic in its assessment of the agency of the poor. Baviskar and Sundar (2008: 89), for example, have turned Chatterjee's argument on its head by arguing that the wealthy are increasingly the ones who are able to secure state protection for illegal claims to land and other resources, while the poor are constrained to relatively weak rights-base claims:

> Chatterjee inverts what is actually the case: generally, it is members of the so-called civil society who break laws with impunity and who demand that the rules be waived for them, whereas members of political society strive to become legal, to gain recognition and entitlements from the state. The state's differential treatment of these two classes is exemplified in the case of encroachments and irregular land use in Delhi. While the law was enforced to demolish the settlements of working class squatters, penalizing people who were victims of the state's failure to build low-cost housing, it was amended to "regularize" the illegal construction and violation of zoning codes by well-to-do traders and homeowners.

Similarly, in the introduction to a recent volume on citizenship in Indian cities, Holston (2012) characterizes the concept of political society as being based less on empirical reality than on "folk categories" and calls for a reassertion of the concept of citizenship in Indian urban studies.

While the debate over the concept of political society continues to evolve in fruitful directions, the central thesis that the post-liberalization project of urban change has been fundamentally undermined by the micropolitics of resistance to its modernist underpinnings has profoundly impacted scholarship on the topic. Benjamin's (2008) thesis of "occupancy urbanism" is one of the more influential manifestations of this argument. Other studies have examined the role of local bureaucrats in mediating between the interests of municipal officials and street vendors in the modernization drive (i.e. Anjaria, 2006); the rise of middle-class collective action and vigilantism in the face of state failures to modernize cities and "cleanse" them of appropriations of space by the poor (i.e. Baviskar, 2003); and the subversion of master-planned urban spaces (such as the planned city of Chandigarh, or neighborhoods planned on the basis of Clarence Perry's Neighborhood Unit Concept) through reinterpretation and multiple acts

of appropriation by the urban poor (i.e. Nangia, 2008; Vidyarthi, 2008). There has also been a significant amount of work that traces contemporary visions of urban change to the modernist visions of the colonial era, often with the argument that these contemporary visions will share a similar fate (i.e. Hosagrahar, 2005; McFarlane, 2008; Arabindoo, 2011).

We argue that, although postcolonial perspectives have added a great deal to our understanding of Indian urban politics, there is a need for a deeper understanding of the interaction between sociospatial change brought about by the commodification of urban land, changing structures of political power, and social and cultural change at the grassroots. Such an understanding would help overcome the somewhat static interpretation of "the state" that is evident in some postcolonial research. The focus of urban research within the postcolonial tradition has largely remained upwards, on the nation state and its modernist ideology, and downwards, on grassroots contestation. Yet it is at the broader municipal and regional scales that we are seeing the coalescence of economic and political interests, and efforts to reengineer urban politics. Indeed the process of privatization of infrastructure and urban development, coupled with reforms in urban governance, represents an apparent effort by the national state to step back from its historic role as social engineer and primary arbiter and enforcer of modernity. Under the regime of de-centralization and privatization outlined in the JNNURM and other reforms, it is not the national state, but rather newly empowered municipal governments, private developers, and civil society groups of the elite that are tasked with realizing urban spatial change. By transforming urban land and real estate in Indian cities into a global commodity, the reforms of the last 20 years have also sown the seeds of countless engagements in collective action on the part of a wide range of actors who have access to this commodity or are in a position to act as brokers in its exchange. These include not only real estate developers and large landowners, but also middle-class families, corporations, farmers, and state actors at state, city, and neighborhood scales. With new economic activity and the loosening of restrictions on development, we are also seeing the emergence of new forms of development that are less regulated by the state: edge cities, special economic zones (SEZs), and new town developments. All of these represent new forms of master-planned urban space, conceived outside the state.

Hence post-liberalization urban reforms arguably represent an effort by the national state to do an end run around the obstacles to direct state engagement in spatial change by fostering an explosion of new agencies in urban development that are not hamstrung by the postcolonial state's historical legacy of failed social engineering. Yet important dynamics of the urban politics that have ensued from this development remain unexplored. There is almost no literature, for example, on the real estate industry – the actors who shape it, the models of urban development they adopt, and their influence on

urban policy. Likewise, very little has been written about changing practices of state land acquisition and development, new models of zoning and land management, and the deployment of technologies of land management like SEZs (exceptions include Roy, 2003 and Jenkins, 2011). There has also been relatively little research on the impact of the JNNURM and of the 74th Amendment on political power; the existing studies tend to focus on the provisions for popular participation rather than on their impact on structural political change (see for example Coelho, Kamath, and Vijaybaskar, 2011). As Ghertner (2011a: 505) has argued, while research has focused on the capacity of ties between the poor and the local state to thwart the process of development of a "bourgeoisie city," there has been very little effort to explore how the structural political changes that are being deployed have facilitated redevelopment and "to explain how new forms of urban governance have facilitated this process, and how new visions of urban space are practically imposed on those lower levels of the state that have for so long reinterpreted state plans to meet the demands of the poor."

Such questions of city and regional scale political economy are, of course, central to the international comparative literature on neoliberalization and urban governance. This literature has focused on the particular problems of scale that the pursuit of economic growth through capital accumulation has posed for governments. Research has focused on the growing recognition by state actors of the critical role of cities and urban regions as centers of capital accumulation, which has led to cities and regions emerging as "geographical targets for a variety of far-reaching institutional changes and policy-realignments designed to enhance local economic growth capacities" (Brenner, 2004: 3). Scholars have sought to develop comparative perspectives on the emergence of a "new urban politics" – a politics of urban entrepreneurialism in which private sector and business interests play an increasing role in urban politics and policy, and in which city governments shift from a managerial focus in providing public services to one of "courting the private sector and cultivating economic enterprise across the urban landscape" (Macleod and Jones, 2011: 2444). In turn, this shift toward entrepreneurialism at the urban and regional level has implications for governance across scales, as state capacities are transferred "upwards, downwards, and sideways" to empower a variety of actors in government and civil society to play a role in fostering economic competitiveness (Jessop, 2002: 454). Attention has focused, for example, on the role of national-level governments in setting the macroeconomic framework for growth, on city and regional governments in developing infrastructure and in creating planning and policy frameworks for city competitiveness, and on the transfer of the provision of collective consumption goods from the state to community-level institutions through the imposition of marketized community-based delivery mechanisms

(Brenner and Theodore, 2002; Brenner, 2004; Leitner, Peck and Sheppard, 2007). Such frameworks of governance are embodied in the World Bank's influential turn toward an "enablement" paradigm of governance in its technical assistance and aid conditionalities, beginning in the late 1980s and early 1990s (World Bank, 1991).

Theories of neoliberalism and urban governance have been the subject of considerable debate and reformulation, much recent critique being focused on the seemingly simplistic and deterministic conceptualization of a uniform model of neoliberalism, which is transferred downwards, from international institutions to the national state and then to the local level. Clarke (2008) has noted that the usefulness of the concept of neoliberalism has been compromised by its omnipresence and promiscuousness – the tendency of scholars to try to employ it to explain almost everything and to associate it too loosely with other concepts and interpretations of social phenomena. Clarke argues that, by attempting to explain everything, the concept may end up saying very little about outcomes in any particular locality. Barnett echoes this point in critiquing the tendency to frame "neoliberalism" as a unitary, coherent ideological project that achieves hegemony through state discourse and action (Barnett, 2005). As Barnett argues, there is a tendency for "stories of neoliberalism" "to reduce the understanding of social relations to a residual effect of hegemonic projects and/or governmental programs of rule" (p. 10). Barnett proposes an alternative hypothesis, namely that what we see as a hegemonic process may in fact be "a muddled set of ad hoc, opportunistic accommodations to these unstable dynamics of social change [rather than] the outcome of highly coherent political–ideological projects" (ibid.).

Frameworks of neoliberalism have also faced challenges as to their applicability outside of Anglo-American contexts. Parnell and Robinson's (2012) bring the debate back to the critique of teleology, which lies close to the heart of postcolonial theory. They argue that the inclination of Anglo-American researchers to "tend to their own backyards" has led to the hegemony of the concept of neoliberalism, even though this concept simply may not be as important outside of those contexts – and particularly in the cities of the global South, which are Parnell and Robinson's particular concern. The constructs that have gained attention in accounts of neoliberalization in America and England – urban regimes, gentrification, and formal urban renewal – may be of lesser importance in the "global South where traditional authority, religion, and informality are as central to legitimate urban narratives as the vacillations in modern urban capitalist public policy" (Parnell and Robinson, 2012: 596). This critique is paralleled by studies that have questioned the relevance of neoliberalism to specific contexts, with particular focus on the intertwining of state and market logics in the case of China (see for example Wu, 2010).

None of these critiques denies that the trend toward corporate capital accumulation as a central strategy of economic development is having an impact on urban politics. Rather they all call for a restoration of local institutions and historical processes as agents both within market-driven governance restructuring and as protagonists in sociospatial processes that exist autonomously from, and in some cases in opposition to, neoliberal projects. An important question, only alluded to in much of this work, is that of the relationship between the global push toward market-oriented political restructuring and autonomous forces of change that are rooted in historical dynamics. We argue that these different agencies must be seen as interacting and reshaping each other in fundamental ways. The question therefore is not whether forces of neoliberalization or autonomous, society-specific forces are more decisive (for example, corporate influence in governance or local traditional leadership), but rather how the interaction between these different forces for change reshapes both and, in so doing, reshapes urban space. Examples of such interactions abound in the Indian context. To cite just one, Ranganathan (2011) demonstrates how the introduction of "user pays" water delivery systems in what she characterizes as lower middle-class informal settlements on Bangalore's urban fringe has led to a change in civil society discourse, as local resident welfare associations (RWAs) come to view their payment of taxes and fees as a basis for making demands of the state. In her interpretation, the imposition of a neoliberal-ized service delivery system has had paradoxical impacts: it has both "formalized" the process of demand making on the part of the community and coopted state actors into accommodating claims to space that they had previously viewed as illegal.

Recent conceptual innovations have pointed the way toward a more flexible, context-sensitive approach to understanding the neoliberal turn, which allows for a deeper understanding of the interaction between global ideals and local context. In a series of articles, Brenner, Peck and Theodore have insisted on a shift away from understandings of "neoliberalism" as an immutable ideology, centered on an ideal end state, and toward a focus on the process of *neoliberalization* (Brenner, Peck and Theodore, 2010a, 2010b). In their interpretation, neoliberalization involves the ceaseless evolution of ideologies of market-driven governance in response to the endless crises of accumulation thrown up by the shifting conditions of capitalism. As a "variegated, geographically uneven, path-dependent pro-cess," neoliberalization does not emanate from a "ground zero" ideal case that is reproduced in homogenized outcomes across the globe – rather, ideals of market-disciplinary modes of governing propagate through mutations in policy and political change that respond to the particular crises of accumulation present in a given context (ibid., p. 327). These local responses emerge

within a geo-regulatory context defined by systemic tendencies towards market-disciplinary institutional reform, the formation of transnational webs of market-oriented policy transfer, deepening patterns of crisis formation and accelerating cycles of crisis-driven policy experimentation. (Ibid., p. 329)

Market-disciplinary modes of governing are propagated by state institutions through practices of regulatory experimentation and inter-jurisdictional policy transfer that are intended to integrate national spaces into international regimes of capital accumulation. Yet these policy and political maneuvers progress, experience stoppage or reversal, and retrench in response to particular historical and sociospatial contexts. Hence, in its interaction with socially and culturally grounded practices, neoliberalization can "only be articulated in incomplete, hybrid modalities" (ibid., p. 332).

A second, closely related conceptual shift is the move away from understandings of neoliberalism as propagated from the top down – imposed through international rule regimes, adopted by national governments, and from there diffused to localities – to a view of neoliberalism as a "mobile technology of governing" that "is selectively taken up in diverse political contexts" to achieve particular state objectives (Ong, 2007: 3). Ong has criticized the prevalent military analogy, which posits neoliberalism as invading and taking over spaces through the mechanisms of the national state, imposing market-based economic management and totalizing social change. Instead she presents neoliberalism as a set of "migratory practices" that states employ in order to resolve particular problems of population management, creating "promiscuous entanglements of global and local logics [that] crystallize different conditions of possibility" (ibid., p. 5). In the developmental states of Asia, she argues that the pursuit of knowledge-based economic growth has led to the adoption of new technologies of governance – special economic zones, public–private partnerships in urban governance, the carving out of exclusive spaces for the consumer class through zoning – aimed at fostering subjects who are "educated and self-managing citizens who can compete in global knowledge markets" (ibid., p. 6). Yet such policies are applied selectively to populations, on the basis of such variables as race, religion, and class, such that government strategies are best understood not as a uniform application of a neoliberal agenda across national space, but rather as "neoliberalism as exception," an effort to create specific spatial and social milieus in which knowledge economies can flourish even as other aspects of governance remain resolutely unliberal. She argues that this framework helps overcome the inability of explorations that take the national state as the inherent scale at which reforms and movements for neoliberalization take place (e.g. Harvey, 2005) to explain the persistence of governance dynamics that do not fit with existing understandings of neoliberal ideals. In China, for example,

Ong argues that "pro-market policies are interwoven with a socialist state, private enterprises flourish alongside repressive laws, consumer culture cohabits with the lack of inalienable rights" (ibid., p. 6).

Ong's framework for analyzing the relatively developmental states of Asia is difficult to replicate in other contexts. The Chinese and Singaporean states, on which she focuses much of her attention, exercise a degree of control through direct stakes in the corporate economy and through ownership of land, both of which allow them an unusual degree of latitude in the use of markets for social engineering and the consolidation of state power. In contrast, power in the Indian state is much more de-centralized, and the state does not enjoy a great deal of control over the economy or over urban space. Nevertheless, the central idea of neoliberalism as a mobile set of governing technologies is useful if one attempts to move beyond frameworks of institutional and economic homogenization to pose questions about how localized social and political logics produce particular outcomes in the Indian context and elsewhere.

The view that emerges from these recent studies is of a much more flexible and mutable process of neoliberalization. This perspective yields a view of a process that is not drawn from a standard playbook, but improvised and dynamic; not necessarily exclusive and displacing of other logics of governance, but endowed with the capacity to coexist with them; not abstracted from context, but responding to it; and not coherent, but potentially rife with internal contradiction. This perspective implies that, in the Indian context as elsewhere, we direct our attention to querying the political objectives that state actors pursue by adopting market-based reform and the particular opportunities and obstacles for capital accumulation presented by path dependencies in state–society dynamics and sociospatial configurations. The question is therefore not whether Indian cities are "becoming neoliberal" or not, but rather what objectives state actors at various scales are pursuing through the imposition of market logics in urban governance, and how these efforts interact with existing path-dependent sociospatial dynamics.

This framing is useful in interpreting India's post-liberalization urban reform and redevelopment policy and planning, which have concentrated on developing governance strategies to overcome the nexus of land, politics, and informality that emerged as a driving dynamic of postcolonial urban politics. The urban reforms of the past 20 years can be read as a restless and ever evolving search, pursued by *some* national, state, and local actors, for innovative means to reengineer governance so as to consolidate the political power of those whose interests coincide with the goal of capital accumulation, and to free urban land from street-level political control, integrating it into circuits of capital accumulation. Yet this effort has occurred in the context of obstacles that are specific to the Indian postcolonial condition. One notable

obstacle is the power of state-level government, which has raised obstacles to the mobilization of strong public–private coalitions around urban redevelopment. As will be discussed in greater detail in the chapter by Weinstein, Sami, and Shatkin in this volume, the power of state governments, which are often electorally inclined to prioritize rural constituencies, is deeply entrenched in the Indian constitution and in path dependencies in state, municipal, and ward-level politics (Pinto, 2000). Another contextual factor is the pervasive muddying of the distinction between legal and illegal land tenure arrangements. Roy (2009) has argued that this informalization of land tenure has led to the informalization of the state itself, as the state cannot apply legal tenure as a criterion for the use of land when its own actions have historically contradicted the law and undermined its meaning. Responding to these contradictions has entailed a combination of renewed assertions of state authority, a re-scaling of state power, and an effort to rehabilitate the authority of the state by striking a new social bargain around urban land. At the same time, national-level urban reform initiatives have been joined by sometimes contradictory efforts by state actors at other levels – notably state governments – to appropriate the benefits of liberalization-driven growth for their own political gain.

The JNNURM represents the most significant national-level effort to achieve these objectives. As Harriss (2010: 10) asserts, paraphrasing the JNNURM's website, the scheme is focused on the objective of fostering "economically productive, efficient, equitable and responsive cities." Hence, while its origins lie in experiments in public–private partnerships in urban governance (specifically those developed in Bangalore) and in World Bank thinking on "best practices" in urban governance, the scheme nonetheless represents an effort to advance the liberalization agenda while ostensibly also attending to concerns about governance and the inequities associated with liberalization. It employs a multipronged strategy to foster a new regime of state legitimacy – a regime based on urban redevelopment and economic growth. First, it seeks to bolster the power of municipal governments and to provide them with incentives toward growth through a combination of capacity-building incentivization toward greater efficiency and the provision of substantial new federal funds for infrastructure development. By requiring the recipient cities to draw city development plans, the initiative seeks to stimulate the development of governing coalitions between local state actors and other "stakeholders" in the private sector and civil society. It also employs a number of measures to loosen the grip of street and ward-level political brokers on land, and therefore on local political power. By calling for a repeal of the Urban Land Ceiling and Regulation Act of 1976 and by providing a variety of requirements or incentives for the reform and technological upgrading of cadastral systems and procedures for property titling,

the program seeks to reduce the legal ambiguity that makes room for local politicians and bureaucrats to broker illegal or legally ambiguous land deals. The scheme also offers incentives for the employment of public–private partnerships in urban redevelopment. The initiative is clearly focused on an agenda of moving beyond the state socialist model of urban planning and policy by freeing land for urban redevelopment and by enabling municipal governments to engage the private sector in urban development efforts. Through its provision of substantial funds for the development of housing and services for poor communities, it also fosters a new urban social contract, one based on the incorporation of informal settlements into marketized models of land and housing delivery.

According to most assessments, the JNNURM has largely fallen short of its objectives; Harriss (2010) points to shortcomings in prescribed processes of public participation in particular. Sivaramakrishnan (2011) attributes this largely to the failure of one of the initiative's primary political objectives – the empowerment of city relative to state governments. Indeed it seems that here path-dependent institutional dynamics won the day, as state agencies have often continued to override the participation process and the process of municipal empowerment, and have been central to the selection, implementation, and evaluation of projects. More recent federal initiatives appear to attempt to hone the urban governance agenda laid out in the JNNURM. In 2009 the government of India announced the next generation JNNURM scheme, titled the Rajiv Awas Yojana (RAY), which provides substantial federal subsidies for slum-redevelopment, including incentives for the tenurization of settlements and public–private partnerships in affordable housing schemes, and requires the inclusion of affordable housing in private sector housing developments (Ministry of Housing and Urban Poverty Alleviation, n.d.). In its aim to create a "slum-free" India, this initiative attempts to deal with a major obstacle that governments have encountered at all levels in gaining control over land for major infrastructure and real estate initiatives.

While the meta-story of the JNNURM has been the program's failure to achieve a sweeping change, the more detailed story of the program's impact on urban politics is as yet largely untold. We know little from existing research about the contests over program implementation that took place, or about the precise impact of the program's push toward the implementation of the 74th Amendment. The implementation of both the JNNURM and the RAY therefore remains an urgent topic for further research.

What has emerged from recent research, however, is an understanding that the incomplete implementation of national-level reform is far from being the end of the story of change to urban politics. In the absence of such a large-scale reform, actors within cities (including state and city government officials and private sector and civil society actors) have been lured by the

promise of wealth and power, fostered by exploding land markets and new economic opportunities, to seek their own means to overcome the lack of city-level power and the informality of land tenure arrangements. While much of the attention paid to local politics has focused on the more heavy-handed attempts by state actors to appropriate land for urbanization, such as the violent encounters at Singur and Nandigram, the push for land has in fact manifest itself in other, sometimes more creative and less blunt efforts to access land. The contributions to this book, as well as other recent research, have begun to uncover the importance of such local mobilizations for urban political change. It is to this topic that we turn in the next section.

Understanding Urban Political Change from the Ground Up: The Findings of the Case Studies

Perhaps the clearest theme that emerges from the studies presented in this volume is that of the impact that the combination of the incomplete and contested processes of national-level reform and macroeconomic change are having on local mobilizations around redevelopment. Economic reforms have unleashed a tremendous urge toward growth and profits and an increasing assertiveness of a newly wealthy class, which is anxious about the government's failure to control urban space. The case studies reveal the varying forms of collective action that have emerged so as to enable civil society and corporate actors to gain control of the production of urban space. They also reveal the political machinations of state actors at various levels to stake their own claims to urban space. Both state and non-state actors call on a variety of political, economic, legal, and sociocultural sources of power, and they deploy various discursive strategies, including that of the global city, of modernization, and of citizenship. Such initiatives include:

- city-specific efforts by local state actors to empower elite organizations to counter the influence of the poor in street-level politics (Ghertner, this volume);
- the formation of coalitions of local government officials, developers, corporate interests, landowners, and others around project-specific urban redevelopment efforts (Weinstein, 2009; Sami, 2013);
- mobilizations of elite organizations such as RWAs to extract land from the control of the poor, most notably through public interest litigation (PIL) (Bhan, 2009; Ghertner, 2011b). These movements arguably have much to do with elite anxieties about the explosion of "slum" populations that pre-date the period of liberalization, yet their affinity with state calls for economic growth and "global city" development have certainly accentuated their political influence.

These movements represent efforts by local networks of actors to counter the influence of the poor in local politics and to realize a vision of an economically competitive city. While theories of neoliberalization have tended to focus on top-down efforts to re-scale the state, the evidence presented in this volume indicates that, in the Indian context, the net impact of such place and project-specific initiatives on urban redevelopment may be just as great, if not even greater.

The grounded processes of political mobilization embody significant contradictions and are tied up in complex ways in historically path-dependent political dynamics. The "middle class" plays a notably contradictory role in such processes; for, even as state and city governments are in some instances mobilizing elite and middle-class residential associations around "global city" visions of urban transition, in other instances such associations have reflected contradictions within the middle class itself and anxieties about its place within rapidly changing cities. Anjaria's (2009) account of community movements against hawkers in Mumbai, for example, reveals limitations to their success imposed by the lack of consensus among consumer-class residents about the imperative to cleanse the city of hawkers and by the continued political support that hawkers enjoy from powerful elements of the state.

The review of the studies in this volume, which comes next, will focus on four dimensions of the grounded processes of urban political change that emerge from the case studies: their ad hoc and iterative nature; the centrality of social networks to their formation; their rootedness in local sociospatial change; and the variations they manifest across context.

The emergence of tentative efforts to re-scale urban governance through program innovations and ad hoc decision making

In the context of the slow progress of the efforts to clear the muddy waters of urban politics and to create some semblance of growth-oriented regimes through large-scale reform, both state and non-state actors have strategically attempted to achieve discrete objectives through specific programmatic initiatives and elite collective action. This finding stands out when compared with the dominant view in international literature, which describes the restructuring of urban governance as a process that represents a broad and largely centralized effort to coordinate policy in the interests of capital accumulation. In Brenner's (1999: 441) words: "As the state comes to operate as an increasingly active moment in the mobilization of each territory's productive forces, its scalar organization in turn assumes a central role in mediating and circumscribing capitalist growth." This argument is true in India, but with important variations. In this country it seems that the slow progress of a coherent process of state re-scaling has accompanied a pastiche

of state and non-state institution building and programmatic efforts that are quite often – perhaps more often than is the case in most other countries – uncoordinated and contradictory.

Ghertner's chapter makes this point most clearly and directly. Ghertner traces the fragmentation of power in Delhi between the central government, the civic–provincial administration (embodied most notably in the chief minister), and local politicians and bureaucrats – who have frustrated the objectives of cleansing the city and of imposing elite ideals of "world class" development. In this context the state actor with a most direct stake in the agenda of urban redevelopment, the chief minister's office, has developed a programmatic response that masterfully pursues this ideal in the face of strong opposition from local politicians and bureaucrats and despite the chief minister's relatively weak base of power. This is the Bhagidari program, an initiative aimed at empowering propertied citizens in urban governance and at forging a shared framework for urban redevelopment – a framework based strongly on elite ideals of globalization-driven economic growth. Notably, Bhagidari does not change the *formal* structure of power in the city – indeed the chief minister herself has little formal power to achieve such a goal, due to the central government's control over key institutions like the Delhi Development Authority, the Delhi police, and the office of lieutenant general. Rather the Bhagidari scheme relies on informal mechanisms to achieve a restructuring of power. These mechanisms include the building of social networks between representatives of RWAs, local politicians and bureaucrats; the forging of a sentiment, shared among these actors, for pursuing global visions through speeches, public input, and strategic planning sessions; and, perhaps most notably, forums in which officials are held directly accountable to Bhagidari representatives through the mechanism of public approbation.

The net outcome of these efforts, as Ghertner argues, is an effective re-scaling of state space, from micro-level negotiations between communities and local officials like junior engineers and overseers – the "home turf" of the urban poor – to district-level collective decision making in forums that tilt the advantage distinctly in favor of property-owning citizens. By making low-level bureaucrats directly accountable to RWAs through public pressure, often in the presence of higher officials, RWAs are "elevated above the common citizen and placed within the apparatus of the state itself" (p. 195). In turn, the empowerment of the RWAs both sustains and justifies the growth-oriented agenda of the chief minister and of the Congress Party, which have successfully sought to utilize the Bhagidari program for fostering influential grassroots allies in their efforts to carry out physical transformation. Thus Ghertner's story, at its heart, describes an effort of city-level political actors to wrest the control of urban spatial dynamics from local bureaucrats and jealous national-level leaders. The fact that Delhi is a city-state, and therefore India's only city

with a chief minister, appears to have fostered both the institutional means and the incentives for the chief minister to pursue such an intervention in the face of competition for political authority from both national government agencies and the street-level political arena.

Weinstein's discussion of the Dharavi Redevelopment Project (DRP) reveals another mode through which ad hoc endeavors seek to promote new agendas for urban redevelopment, despite the limitations of efforts to reform urban politics. In this case the tenacity and relentlessness of a single individual, who has positioned himself as an intermediary between the interests of state, city and national government actors, investors, and developers, pivots the push for Dharavi's transformation, from "slum," into an exclusive commercial, residential and business complex in a rather buccaneer manner. Weinstein's characterization of Mukesh Mehta as "entrepreneurial bureaucrat" captures the paradox of a private individual fashioning himself into an agent of multiple levels of government, in the interests of a privatized development. Yet, aside from the troubling prospect of the destruction of a socially functional and economically productive settlement of hundreds of thousands of people, the Mehta case raises the broader question of what the DRP process, apparently driven by the interests and visions of a narrow range of actors, says about the restructuring of political power. Does the emergence of agents of change like Mehta portend that redevelopment processes will continue to be shaped by the political gamesmanship of individuals or small cliques able to mobilize sufficient money power and political clout to bend urban development to their wills? Or do the conflict engendered by Mehta's project and his failure (as yet) to achieve his objectives indicate further future efforts at reform that aim to establish a stronger and more stable political center from which the redevelopment agenda can be pursued?

We believe that the finding concerning the prevalence of ad hoc and programmatic efforts in urban governance offers two fundamental insights concerning urban political change in India. First, it shows that, while national efforts to reform urban governance have achieved only partial success, they have made a distinct dent in postcolonial India's "culture of statism." In other words, this finding indicates that the notion that "Indian politics is dominated by an overwhelming sense that for every shortcoming in society, for every imperfection in its working, for everything left undone, the solution was some form of state action" (Mehta, 2003: 121) is changing. The incipient change in culture of statism, which produced more than sixty new public sector towns, including Chandigarh, and ambitiously centralized schemes, has opened up windows of opportunities for fortune-seeking individuals like Mukesh Mehta and go-between institutions like RWAs that navigate the remnants of officious and yet-to-crystallize emergent realms in which urban policy-making and planning practice takes place.

Second, the rise of these efforts in many ways represents a post-liberalization variation on the historical emergence of "ad hocism" in urban policy and planning practice that has been identified by previous scholars as a response to the challenges of political fragmentation and of the breakdown of state control over the city in India's immediate pre-liberalization era. In the words of Partha Chatterjee (2004: 136):

> Officials from diverse agencies such as municipal authorities, police, health services derived numerous ways in which such facilities and benefits could be extended on a case-to-case, ad hoc, or exceptional basis, without jeopardizing the overall structure of legality and property. One might say that this was perhaps the most remarkable development in the governance of Indian cities in the 1970s and 80s – the emergence of an entire substructure of paralegal arrangements, created or at least recognized by the governmental authorities, for the integration of low-wage laboring and service populations into the public life of the city.

The emerging but uncanny resemblance with contemporary "substructures" of "case-to-case," ad hoc, or "exceptional" arrangements is hard to miss. Yet there is a crucial difference: in the post-liberalization period the exceptional/paralegal arrangements underpinning the governance of Indian cities have begun to expand, incorporating a range of elite actors like Mehta and RWAs, which have cohered around an agenda of enabling the imposition of urban redevelopment initiatives at scale. Hence it appears that this strategy is being deployed in the current context to re-empower the agents of urban transformation, in response to the broader distribution of power embodied in the previous wave of informalization of politics.

The emergence of "network politics" as a central dynamic of power

The second finding from the case studies – and one that is closely related to the preceding point on ad hoc and programmatic initiatives – concerns the formation of what we call here *network politics* as a major force shaping the dynamics of political power. This network politics is most visible in the appearance of elite networks around the pursuit of particular projects or shared agendas of spatial change and urban political reform. These networks represent a direct response to the lack of any stable state institutions that can exercise sufficient influence to coordinate an agenda of change. They bring together a range of actors (such as developers, politicians at various levels, middle-class associations, corporate interests, and others) around shared interests, which are often interests in property ownership and usages of urban land.[3]

Sami's chapter most directly highlights this dynamic in her examination of the Bangalore Agenda Task Force (BATF) and Agenda for Bengaluru

Infrastructure Development (ABIDe). The two organizations represent efforts by the Karnataka state government (first under Congress Party, later under BJP rule) to build a coalition around an urban redevelopment agenda that cuts across the lines of politics, bureaucracy, business, and civil society. While this effort resembles the dynamics of "urban regime" politics with respect to the range of actors at the table, it differs dramatically where the power relations among these actors are concerned. In the context of the United States, regime theory focuses on the role of elected municipal leaders as they endeavor to mobilize and coordinate elite collective action in order to "develop policies in concert with those who have access to capital" (Fainstein, 1995: 35). In the case of BATF and ABIDe, however, collective action crystallized quite directly around the personal relationships of a narrow range of key individuals in state government and in the corporate sector. For instance, the BATF itself emerged out of a friendship between the chief minister of Karnataka and a major corporate figure, Nandan Nilekani of Infosys, and the initiative grew directly around Mr. Nilekani's social connections. In this case, therefore, network politics represents a formally constituted effort to bring a variety of stakeholders together to achieve certain shared objectives in concert with the state, but not necessarily under its direct tutelage. Because this initiative enjoys a significant degree of autonomy from the state and its capillary organizations and because it focuses to a great extent on non-state actors, Sami's description of it brings out the importance of social networks over the notion of urban regimes in the Indian context.

In other instances, network politics emerges as a driving force for urban spatial and social change, almost entirely independent of state coordination and control, through the collective action of elite groups in pursuit of very particular objectives. In a previous article examining Magarpatta City – a major new town in Pune that was inventively developed by a cooperative of farmers – Sami (2013) offered another instance of such network mobilization, this time around a specific redevelopment project. The central figure in this case was Satish Magar, who was able to draw on his own networks in the farming community, of which he was a leading member (his grandfather was Pune's mayor). Magar cultivated networks among state and city politicians and among prominent city businesses. In contrast to the failure of some of the most prominent state-driven efforts at large-scale urban redevelopment in India, in the Magarpatta case Mr. Magar's ability to bridge the social networks of the community and the broader power structure of the city enabled him to bring the project to fruition.

The importance of network politics resonates through other chapters as well. Mukesh Mehta's strategy in Dharavi rests almost entirely on the mobilization of networks of political and economic power. In Kudva's contribution, which focuses on local activism around sanitation issues, the organization of garbage collection efforts in a Mangalore neighborhood

by a certain Mrs. Kamath also pivots crucially upon her personal contacts, social standing, and familial relationships. Kudva's account paints a rich picture of such network politics, exploring the ways in which local actors like Mrs. Kamath "jump scales" to build networks – from neighborhood to city, to region, and beyond. She also embeds her discussion of network building within dynamics of *jati* and religion, alluding to the complex interplay between the ways in which *jati* and religion structure contestations over political influence in the city and the ways in which these contestations might in turn be reshaping existing social relations. Although vastly different in scope and intent, both the Mumbai and the Mangalore projects owe their conception and development to their originators' networking acumen and to the recognition that networking constitutes a critical strategy for asserting power in the multipolar and fragmented universe of power in Indian cities.

The interaction between spatial transformation and political change

The third finding is that changes in state redevelopment initiatives and elite collective action interact in complex and varied ways with the dynamics of spatial change. While political power is arguably more fluid and open-ended and the creation of mechanisms to attain political change more realizable through network mobilization and institutional innovation, actual physical space can be more difficult to reshape. As Chatterjee's chapter in this volume argues, the accretion of urban spatial change wrought by historic conflict and contestation fosters "local path dependencies of communal, spatial, and cultural contestations [that] interact with global influences to create sociospatial tropes of urban life." State, community, corporate and civil society actors all mobilize such tropes, both to construct their understanding of the meaning of urban space and in their efforts to organize in order to protect their claims to this space.

Ghertner displays a useful way of thinking about this dynamic when he draws a parallel between the gentrification of urban space and what he calls the gentrification of the state, which he illustrates through a discussion of the Bhagidari scheme. In fact the gentrification of the state is a mechanism to realize the ultimate objective of gentrified space. It attempts to achieve this objective by employing changes in state institutions and social power as a wedge, to dislocate entrenched spatial practices and to "cleanse" urban space in the interests of a real estate-driven transformation. Through the Bhagidari and other schemes, state actors formalize the role taken in governance by emergent actors such as Delhi's market and industrial associations and RWAs. In the case of RWAs specifically, the state has enlisted, through Bhagidari, an actor with a direct stake in urban spatial change and in the battle over the meanings of public space and neighborhood. This phenomenon suggests a loosening of

state hegemony in the definition of spatial ideals and a growing readiness to seek allies in battles over urban space.

Chatterjee's contribution discusses a very different instance of parallel spatial/political mobilization of social actors in the pursuit of a particular form of urbanity. She discusses the way in which the post-liberalization exacerbation of divisions between Muslims and Hindus, which culminated in the horrifying riots of 2002, have played out in the increased neighborhood-level separation of the two populations. This has created a convenient context for a government with Hindu fundamentalist leanings to exploit religious rhetoric, in a largely successful effort to implement an agenda of spatial transformation that threatens the dislocation of both the Hindu and the Muslim poor. Indeed, Ahmedabad's Muslim poor are threatened with double discrimination in the face of state reconfiguration and re-scaling. Given the long history of communal tensions, they fear that the new urban projects like the riverfront development, which concentrate on beautification rather than strategizing alternative livelihoods for the displaced families, may mean that the latter will not be resettled at all. The Hindu poor, on the other hand, might "benefit" from resettlement in public housing projects on the city's outskirts, but their potential spatial concentration not only fosters the possibility of their mobilization as foot-soldiers during riots, but also has the potential to further exacerbate alienation between the two communities.

Björkman's contribution points to yet another way in which state actors attempt to consolidate political control over urban space – the employment of parallel discursive and infrastructural strategies in legitimizing or delegitimizing spatial claims. Björkman's study focuses on one particular community in Mumbai, Shivajinagar-Bainganwadi, which has a history of formalization and legalization that is evident in its gridded form. Yet, with the political machinations that have attended the push to make Mumbai "world class" and to realize economic growth through the imposition of slum rehabilitation, urban redevelopment, and infrastructure "rationalization," the area has lost access to its water connections and found itself relabeled a "slum." While her chapter highlights the ineffectuality of employing simplistic binary concepts such as formal/informal and planned/unplanned to understand the multifarious spaces of Indian cities, it is clear from her analysis that these binaries have been selectively deployed in the interest of particular state actors at particular junctures to forward an agenda of spatial control. By tracing the transformation of a Mumbai neighborhood from a municipal housing colony into an illegal slum, the chapter shows how the liberalization era policy shifts and politically mediated dynamics criminalized the settlement's water infrastructure, thereby changing its legal status. By brilliantly unraveling the subterranean spaces of water pipes through a "thick" description, the chapter highlights how the binaries themselves become the stakes around which political processes congeal.

Perhaps most importantly, none of these studies presents the case of a state that is able to use elite hegemony to bludgeon communities and to obliterate or dramatically change their spaces. Instead, state action uses key strategies such as policy discourses combined with bureaucratic or technical power – as enunciated, for instance, in Björkman's description of the senior water engineer's interpretation of the official rule book, which shows that "[the] shift in the meaning of slum has been accomplished so completely that the distinction from 'unauthorized' area is dismissed as 'details.'"

Finally, Searle's chapter provides a unique perspective, peering as it does into the almost completely unexamined world of the Indian real estate development industry. Searle focuses on disagreements between local real estate developers and international real estate finance and consulting firms over questions of valuation of land and expertise. Indian developers view themselves as adding value primarily through the process of assembling land for development – wresting land from farmers, negotiating the complexities of village land records, and dealing with government land use regulations. In sharp contrast with practices elsewhere, they pay less attention to the buildings themselves. Rather they view them as (in Searle's words) "one-time sales opportunities to 'unlock the value' of land parcels." Their potential international partners, on the other hand, place value on the quality of urban design, architecture, and property management, which they consider essential to creating an attractive brand.

The Indian view is arguably a product of the current context of contestation over land, as elements of the state endeavor to commodify urban space but have yet to hone techniques for controlling street-level politics. The shifting political climate, in which there is no stable urban vision emerging from a central font of power that can implement such a vision, might offer one explanation as to why real estate developers focus on consolidating their control over land and on extracting value from it in a fairly tight time frame. The Indian developers' strategies, in this argument, are rooted in an aversion to both market risks and political risks associated with development. These strategies include the use of pre-sales to finance development; the tendency toward sale rather than leasing of property; the aversion toward property management; and the tendency to focus on cost rather than creating a development brand. These strategies are effective in hedging against market downturns and political conflict. While Searle's chapter provides rare insight into the logic of development decision making in India, it also contributes to our understanding of the impact that new, globally oriented development is having on the cityscape. A striking aspect of many new developments is the sense that they are isolated and under-maintained – lone concrete blocks and stalks of glass and steel besieged by clogged traffic arteries and derelict urban spaces. Searle's chapter helps understand how this comes about.

The final finding concerns the diversity of Indian cities' experience of the state strategies deployed in pursuit of redevelopment. This finding is perhaps the most speculative, as the cases presented in this book focus only on a handful of experiences in a group of cities – Bangalore, Delhi, Mumbai, Pune, Ahmedabad, Jaipur and Mangalore – that do not come close to representing this diversity. Yet even this select set of cases indicates certain variables that might lead some city governments to embrace a strong agenda of urban reform. One factor is the relative demographic and economic weight of cities within their states, which might have implications for the state government's interest in expending political capital on urban redevelopment, and also in maintaining strong control over urban development. It is notable that Delhi, as a city-state, exhibits one of the strongest efforts at reform of urban governance. The cases of Ahmedabad, Mumbai, and Pune all represent urban reform efforts facilitated by state governments in states (the former, Gujarat; the latter two, Maharashtra) where relatively large percentages of the population live in cities.

Yet another factor that emerges from the Jaipur case is the significance of the existence of historically entrenched elite factions with an interest in economic liberalization. Vidyarthi examines variations in the vision of global urbanism in Jaipur, a city with noteworthy tourism, handicraft and textile industries that provide long-standing linkages with international networks of trade and investment. The presence of an "old economy" elite (as Vidyarthi terms them), whose fortunes are tied to the continued importance of these industries, provides competition for those who seek to position Jaipur among India's aspirant "global cities" and prefer a transformation of the city along the lines of Gurgaon. Indeed the presence of the old economy elites creates a strong line of continuity with the past and has led to a distinct physical transformation, based on a curious pastiche of "traditional" motifs fused onto a more contemporary infrastructure and environment (namely historical Rajasthani-style paintings on the pillars of a flyover). The phrase "world class heritage city" that civic officials and journalists have recently adopted nicely captures the vision driving these interventions. What is most intriguing here with respect to our understanding of urban politics, however, is that there seems to be a more coherent center of power in the urban political economy, which may have come closest to forming the kind of centralized urban political regime that has been subject to extensive investigation elsewhere.

Conclusion

India defies easy generalization, and no single narrative can capture the complexity of its urbanization. Yet the pressing issues facing communities and urban policymakers in this time of tremendous change demand efforts to develop

frameworks around which to base discussions about action. Drawing on the case studies presented in this volume and on recent literature on urban politics in India, this review chapter intends to open up a conversation about how we understand change in Indian cities. We have argued that recent national-level reforms in urban governance can be read as expressing a process of neoliber-alization adapted to the particular challenges to capital accumulation in the Indian context, and specifically to the challenges of re-scaling governance so as to enable state actors at the metropolitan level and to incentivize them toward entrepreneurial action. Second, we argue that the period of flux opened up by economic change and by the incomplete impact of the reform agenda has fostered a wave of local experimentations in governance and collective action that have been deployed both by local state actors and by those in civil society with the aim of giving them control over urban space as a means to capital accumulation. The localized experiments likely represent the testing grounds for scaled-up governance reforms, as demonstrated by the scaling up of previous initiatives like the BATF model of public–private partnership in Bangalore. These ad hoc and network-oriented initiatives are fostering new dynamics of spatial and political inequality and contestation.

Collectively, these arguments indicate that, while the open-ended nature of India's urban politics continues to offer opportunities for the urban poor to find their space in the city and in urban politics, these opportunities are being systematically restricted. They also suggest the venues that are likely to be important as this battle over space and agency continues to unfold. Questions about the modalities and political strategies of community-based collective action, about the regulation of land use and of the real estate industry, about the development of alternative models of urban governance and electoral politics, and about legal interpretation of claims to land are likely to have a significant bearing on outcomes for community agency.

The ultimate goal of urban political theory is, of course, to inform the prac-tice of urban political actors, be they government officials or representatives of people's organizations. It would be too ambitious to attempt to address the specific implications of the findings of the studies in this book for such prac-tice. What is clear is the need to continue to develop understandings of change in power and politics in Indian cities, to inform these actors as they continue to develop and calibrate appropriate strategies of political action. We hope that this book will make a small contribution toward opening up new research and debate, and ultimately new interventions in urban space and political power.

Notes

1   In fact it is not clear to what extent the 74th Amendment was conceived and formulated in relation to liberalization. Evidence indicates that the reform was undertaken as an afterthought to the 73rd Constitutional Amendment, which

provided constitutional status to rural local governments (Harriss, 2010). Nevertheless, the implementation of the 74th Amendment has been closely tied to debates about governance and economic development in cities.

2 One widely referenced example of this subversion of modernist planning is that of Chandigarh, where, according to some analysts, a gradual process of encroachment and physical transformation has fundamentally undermined the modernist ideals represented in Le Corbusier's plan for the city, thereby sabotaging Nehru's grand experiment with modernist urban planning (Nangia, 2008).

3 We are indebted to Neha Sami for these insights on the growing role of networks.

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