

Urban Multiplicities

Governing India's Megacities

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A recent two-day international workshop on the “Governance of Megacity Regions in India” in Mumbai revealed the multiple conceptions and contestations that drive metropolitan growth in India and around the world. Though cities globally face similar competitive pressures in an era of footloose capital flows, there were few readymade models of metropolitan governance on offer. Instead the international experience suggests that democratic processes matter as much as getting institutions right. Although questions of sustainability and resilience remained an intriguing but underexplored theme in the workshop, the increasing urgency of environmental governance agendas for India's megacity regions emerged as a key area for future research and policy.

Mumbai, Kolkata, Bangalore, Hyderabad, and Chennai – maximum city, city of joy, and the south's information technology (IT) powerhouses – are all iconic cities that feature on lists of the most populous and competitive global urban agglomerations. At the same time, all five have become, to various degrees, victims of their own success, and prey to the problems of growth – not only insufficient, congested, and fragmented public services and infrastructure, but also political systems that are increasingly perceived to be unresponsive.

This was the problematic that a two-day international workshop organised by the Confederation of Indian Industries (CII) and the Centre for Policy Research (CPR) in early February 2013 in Mumbai on the “Governance of Megacity Regions in India” sought to address. Speakers and attendees from government, the corporate and voluntary sectors, and media and academia, from India and abroad, covered a surprisingly wide swath of subjects in urban governance, from floor-space indices to the role of watersheds. Underlying the diversity of topics, however, questions of scale, from the regional to the individual citizen, and the connections between them, were a common thread of engagement.

The variety of viewpoints on “what defines the megacity region” and “what drives growth” to “what the aims of the megacity should be” represented attempts at reconciling the variables and priorities applicable at these widely divergent scales. No easy resolutions were available either in international experiences or in the conclusions reached at the end of the workshop, mirroring what Kennedy and Zerah (2008: 117) have called the “contentious, contradictory and difficult to resolve” “reality of ongoing processes” in Indian cities. Instead, what emerged was a shared recognition of the need of platforms for negotiation, debate, conversation, and partnership between the local, the regional, and higher scales, as well as the many state, business, and citizen participants of the Indian metropolis. However, equally important, though underexplored, were the environmental governance agendas that will shape the future of Indian cities.

This report attempts to provide an overview of the points of contention and occasional consensus, and the various stances presented, situating the debates where possible in the larger urban governance literature and suggesting directions for future investigation and research. It is organised as follows. Section 1 surveys the various conceptions of the region that came to the fore in workshop discussions. Section 2 considers

The author would like to thank the organisers of the Confederation of Indian Industries and Centre for Policy Research International Workshop on the Governance of Megacity Regions in India. Thanks are also due to the Centre for Policy Research rapporteur team for detailed minutes of the first day's proceedings and to Anant Maringanti for his insights and helpful comments on earlier drafts.

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some of the forces that shape metropolitan growth in India. Section 3 analyses the experience of cities worldwide on developing the right institutions and processes, and the lessons for India. Section 4 highlights some of the data and capacity hurdles in understanding and governing the megacity. The concluding section contrasts the multiple conceptions and directions for the Indian metropolis, around the loci of the megapolitan and the multipolitan.

1 Cities as Multiplicities

Perhaps the first and most significant set of multiplicities cohered around the notion of the megacity region itself. In his concluding remarks, K C Sivaramakrishnan of the CPR, New Delhi, acknowledged these divergences when he noted that a city region means many things to many people.¹

There were the state-defined city regions in postcolonial India and South Africa. India has moved to a more federal character over the course of its postcolonial history with the local level receiving Constitutional recognition, as Philip Harrison of the University of the Witwatersrand, Johannesburg, pointed out. However, as the CPR report *How to Govern India's Megacities* (see Section III) countered, these official metropolises are beset by multiplicities in governance structures and definitions. As a result, like in South Africa, the “official” metropolis in India does not always coincide with any organic idea of the megacity region.

An alternative paradigm to understand the city was posited by journalist Kalpana Sharma, who drew attention to the collectivities that emerged in response to the horrific rape-murder in the capital recently. Highlighting the different political trajectories of Indian metropolises, Darshini Mahadevia of the Centre for Environmental Planning and Technology, Ahmedabad, supported this notion of the city as people by adding the idea of the city as habitat. Indeed, recent scholarship such as Parthasarathy (2013) suggests that the local, regional, and provincial forces of ethnicity, class, and caste are as important in driving the political trajectories of these megacity regional nodes as globalisation and cosmopolitanism. Former union power minister Suresh Prabhu seemed to concur when he spoke about the city as a cultural entity.

A running debate between advocates of the city as people and habitat and the city as a growth node (see below) characterised the workshop, though sometimes the two perspectives coalesced in concerns about service delivery and its fragmentation.

Eco-region and Econo-region

Amy Liu of the Metropolitan Policy Program at the Brookings Institution, Washington, made a forceful case for seeing metropolitan areas through an “economics lens.” The pre-eminent characteristic of these regions remains intricate interrelated market dynamics that mere patterns of human settlement cannot quite capture. She advocated paying attention to labour flows, such as commuting patterns, to define metropolitan regions. The US approach thus emphasises informal partnerships between local authorities over formal institutional frameworks in defining the governance frameworks for megacity regions.

But Liu’s implicit emphasis on the role of “flows” – labour and resource – was picked up in a very different form by Marco Kusumawijaya of Jakarta. In contrast to Liu’s notion of economic or “econo-regions”, Kusumawijaya drew on the Jakarta floods of 2005 to offer a vision of ecological or “eco-regions”. Noting the complex repercussions of change in watersheds and “bio-regions”, he argued that planning for and managing these natural systems need effective cross-border arrangements. Former Minnesota Senator Myron Oldfeld connected the dots when he noted that the complicated externalities that underlie environmental issues are often dealt at the metropolitan level.

Prabhu also hinted at this policy agenda when he noted that it is important to pay attention to the carrying capacities of cities vis-à-vis water, electricity and waste.² The idea of eco-regions was cited several times – by Sivaramakrishnan, Mike Douglass of the National University of Singapore, and by a questioner’s reference to Richard T T Forman’s work. But it remained an intriguing, but underexplored theme, in the workshop.

Little recognised issues of environmental governance may well shape future political, economic, and social tussles in and around India’s megacities for a long time to come. For one, the varieties of natural and man-made water and resource systems that service India’s cities yoke them in unlikely relationships with the most remote hinterlands. As the CPR report notes, India’s megacity regions already depend on sources hundreds of kilometres away for their water supply (CPR 2013a). Similarly, solid waste management regimes in cities such as Hyderabad and elsewhere continue to be deeply inequitable in their distribution of the costs of treatment. While natural resource and energy concerns have not received the attention they deserve from urban planners and policymakers, they figure increasingly on the agendas of people’s movements and in cross-jurisdictional conflicts such as the one over Cauvery waters.

Second, Indian cities face potentially seismic shifts in the wake of climate change, an issue brought up by Douglass in his concluding remarks. Mumbai, Kolkata, and Delhi are counted among the top 20 risk cities in the *Climate Change and Environmental Risk Atlas 2013* (Indian Express 2012). Existing governance apparatuses remain untested at dealing with change on this scale. Moreover, work at the intersection of environmental and urban economics by the Canadian economist Scott Taylor highlights the role of power-dense fossil fuels in sustaining urban agglomerations (Cruz and Taylor 2012). Though still in progress, this analysis suggests that a transition to renewables may decelerate these economies of agglomeration, highlighting another avenue for exploring the future of megacity regions. With sustainability and resilience becoming increasingly prominent in international urban research networks (Kennedy et al 2012; CPR 2013a), Indian researchers may be able to adapt and evolve the conceptual tools to support such an environmental governance agenda.

The empirical research and policy programme that emerges from the ecological life of India’s cities thus provides a fruitful avenue for future work. This includes not only evaluation and

up-scaling of new initiatives such as the Mumbai Metropolitan Regional Development Authority's (MMRDA) environmental asset register (CPR 2013a), but also the application of urban metabolism models to understand resource and energy flows in India's megacity regions (Castan Broto et al 2012), among others.

2 How Big Is a City Supposed To Be?

Describing the governance challenges posed by Pune's runaway growth, Vandana Chavan, Pune municipal councillor, asked the million-dollar question: "How big is a city supposed to be?"

The concerns of agglomeration size, pattern, and growth in their many manifestations – demographic, spatial/territorial, economic – remained the stated or unstated subtext to all discussions. Growth – how to ignite it, accelerate it, support it, deal with it, manage it, control it, and, on rare occasions, even counter it – constituted the overarching theme of the city narratives on offer. As the CPR report (2013a) notes, planners in previous eras had decidedly mixed sentiments about urbanisation trends, and it is only recently that this ambivalence has vanished, with a new emphasis on "city-centric growth strategies" (Kennedy and Zerah 2008).

Peripheral Cities

As scholars have noted, the peri-urban is the area characterised by fast changes across space and time (Dupont 2005; Dupont and Sridaran 2006). Peri-urban growth hubs that push megacity boundaries outwards have been marked by focused investment in infrastructure as well as fragmentation of public service delivery. Yet, even as the state in these settings has taken the lead in facilitating urban growth, private informal and formal actors have been the chief drivers in a policyscape where increasingly evident gaps in public funding of basic services are sought to be filled through private capital flows (Joshi 2009).

A number of studies have examined the politics and changes in local governance frameworks that have facilitated private investment in locations such as Gurgaon in Haryana, Navi Mumbai, and Cyberabad near Hyderabad, as well as "corporate urbanisation" (Denis et al 2012). However, less is known about the local patterns produced by processes that rework the city as a club realm, with the provision of key urban public amenities – whether water, power, security or even planning – restricted to a select paying membership within "gated" communities (Yardley 2011). Indeed the most characteristic image of peri-urban growth lies in the high-rise "exclusive" communities advertised in hoardings across cityscapes. Questioner Neelima Risbud of the School of Planning and Architecture, New Delhi, signalled this feature of the growth dynamics of Indian megacities when she asked about the role of real estate development in pushing urban frontiers.

Scholarship has largely focused on the political and equity implications of these trends but research into the efficiency effects and repercussions for urban growth patterns is still in an incipient stage. Increasing reliance on club-provisioning of residential public amenities in peripheries leads to an

undermining of the public realm, which is what defines "cityness", as Douglass argued in the concluding session. In particular, in contrast to earlier patterns of regularisation and incorporation of "unauthorised" growth on peripheries of cities such as Delhi into city-wide supply networks, enclave urbanisation that focuses on private solutions to public problems appears more resistant to inclusion in the larger urban framework, though it may create its own informal shadow settlements, as Bhattacharya and Sanyal (2011) have argued.

Shrinking States, Expanding Regions

A key political repercussion of urban growth emerged in the international case studies of London, Seoul, and Tokyo. All represented city regions that were disproportionately powerful relative to the nation state – demographically, economically and, as a consequence, politically. The Seoul region, for instance, accounts for about half of the South Korean population. With a hinterland of nearly 21 million people, according to Sue Goss, the London region has nearly a third of the UK's population, and a similar proportion applies to Tokyo vis-à-vis Japan (Douglass 2002).

The resulting tensions were a key driver of metropolitan governance in these cities. Andrew Thornley of the London School of Economics, for instance, narrated how Tokyo's bid for the 2016 Olympics, which was motivated by the governor of Tokyo's desire to finance his pet projects, went against the wishes of the national government. In Seoul, a history of failure followed growth containment measures imposed by South Korea's developmental state over the 1960s and 1970s. These included direct control over population, prohibition of industry, a Seoul citizen tax, prohibition of universities, and demolition of squatter settlements, among others. However, the logic of path dependence meant that each of these measures failed even as Seoul continued to grow more on its peripheries than in its core. Seoul thus provided a stark illustration of what Mike Raco of University College London called the "picking of winners" in the global city stakes.

With a combined population no more than a fraction of the country's total and a contribution to the gross domestic product (GDP) of just about 10%, none of India's metropolises wield the same power vis-à-vis the nation, argued one of the responders to Douglass' presentation. However, each of the five cities under discussion contributed as much as 40% to 60% of the respective state domestic products (CPR 2013a). The power of these agglomeration economies thus has significant implications for the sub-national states. On the one hand, these city regions are the major engines of economic expansion for surrounding states, like Delhi vis-à-vis Haryana. On the other hand, as Douglass cautioned in the case of Seoul, they can drain natural, financial, and labour resources from surrounding economies in a virtuous/vicious cycle of success, where decentralisation implies that already well-endowed and populous regions attract greater public and private investment. Further, as Parthasarathy (2013) notes, proximity to the political power of the state capital has driven the growth dynamics of each of India's five megacities.

In the Indian context, the expanding influence of global city regions also comes into conflict with the trend towards smaller states. Thus, even as Hyderabad occupies a dominant position in the Andhra Pradesh economy, it is likely to loom even larger in a Telangana state. It is little surprise then that states have been unenthusiastic in relinquishing power to metropolitan agencies, as many officials on the panels complained. From a governance perspective, any viable institutional frameworks must aim to even out power disparities between shrinking states and growing city regions.

3 Governing Multiplicity

Given both the multiplicity of conceptualisations of the city region as well as the nature of the growth processes facilitating their political prominence, it is not surprising that contradictions and crises have marred metropolitan governance frameworks around the world, and in India. However, despite the commonalities in the forces and competitive pressures facing cities globally, no paradigmatic or universally effective models of metropolitan governance have emerged. This section first surveys the Indian experience, highlights the civic and business actors and forces shaping megacities, and then surveys the lessons from international experience.

State City

A study on the five megacity regions and their challenges, commissioned by the Ministry of Urban Development and produced by the CPR (2013a, b, c, d, e, f), provided the framework for the workshop discussions. Presenting the study early on the first day of the workshop, Partha Mukhopadhyay of the CPR highlighted the multiplicities that define metropolitan governance in India. These include multiple governmental conceptualisations – the idea of urban agglomeration, collections of municipal bodies, and starting in the 1970s, new planning and development entities. They also include multiple administrative bodies and service providers, often parastatals, as well as the multiple territorialities covered by special planning and industrial development authorities or special purpose bodies such as special economic zones (SEZs). Multiple legislations govern metropolises and there are competing demands for land – public and private. Further, in addition to the ethnic, caste, and class diversities that define Indian realities, there are spatialised inequities in access to public services of all types.

In considering the way forward from these institutional complexities, Sivaramakrishnan noted that the union-state framework, especially after the 74th Constitutional Amendment Act, made no place for the city region. However, the broader institutional problems are far from unique to India. The value of the international experience lies not so much in offering solutions as in helping highlight areas of commonalities and possible lessons.

World-Class Competition

Even as the “world-class city” meme has come in for sustained criticism in the Indian context (Mahadevia 2011), it was striking how many of the presenters, from Robert Young on Toronto

and Andy Thornley on London to Mike Douglass on Seoul, attributed the genesis and evolution of urban governance reforms to similar anxieties about the need to compete in an era of footloose and fancy-free capital flows.

A burgeoning international and Indian literature has documented the ways in which globalisation in the world city mode is shaping urban geographies (Banerjee-Guha 2009; Kennedy and Zerah 2008). However, a range of government and private corporate sector speakers at the workshop provided a glimpse into how these competitive pressures apply in ground-level policy and planning processes. Speakers such as Narinder Nayar of Mumbai First and Nasser Munjee of the Development Credit Bank, Mumbai, emphasised the serious infrastructural and service delivery gaps riddling Indian cities, especially in comparison with international benchmarks. Sista Vishwanath, formerly with the Hyderabad Metropolitan Development Authority (HMDA), provided the context when he stated that “funding is the bane of urban development.” These and other presentations underlined how investment gaps plague quality of life and urban development potential. Ram Walase of the infrastructure firm Infrastructure Leasing and Financial Services Limited (IL&FS) spoke about the planning, implementation, and technology challenges that the supply-side of urban governance must address. Ashank Desai of Mastek put forward an interesting personal narrative to argue that Mumbai missed out on an opportunity to become India’s IT city because its “supply side is not organised”. He noted that the high cost of living in Mumbai and poor planning mean that it is difficult to attract talented employees to move there.

Echoing the consensus that drove the “world city” leadership mantle in cities like London, many of these speakers expressed concern that the lack of dedicated and empowered representatives for the metropolis were a serious bottleneck in solving metropolitan problems. Nayar, for instance, pointed out that no single body is responsible for Mumbai city, comparing Mumbai metropolitan governance to a conductor-less orchestra. Sanjay Ubale of Tata Realty and Infrastructure Limited (TRIL), on the other hand, argued that accountable representatives are not empowered to deliver. The very multiplicity of responsible agencies, 17 in Mumbai alone according to Nayar, means that accountability cannot be fixed. Ubale made a case for a better balance between accountability and empowerment in urban governance, and further for the executive and regulatory functions to be separated. Nayar, Ubale and Munjee backed the idea of strong executive authority, with an elected mayor as the chief executive officer or CEO of the city.

Institutions versus Processes

The experience of London, presented by Thornley, Goss of London’s Office of Public Management, and Raco, proved highly pertinent as a test case for world city governance. Supported by a far-ranging consensus between the private sector, state agencies, and a popular referendum, and instigated by the widespread desire to protect and promote London’s role as a world city, the Greater London Authority (GLA) Act of 1999 established a strong directly elected mayor as the face of

London's government. However, as Goss explained, in practice, the mayor's office is constrained in its functional powers by 32 local boroughs and in its financial powers by the central government, which also holds legislative powers. As a result, the mayor's functions often require considerable posturing and lobbying, and the GLA's strategic functions in transport, waste, infrastructure, planning, and economic development require coordination and partnership with the local boroughs, especially since local taxes collected by the latter are often used for the centre city.

Thus even in the strong mayor model in Greater London, Goss emphasised how powers constantly move back and forth between the various levels with several grey areas where both the GLA and boroughs claim agency. The creation of a city charter, concretising collaboration between the strategic and local functions of the mayor and the London councils, with a bi-annual congress of the two parties, is what has stabilised some of the tensions. Goss further noted that with an economic hinterland stretching to a region of 21 million people versus the eight million in the GLA, working partnerships with 100 or so local authorities in the south-east corridor is increasingly emerging as a solution over widening GLA boundaries or transferring powers. In this, the UK model appeared to be converging in some ways towards the US approach of informal partnerships between local areas, described by Liu of the Brookings Institution.

Young, in contrast, painted a portrait of succeeding waves of amalgamation and expansion in the notion of metropolitan Toronto over 50 years, led by tensions between the core city and its suburbs and culminating recently in the emergence of the Greater Golden Horseshoe area. The impetus for these recent transformations has come from the primacy of growth and competitiveness concerns, though the outcomes have not been entirely successful, especially with the establishment of multiple special purpose agencies, property tax-driven intergovernmental competition, inadequate funding for infrastructure, and conflicts and inaction over transit.

In presenting the case of the South African Gauteng city-region around Johannesburg, Harrison seemed to cut through the diversity of international experience when he commented that South Africa had its "institutions right" but "its processes wrong", especially in matters of building "cadres", trust, and eradicating corruption. His thesis that institutions are a necessary but not sufficient condition for successful metropolitan governance seemed to be an appropriate summing up of the common experience.

Sivaramakrishnan had warned in the introductory session that there were only experiments but no best practices for city regions. Though the aim of the workshop was not to draw on models but to understand them, Harrison's injunction came closest to what might be called lessons for the Indian case. Marie-Hélène Zérah made a similar argument in her comments on London, maintaining that the megacity region could not be an institutional fix for the problems of Indian cities and that a back and forth must, of necessity, continue between the local and larger levels.

Ravindra, urban advisor to the government of Karnataka, further crystallised the variables when he noted that urban governance comprised the two separate issues of internal governance and inter-government relations. In this sense, Chavan's question about how big the city should be devolves down to defining the functional boundaries of metropolitan governance – the spheres or territory within and outside. While the difficulty of coordination across jurisdictions and agencies in India causes a push for boundary expansion in some cases, cities worldwide have taken varying stances on this issue, emphasising partnership and collaboration in the UK and US, and the broadening of city limits in places such as Toronto and Seoul.

An unexpected lesson from the presentations was the role of transit both in defining the city region and the role of metropolitan government. In the variety of international experiences, from London to Toronto, and in India (CPR 2013a), the development of transit systems was the archetypal function at the metropolitan level. Moreover, transit systems helped reinforce, and in some cases, even introduce, the broader idea of a city region. Though urban territorial growth in India is still largely automobile dependent, the enthusiastic embrace of metro rail systems by urban Indians may partially reflect this political/sentimental function.

The Demand-Side: Civic Societies

The CPR study provided the context for the workshop and identified the multiple administrative, legislative, and demographic determinants of metropolitan governance in India. But when it came to the question of what Raco called "governance beyond the state" (privatisation and community politics), Kusumawijaya introduced the people into what he described as the "demand-side" of urban governance, arguing for horizontal forms of decentralisation and participatory democracy. Douglass also invoked a right to change the city as a principle for the megacity region, defining it not through objectives, but by the messy and participatory processes of democracy.

Speaking to what he had earlier referred to as flaws of India's metropolitan planning committees, Sivaramakrishnan also argued that perhaps it was the absence of an effective demand-side for decentralisation and devolution that had prevented realisation of the 74th Constitutional Amendment Act's promise. Once again, it was Raco who traced the political economy thread to this proposal when he claimed that the London Plan had helped politicise debates over spatial planning, suggesting that governance through democratic and state structures heightens civic participation.

Indeed, it can be argued that the sophistication and reach of corporate interest groups in urban policy processes represents an element of just such a demand-side civic society. As Kusumawijaya proposed, what Indian cities need is a greater density and diversity of such interest groups, representing their many stakeholders – the temporary migrants, users of public amenities and modes of transport, and others.

The tasks of understanding and encouraging the demand-side of urban governance in the Indian context remain open.

Though much research into urban politics has centred around Partha Chatterjee's notions of political and civil society (Wood 2013, forthcoming), an examination of political and ethnic formations and forms of violence can help clarify how these forces converge and fragment to shape Indian cities and their socio-political landscapes, allowing the realisation or otherwise of democratic potential.

4 Statistical Regions and City Capacities

A major impediment to understanding the city region not only in India, but also elsewhere in the developing world comes through misalignments in data availability. Marco Aurelio Costa of the Instituto de Pesquisa Econômica Aplicada (IPEA) of Brazil pointed out the discrepancies between the 55 metro regions in his country and the 12 metropolises defined for statistical purposes by the Brazilian Institute of Geography and Statistics or IBGE.

Uma Adusumilli, chief planner of the MMRDA, highlighted a similar concern when she noted that the Mumbai metropolitan region sprawls over two full and two partial districts. However, since several types of data are only available at the district level, this is a barrier to developing a comprehensive portrait of the megacity region. Earlier, in presenting the CPR study, Partha Mukhopadhyay alluded to the data challenges faced in computing city region aggregates, especially the pioneering estimation of regional GDPs.

The spotlight on the megacity region as a political unit may spur greater innovation and initiatives in both primary data collection and estimation of aggregates at this level. Moreover, it may make possible newer perspectives, for instance, through an analysis of how labour flows constitute cities. Though commuting research is still in its infancy in India (Chandrasekhar 2011), tracing commuting patterns (as in the US), especially among less-skilled workers, at the city level may yield fresh insights into the functional region. Similarly, although city-level investigations in the Indian context are scarce, seasonal, circular, and temporary migration flows represent challenges for urban governance paradigms in the developing world.³ To consider one comparable case, Thailand's National Migration Survey estimated a 9% difference in the wet-season and dry-season populations of Bangkok in the early 1990s (Chamrathirong 1995).

However, N Sridharan of the School of Planning and Architecture provided a different spin to the questions of data when he noted the availability of the spatial data infrastructure tool at the city level. The infrequent use of the tool reflects perhaps the skills and capacity constraints that beleaguer Indian cities.

The absence of expertise, skills, and state "capacity" at the local, and especially the municipal, level in India represented a challenge lamented by the workshop speakers. Walase of IL&FS put the political implications at centre stage when he argued that local government capacity was a serious issue in attempts at decentralisation. N Suresh traced the rise of parastatals and the eclipse of municipalities in urban governance processes to the lack of capacity and finances in the latter. In her comments, Marie-Hélène Zérah of the Centre de Sciences

Humaines (CSH), New Delhi, contrasted the poor capacities in peri-urban areas to those in the core cities. There is a case to be made perhaps for metropolitan/regional governance bodies to function as storehouses of professional public expertise for use by local and lower-level bodies on a consulting or ad hoc basis.

Once again, this concern found reiteration in the international experience. Liu highlighted the need for young professionals to create capacity and infuse talent into city governments. However, it was Raco who offered a political economy framework for understanding the persistent capacity gaps in local government. Drawing on the increasing dominance of public-private partnerships (PPPs) in the provision of infrastructure as well as welfare services in the UK, he argued that the role of the state in these sectors is more and more that of a "contract manager." At the same time, however, the key skills for negotiating and monitoring these contracts, whether legal or accounting, reside in the private corporate sector, making the enforcement of the public interest near impossible and leading to inefficient outcomes over the long term. Interestingly, Raco's argument was previously voiced by Liu, who ascribed the relative dearth of PPPs in the US to the lack of government capacity to protect the public interest.

Evidence suggests that similar processes of policy capture may be at play in the Indian context. Commentators have shown, for instance, how World Bank reports have guided water sector policy at the state level (Sohoni 2012), among others. The range of issues underlined by Raco reinforce the need for fine-grained policy ethnographies, examining how policies get made and programmes are implemented at the national, state, regional and local levels through the interaction of private and public interest groups. Such studies can also reveal the urgent capacity gaps that need addressing by paying attention to Indian conditions.

5 Conclusions: Emerging Multipolitanisms

At the end, as the range of voices represented on the concluding panel showed, the workshop opened up as many questions as it answered. While Amita Bhide of the Tata Institute of Social Sciences, Mumbai, brought up the matter of core-periphery tensions, Sivaramakrishnan admitted that the workshop was only the first step in learning about megacity governance.

The multiplicities that plague urban governance in India can thus be seen to reflect the multiplicity and deep interconnections between the challenges posed to and by urbanisation – political, economic, ecological, cultural, and social. To an extent, the nature of these interdependencies presage the welcome inauguration of new research agendas across the social science disciplines, especially on sustainable urban systems and the mapping of labour and resource flows into and out of city regions.

More fundamentally, these multiplicities mirror the underlying pluralities of a democratic polity. Raco summed up this reality when he commented that "India is a democracy and it feels like one." If institutions are derived from objectives, as Munjee correctly argued, a multiplicity of institutions

necessarily reflect the diversity of India's urban citizenry – the temporary rural migrant workers on construction sites as much as the planners, builders, engineers, and future inhabitants. As Raco suggested, each of these groups and individuals have subtly different interests. Presuming or imposing an artificial consensus does more violence to the city's many stakeholders than honestly acknowledging and addressing these differences.

In terms of Ravindra's distinction between internal governance and inter-government relations, it seems clear that subsuming these differences under the rubric of one city and one consensus (Kennedy and Zérah 2008) still leaves open, and perhaps exacerbates, the tensions between regional scale entities. When it comes to inter-government relations, the

informal partnership models suggested, if not fully realised, by the us and uk cases offer promise in the Indian context, despite dissimilarities in economic and institutional histories. Indeed, as one presenter argued, the focus on the megapolitan should yield perhaps to the multipolitan, allowing for greater interplay between urban nodes of various sizes.

While the idea of the multipolitan remained more an outline than a proposal in the Indian context, the many voices in the workshop seemed to agree on the need of more platforms for negotiation and conversation in and on India's megacity regions. Equally, they suggested the unstated urgency of moving to newer policy and research agendas around the resilience of these agglomerations.

NOTES

- 1 The account here does not follow the chronological order of the presentations.
- 2 Here, and elsewhere, this account draws on the detailed notes on the first day's proceedings prepared by Shahana Sheikh.
- 3 One exception may be Leclerc and Bourguignon (2006), who analyse the urban periphery in terms of population mobility patterns.

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Survey

August 27, 2011

Experimental Economics: A Survey

by

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Over the past few decades, experimental methods have given economists access to new sources of data and enlarged the set of economic propositions that can be validated. This field has grown exponentially in the past few decades, but is still relatively new to the average Indian academic. The objective of this survey is to familiarise the Indian audience with some aspects of experimental economics.

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