



Land Conflicts and Cooperatives along Pune's Highways: Managing India's Agrarian to Urban Transition

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**Land Conflicts and Cooperatives along Pune's Highways:
Managing India's Agrarian to Urban Transition**

ABSTRACT

The past ten years has been a decade of land wars in India. Rapid urbanization is spilling beyond city boundaries into the highways connecting large cities, instigating a frenzied consolidation and conversion of agricultural lands into urban/industrial lands. This process is fraught with conflict, as different social groups compete to stake their claims on the land value increments – the increases in land value due to the change in land use from agricultural to non-agricultural - of these newly converted highway lands.

Against the backdrop of conflictual land consolidation processes, this dissertation examines the unique case of the Pune highways, located in the state of Maharashtra in India. Along some of Pune's highways, agrarian landowners – sometimes voluntarily and sometimes with the mediation of bureaucrats – are pooling their fragmented agricultural lands, converting them to urban and industrial lands, and forming collective institutions of land ownership to own and control these newly converted highway lands. In other words, agrarian landowners along these highways are not being displaced from their lands. Instead, they are capturing some or all of the land value increments, and are benefiting from the urban transition. I examine the conditions that made these collective institutions possible in the Pune region, and the possibility and desirability of transferring these conditions to other regions elsewhere that are mired in similar land conflicts.

My main finding is that the core of India's land conflicts is a change in the valuation of land from fertility to location. This new, highway-induced restructuring of the land market interacts in complex ways with older caste-based forms of agrarian land control and these changes in land-based social relations is the source of conflict. India's rapid urbanization along highways is taking place not within cities, but in-between cities, and is leading to new forms of politics that defies the urban-rural dichotomies.

I also use Pune's land conflicts and cooperatives as a window into the broader phenomenon of India's 21st century transition from an agrarian to urban economy, and articulate the major elements of the new regional institutions that are needed for managing land markets during an uncertain urban transition.

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Chapter 1

INTRODUCTION – TERRITORIAL POLITICS OF INDIA'S LAND CONFLICTS

The past ten years in India have been a decade of land wars. In early 2008, the small village of Singur in the state of West Bengal, located along the Kolkata¹-Delhi national highway, grabbed international media attention as the site of one of India's most contentious and violent struggles over land acquisitions. The protests by the Singur farmers was against the forced acquisition of agricultural lands by the state government for the setting up of a small-car manufacturing factory by Tata Motors, one of India's largest corporations. By the end of 2008, Tata Motors decided to pull out of West Bengal, and ruling state government, the Communist Party of India (Marxist), lost office for the first time in thirty years in the subsequent state elections. In 2011, land acquisition for the 160-kilometer Yamuna Expressway, connecting the cities of Delhi and Agra, unleashed a wave of violence, with protesting farmers torching government vehicles in their rage against the acquisition, and the state government deploying police forces to quell the protesters. The farmers-police clash resulted in the death of two farmers and two policemen. In 2010, the Indian government's Ministry of Environment and Forests rejected the proposal by the London-based firm, Vedanta Resources, to mine bauxite from the Niyamgiri hills. The government's move was an outcome of four years of protests by the Kondh tribes to protect their 'sacred mountain' from resource extraction.

The large-scale coercive acquisition of land is not a new phenomenon. History has countless examples, including the violent displacement of populations during the British enclosure movement in the 16th to 19th centuries and the forced acquisition of land through territorial conquests in the pre-colonial and colonial times (Pistor, 2011; White et al., 2012). But, the 21st century land conflicts are erupting within a new context of a globalized, liberalized economy. Since Independence in 1947 till the 1980s, India's land conflicts were precipitated by the state's coercive acquisition of land, enabled through the eminent domain legislature, for "public purposes" like dams and state-led industrialization. With the liberalization of the Indian economy since the late 1980s onwards, both

¹ Formerly Calcutta.

the nature of the public purpose and the institutional actors involved in these land conflicts have changed. Besides the earlier “public purposes” of dams, most recent land conflicts are over the state’s acquisition of agricultural land for privatized real estate and infrastructural developments like infrastructure corridors and superhighways, Special Economic Zones and hi-tech cities (Levien, 2012). The easing of regulations on the domestic real estate industry and the opening up of the real estate sector to foreign investment has led both to the privatization – the more direct and central role of the private sector in the production of the built environment – and the “foreignisation” (Zoomers, 2010) - the complex linkages through which foreign investors are directly and indirectly involved in these land processes – of land development. India’s contemporary land conflicts, then, are the visible expressions of a country in transition from a state-led, socialist economy to a more liberalized and globalized one.

Against the backdrop of India’s contemporary land conflicts, the highways connecting the city of Pune, in Western India, to its neighboring cities stand out as stories of success. Along these Pune highways, agrarian landowners from multiple villages are coming together, sometimes voluntarily and sometimes with the mediation of bureaucrats, pooling their fragmented agricultural landholdings, forming land cooperatives and leasing these lands to industrialists and property developers. The land development along Pune’s highways poses some unexpected puzzles:

- As countries around the world are moving towards private property rights regimes, why are land cooperatives emerging in the Pune region, especially within the context of a liberalizing economy?

- As state actors around the country resort to coercive land acquisition strategies, what explains the strange but good performance of the Pune bureaucrats in not resorting to coercion, but using cooperative strategies to consolidate agricultural land for urban expansions?

- The most marginalized groups along Pune's highways – a tribal group called the Thakkars – are enthusiastic about giving up their agricultural lands in exchange for any form of monetary and/or non-monetary compensation. India's land conflicts are framed as taking place between farmers and industrialists, or farmers and the state on behalf of industrialists. What, then, explains the willingness of the most marginalized sub-group of farmers – the marginal tribal landowners – in parting with their agricultural lands?

In this chapter, I argue that India's ongoing land conflicts cannot be analyzed as a monolithic category. Instead, these conflicts can be disaggregated into three types, based on the underlying sociospatial processes driving them. My dissertation focuses on one type of land conflict, which I characterize as the politics of redistribution.

1.1 CONVENTIONAL NARRATIVES, SURPRISE FINDINGS

Activist, media, policy and popular discourses frame India's land conflicts as taking place between farmers and industrialists. National and international media reports are splashed with the farmers v. industrialists headlines: Aljazeera's "The great land grab: India's war on farmers" (Shiva, 2011), the Washington Post's "In India, fresh clashes over rural land as farmers stand up to government" (Denyer, 2011), and NDTV's [New Delhi Television] "UP farmers bring agitation to Delhi, plan Parliament 'gherao'" (NDTV, 2010) "and "Farmers' agitation spreads to Agra, villagers set office on fire" (NDTV, 2011).

The assumptions underlying the current debates find clear expression in the proposed amendment to India's antiquated eminent domain legislation - the 1894 Land Acquisition Act (LAA) - that is now slated for debate in Parliament (Government of India, 2011). The proposed amendment treats all contemporary land conflicts over the conversion of agricultural lands to non-agricultural as the same: Singur, a land conflict along highways, is no different from Vedanta in

Niyamgiri, a land conflict over mineral-rich lands. It assumes that the main source of aggrievement for the “project affected persons” is the poor compensation resulting from the undervalued market price of their land. The proposed remedy is a more efficient regulation of the land market, including better methods for land valuation and more attractive forms of land compensation for the aggrieved landowners.

Yet, when I started my fieldwork on land conflicts in the Pune region, I was met with some unexpected findings that challenged the framing of these conflicts as between farmers and industrialists. In the Khed region along the Pune-Nashik highway, agrarian landowners had protested against a proposed industrial development in 2006. When I spoke to the landowners in the region, I was surprised to learn that most of the younger generation males of the Thakkar group – a tribal group that has historically worked as agrarian laborers for the upper-caste landowners – were not a part of the 2006 protests. In fact, these Thakkars were willing, and eager even, to give up their lands for the new highway developments. The sudden market demand for their marginal agricultural lands empowered these younger generation, male Thakkars with some financial independence, and offered them an opportunity to break out of the relationships of dependency with upper-caste landowners.

Around 60 kilometers from Khed is the Bhimashankar forest. Unlike the Khed Thakkars, who have had private property rights to their small plots of land since the late 19th century, the Bhimashankar Thakkars have indigenous, usufruct claims to their land. Since the Indian government declared the forest area a protected wildlife sanctuary in 1985, the Thakkars have had an antagonistic relationship with the Forest Department and local government officials. Threatened by relocation, these Thakkars are demanding recognition of their indigenous claims to the forest lands. The Bhimashankar Thakkars, and more broadly, forest-dwelling tribals, use land conflicts as a politics of

recognition - of a positive revaluation and affirmation of tribal ways of living and of a validation of the tribals' indigenous, communal, usufruct and other forms of property rights. Without falling into the trap of essentializing the tribals as a culturally invariant social group that represents an alternative development paradigm to modernism and capitalism,² we still can see that the forest and mineral-rich lands represent a unique political geography distinct from other regions mired in land conflicts. Besides tourism, forest lands in India are in high market demand because they are rich in mineral resources. The synchronous overlap between mineral-rich forest lands and tribal habitats is pitting the lives and livelihoods of the eight million tribals living on these mineral-rich lands against the ravenous need for minerals like coal and bauxite by a rapidly industrializing country. An added layer of complexity is the raging internal civil war in the region that is now called the 'Red Corridor' – a region with the richest mineral-rich lands, but home to the poorest tribal populations. This region, spanning eight Indian states, is controlled by a guerrilla group called the Naxalites, or Maoists, who claim to be fighting on behalf of the tribal groups against an extractive state. These conflicts over mineral-rich and forest lands are a politics of recognition. They demand new imaginations for asserting a place for tribals within ecologically fragile and commercially coveted forest lands, and this is a distinctly different project from that of the Khed Thakkars.'

Around 45 kilometers to the south of the Khed area - on the outer fringes of the city of Pune, and in the villages of Baramati district along the Pune-Sholapur highway – live another tribal group, the non-pastoral nomadic tribes like the Gosavi, Garudi, and Pardhi. These groups have traditionally provided services like petty trading and street entertainment to the sedentary village

² See Baviskar (1996), Comaroff and Comaroff (2009) and Li (2010) for critiques on the dominant, essentializing tribal narratives. Baviskar points to the tribals' performance of essentialized narratives of the exotic other to appeal to non-governmental organizations, the media and other actors that support tribal rights; Comaroff and Comaroff to the commodification of the tribal ethnicity by tribals themselves for consumption in the global marketplace; and Li for the arbitrariness in the predominantly colonial social construction of the tribals as a census category.

populations. But, a long history of exclusion that was formally institutionalized in the colonial period through categorizing these groups as ‘criminal tribes’ has stripped them of even the most basic citizenship rights. The non-pastoral nomadic tribes make up more than nine percent of the population of Pune district, but they are invisibles in the state records (Nambiar, 2009).³ Lacking any form of documentary identification - be it birth certificates, ration cards or election cards - these nomadic tribes cannot even exercise their right to vote. These tribes are starting to organize themselves, with the mediation of non-governmental organizations (NGOs), to demand ration cards, election cards and other documentary forms of identity that can grant them the right to vote, the entitlements of universal public services, and the access to public subsidies and targeted programs for improving the life-chances of low-income and low-caste groups. The political claims of the non-nomadic tribes are similar to that of the residents of informal settlements are starting to burgeon around the peripheries of Pune city. The high rents of inner-city informal settlements is leading to a market displacement of the poorest informal residents from settlements within Pune city to the city fringes, where urban land is cheaper (Kundu et al, 2002; Bapat, 2004). For the non-pastoral nomadic tribes and the informal residents, their land struggles are more than just claims to land. They are signifiers of deeper struggles for the rights to participate in the everyday workings of these territories. Precisely because many social groups lack legal status as property owners, their land struggles take on wider meanings of “residents rights” – the rights to land, jobs, water and other urban amenities not just for citizens, but for all urban residents.⁴

³ For more information on the non-pastoral nomadic tribes, see the work of Econet, an advocacy group in Pune that works with India’s nomadic tribes for their human and institutional development: <http://econetindia.org/non-pastoral-nomaic-tribes>.

⁴ For more on the “right to the city” debate, see, amongst others, Purcell, 2002, Harvey, 2003, Mitchell, 2003. The contemporary notions of the “right to the city” grew out of Henri Lefebvre’s writings on the theme, particularly in his 1968 book, *Le droit à la ville* and 1991 book, *The Production of Space*.

1.2 TERRITORIAL POLITICS OF LAND CONFLICTS

The simplistic, and misleading, framing of India's land conflicts as between farmers and industrialists cannot capture this complicated terrain of land politics. Instead, I suggest a new conceptual mapping of India's land conflicts based on the political claims being made by different marginalized groups through these land struggles. I refer to this control of land, and more broadly, of a territorially bounded space, to articulate larger projects of accumulation, resistance, identity, and/or power consolidation as 'territorial politics' (Delaney, 2005; Jessop et al, 2008). The territorial politics of India's land conflicts can be more accurately captured by categorizing land conflicts into three broad types: conflicts precipitated by the i) politics of redistribution (the Khed Thakkars), ii) politics of recognition (the Bhimashankar Thakkars), and iii) politics of exclusion (the nomadic tribal groups).

Table 1.1: Territorial politics of land conflicts

NATURE OF LAND CONFLICT	DISADVANTAGED GROUPS IN LAND CONFLICT	RELATIONSHIP OF DISADVANTAGED GROUPS TO LAND	POLITICAL CLAIMS BEING MADE BY DISADVANTAGED GROUPS THROUGH LAND STRUGGLES	REMEDIES FOR LAND CONFLICT
POLITICS OF REDISTRIBUTION	MARGINAL OWNERS OF DRY LAND	PRIVATE PROPERTY RIGHTS TO LAND	CHALLENGING HISTORICALLY PRODUCED, AGRARIAN FORMS OF LAND-BASED CONTROL	FINANCIAL REMEDY OF EQUITABLE DISTRIBUTION OF THE BENEFITS OF URBANIZATION
POLITICS OF RECOGNITION	FOREST-DWELLING TRIBALS	INDIGENOUS PROPERTY CLAIMS TO LAND	RECOGNITION OF TRIBAL ECONOMIES, EPISTEMOLOGIES AND LEGAL FRAMEWORKS	CULTURAL REMEDY OF VALIDATING TRIBAL WAYS OF LIVING
POLITICS OF EXCLUSION	RESIDENTS OF INFORMAL SETTLEMENTS, NOMADIC TRIBES, LANDLESS LABORERS	DE FACTO TENURE, SELF-HELP AND OTHER FORMS OF PROPERTY CLAIMS TO LAND	WIDER RANGE OF CITIZENSHIP RIGHTS DE-LINKED FROM STATUS OF PROPERTY OWNERSHIP	POLITICAL REMEDY OF ENLARGED CITIZENSHIP RIGHTS

India's land conflicts are a symptom of the deeper process of the restructuring of land markets during an agrarian to urban transition. Centering an analysis of urban change on the experiences of the most disenfranchised within the polity brings the specific aspirations, opportunities and risks confronted by these marginalized groups to the very core of our conceptualizing of contemporary urban transformations. As an illustration, a region along a highway may be characterized as the politics of exclusion, redistribution or recognition depending on the relationship of its marginalized groups to their land. If the region has an agrarian history of acute landlessness, or if the highway region has a large number of informal residents, these groups in their present situation will not benefit from the land value increments of highway urbanization, and the transition is best characterized as the politics of exclusion. If, as in the case of the Pune highways, the region has low incidences of landlessness, the transition can be managed as a politics of redistribution. And if forest lands adjoin the highway, the incidences of tribal groups with indigenous property claims point to a politics of recognition. The spatial entity – the regions along the highway – is not taken-for-granted as a distinct human settlement that can be sharply distinguished from other regions, say the city or the urban fringe. Instead, it is the relationship of the most marginalized social groups to their land and the changes to these relationships during an agrarian to urban transition that differentiates a particular territory from another.

The categories of redistribution, exclusion and recognition are merely instrumental devices to disaggregate the varied property conditions of India's most marginalized groups. This does not mean, for instance, that marginalized social groups with private property rights to their marginal plots of land are seeking only material redistribution, and are indifferent to recognition claims. In my dissertation, I show how the Khed Thakkars are, in fact, using their meager landed assets as a route to both material redistribution and social recognition. Instead, these categories offer a new way for

planners and policy-makers of slicing through the complex land conflicts the country is facing, and to articulate appropriate solutions to the different types of land conflicts.

Land cooperatives, as redistributive remedies, are inventive solutions to resolve the contentious politics of redistribution. But, land cooperatives exclude those without private property rights to their land, and will not work for land conflicts precipitated by the politics of exclusion. They are also not appropriate for land conflicts over mineral-rich and forest lands, which are struggles for recognition – for a positive revaluation of indigenous property claims to land.

My dissertation focuses on the highway regions characterized by the politics of redistribution, and analyzes the performance of Pune’s land cooperatives as redistributive solutions to this particular type of land conflict.

1.3 RESEARCH FOCUS AND FRAMEWORK

1.3.1 POLITICS OF REDISTRIBUTION

The core of the highway land conflicts in the Khed region, and more broadly, in agrarian regions where the land conflicts are rooted in a politics of redistribution, is a change in the forms of land rent during an agrarian to urban transition. Land rent is the price paid for the exclusive use of land. In an autarkic agrarian economy, the rent of agricultural land is determined by its fertility and location, i.e. the most valuable land has the highest productivity (a function of its fertility) and the lowest transportation costs (a function of its location) (Scott, 1980; Fujita, 2012). In a liberalized urban/industrial economy, the determinants of land rent changes. It is no longer the combination of fertility and location that separates the most valuable plot of land from the least valuable one, but the location of land within a transnational real estate market. In rapidly urbanizing countries like

India, the explosive demand for urban land, combined with the scarcity⁵ of serviced urban land, is transforming urban land into a high-value market commodity. This does not mean that all available non-urban land can be converted into urban land to meet the demands of the urban expansion. It is only land in certain “appropriate locations” that is suitable for urban/industrial uses (Sathe, 2011). These appropriately located lands include land around the peripheries of large cities, land along infrastructure corridors and mineral-rich lands (Ibid). The frenzied conversion of agricultural land along highways into urban land is a function of this shift in land rent, as fertile land that previously fetched high market values in an agrarian economy are now being converted into urban/industrial land to capitalize on their favorable location. This new, highway-induced restructuring of the land market during an urban transition interacts in complex ways with more traditional forms of caste-based control, and is the basis of the politics-of-redistribution type of land conflicts.

Caste is a persistent marker of political, economic and social relations in India, particularly in rural India. The most powerful social groups in rural India are the dominant castes, an intermediate caste group between the upper-caste Brahmins and the low-caste Dalits and tribals. The dominant castes “wield preponderant economic and political power” over the other castes, and have been the

⁵ The scarcity of serviced urban land is described in one of two ways. Some scholars argue that the exponential growth of the urban population – commonly referred to as the ‘urban turn’– demands a rapid opening up of the supplies of urban land. For instance, India’s urban population is projected to increase from 340 million in 2008 to 590 million in 2030 (McKinsey Global Institute, 2010). If adequate urban land is not made available to accommodate these urban expansions, urbanization will proceed in a haphazard, laissez-faire manner and result in informal and irregular settlements with poor services, scarcities in serviced land markets that will further exclude the poor from these formal land/housing markets, and environmental degradation through urban sprawl. Others argue that there is no urgent demand for urban land. The transformation of land into an international tradeable asset within the new political-economic context of neoliberalization demands these speculative narratives of rapid urbanization and land scarcity. Tania Li, for instance, argues that similar to the earlier commodity ‘rushes’ like the gold rush, these narratives of land scarcity make land appear to be a commodity that is “valuable, limited/scarce, and poised to rise in value,” and are discursive instruments to attract investors and potential buyers into investing in land and real estate. In other words, it is the speculative narratives of land scarcity that are fueling these processes. I explain these arguments in details in the section on the liberalization of land markets in Chapter 2.

backbone of Indian democracy since Independence in 1947 (Srinivas, 1987). Through long histories of socio-spatial segregation, the most marginalized groups in the Khed villages – the tribals – owned the driest land, and the dominant caste landowners owned the most fertile lands. In other words, long histories of socio-spatial politics produced a neat mapping of social power with land ownership. The intense demand for highway lands for urban expansion over the past two decades has changed the metric for land valuation from fertility to location. Also, in the interest of food security, the Indian state requires that, as far as possible, only dry lands, and not fertile lands, be acquired for infrastructural, industrial and urban development. In response to these shifts, previously unproductive dry lands adjacent to the highways, owned by the Dalits and tribals, are now transformed into attractive market commodities, and similarly, fertile lands located away from the highway lose their market value. Marginalized groups are capitalizing on this shift in market demand for their dry lands to challenge historically produced, agrarian forms of land-based control by the dominant-caste landowners. It is in this context that the younger generation male Thakkars of the Khed region are eagerly parting with their dry lands for industrial/urban expansions.

Though the policy of acquiring only dry lands for industrial/urban expansion indirectly targets the lands of the most marginalized groups, these land consolidation processes for urbanization also affect dominant caste landowners. The latter also own some dry lands, and the practical reality of consolidating contiguous plots of land for urban/industrial developments necessitates the acquisition of some fertile lands in addition to dry lands. Moreover, the poor performance of agriculture - aggravated by labor shortages as Dalit and tribal agricultural laborers are now finding alternative work in the factories coming up along the highways - coupled with the bright prospects of urbanization – driven by the skyrocketing prices of urban land and the prospects of the ‘India Shining’ growth story - is changing the aspirations of dominant caste agrarian landowners. These landowners want to be included in the benefits of India’s urbanization, and their

protests against land consolidation stem from a demand for more inclusive compensation packages for their land.

This is the basis of many of the recent land conflicts in India that have been misleadingly framed as taking place between farmers and industrialists. The dominant castes in West Bengal – the Mahisyas – played a central role in the Singur protests against the Tata Nano manufacturing plant (Majumder, 2012). The dominant caste Jats were at the forefront of the violent Yamuna Expressway protests (Mahaprashasta, 2012), and the conflict was resolved when the state government made the land compensation package more attractive to the landowners (unlike the Pune case, land cooperatives were not formed along the Yamuna Expressway; farmers agreed to part with their land when they were offered higher monetary compensations). Khed, Singur, Yamuna Expressway – these land conflicts are underpinned by the politics of redistribution, where different social groups compete to stake their claims on the land value increments as land use changes from agricultural to non-agricultural, and more broadly, on the benefits of highway urbanization.

1.3.2 FRAMEWORK OF LAND VALUE CAPTURE

A central planning question that arises from the restructuring of land markets during an agrarian to urban transition, within the context of a liberalized economy, is: how can/should the land value increments be allocated amongst different institutional actors, such as the agrarian landowners, politicians, bureaucrats, industrial firms and property developers? The question of the allocation of land value increments arises because of the peculiar nature of land as a commodity. Unlike other commodities, land is a natural resource, fixed in supply, and immobile. Because of these attributes, increases in land value are a complex mix of public and private actions. The value of land increases not only because of the efforts and investments of the private landowner, but also because of public action (George, 1879; Loucks, 1930). Public action includes public investment in

infrastructure and social services, changes in land use and land use regulations, and population growth and economic development (Ibid). The practical challenge with land value increments is how to ascertain the proportion of the land value increment arising from public and private actions respectively (Ingram and Hong, 2012). Allocating too little of the land value increment to the private sector de-incentivizes private landowners from making investments in their property, allocating too much deprives society of its fair share of the increment. It is easiest to calculate land value increments when “the change in land value [is] associated with an action that took place over a relatively brief period of time, such as a public infrastructure project [and/or] a regulatory change” (Ibid: 5). The land value increment accompanying an urban transition – with the change in land use from agricultural to urban – is a “time-bound action” (Ibid) that lends itself to a more accurate estimation of the increments created by public action.

The idea of the land value increment traces its origins to the 19th century political economist, Henry George, who argued that increases in land value are collectively created by society, and, therefore, these land value increments should accrue to society as a whole. More recently, there has been a growing interest among some scholars on the relevance of land value increments in managing urban growth (Ibid; Smolka and Amborski, 2000). They argue that the intense demand for urban land, and the changes in land use and land use regulations to accommodate this increasing demand, are creating skyrocketing increases in land value, and planners have to innovate with new regulatory mechanisms for a more “collective ownership of the public created land value” (Ibid; Fainstein, 2012). My theoretical moorings in analyzing the restructuring of India’s land markets during an urban transition are tied to this framework of land value increments. The rest of my dissertation uses the lens of land value increments to evaluate who captures the land value increments of the newly converted highway lands, through what process, who decides how the captured land value increments are used, and how these increments are used.

1.4 RESEARCH DESIGN

At the start of my fieldwork in mid-2010, India's land conflicts were the subject of much heated debate amongst policy-makers, academics, activists, the media, and the general citizenry. The private sector was condemning the statist land acquisition laws as the "biggest constraint" to urgently needed industrialization and urbanization – "70 percent of the 190 delayed [infrastructure] projects are on account of land acquisition problems" (IDFC, 2009: 1). Social activists, on the other hand, were coming down hard on the state for resorting to coercive practices of eminent domain that was leading to the widespread displacement and disfranchisement of India's most marginalized groups. Though these critiques on what was wrong with the current state of land management in India were crucial in framing the problem, less attention was being paid on how to resolve these land conflicts. I spent the first few months of my fieldwork traveling, talking to policy-makers and activists, and looking for cases of "success" – cases where conflicting institutional interests had been successfully reconciled; empirical cases that could offer a way forward from the current land impasse. Such empirical cases of success would be worthy of further investigation because they enable us to identify the "right conditions" under which typical institutional or structural "constraints can be prevailed over" (Peattie, 1990; Flyvbjerg, 2006; Mukhija, 2010).

It was at this time that I came across the Khed case during my visit to Pune. The Khed case seemed unique in successfully bringing together institutional actors with oppositional interests – agrarian landowners and industrialists – in an innovative land cooperative experiment. The Pune bureaucrats played a pivotal role in mediating these negotiations, which seemed to offer some hope that the public sector is not always incompetent and/or corrupt. The active involvement of bureaucrats also pointed to the possibility of scaling up the land cooperative experiment – through identifying the conditions that made the Khed bureaucrats effective conflict mediators, and

replicating these conditions elsewhere to incentive good bureaucratic performance in land management. By December 2010, I had moved to Pune for an in-depth analysis of the Khed land cooperative. But a few months in the field further complicated, and enriched, my research design through the discovery that land cooperatives were being formed only along some highways in the Pune region, and not along others, and that different forms of land cooperatives were being formed along different highways.

Because of these findings, I narrowed in on three highways in the Pune region – the Pune-Mumbai, Pune-Sholapur and Pune-Nashik highways – as the focus on my study.

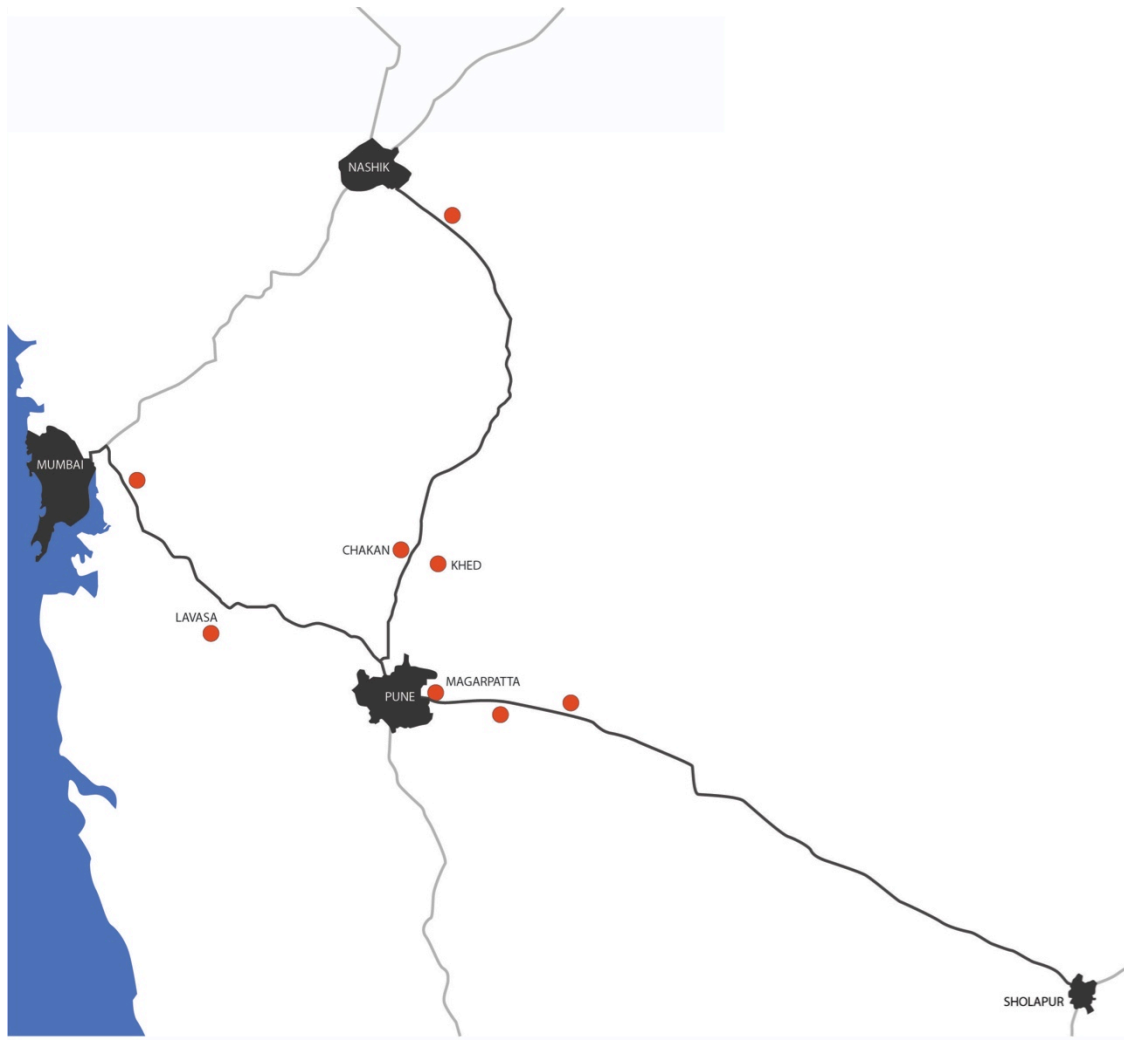


Figure 1.1: Research case studies - The three Pune highways

Like many other regions in other parts of India, the Pune-Mumbai highway remains mired in land conflicts. A number of large-scale, self-contained, primarily residential townships (gated communities) have started coming up along the Pune-Mumbai highway. The state acquired land for these highway developments, on behalf of the developers, using its eminent domain powers, leading to widespread tribal displacements and political corruption.

Along the Pune-Sholapur highway, agrarian landowners voluntarily pooled their fragmented agricultural lands, developed primarily residential townships, and formed shareholding companies to manage these townships. These landowners devised some strict rules to regulate these shareholding companies - each landholding family receives shares proportional to the land given up for the urban development, only these agrarian landowners are allowed as equity members of the shareholding company, and shareholders cannot sell their shares to outsiders. These regulations ensure that the agrarian landowners capture all the land value increment of the newly converted urban land.

The Pune-Nashik highway is part of an automobile manufacturing agglomeration economy. Land cooperatives are being formed along this highway to open up the supply of land for auto-related industrial firms. But these land cooperatives are not voluntarily formed; they are bureaucrat-mediated. The first of these bureaucrat-mediated land cooperatives is the Khed Special Economic Zone (SEZ). SEZs are industrial enclaves that are exempt from the economic regulations governing industrial firms in other parts of the country. The special regulations are expected to incentivize foreign direct investment (FDI), improve manufacturing exports, and encourage firms to locate in geographies areas where they would have no market incentives to locate. In 2006, the agrarian landowners in the Khed region protested against the formation of the SEZ. Local bureaucrats overcame these protests through the formation of a land cooperative. Fifteen percent of the shares of the new SEZ development are owned by the farmers' land cooperative, and the remaining 85 percent of the shares are held in a joint partnership between the bureaucrats and the private sector firm. Following the Khed example, other highway villages along the Pune-Nashik highway have agreed to new developments – like more SEZs and an international airport – if they get a deal similar to the Khed one.

The Pune highways represent three models of land consolidation along highways:

- The Pune-Mumbai highway represents a pure state model of land consolidation, of the state acquisition of land through the use of eminent domain.
- The Pune-Sholapur highway represents a pure market model of land consolidation, where agrarian landowners voluntarily consolidate their lands for urban/industrial uses through the formation of voluntarily-formed land cooperatives.
- The Pune-Nashik highway represents a hybrid model of land consolidation, where bureaucrats use negotiation, and not coercion, to mediate land transactions between agrarian landowners and incoming businesses and form bureaucrat-mediated land cooperatives as hybrid institutions to bring together the conflicting interests of landowners and private sector firms.

In other words, the state appropriates all of the land value increment in the Pune-Mumbai highway case, agrarian landowners capture all of the land value increment in the Pune-Sholapur highway case, and the bureaucrats, private sector firm and agrarian landowners share the land value increment in the Pune-Nashik highway case.

Table 1.2: Institutional outcomes along Pune’s highways

HIGHWAY	INSTITUTIONAL OUTCOME	WHO CAPTURES THE LAND VALUE INCREMENT?
PUNE-MUMBAI	Pure state model of land consolidation	Parastatal
PUNE-SHOLAPUR	Pure market model of land consolidation	Agrarian landowners
PUNE-NASHIK	Hybrid model of land consolidation	Agrarian landowners, parastatals, and private sector firm

The Pune highways offer a natural experiment to compare three different institutional arrangements for managing land during an agrarian to urban transition. The different institutional outcomes along highways within the same region allowed me to hold many variables constant – such as state-level politics, regional agrarian and land tenure histories, level of regional economic development – and to seek answers to some key questions like: Why did land cooperatives emerge along two of Pune’s highways – the Pune-Sholapur and Pune-Nashik highways – and not along the Pune-Mumbai highway? Why did different forms of land cooperatives – voluntarily formed and bureaucrat-mediated land cooperatives - emerge along the Pune highways? Which of these modes of land consolidation – public, private, or public-private – are more equitable and democratic in their distributional outcomes? Other questions that motivate my research include: How are the most marginalized groups along the Pune highways, i.e. the tribals, experiencing the transition, and how effective are land cooperatives in equitably redistributing land value increments to these groups? More broadly, what do the Pune land conflicts and cooperatives tell us about India’s agrarian to urban transition along highways? These are the questions I set out to answer in the rest of the dissertation.

1.5 CHAPTER OUTLINE

Having laid out the broad framework of territorial politics, the rest of the dissertation focuses on a specific type of highway land conflict – those characterized by the politics of redistribution.

Chapter 2, on “Highway Urbanization,” situates the current phenomenon of highway urbanization in India within a wider historical and geographical context. It argues that the contemporary processes of urbanization are set within the context of a new form of globalization, and as such, these urban processes are markedly different from 19th and 20th century phenomena like suburbs. It outlines the unique challenges posed by the phenomenon of highway urbanization to

existing institutions for governing land, and lays out the broad contours of the encounters of a democratic India with the new globalizing economy.

Chapter 3, on “The Pune Highways,” hones in on the three highways in the Pune region. It provides an in-depth empirical account of an urban development project along each of these highways – the Lavasa Lake City project along the Pune-Mumbai Expressway, the Magarpatta Township along the Pune-Sholapur highway, and the Khed Special Economic Zone (SEZ) along the Pune-Nashik highway. This chapter introduces the “dominant caste agrarian landowners,” also called the agrarian bourgeoisie, and points to the presence of the dominant caste landowners as the main explanatory variable for the emergence of land cooperatives along two of Pune’s highways, but not along the Pune-Mumbai highway.

Chapter 4, on “Cities of Sugar: The Magarpatta Model of Land Consolidation,” analyzes one form of land cooperative – the voluntarily formed shareholding cooperatives along the Pune-Sholapur highway. It traces these voluntarily formed cooperatives to the region’s rich history in sugar cooperatives. Since the earlier agrarian institutions of sugar cooperatives are now being re-worked into shareholding companies in land, this chapter asks why sugar cooperatives emerged only in some regions in post-Independent India from the 1950s to 1970s, and not in others. To draw larger inferences at a country-wide scale, I compare the Western Maharashtra region, within which the Pune-Sholapur highway is located, to the Southern Karnataka region. The Western Maharashtra region has the country’s densest concentration of sugar cooperatives. In contrast, the Southern Karnataka region is also rich in sugarcane cultivation, but all the sugarcane is processed in privately owned sugar factories, not in sugar cooperatives. This chapter analyzes the replicability of the Magarpatta model of land consolidation, both in terms of i) practical replicability: how transferable are the conditions that made this model possible to other regions of the country? ii) normative

replicability – is this model democratic and socially equitable; is it a desirable model to replicate in other regions of the country?

Chapter 5, on “Adversarial Cooperation: The Khed Model of Land Consolidation,” analyzes another form of cooperative – the bureaucrat-mediated land cooperatives along the Pune-Nashik highway. Unlike the Magarpatta region, the Khed region lacks a prior institutional history of sugar cooperatives. In the Khed case, inventive bureaucrats played a crucial mediating role in bringing together diverse social groups, often with conflicting interests, in a collective land experiment. The Southern Karnataka comparison is instructive here, too. Though the Southern Karnataka region has a critical mass of dominant caste landowners who have been agitating against coercive land acquisition practices, the bureaucrats in this region lack the resourcefulness of the Khed bureaucrats in innovating with new institutions like land cooperatives. This chapter outlines the clever timing of the Khed bureaucrats in fostering collective action amongst conflicting social groups, and also explains why the Southern Karnataka region lacks savvy bureaucrats like the Khed ones.

Chapter 6, the “Coda: Land cooperatives as redistributive regional institutions,” evaluates the performance of land cooperatives in democratically and equitably allocating land, and more precisely, the land value increments, amongst different social groups. It concludes that though Pune’s land cooperatives are far from ideal institutions of democracy and social equity, they do open up new possibilities for dealing with the challenges of contemporary highway urbanization.

Chapter 2

HIGHWAY URBANIZATION

Rajgurunagar, Chakan and Talegaon are a cluster of ‘villages’ located around 40 kilometers from Pune along the Pune-Nashik highway. Rajgurunagar has a population of 19,000, and is governed by a *Village Panchayat*. But, it hardly fits the description of a village. With its four and five story commercial buildings, tightly packed single-family homes and multi-family apartments of four to six stories, it could pass off as a high-density, mixed-use neighborhood within a bustling city. Chakan was proposed as the location for the new Pune International Airport. Apartment complexes advertising the proximity to the airport have started burgeoning in Chakan. In August 2012, the state government changed the location of the proposed international airport from Chakan to Rajgurunagar. The Pune-Nashik highway is a successful automobile-manufacturing cluster. Rajgurunagar, Chakan, Talegaon and their neighboring villages have large manufacturing factories for the multinational and domestic auto companies, Volkswagon, Daimler-Benz, Mahindra and Mahindra and Bajaj Auto.

The ‘villages’ of Rajgurunagar, Chakan and Talegaon are a diverse mix of social groups – old-time residents, newly arrived skilled and unskilled industrial workers, and migrant agricultural laborers. The top-level managers in these factories commute daily from Pune city to these villages for their work. The factories are reluctant to employ local labor for permanent jobs, partly because they lack the requisite skills and partly because of fear of unionization. The Dalit and tribal residents in these highway ‘villages’ work in these factories, mainly as daily-wage and contract laborers, on their own agricultural fields, and on the fields of dominant-caste landowners. The more affluent agrarian landowners have started their own construction, trucking and restaurant businesses to service the new highway developments. The dominant-caste landowners face acute labor shortages as most of the Dalits and tribals who previously worked on their lands now find work in the factories. These landowners rely on unskilled laborers who come to this region from some of the

most economically distressed parts of the country, particularly from north Karnataka, and provide these migrant laborers accommodation, food and some paltry wages in exchange for agricultural work.

It is a common sight to see apartment complexes being built in the midst of agricultural fields in these highway villages. As common a sight as the apartments are the billboards advertising these apartments, with flashy slogans that sell apartment ownership as a means to a “worldclass” urban lifestyle.



Figure 2.1: Views of Rajgurunagar *Village Panchayat*



Figure 2.2: Apartments coming up in the midst of agricultural fields in Chakan. Chakan was the proposed location for the new Pune international airport, and the apartment advertisement reads: "Book your flat and fly to Singapore."



Figure 2.3: Industrial cluster in Talegaon

The highway ‘villages’ of Rajgurunagar, Chakan and Talegaon has thriving industrial economies. With a population from 15,000 to 20,000 residents each, they meet the demographic criterion of the Indian census for urban areas to have a population size exceeding 5000 people. And yet, these areas remain as villages in India’s census statistics, their residents are enumerated as rural, and they are governed by rural local governments.

2.1 URBANIZATION-OUTSIDE-CITIES: “THE SHAPE OF THINGS TO COME?”

Rajgurunagar, Chakan and Talegaon are not aberrations in India’s agrarian countryside. The rapid restructuring of land markets along highways exaggerates, and makes more perceptible, the subtle changes that are underway in India’s villages. India’s most rapid urbanization is not taking place within its larger cities of Mumbai or Bangalore, but in large villages that are classified as villages but have “an increasingly urban character” (IIHS, 2011). This “grey zone” of villages is home to nearly 80-140 million residents (Ibid). Pointing to the declining hold of culture and agriculture, the traditional “mainstay” of village life, on contemporary Indian villages, scholars are underscoring the disappearance of the Indian ‘village’ as we commonly understand it (Gupta, 2005). Nearly 40 percent of the rural population in half of India’s states is now engaged in non-agricultural work, and the numbers are increasing (Ibid). Agriculture contributes to only one-fourth of the rural GDP (Credit Suisse, 2012). 75 percent of new factories in the past decade were set up in villages, contributing to nearly 70 percent of the new manufacturing jobs created (Ibid).

This is true not only for India, but for other countries in the global south. In Africa, Nairobi’s industrial and urban expansion is spilling beyond city boundaries into the regions along inter-urban highways connecting Nairobi to its neighboring cities of Mombasa and Kampala (UN-HABITAT, 2008). Since the 1980s, the Nairobi-Mombasa highway has become the favored

destination for manufacturing firms, and the highway region is a teeming mix of industries, high-income residential properties, and informal settlements. In Egypt, the urban transition is taking place within the North Delta Region - the triangular region connecting Cairo to the coastal cities of Alexandria and Ismailia-Port Said (Ibid). The zones along the Cairo-Alexandria and Cairo-Ismailia highways within the North Delta Region accommodate nearly 50 percent of Egypt's industries. The story is not too different in other parts of Africa, with the Greater Ibadan-Lagos-Accra highway spanning four countries in West Africa, and the Johannesburg-Pretoria and Maputo-Johannesburg highways in South Africa (Ibid). The phenomenon is marked in Southeast and East Asia, with the state-sponsored projects of "transborder growth triangles" (Douglass, 2000). The most ambitious of these include the Sijori Growth Triangle linking the city-state of Singapore to Johor Baru in Malaysia and part of the Riau Islands in Indonesia; the mega-urban regions linking Medan in Indonesia to regions within Malaysia and southern Thailand; and the industrialization along the new highways connecting Bangkok to Laos and Vietnam (Ibid). China's urbanization and industrialization is predominantly taking place in villages, and has attracted much scholarly attention to urban villages, villages-in-the-city, and rural industrialization (Friedmann, 2005; Hsing, 2011). Recognizing the scale of these urban developments, the UN-HABITAT identified massive urban conurbations like urban corridors, mega-regions and city-regions as the "shape of things to come" (UN-HABITAT, 2010).

Urbanization is spilling beyond city boundaries not only in countries in the global south, but also in the Western advanced industrialized societies. The emergent built environment in the U.S is a "fragmented and multi-nodal mixture of employment and residential settings, with a fusion of suburban, exurban, and central-city characteristics" (Chaves et al, 2011: 35). For instance, projections based on current growth trends in the U.S show that nearly 70 percent of the country's population growth and 80 percent of its employment growth will be accommodated within ten "megapolitan areas" – "integrated networks of metropolitan areas" – clustered along inter-state

highways (Carbonella and Yaro, 2005; Lang and Dhavale, 2005). Frankfurt has witnessed a dramatic socio-spatial restructuring in the past two decades, where most of its dynamic growth has taken place “in a para-urban zone beyond a 10-mile radius and inside a 100-mile radius around the center” (Keil and Ronneberger, 2006). Terms like the 100-mile city (Sudjic, 2006), edgeless city (Lang, 2003), metroburbs (Chaves et al, 2011), technoburb (Fishman, 2006) are attempts to capture these liminal geographies that defy the neat city-suburb-village transect that characterized earlier eras of settlement development in the U.S.

Given the scale of these contemporary forms of urbanization-outside-cities, scholars have advanced a number of explanations for the emergence of these urban forms. These explanations can be broadly grouped into four schools of thought: i) the endogenous view, ii) the convergence view, iii) the agglomeration view, and iv) the uneven development view.

2.1.1 THE ENDOGENOUS VIEW

The most popular voices within this school are Jean Gottman, Terry McGee and John Friedmann, who argue that the hybrid geographies of urbanization-outside-cities are emerging due to endogenous reasons, i.e. reasons internal to their national economies.

One of the closest historical precedents to the contemporary urbanization along infrastructure corridors was the massive urban conurbation stretching along the Boston-Washington highway in the 1960s, termed by the French geographer, Jean Gottman, as megalopolis (1964). Integrated by an infrastructural spine, Gottmann argued that the Bos-Wash megalopolis, as a form of urbanization, has been developing into a powerhouse of agglomerated economic activity since the settling of the Puritans in New England in the 17th century. In a persuasive argument for articulating a “new image” for U.S urban development in the 1960s, John Friedmann pointed to the skewed

spatial structure of economically thriving metropolitan core regions and economically impoverished inter-metropolitan peripheries (1965). He argued that the policy and planning focus on the city and metropolitan regions led to a neglect of the inter-metropolitan peripheries, a zone that accommodates more than one-fifth of the U.S population. Instead of the fixed physical artifact of the city, Friedmann urged planners to adopt more relevant and timely categories of space like the “urban field,” which he defined as “a pattern of point locations and connecting flows of people, information, money and commodities” (Ibid: 314). In the context of Asia, in the 1960s, Terry McGee characterized the distinct pattern of urbanization in South-east Asia as ‘desakota,’ a neologism that combines the Baha Indonesian term ‘desa’ [village] and ‘kota’ [city] (1967). McGee argued that the desakota model of urbanization was unique to South-east Asia, with its well-developed infrastructure of roads and canals, a dense rural population engaged in smallholder cultivation, and an integrated ‘transactive’ urban-rural environment in terms of movements of people and commodities.

Most of the writings on the endogenous view are from the 1960s and 70s. In a more recent work on the urban villages and rural industrialization in China, Friedman points to endogenous variables – including high rural population densities, an excess supply of labor, historical antecedents (like craft traditions), high levels of household savings, resourceful local leadership and entrepreneurial talent on the part of households – as explanations for China’s contemporary urbanization (2005).

2.1.2 THE CONVERGENCE VIEW

Challenging the endogenous view, scholars within the convergence view argue that it is “Orientalist” to talk about a unique South-east Asian or a Third World city (Dick and Rimmer, 1998). Instead, we need a “single urban discourse” that recognizes the aspiration of countries in the

global south to catch up with the West (Ibid). Some convergence scholars point to the similar conditions of high levels of income inequality and perceived sense of low public safety in both the U.S and South-east Asian countries (Ibid). These common conditions are propelling the South-east Asian middle class towards adopting American forms of urbanism, including gated residential communities, patrolled shopping malls and privatized recreational spaces. Others point to the international diffusion of Anglo-American models of suburbanization to countries in the global south via institutional actors like master planners, design consultants and property specialists from the U.S who are hired as foreign experts to consult on the new urban developments (Ibid), and domestic architects, planners and government officials who model their urban developments on the “northern exemplars of the good suburban life” (Clapson and Hutchison, 2010: 4).

The convergence view acknowledges globalization as a driving force behind the forms of urbanization in the global south. Globalization, in this view, is defined as the flow of ideas from the West to the rest of the world. From colonial times to the present, models of urban development have been transferred from Western cities to cities in developing countries, with the only difference between then and now being the length of the time lag: technology transfer is more rapid in contemporary times.

In contrast to the endogenous and convergence views, the agglomeration and uneven development views situate the contemporary urban processes within a new form of globalization. The 1970s saw a radical restructuring of the global economic system of production, with the shift from Fordism to post-Fordism. The economic recession that swept through the established industrial cities of the United States and Western Europe spelled the decline of the Fordist production paradigm – of large, vertically integrated corporations to ensure mass production of standardized goods, and of the Keynesian welfare state with its redistributive social-welfare policies

and the nationalized institutions of collective bargaining to stabilize mass consumption (Piore and Sabel, 1986; Scott, 1988). These social-political-economic changes interacted with technological advancements to further destabilize the Fordist system. Technological innovations - like the rise of information and communication networks that accelerated the flows of capital, labor, goods and raw materials, and the development of shipping containers that drastically reduced the cost of shipping and allowed the production process to be separated into different, highly specialized geographical locations (Castells, 1996; Levinson, 2008) – enabled the unprecedented spatial dispersion of the production process of the global economy. The agglomeration and uneven development schools view the contemporary growth of mega-regions and inter-urban corridors as the spatial correlates of this changing economic order.

2.1.3 THE AGGLOMERATION VIEW

This view addresses a central paradox of the new form of globalization. We are in the midst of the digital era – or, in the words of Manuel Castells, in an information age or network society (1996) – which makes it possible for a placeless, borderless dispersal of economic activity across the globe. Yet, instead of the diminishing, and ultimately vanishing, role of place within global economic organization, we are seeing the resurgence of place in a new form – in the form of large urban conurbations like mega-regions and inter-urban corridors. Agglomeration scholars agree that current economic activity requires these large urban conurbations as the command and control nodes for organizing the globally dispersed economic activities (Sassen, 2001; Scott, 2006). However, these scholars diverge on the question of who should benefit from these emergent sociospatial processes. Some agglomeration scholars analyze the emerging clusters with firms as their unit of analysis. The most popular articulation of this view is that of Michael Porter. As companies struggle to decide where to locate their operations within this globally dispersed economy, Porter advises them to shift

their thinking from “internal to external sources of company success” (2000). The earlier ideas on the competitive advantage of companies – like how the company is internally organized and managed, on the business costs such as taxes and utility rates – have now taken on larger considerations. The wider environment within which a company locates now exerts a great deal of influence on how competitive firms are (Ibid). The more business-oriented/economic view for agglomeration argues that firms cluster in a dense regional economy to increase their productivity, to innovate faster, and to be more globally competitive in a global economy. Clustering improves economic competitiveness in three ways. First, firms within an agglomeration have access to shared inputs, employees and public goods (Ibid; World Bank, 2009). For instance, firms can be more nimble in increasing or decreasing production through hiring and firing, and/or subcontracting, labor and services to specialized firms clustered in the region. Second, the geographical concentration of the labor pool facilitates a better matching between firms and workers (World Bank, 2009). Third, innovation and learning takes place through knowledge spillovers - the transmission of ideas amongst entrepreneurs and workers both within-industry and between-industry (Ibid).

The flexible specialization scholars shift the unit of analysis from firms to small-scale firms in developing countries. The post-Fordist period witnessed the emergence of new dynamic centers of economic growth in regions like central and northwestern Italy and the Silicon Valley. These new regions of growth were based on flexible specialization, characterized by networked clusters of small-scale, technologically sophisticated and decentralized firms (Ibid; Piore and Sabel, 1986). Taking forward the work pioneered by Piore and Sabel, scholars working in the context of newly industrializing countries have argued that the flexible specialization form of industrial organization is particularly advantageous to countries with “incipient industrialization” (Schmitz and Nadvi, 1999). Developing countries are characterized by a few large enterprises at the top and many small

struggling enterprises at the bottom that lack the resources to scale up to mid-sized firms. Clustering allows small-scale firms to grow into global players through mobilizing resources in small amounts, and through sharing the resources that require larger economies of scale (Ibid).

Scholars who are more focused on questions of social equity than on the economic competitiveness of firms offer a third point of view within the agglomeration school. These scholars point to the potential of these regional economic clusters in preventing regressive inter-jurisdictional competition. The intense competitiveness amongst cities around the world in attracting transnational firms to their jurisdictions has led to short-sighted, parochial and fragmented decision-making, with many local governments prioritizing pro-business economic policies over policies for improving collective public goods and services (Donahue, 1997; Libertun de Duren, 2006). Regional economic agglomerations provide the incentives for local governments to work cooperatively with one another and to advance regional visions, instead of pitting them against each other (Douglass, 2002; Dewar and Epstein, 2007).

2.1.4 THE UNEVEN DEVELOPMENT VIEW

In contradistinction to the agglomeration view, critical scholars argue that these contemporary phenomena of mega-regions and inter-urban corridors are expressions of uneven development. The concept of uneven development traces its earliest articulations to the French sociospatial theorist, Henri Lefebvre. Writing in the 1960s, Lefebvre argued that by the 21st century, capitalist development would reach its apogee through a complete urbanization of human society. Capitalist urban space, according to Lefebvre, would be “global [the space of sovereignty...a fetishized space, reductive of differences], fragmented [a space that is separating, disjunctive, a space that locates specificities, places or localities, both in order to control them and in order to make

them negotiable], and hierarchical [ranging from the lowliest places to the noblest, from the tabooed to the sovereign]” (Lefebvre, 1991: 282).

Marxist geographers like David Harvey, Neil Smith and Neil Brenner have compellingly carried forward Lefebvre’s idea of global-fragmented-hierarchical space in their analyses of uneven development. Drawing a link between urbanization and capitalism, Harvey underscores the active role that urbanization has played in absorbing the surpluses of capitalism: the cycles of development, destruction and redevelopment of urban places is a necessary condition for capitalism to survive (Harvey, 1985; 2003). Similarly, Smith expounds on the concept of uneven development in his book of the same name: “Capital attempts to see-saw from a developed to an underdeveloped area, then at a later point back to the first area which is by now underdeveloped... This is the see-saw movement of capital, which lies behind the larger uneven development process.” (Smith, 1984: 149). Of particular importance to the emergence of mega-regions and inter-urban corridors, these Marxist economic geographers dismiss as obsolete the spatial categories of urban and rural (Harvey, 2003; Brenner, 2013). Brenner argues that the crisis of the Fordist model of capital accumulation in the 1970s marked the weakening of the nation-state as the key arbiter of economic and social relations (2004). But, the weakening of the nation-state does not mean the end of the state. It merely represents “state spatial restructuring,” i.e. the restructuring of the scales at which the state operates, in a post-Fordist era. Besides the upscaling of state regulatory processes – through the formation of supranational blocs like the European Union and Mercosur – we see a simultaneous downscaling of political scale in the emergence of subnational urban regions. Instead of the idea of balanced national economic development that was the driving force of the earlier Fordist era of capital accumulation, contemporary strategies of economic growth focus on increasing the territorial competitiveness of certain urban regions. The concentration of major socioeconomic assets in a few globally competitive urban regions is leading to one of the most exacerbated forms of uneven spatial

development. Instead of the conventional spatial categories of urban and rural, Brenner calls for “a new lexicon of sociospatial difference” that captures the “unevenly woven fabric of worldwide urbanization” (Brenner, 2013: 101).

The main concerns of the Marxist geographers against uneven development were clearly expressed in the former’s trenchant criticisms of the World Bank’s 2009 World Development Report (WDR) on “Reshaping Economic Geography.” The central message of the WDR was that uneven spatial development is an inevitable correlate of economic growth. The report argued that when policy makers seek to balance economic development and redirect growth from prosperous to impoverished areas, they are unnecessarily interfering with market logic and restraining economic growth. Instead, the report argues that regional clusters should be allowed to grow unfettered. It is only when countries reach an intermediate stage of urbanization that instruments for balancing economic growth – like connective infrastructure and spatially targeted policies – be used to integrate the economically lagging areas with the economically leading ones. Critical scholars rallied against what they perceived to be an economically reductionist justification for uneven development (Peck and Sheppard, 2010: 333), and argued instead for active policy interventions to correct these uneven spatial processes (Scott, 2009).

2.2 SITUATING MY RESEARCH WITHIN THE LITERATURE

The megapolitan regions along the U.S inter-state highways, the transborder growth triangles in South-East and East Asia, the highway urbanizations in India and Kenya – all of these urban processes are not endogenously driven by public and private actors within a particular nation-state. The endogenous scholars – Gottman, Friedman, McGee – developed neologisms such as megalopolis, urban field and desakota in the 1960s and 70s, at a time when the nation-state remained a powerful arbiter of economic relations in both developed and developing countries. However, it is

clear that we live in a different world post-1970s, and the endogenous views needs to be revised to recognize the role of globalization in explaining contemporary urban processes. In a 2005 article on “renewing the [desakota] debate,” McGee re-conceptualized his earlier work on desakotas for the current times: “Globalization has accelerated the flow of people, commodities, capital and information that is causing both detachment of the city core and integration with its surrounding extended metropolitan region at the same time. Detachment in the sense that the city cores are increasingly sourcing their resources such as food and leisure from a wider global market and integration in the sense that the resources of the peri-urban region such as land and water are increasingly needed” (McGee, 2005: 43).

Since the 1980s, countries around the world are converging towards similar processes and forms of urban growth – Special Economic Zones (SEZs), residential gated communities, patrolled shopping malls – and these spaces are located within ever expanding urban conurbations, like along inter-urban highways and within mega-city regions. Though countries around the world are converging towards similar urban forms, it is misleading to assert that they are converging towards an Anglo-American model of suburbanization - as espoused by the convergence school – for two reasons. First, suburbs are linked to a specific moment of development within the industrial history of the West. Most clearly expressed in the zonal or concentric ring theory of E.W.Burgess, suburbs had a discrete form – they were the concentric zone of residential uses around the city, which served as the core for organizing economic activity – and they were embedded within a specific historical moment – suburbs represented one of the concentric zones of development around an outwardly growing, industrializing modern metropolis (Dear, 2003; Dear and Dahmann, 2008). These models were based on the growth patterns of Chicago, considered to be the paradigmatic modernist city of the late 19th to early 20th century. The past few decades have seen some large-scale changes – the rise of information technologies, the end of the Cold War, the deregulation of national economies –

which have moved us into a new era that scholars varyingly call postmodern, post-socialist, post-Fordist. How relevant, then, is the historically specific development of Anglo-American suburbs as the explanation for contemporary urban processes that are unfolding in a different time period? Second, as urbanization-outside-cities becomes a dominant form of urbanization around the world, it takes on varied forms and is driven by different sociospatial processes. In the US, the functionally monolithic suburbs that ringed the core city have now been replaced by regions that represent a “fragmented and multimodal mixture of employment and residential settings, with a fusion of suburban, exurban and central-city characteristics” (Chaves et al, 2011: 35). Scholars have coined neologisms like metroburbs, technoburbs, edgeless city and privatopia to distinguish these contemporary urban processes from earlier suburbs. The North Delta region in Egypt – the triangular region bounded by the Cairo-Alexandria and Cairo-Port Said highways on two sides, and by the coast on the third – is largely unplanned, with private industrial firms, large-scale property developers and small-scale builders converting agricultural lands within this region into formal and informal developments. The Sijori Growth Triangle connecting Singapore, Indonesia and Malaysia is strongly planned and led by the Singaporean developmental state to make the Singapore region an economically competitive hub within a globalizing economy. The convergence explanation leaves unanswered many important questions such as: though the US technoburbs and Singapore’s Sijori Growth Triangle look similar in urban form, what are the different narratives leading to these convergent urban formations; besides the flow of ideas and planning practices from the US to the rest of the world, what are the new geographies of policy transfers – like, for instance, the role of Singapore in serving as an aspirational model of development and as the technical expert for Asian countries; and, with the new form of globalization, what are the key differences in the modes of policy transfers across countries? The convergence school’s blinkered focus on the Anglo-American model of development lumps diverse urban processes under the monolithic category of the suburb,

it leaves many other regions of the world that are growing in influence out of the orbit of analysis, and it does not adequately explain the difference between the pre-1970s and post-1970s forms of the global transfer of ideas and planning practices.

In my work, I agree with the underlying argument that launches both the agglomeration and uneven development views – the post-1970s context of globalization that is producing, and is in turn produced by, these emergent forms of urbanization. The agglomeration and uneven development views differ in their evaluation on the role of the state within these contemporary processes of globalization and urbanization. The agglomeration view sees highway urbanization as a proactive response on the part of the state in responding to the opportunities and risks posed by the increased mobility of capital within this global era. The nation-state is being rendered irrelevant by these global flows, and the local government is too small a scale to effectively deal with transnational capital. Large urban configurations, like highway urbanization, are more appropriate scales of political organization that can level the playing field between spatially fixed governments and mobile capital. Unlike the agglomeration view that grants agency to the political actors within highway-regions and city-regions in negotiating with the new opportunities and threats of globalization, the uneven development view strips these actors of their agency. This view argues that, caught in a web of inter-jurisdictional competition, highway regions have no option but to compete with one another to attract footloose capital: “city-regions are forced to be competitive, forced to take on more responsibilities, forced to restrict their welfare functions, and forced to integrate with their surrounding regions” (Beauregard, 2006).

Though I agree with the starting point of post-1970s globalization as the framework within which we analyze these urban changes, I situate my own work somewhere between the agglomeration and uneven development views. Instead of starting a priori with either of these views – with their deterministic roles for the state and the predictable outcomes of contemporary

globalization and urbanization (a celebrated outcome in the agglomeration view and a crippling outcome in the uneven development view), I use the analytical lens of land as a heuristic into these broader global transformations. The sector of land underwent a radical restructuring from the 1970s onwards, leading to the creation of a transnational real estate market (Pistor, 2011). A number of policy interventions led to the creation of these globally interconnected land markets, including the deregulation of land markets to allow foreign direct investment in the real estate industry, the creation of new financial instruments to make land more easily tradable amongst global investors, and the promotion of “free trade zones” that grant private property rights to firms even if the national law does not permit it (Ibid; White et al, 2012). Through an in-depth analysis of restructured land markets along the highways in the Pune region, I interrogate the rationalities guiding the actions of the different public and private institutional actors during this agrarian to urban transition, the changing roles of these different institutions and their changing relationships to one another as they are exposed to the new opportunities and risks of a transition, the changes in land ownership and the attendant changes in land-based social relations. As explained in the introductory chapter, I use the framework of land value capture to analyze these changes in land and land-based social relations.

2.3 INDIA’S HIGHWAY URBANIZATION

In 2001, the Indian government launched one of the most ambitious infrastructure development programs the country has ever seen, comparable in scale only to the 19th century railway building enterprise of colonial India. The 2001 highway development program planned to widen and pave 64,000 kilometers of national highways. This upgraded network of highways has led to an exodus of land and building intensive industries out of cities into these highway regions (Ghani et al, 2012; 2013). Lands along the highways are cheaper than inner-city lands, and their proximity to

transportation corridors makes them attractive destinations for industries. These highways are also favored destinations for self-contained residential enclaves, which are marketed as residential havens, far from the congestion, crime and poor infrastructure that plagues large Indian cities.

Some of India's highways are designated as Infrastructure Corridors. These infrastructure corridors are tolled highways constructed through public-private partnerships. They are part of the state-sponsored industrial clustering plan to make certain regions within the country more globally competitive and attractive to foreign direct investment (FDI) through developing state-of-the-art infrastructure. These corridors are generally master planned by parastatals, or by consulting firms hired by parastatals.

This section looks at the new challenges posed by India's highway urbanization to our existing institutional frameworks, and it concludes with some preliminary insights on the interactions of the democratic India with a new globalizing, liberalizing economy. It points to the mixed reality of contemporary urbanization in India, with certain aspects of the urban transition enfranchising the most marginalized groups, and other aspects of it disfranchising them.

2.3.1 HIGHWAY URBANIZATION AND THE CHALLENGES TO DECENTRALIZATION

In 1991, the Indian government introduced a new decentralization policy – the 73rd Constitutional Amendment Act for village governments and the 74th Constitutional Amendment for city governments – for devolving decision-making to urban and rural local governments. As the government pushed forth a decentralization policy, the country has been witnessing a new form of highway urbanization that is much larger in scale than the political jurisdiction of individual cities and villages. The institutional challenges posed by highway urbanization can be framed within a

larger debate on the comparative advantages of decentralized local governments versus regional governments in managing large-scale, trans-local transformations. The advocates of centralized governments argue that local governments are fragmented and parochial, and lack the incentives to advance regional interests (Downs, 1994; Altshuler, 1996; Calthorpe and Fulton, 2001). In the US, local government authority over land use regulations has resulted in urban sprawl and racial segregation (Ibid). In the US, as well as in the developing economies of Latin America and China, inter-jurisdictional competition among local governments to attract desirable industrial and business uses has diverted public monies away from collective public goods towards pro-business financial incentives (Donahue, 1997; Ding, 2005; Libertun du Duren, 2008). These advocates thus view them as necessary for regional equity, because risk spreading and equitable distribution of benefits is possible only within a centralized state that captures most of the costs and benefits associated with its land use decisions (Downs, 1994; Oats, 1999). The advocates of decentralized local governments, on the other hand, accuse centralized regional governments of being unresponsive to localized public interests, too far removed from citizens to allow for effective communication of information from the government to the public, and too large in scale to allow for meaningful citizen participation in decision making (Tiebout, 1956; Ostrom et al, 1961; Cheema and Rondinelli, 1983). Researchers have attempted to reconcile this dichotomy between decentralized local governments and centralized regional governments through a turn to regional institutions, as opposed to regional governments, on the grounds that these institutions will allow cities to maintain their autonomy while simultaneously giving them incentives to advance regional interests (Frug, 2002; McKinney and Johnson, 2009). My work on land cooperatives falls within this middle ground of regional institutions. The land cooperatives that are emerging along Pune's highways encompass a number of highway villages, and a central evaluative criterion is to analyze if these land cooperatives strengthen or undermine existing local democratic institutions.

2.3.2 HIGHWAY URBANIZATION AND THE CHALLENGES TO STATE-MARKET DICHOTOMIES

Besides the 1991 decentralization policies, contemporary highway urbanization is unfolding within the context of a liberalized economy. From the 1980s onwards, India started moving out of a socialist model of development towards a more market-oriented economy. The sector of land experienced dramatic changes from the 1990s onwards. The liberalization of land markets included, amongst other policy changes, an opening up of the real estate and construction industries to foreign direct investment (FDI) and the repealing of redistributive land regulations – like the Urban Land Ceiling and Regulation Act that redistributed urban land beyond a certain threshold acreage from individual landowners towards public purposes – to enable more unhindered market transactions in land. Before the 1980s, urbanization was largely confined within the political boundaries of cities, but since the 1990s, the most rapid urbanization in India has been taking place in large villages and small towns located at the peripheries of large cities and along infrastructure corridors. Scholars from oppositional points of view have advanced explanations on the connection between the liberalization of land markets and the phenomenon of highway urbanization.

The optimistic view argues that with the opening up of the economy, capital is no longer as scarce as it used to be during socialist times (Sathe, 2011). With the influx of domestic and foreign capital, the main constraint that countries like India are facing is the shortage of serviced urban land. This shortage of serviced urban land is not only hindering urbanization and industrialization; it is also leading to a proliferation of informal settlements (Smolka, 2003; Angel, 2008). This view argues that the short supply of formal, serviced land leads to exorbitant land prices within cities, making informal and unauthorized land the only affordable option open to the poor (Ibid). Policy interventions for opening up the supplies of serviced urban land will not only facilitate smoother

urbanization and industrialization, it will also address the root cause of urban informality (the shortage of serviced land in desirable locations). One of the ways in which land supply can be increased in a regulated manner is through ‘guided land development’ or ‘infrastructure-led development,’ i.e. the provision of infrastructure networks that can serve as the guiding spines along for new urban development. Pointing to historical precedents like the 1859 Cerda plan for Barcelona – a network of gridded roads to increase the urban land area by ten times – these advocates of liberalized land markets argue that guided land development has worked successfully in the past, and countries in the global south must take on more proactive approaches to deal with their urban transition (Angel, 2008). They also point to the urgency of acting now – once the urban transition is complete, it will be too late for these countries to intervene and rectify the haphazard urban growth (Ibid).

An oppositional point of view, from a critical political economy perspective, relates the frenzied conversion of agricultural lands to urban/industrial lands to the broader processes of neoliberal capitalist accumulation (Sassen, 2001: 256; Harvey, 2006), using the idea of the “rent gap,” conceptualized by the Marxist geographer, Neil Smith. Smith defines the rent gap as “the gap between the actual capitalized ground rent (land value) of a plot of land given its present use and the potential ground rent that might be gleaned under a ‘higher and best use’” (1987). The redevelopment of inner-city informal settlements into high-end urban developments, the redevelopment of waterfronts into swanky destinations for urban consumers, the conversion of agricultural lands into industrial and commercial complexes – all of these seemingly unrelated processes are instantiations of the broader neoliberal phenomenon of opening up these “as yet untapped areas of the developing world to private foreign investment” (Ibid; White et al, 2012). In other words, the liberalization of land markets and the attendant phenomenon of highway urbanization are functions are neoliberal globalization.

As India makes its transition from a state-led to market-oriented economy, the land cooperatives represent a unique form of hybrid institution. Land cooperatives are market institutions that incorporate social values. They emerged to remedy the institutional flaws of the pure market, and have more of a social orientation through democratic worker control of the production process and profit-making under non-exploitative, more humane conditions (Whyte and Whyte, 1991). As countries around the world are shifting to private property rights regimes, why are collective institutions emerging within a country that is fast liberalizing? How effective are these land cooperatives in improving the bargaining position of marginalized groups, and in protecting their rights, vis-à-vis local and global corporate actors?

2.3.3 INTERACTIONS OF A DEMOCRATIC INDIA WITH THE NEW ECONOMY

21st century India is making a transition from an agrarian to urban economy, similar to the 18th and 19th century industrial revolution in the West. But, India's transition is taking place under conditions of intensified territorial competitiveness within the context of a post-1970s form of globalization. In the sector of land, an added layer of complexity is that India's public officials have little prior experience working with deregulated land markets, and they have to learn how to regulate private sector participation in their land markets, while simultaneously ensuring that the urban transition strengthens the global competitiveness of their regions/countries.

Other developing countries in South-east Asia, Africa and a few Latin American countries are also undergoing an urban transition. But the narrative of India's agrarian to urban transition will be scripted by the encounters of a democratic India – with its own unique set of democratic

paradoxes and challenges - with a liberalizing and globalizing economy. The land conflicts along India's highways offer us a window into these encounters.

Unlike Western liberal democracies, India did not witness a classic bourgeois revolution (Vanaik, 1990; Varshney, 1998). The newly independent post-colonial state, under the leadership of Nehru, was committed to the ideals of modernity and state-led industrialization. India's social transformation towards a modern nation-state, then, was not led from within civil society by an industrial bourgeoisie, but was a top-down, state-led strategy. The numerical and economic strength of the agrarian propertied classes meant that power had to be shared between the agrarian and industrial bourgeoisie. Since Independence, Indian democracy has been a fragile balance of class power amongst three distinct groups – the state-bureaucratic elites, the agrarian propertied class, and the industrial capitalists (Bardhan, 1984; Kaviraj, 1988; Vanaik, 1990). Different eras in India's post-Independence history have seen one or more of these groups gain more control than the others within the tripartite ruling coalition, but at no point has public policy antagonized any of these groups (Kaviraj, 1988). As Indian political commentators have noted, “if any of these classes is seriously dissatisfied and leaves the ruling bloc, that not only alters the structure of the coalition, but threatens it with political disaster” (Ibid: 2431). I argue that the conflicts along India's highways are rooted in the re-negotiations amongst the three groups within the ruling coalition – the bureaucratic elites, the agrarian landed class, and the industrial capitalists – during an uncertain era of agrarian to urban transition.

India's urban transition and the liberalization of its land markets have been analyzed through a number of theoretical frameworks, many of them borrowed from the experiences of North Atlantic cities. The starting point for many analyses on the changes in urban property relations in India have been the growth machine and other theories of urban politics produced in the context of

U.S cities (Weinstein, 2008; Sami, 2012). A growing niche of Indian scholars has interrogated the hegemonic role of the burgeoning urban middle class – previously dependent on public sector employment, but now riding the wave of economic liberalization and relying on private professional jobs for economic prosperity – in imagining a more globally competitive and liberalized future for India (Fernandes, 2006; Harriss, 2006). These analyses, though deeply insightful, still sharply divide Indian politics into urban and rural. The urban-rural divide blinds us both to the intra-urban and intra-rural conflicts (for instance, the caste-based conflicts between dominant caste and tribal agrarian landowners) and to the urban-rural coalitions that are being formed between agrarian and industrial elites. My dissertation is particularly attentive to the new form of politics emerging along India’s urbanizing highways that defies the urban-rural dichotomies: of the role of the agrarian propertied class in shaping the direction of industrial/urban land policy, of the re-workings of older agrarian institutions into new urban forms to meet the contemporary challenges of the urban transition, and of the new urban-rural coalitions as India’s politically important agrarian landed elites seek new terms of inclusion in contemporary India’s urban growth story.

The most visible expression of these urban-rural politics is the new institutions – like the land cooperatives – emerging along Pune’s highways. Pune’s land cooperatives, then, offer us not only an empirical case of an institutional solution to India’s seemingly intractable land conflicts but also offer us a point of entry into understanding the complex dynamics of the 21st century agrarian to urban transition of one of the world’s largest democracies. The main findings of my dissertation on Pune’s land cooperatives are summarized in the next section.

2.3.4 COLLECTIVE INSTITUTIONS: IN THEORY AND IN PRACTICE

Collective institutions:

In theory: Much of the current work on land cooperatives and collective institutions has focused on the normative justifications for cooperatives – on the importance of workers cooperatives in challenging the surplus-extracting impulses of capitalism (Whyte and Whyte, 1991), on the importance of cooperation as a strategy of resistance against the new “neoliberal” forms of capitalism (Sennett, 2012). The more operational inquiries on cooperatives have focused on why they work in some areas and not others (Ostrom 1990; Bardhan 1993), why they work for some commodities and not others (Attwood and Baviskar 1987), and the reasons for their operational success or failure (Whyte and Whyte, 1991). These operational studies rarely question the intent for the formation of cooperatives, but tacitly assume that they are being formed to challenge the more inhumane and exploitative forms of capitalism.

In practice: My work shifts the discourse of cooperatives away from ideological assumptions on their formation – cooperatives as “alternatives to capitalism” (Whyte and Whyte 1991) - to investigating the political-economic contexts within which they emerge, and the linkages between cooperatives and the local power structures within which they are embedded. My research concludes that far from being institutions of worker control, Western Maharashtra’s sugar cooperatives were captured by the dominant-caste Marathas and the Congress party. These agrarian class and caste hierarchies are reproduced in the Magarpatta model of shareholding companies in land. The Khed model of bureaucrat-mediated land cooperatives were institutional mechanisms by savvy bureaucrats to overcome local protests by dominant caste agrarian landowners against the proposed SEZ development. More broadly, there is a strong instrumental rationality in the formation of Pune’s land cooperatives. The tripartite ruling coalition – the dominant-caste agrarian landowners, the industrial capitalists, and the bureaucratic-managerial elites - are negotiating with one another to find

arrangements that will maximize their own interests during an uncertain transition, while being careful not to antagonize and alienate the other two groups. One such negotiated solution is the collective institutions in land.

In providing hope: The most hopeful outcome from the Pune highway land conflicts and cooperatives is the increased autonomy of the tribals from agrarian forms of caste-based control. As owners of marginal plots of dry land and as members of the land cooperative, the tribals will receive dividends from their landed assets. The restructuring of land markets and the formation of land cooperatives provide the material basis for the tribals to start asserting self-respect both for their labor and for themselves. These claims of redistribution and recognition by tribals will hopefully lead to changes in the formal planning process and give a stronger voice and improved status for the tribals in India's urban growth story.

Having set the broad canvas of the contemporary urbanization processes outside cities, the next chapter hones in on highway urbanization in India, through the case study of three highways in the Pune region.

Chapter 3

THE PUNE HIGHWAYS

Converting agricultural lands along India's highways into urban/industrial lands is not simple. Since the process involves urban and rural regulatory regimes, it is a complicated, and sometimes redundant, process. Urban and rural lands are planned and regulated by different state agencies. Urban lands in most Indian states are managed by parastatals. These are quasi-state institutions that have more financial discretion and lower levels of accountability compared to general purpose governments like municipalities. Agricultural lands are managed by district-level Revenue Departments. Revenue Departments were initially set up in the late 19th century during colonial rule to extract taxes from agricultural lands, which were a significant source of colonial revenue. Agricultural lands continued to be vested with the Revenue Departments after Independence. The District Collector (DC), the bureaucrat in charge of the Revenue Department, has long enjoyed power and prestige in district-scale decision-making.

Besides the overlaps in jurisdictional boundaries, the process involves multiple pieces of urban and rural legislations. The laws regulating agricultural lands that are relevant in these conversion processes are the Land Reforms Act – which prohibits the purchase of agricultural land by companies and non-agriculturalists – and the Land Revenue Act – which regulates agricultural land revenues, and takes a conservative stance on the conversion of agricultural lands to non-agricultural lands (if more lands are converted from agricultural to non-agricultural, it reduces the stock of agricultural lands for revenue collection). The laws regulating urban lands that come into play in the conversion process are the Urban Land Ceiling and Regulation Act – which restricts the acreage of urban land that an individual can own – and the Town and Country Planning Act – which oversees the byelaws and levies (like betterment charges, water and road cesses) for urban residential and commercial developments.

Arguing that these land conversion processes are outdated and unnecessarily byzantine, some states – including Maharashtra – have legislated Integrated Township Acts, which expedite the

land conversion process for all residential and mixed-use developments that are larger than 100 acres in size.

The first section in this chapter outlines in more detail the regulatory steps and laws in the conversion of agricultural land to residential, commercial and industrial uses. The next section provides a rich description of an urban development project along each of the three Pune highways – the Lavasa Lake City project along the Pune-Mumbai Expressway, the Magarpatta Township along the Pune-Sholapur highway, and the Khed Special Economic Zone (SEZ) along the Pune-Nashik highway.

3.1 INSTITUTIONAL ACTORS IN LAND CONSOLIDATION

In the following tables, the urban institutional actors and acts are marked in red font, and the rural actors and acts are in green font.

Table 3.1: Land conversion for residential and commercial uses

Regulatory step	Institutional actor involved	Act invoked
Individual agrarian landowner forwards application for conversion to the Revenue Department.	Revenue Department	Land Reforms Act, Land Revenue Act
If the conversion does not cause a public nuisance, the District Collector (DC) of the Revenue Department approves it.		
The landowner forwards the converted land to the following urban parastatals for No-Objection-Certificates (NOCs): the residential parastatal to check if the proposed development conforms to the master plan (if the region is covered by the master plan), the pollution control board, the water supply and sewerage board, and the transportation department.	Residential parastatal (if the state has one) or the city planning agency, Pollution Control Board, water supply and sanitation parastatals (if the state has one) or the WSS agency within the urban local government, Transportation parastatal.	Town and Country Planning Act, and relevant pollution and water control acts, and transportation acts.
On receiving the NOCs, the landowner forwards the application to the <i>Village Panchayat</i> . If the proposed land-use and development does not endanger public health and safety, the <i>Village Panchayat</i> approves the building permit, thereby completing the conversion process.	<i>Village Panchayat</i>	<i>Village Panchayat Act</i>

Table 3.2: Land acquisition and conversion for industrial uses (including SEZs)

<p>The private sector firm approaches the industrial parastatal with a proposed industrial location.</p>	<p>Industrial parastatal</p>	<p>Relevant industrial parastatal act. For Maharashtra, it is the Maharashtra Industrial Development Act.</p>
<p>The industrial parastatal issues a preliminary notification for the area. The notification has to be publicized in the locality, in the official gazette, and in at least two local newspapers, one of which has to be in the regional language.</p>	<p>Industrial parastatal</p>	
<p>The owners/occupiers of the land have 30 days to show cause notice as to why the parastatals cannot acquire their land.</p>		
<p>The industrial parastatal has the discretion to accept/reject the notice, and passes the final notification for the area. With the passing of the final notification, the land vests with the state free of encumbrances. Unclear land titles is an endemic problem in India, and the mediation of the state in acquiring agricultural land and conveying the land free of encumbrances relieves the private sector firm from any future legal troubles that may arise due to irregular tenure.</p>	<p>Industrial parastatal</p>	
<p>The Revenue Department is the price-fixing authority. The DC mediates the negotiations between the industrial parastatal and the landowners for the fixing of the price of land compensation. The fixing of the price is not arbitrary, but depends on the guidance and market values of land in that region.</p>	<p>Revenue Department</p>	<p>Industrial parastatal act</p>
<p>The converted land application is forwarded to the <i>Village Panchayat</i>. If the proposed land-use and development does not endanger public health and safety, the <i>Village Panchayat</i> approves the building permit.</p>	<p><i>Village Panchayat</i></p>	<p><i>Village Panchayat Act</i></p>
<p>The industrial parastatal either services the converted and unencumbered land itself, and then sells the serviced industrial land to the private sector firm, or it hands over the unserviced land to the private sector firm that then develops the infrastructure itself.</p>		

Table 3.3: Land acquisition and conversion for integrated townships

The developer approaches the residential parastatal with a proposed location for the township.	Residential parastatal (if the state has one) or the city planning agency)	Integrated Township Act
The parastatal issues the preliminary and final notification for the area if the proposed development meets the following conditions: the minimum area of the development is 100 acres, and it conforms to the planning and building regulations of the integrated township policy, including the provision of water supply, waste management and roads within the township.	Residential parastatal (if the state has one) or the city planning agency)	Integrated Township Act
The non-agricultural conversion is automatic, and the Revenue Department is not involved in the procedure. If any government land lies within the proposed township boundary, the government leases the land to the developer. The integrated township development is exempted from the condition that only agriculturalists are eligible to buy agricultural land, and from any ceiling limits on the purchase and holding of agricultural lands by individuals and developers.		

As evident from the tables above, converting agricultural land to industrial lands involves fewer steps and institutional actors compared to the conversion of agricultural lands to residential uses. The most streamlined procedure is the Integrated Township Act, which expedites the process through authorizing a single-window agency to convert the land (for more on the equity consequences of these acts, see the final section in Chapter 4 on “Cities of Sugar”).

3.2 HIGHWAY URBANIZATION: THE PUNE CASES

As mentioned earlier, the Pune highways offer a natural experiment because, within the same region, different institutional outcomes emerged along the three major highways connecting Pune to its neighboring cities. The Pune-Mumbai Infrastructure Corridor is an example of a pure state model of land consolidation, the Pune-Sholapur highway of a pure market model of land consolidation, and the Pune-Nashik highway of a hybrid model of land consolidation.

3.2.1 PUNE-MUMBAI EXPRESSWAY

India's expressways or infrastructure corridors – the Pune-Mumbai Expressway, which is part of the Delhi-Mumbai Infrastructure Corridor, the Bangalore-Mysore Infrastructure Corridor, and the Yamuna Expressway – are different from highways. The expressways/infrastructure corridors are tolled highways constructed through public-private partnerships. They are part of the state-sponsored industrial clustering plan to make certain regions within the country more globally competitive and attractive to FDI through developing state-of-the-art infrastructural corridors. These corridors are generally master planned by parastatals, or by consulting firms hired by parastatals, to sort out the locations of the SEZs, industrial clusters, and integrated townships along these corridors.

A number of integrated townships have been formed along the Pune-Mumbai Expressway, including the Sahara and Lavasa townships. Here, I focus on the Lavasa township as an instantiation of the kind of urban development that is becoming *sine qua non* along most of the infrastructure corridors in India.

LAVASA LAKE CITY

Around 40 kilometers from Pune, and 90 kilometers from Mumbai, along the Pune-Mumbai Expressway, is India's largest integrated township, Lavasa Lake City.⁶ Spanning 25,000 acres - approximately 1/5th the land area of the Municipal Corporation of Greater Mumbai - the township stretches across seven hills within the ecologically sensitive Sahayadri mountain range. Lavasa Lake City heralds itself as the first planned hill city of Independent India. In a historical reference to the hill towns - Shimla, Mussoorie, Darjeeling - planned by the colonial state in the nineteenth century with the intention of escaping both the heat and the native Indian population of the lower-lying plains (Kenny, 1995; Kennedy, 1996), this 21st century integrated township promises respite from the congestion and poor infrastructure that plagues large Indian cities. Of the five proposed towns that make up the township, the first, Dasve, was completed in 2011, and the others are slated for completion by 2020.

The Lavasa Corporation, a private company registered under the Companies Act 1969, is planning the township. The international design firm, HOK International Limited, is preparing the Lavasa master plan based on the principles of New Urbanism - a design philosophy that promotes compact, walkable and mixed-use cities. The US-based Biomimicry Institute is partnering with HOK to incorporate sustainable design principles into the daily functioning of the township through initiatives like energy-efficient design and eco-friendly waste management. As its name suggests, biomimicry is an emergent design approach that seeks environmentally sustainable solutions by emulating nature. An example is designing "a solar cell inspired by a leaf."⁷

In an ironic twist, the city being planned on the principles of biomimicry is now under litigation for egregious environmental practices. Social activists like Medha Patkar – who led the

⁶ <http://www.lavasa.com>

⁷ <http://biomimicry.net/about/biomimicry38/institute/>

protests against the Narmada Dam in the 1990s - have been protesting against the Lavasa project since 2006 for its displacement of tribal populations and degradation of ecologically sensitive lands. The environmental resistances reached a head in 2012, when the lawyer and former Indian Police Service officer, Y.P.Singh, as the representative of six NGOs, sent a legal notice to the Central Government's Ministry of Environment and Forests (MoEF) against Lavasa. Singh charged the Maharashtra state government with granting environmental clearance to the Lavasa project when it did not have the statutory powers to do so. The 1994 Environmental Impact Assessment Notification vests these powers only with the central government through the environmental ministry. Lavasa Corporation defended itself by arguing that tourism projects are exempted from the 1994 notification, and the township project received a 'mega tourism project' status from the state government, thereby exempting it from the MoEF environmental clearance.

Another on-going litigation against the Lavasa project since 2008 is the petition to the Pune High Court by two tribal agrarian landowners against Lavasa's acquisition of their lands. In 2008, the Maharashtra state government appointed the Lavasa Corporation as the Special Planning Authority for the township project. In other words, the state government delegated the planning functions vested in local and state legislative bodies to a private company. The granting of Special Planning Authority status authorized Lavasa Corporation to acquire land for the township. The petitioners charged the Special Planning Authority with approving a master plan that did not conform to the Maharashtra Regional Town Planning Act and Development Control Regulations.

Sharad Pawar, one of Maharashtra's most influential politicians and a Union Minister in the Cabinet, is seriously implicated in the Lavasa litigations. Pawar's daughter, Supriya Sule - also a Member of Parliament - and her husband had large, personal stakes in the Lavasa Corporation as shareholders. Sharad Pawar's nephew, Ajit Pawar, was the minister in charge during the state government's approval of the Lavasa project.

The environmental and planning irregularities scarring the Lavasa project prompted the Comptroller and Auditor General (CAG) of India to investigate the development. The CAG is India's Supreme Audit Institution that ensures accountability, transparency and efficiency of public administration. This organization audits the receipts and expenditures of the Government of India, state governments and government-owned companies. The CAG report on Lavasa was completed in April 2012, and it unequivocally indicted the project for its violation of procedural due process and improper delegation of power. The CAG charges against the Lavasa development included the state government's lack of publicity of the project, the opaque tendering process with only Lavasa Corporation in the bidding for the project, the granting of Special Planning Authority to a private firm without precedent, and the diversion of lands originally marked for afforestation for the development of the private township.

The case is sub judice, but the growing media and public flak against it may lead to the rescission of Lavasa Corporation's status as Special Planning Authority. One town, however, has been completed, the second is close to completion, and as the case proceeds in court, the Lavasa Corporation is continuing its construction and marketing activities with the remaining three towns.

3.2.2 PUNE-SHOLAPUR HIGHWAY

The most rapidly urbanizing growth triangle in Maharashtra is the Mumbai-Pune-Nashik region. Pune and Nashik are logical regions for urban expansion, given their proximity to the state's economically primate city, Mumbai. The Pune-Sholapur highway is not urbanizing as rapidly as the Pune-Mumbai and Pune-Nashik highways. Integrated townships are coming up along the Pune-Sholapur highway, but most of them are concentrated within a 30-kilometer radius from Pune city. These townships are advertising themselves as proximate to Pune, but far from the crime and

congestion that plagues Pune. Further from Pune along the Pune-Sholapur highway, where the demand for urban land is not as intense as in the regions around Pune, agrarian landowners are diversifying from agriculture into another sector that has become a bright economic prospect with urbanization – wine. These landowners are shifting from agricultural production to wine grape cultivation, and I’ll return to this point in more detail in the next chapter on “Cities of Sugar.”

The integrated townships that are emerging along the Pune-Sholapur highway, closer to Pune, are different from those along the Pune-Mumbai Expressway. State-level politicians and bureaucrats play a big role in determining the location of integrated townships along infrastructure corridors through influencing the master plan to incorporate projects that are strategically beneficial to them. On the other hand, the integrated townships along the Pune-Sholapur highway are more market-driven, with agrarian landowners seeing a real estate opportunity in converting their agricultural lands into townships. But, the Pune-Sholapur highways are not completely insulated from politics. The first of these highway developments was the Magarpatta township, formed in 2001. The Magarpatta sugarcane landowners voluntarily pooled their fragmented agricultural lands and formed a shareholding company to manage the township. Only the agrarian landowners are equity members of the shareholding company, and they own shares in proportion to the land given up for the township. The protagonist in the Magarpatta case, the agrarian landowner, Satish Magar, has close political and personal connections with Sharad Pawar, which made it possible for him to navigate India’s byzantine land conversion process and form the township. But, Satish Magar was more pragmatic in conceiving and implementing the idea of a collective institution of land ownership that included agrarian landowners as partners in the development, as opposed to adopting coercive land acquisition strategies that displaced landowners and made them opponents to the project (the concluding section of this chapter discusses why the Magarpatta landowners took the more pragmatic solution of forming collective institutions of land ownership).

Following the commercial success of the Magarpatta township, agrarian landowners from the Pune region have started approaching the Magarpatta company to consult them on replicating the Magarpatta model in other areas. The Magarpatta company is now developing the Nanded township, 700 acres in size, located around fifteen kilometres from Magarpatta. The company owns 51% of the shares in Nanded, with the remaining 49% shares owned by the local Nanded landowners who gave up their lands for the township. The 2006 Maharashtra Integrated Township Policy facilitates the setting up of new townships. Satish Magar is one of the key drafters of this township policy. Learning from the difficulties he faced in navigating land regulations, the township policy now has more streamlined regulations for converting agricultural lands to township lands (outlined in the previous section). The Magarpatta company has three more similar projects in the pipeline. I describe the Magarpatta township because it set the precedent for the Pune-Sholapur highway, and because, as of June 2012, it is the only completed township with this collective model of land ownership.

MAGARPATTA TOWNSHIP

Recitals of a legendary past: What started as a project to help farmers gain the full benefit of their land use has today spun into a dream for thousands who set out in search of a better life. Urban cities of Maharashtra faced the problem of unauthorized constructions and haphazard development. Pune city was also a patch of unplanned layouts that was destined to be a marionette in the hands of wealthy industrialists. Until 120 farmers of Magarpatta came together with a dream to create a new way of life. They pooled in their ancestral lands held by them for over 300 years and proposed the idea of ‘Magarpatta City’ – an innovative township, to the Pune Municipal Corporation and the Government of Maharashtra.

This is how Magarpatta is marketed in its brochure “The Story of Magarpatta – The pride of Pune City,” with the aspirational subtitle “Life as it should be...” The completed and functional 400-acre Magarpatta City is a higher-income enclave of apartments, row houses, bungalows, food courts, information-technology (IT) complexes, school and 120 acres of gardens and lawns. A block from this dense urban environment of apartments and IT complexes, vestiges of the 1990s landscape remain in the few sugarcane fields surrounding Magarpatta City. These sugarcane growers, like the Magarpatta ones, have ambitions to be developers, but they are holding on to their plots, waiting for land prices to soar higher before starting their residential and commercial developments.



Figure 3.1: Sugarcane fields around Magarpatta Township waiting to be developed

Before the 1990s, the Magarpatta City area was the site of fertile sugarcane fields. The largest landowning family in Hadapsar was the joint family of the Magars, a politically influential network whose most prominent member, Annasaheb Magar, had been a Member of Parliament for the Congress Party in the 1970s. During his political tenure, Annasaheb Magar channeled many development projects to his home constituency of Hadapsar, including the setting up of a cooperative sugar factory to benefit the local sugarcane growers. The 1980s saw a wave of urbanization-related changes sweep over the Hadapsar area. In 1982, the Pune Municipal

Corporation's Development Plan marked Hadapsar as a future urban zone, which meant that the Magars' lands could be acquired in the future by the government under the Urban Land Ceiling and Regulation Act. This land ceiling act was legislated to redistribute urban lands – land beyond a certain threshold would be acquired by the government and used for public purposes, like housing for the urban poor. The Hadapsar area was also facing acute agricultural labor shortages, with the Dalit laborers who lived and worked on the sugarcane fields now finding alternative employment in Pune's informal economy. With the impending threat of land acquisition, rising land values and agricultural labor shortage, the Magars saw an opportunity in land development. Consolidating agricultural lands owned by multiple landowners into a township is an ambitious endeavor, entailing huge efforts in convincing landowners, mobilizing capital, and navigating labyrinthine land regulations. Satish Magar had the economic, social and political savvy to get this done:

Convincing landowners: Annasaheb Magar's family owned nearly 40% of the agricultural lands in the area. The other landowners – many of them also with the surname Magar, but not related to Annasaheb – had smaller landholdings of less than ten acres in size. Market pressures on land were resulting in small landowners selling their agricultural lands to developers. Annasaheb's nephew, Satish Magar, took the lead in convincing the other sugarcane landowners not to sell their lands to developers, and instead, to pool their fragmented landholdings, develop a township on the consolidated land, and enjoy the long-term benefits from their land assets as shareholders of the township company. The Magars' long political history in the area and their strong political connections were key factors in bringing the other landowners together in a collective land development experiment. A 70-year old landowner-turned-shareholder, who gave up four acres of his land for the Magarpatta township, spoke of the landowners' trust in the Magar family:

I have been farming here since 1965. Hadapsar, Mundhwa, all of these areas were rich sugar-growing areas. The best fields were here... In 1993, our Magar family had a meeting, and all

of us were convinced of the [Magarpatta] project. We gave a signature, we did not ask anything, we just gave our signature, we trusted Satish Magar. Annasaheb Magar became an MP [Member of Parliament] from here. He made a market here; it is the biggest market in Pune. He started a sugar factory here for the farmers - 20 kilometers from here. All our sugarcane from here went to this factory. Like Annasaheb Magar helped us, Satish Magar is also helping the farmers with the township.⁸

The Magarpatta landowners agreed to join the collective experiment because they continue to own the private property rights to their land. Through the ownership of shares in the company, each family owns shares, with one share equivalent to one square meter of land. The shares cannot be sold outside the family. These institutional arrangements around Pune – the earlier versions of the sugar cooperatives, the contemporary versions of the shareholding companies – are markedly different from the communal forms of property ownership practiced in the former communist economies and the community land trust arrangements in the United States. India has never had a strong tradition of collective property ownership, at least within the more formal discourses and policies of the modern nation-state. Soon after Independence, the Nehru-led government strongly advocated for commodity cooperatives like the sugar cooperatives because these cooperatives upheld the principles of private property ownership while giving small landowners the institutional support to compete in a market economy (I trace these post-Independence origins of cooperatives in more detail in the next chapter). For now, suffice to say that the history of trust cultivated through decades in Satish Magar’s family, and the guarantee that the title deeds to their land will remain in their names, convinced the landowners to transition from sugarcane farming to becoming shareholders of a township company.

⁸ Interview with author, 12 May, 2011.

Financing the township: Since no land acquisition was involved in the process, the project entailed no land costs. Satish Magar turned to the Housing Development and Finance Corporation (HDFC), one of the India's largest housing finance companies, for loans to meet the development costs of the township. Satish Magar's personal relationships with Deepak Parikh, the Chairman of HDFC, enabled him to get some much-needed financial advice on servicing the HDFC debt. Many of the earthmoving, landscaping, road-building and construction contracts for developing the township went to Magarpatta landowners who had recently started these companies. On the completion of the township, the cost of serviced, township land increased from INR 100 in 1998 to INR 1000 in 2008. Thirty percent of the total development cost was earmarked as the cost of land at the current price, and paid to the shareholders.

Navigating land regulations: The Magars' close political connections with top-level state government politicians of the Nationalist Congress Party, including the Chief Minister at the time, helped them navigate the land regulatory process. The state government granted the Magarpatta township two exemptions: an exemption from the Maharashtra Land Revenue Act condition that only agriculturalists can apply for a conversion of their agricultural lands to non-agricultural uses, and an exemption from the Urban Land Ceiling and Regulation Act. Sharad Pawar was the Chief Minister of Maharashtra at the time the Magars began the land conversion process in the early 1990s. More recently, Satish Magar's political connections with Sharad Pawar became cemented in a personal relationship. As one of the Magar landowners drove me around the township, the backseat of his car was piled high with wedding invitations that had to be distributed for the May 2011 wedding of Satish Magar's daughter with Sharad Pawar's nephew.

The developers of Magarpatta, and of all townships approved under the new integrated township policy, are responsible for providing services – water supply, drainage, garbage disposal,

roads, and power (either through captive power generation, or from the existing grid). The private company, the Magarpatta City Property Management Services (PMS), manages Magarpatta's services, providing electricity, roads, plumbing, and internet services within the township. Satish Magar's brother owns this company. Magarpatt residents pay property taxes to the Pune Municipal Corporation (i.e. the municipal government), but they also pay maintenance charges to PMS for the services within the township. One of the sugarcane landowners-turned-shareholder proudly claimed that the stellar services provided by PMS is one the factors that makes Magarpatta a "world-class city":

If we have any problem – drainage, lights, roads, we call our services company, PMS. Someone will be here within five minutes. You will not find this anywhere in the world. Anywhere else, they give you a house, and then they will tell you to go to the corporation after that. We pay property taxes to Pune Municipal Corporation, though most of our services are maintained by PMS. We paid a one-time 3.5 lakhs [INR 3,500,000] for maintenance, and all the services are maintained from that interest. No corporation person comes here. Everything is done by PMS. This is the number one city in India, a world-class city.⁹

Besides being shareholders, the younger generation landowners who started construction, landscaping and other businesses to service Magarpatta are now expanding their work to the upcoming Nanded and other townships. The smallest shareholder in Magarpatta, who gave up 0.12 acres of land, now owns two apartments in the township, worth USD 35,000, and receives dividends from his township shares, rental incomes from the leased office buildings (all the office buildings in Magarpatta are owned by the company and rented out to firms), and income from his construction

⁹ Interview with author, 13 May, 2011.

business that is now active in Nanded. The older generation landowners have bought agricultural lands in surrounding districts that are now rural, but have the potential to urbanize in the near future.

Stories of Magarpatta's success have diffused to other regions around Pune. When the bureaucrats of the Khed region, along the Pune-Nashik highway, faced resistance against the land consolidation of agricultural land for a new industrial development, they adapted the Magarpatta solution to reconcile their land conflict.

3.2.3 PUNE-NASHIK HIGHWAY

The Pune-Nashik highway differs from the other two highways in its character of the dominance of industrial, as opposed to residential/township, development. This highway is part of a successful agglomeration economy of automobile manufacturing firms, with automobile giants - like Volkswagon, Daimler-Benz, Mahindra and Mahindra, and Bajaj Auto - located along it. The automobile industrial cluster has been developing along this highway since the late 1980s, but the past decade saw two important changes. The first is that, despite the fact that firms will move to the Pune region anyway because of its thriving industrial clusters, many firms started demanding SEZ status for their proposed industrial developments along the Pune-Nashik highway. The first of these was the proposal for a multi-product SEZ in the Khed region, located around 40 kilometers from Pune along the Pune-Nashik highway, by one of India's most successful domestic firms for auto components manufacturing, Bharat Forge. This was followed by other proposals, including the Sinnar SEZ 30 kilometers from Nashik along the Pune-Nashik highway. The second change is the reaction from agrarian landowners to these proposed SEZ developments. The heightened protests by agrarian landowners, activists and oppositional political parties have led to interminable delays, and even termination, of many of these developments.

The Khed SEZ stands out as a unique case of successful resolution of these land conflicts. The local Pune bureaucrats negotiated with the protesting landowners and formed a bureaucrat-mediated land cooperative, where a certain percentage of the developed land is owned by a land cooperative – owned and controlled by the agrarian landowners who have given up their land for the industrial development – and the land cooperative leases its collectively owned land to industry. Soon after the formation of the Khed cooperative, the neighboring villagers of Avsari Khurd pooled in 3500 acres of unirrigated lands and approached the industrial parastatal to lease their consolidated lands for industrial development. The villagers of the neighboring villages of Chakan have agreed to part with their lands for the proposed Pune International Airport if they get a deal similar to the Khed agrarian landowners. The bureaucrats who mediated the Khed case are involved in creating a similar institutional arrangement for the Sinnar SEZ, located around 30 kilometers from Nashik along the Pune-Nashik highway. Here, I focus on the sequence of events that led to the formation of the Khed land cooperative.

KHED SEZ

In 2006, Bharat Forge, an Indian company that manufactures automobile components, identified 16,800 acres of land in 17 villages in Khed *taluk* for setting up a multi-product SEZ. The Khed agrarian landowners opposed the proposed development, and eminent activists and politicians of oppositional political parties congregated in Khed to join the landowners' agitation. The industrial parastatal—the Maharashtra Industrial Development Corporation (MIDC) —approached the District Collector of Pune district to mediate the land consolidation process. The District Collector had worked in MIDC for five years before his transfer to the Revenue Department, and he had a close working relationship with MIDC bureaucrats. He delegated the power to acquire lands for Bharat Forge to his Revenue Department bureaucrat at the sub-district level, Shyam Patil.

Through repeated interactions with these villages, Patil was familiar with their local leaders. Most of the villages along the Pune–Nashik corridor and more broadly, in western Maharashtra, where this highway is located, are characterized by peasant agriculture. However, the villages have a few influential families that own larger tracts of land and are politically powerful. Negotiations between the local leaders and Patil resulted in an agreement whereby 15 percent of the acquired lands would be developed and returned to the landowners to form a land cooperative. Like the Hadapsar area in the Magarpatta case, the Khed villages are also facing an acute agricultural labor shortage because many of the agricultural laborers – mainly tribals – are finding alternative informal work in the factories coming up along the Pune-Nashik highway. Thus, the Kelkars and the other local leaders are eager to move from an agricultural to an industrial economy. However, they initially resisted the Khed development because they felt shortchanged by the cash compensation offered for their land. Patil was keen enough to recognize their urban aspirations and negotiate a more attractive deal of the land cooperatives with them. Also, the negotiating landowners opposed the earlier version of the SEZ plan that required the conversion of agriculturally fertile lands in the plains for the new development. Patil convinced Bharat Forge and MIDC to shift the SEZ to the agriculturally unproductive, dry lands on the hills, and leave the fertile lands on the plains untouched.

Phase 1 of Khed City is located within four *Village Panchayats* – Kanersar, Nimgaon, Dhawadi and Shirur.

Table 3.4: Acreage of dry land acquired for SEZ

	Fertile lands (in acres)	Dry lands (in acres)	Dry lands acquired for SEZ (in acres)
Kanersar	358	2236	941
Nimgaon	1112	662	946
Dhawadi	1517	3489	608
Shirur			965

Mohanseth Kelkar, the the *Police Patil* of Kanersar, i.e., the *Village Panchayat*-elected representative in charge of law and order, and Ramarao Kelkar, the *Village Panchayat Sarpanch* [head] at the time of the negotiations, explained the Khed land consolidation process:

Earlier, even we had protested against the industry. *Sarpanches* of the 17 villages got together, formed an organization and in that protest, we went to the District collector's office. We went there asking them to close it [the industry]. With Patil *saab* [Shyam Patil], we discussed what will happen if the industry comes here. Because of this discussion, four villages immediately agreed to the industry. Kanersar was the first village to agree.... Patil *saab* told us, 'you prepare your people, we will arrange whatever you need.' We went around all the farmlands in the village, what to keep and what to remove, we underlined that. We had a *gram sabha* [village assembly] and convinced the people.

An MIDC bureaucrat pointed to the crucial role played by the local village leaders as conduits between the state and the agrarian landowners: "These are the leaders of the village, only they can convince the villagers, outsiders cannot."¹⁰ The negotiations between the 'local leaders,' MIDC and the Revenue Department led to the formation of Khed Economic Infrastructure Private Limited (KEIPL). KEIPL is a joint venture company between the private-sector firm, Bharat Forge, the industrial parastatal, MIDC, and the agrarian landowners' cooperative, Khed Developers Limited. The residents of the four villages will elect one representative each at the *Gram Sabhas* - the village deliberative assemblies - and these representatives will participate in KEIPL decision-making. The

¹⁰ Interview with author, 23 May 2011.

chief executive officer (CEO) of the KEIPL is a bureaucrat from the Maharashtra Industries Secretariat, with experience in industrial development. Bharat Forge and MIDC own 85 percent of the developed industrial land, and the land cooperative owns the remaining 15 percent. Bharat Forge has committed an undisclosed amount towards the new development, and the details on the identification, pricing and allocation of risks of this joint venture company are unknown. This leaves many questions unanswered, including why the land cooperative owns only 15 percent of the shares of the new company, and if this is an accurate reflection of the allocation of risks among the different institutional actors involved.

The Khed City development consists of a multi-product SEZ (including automotive, auto components, engineering, information technology, biotechnology, food and agro processing, electrical, electronics, plastics and pharmaceutical firms), a textile park, a domestic industrial park, and support amenities including housing, commercial and recreational uses. It is master planned by the international design firm, HOK International. Like Lavasa, the US-based firm, Biomimicry Institute, is providing 'biomimicry' design solutions for ensuring environmental sustainability. Other international consultants involved in the project include the US-based VHB for infrastructural development and CBRE (Richard Ellis) for feasibility studies.

The four villages that agreed to be a part of the SEZ have given up 3,460 acres of land for Phase 1. These lands are partly owned by the dominant caste *Maratha-Kumbi* landowners, and partly by tribals called the Thakars. The initial protests in 2006 were initiated by the dominant caste, larger landowners who live in the plains. The Thakkars live in spatially segregated settlements on the hills, and each Thakkar household owns less than two acres of dry land. Unlike the tribals living in forest lands, the Khed Thakkars have legal titles to their lands. They depend on their dry lands for subsistence farming. Most of them have been working on the fields of the dominant caste landowners for generations.

The risks and benefits from the Khed SEZ varies for these different social groups. Most of the dominant caste agrarian landowners in these villages own multiple plots of land, sometimes in joint ownership with others, at several geographically dispersed sites.¹¹ These landowners gave up their dry lands on the hills for the SEZ, but continue farming on their remaining cultivable lands on the plains. The cooperative offered these landowners the possibility of making profits from dry lands that were otherwise left unused. Besides the benefits as shareholders, the local leaders of the four consenting villages were promised construction and other jobs as additional incentives to convince their villagers to join the project. Mohanseth Kelkar, together with five other cousins, started a construction company in 2009 after MIDC and Bharat Forge promised them some construction contracts. Though they lack prior experience in construction, their newly formed company has the contract for the construction of homes for the displaced tribals. The Bharat Forge employee supervising the construction said that the Kelkars' construction company is slow in its work, and quality is not up-to-the-mark, but these "concessions have to be made as confidence-building measures."¹²

The landowners in these Khed villages are anxious about the status of the project. MIDC and the Revenue Department bureaucrats have not visited these villages in the past year. MIDC is still in the process of surveying the land, and the lack of any visible construction on the site is adding to the landowners' anxieties. The only construction work that has started on the site is that of homes for the tribals displaced from the hills by the SEZ project. Interviews with the Khed landowners revealed strong feelings of uncertainty over the project. Many dominant caste landowners who had given up land for the SEZ asked me if I had visited MIDC. When I answered in the affirmative, they

¹¹ Source: File with the details of landholdings for the SEZ project, compiled by the Maharashtra Industrial Development Corporation (MIDC). This file contains the names of the landowners, their land survey/title number and land acreage.

¹² Interview with author, 8 May 2011.

had many anxious questions on the project: “Our negotiations were completed in 2008, but we don’t see the buildings coming up.”¹³ “I gave up 15 acres of land four years back. For the three acres for which I am a shareholder [15% of the land], I should have received Rs. 120,000 in interest. But, for four years, I haven’t received anything.”¹⁴ Though these dominant caste landowners expressed anxiety over the status of the SEZ project, they still continue productive agricultural activities on their fertile lands in the plains. Aside from the anxieties on the status of the new industrial development, the Kanersar landowners are satisfied with the joint venture arrangement.

The dominant-caste landowners of the neighboring village of Nimgaon, on the other hand, want more control over the 15 percent land that is part of the land cooperative. In January 2011, during a meeting between Nimgaon landowners and an MIDC bureaucrat over the status of the project, the Nimgaon dominant-caste landowners angrily demanded that the joint venture company return their land (the landowners erroneously stated that the KEIPL company had ownership and control over 5500 acres of land, of which 500 acres belonged to the land cooperative:

You formed a different company for 500 acres – what was the need? The company [Bharat Forge] has 5000 acres, and now they have their eyes on our 500 acres. Give us back our 15 percent lands. If you want to build a 600 crore [INR 6,000,000,000] company do it on your land. We know our land will not remain unused, we will build a shopping complex, apartment; people will come and rent our land.

The MIDC bureaucrat assured them that, through the land cooperative, they would have control over how the 15 percent land is developed. The meeting ended with Nimgaon landowners unconvinced by the bureaucrats’ assurances. No more meetings have been held since, further exacerbating landowners’ anxieties.

¹³ Interview with author, 6 June 2011.

¹⁴ Ibid

The dominant caste landowners can fall back on their fertile lands as a safety net during this uncertain transition from an agrarian to industrial economy. On the other hand, the sudden market demand for the Thakkars' dry lands encouraged them to give up all of their dry lands for the new industrial development, and indulge in conspicuous consumption with the compensation money for 85 percent of their land. The Thakkar settlements on the hills are fairly secluded and physically removed from the main village. The Kanersar Thakkar settlement does not have running water, and the Thakkar women have to trek 45 minutes down the hill every morning to fetch water from the public tap. In a settlement that lacks basic amenities of water and electricity, the surprise finding was a jeep parked outside the Thakars' homes. Most of the Thakars refuse to work on the lands of their erstwhile agricultural employers, and are enjoying their economic freedom from the dominant caste, at least till their compensation money runs out. This has led to acute agricultural labor shortage in the Khed region, and a common refrain amongst dominant caste landowners around the Khed region is "*mazdoor milta nabin*" [workers are not found]:

[Before the SEZ proposal] people here had less money, now they have more money and employment opportunities. They have bought cars to roam around, lots of changes, lifestyle changes. Earlier, if we asked the laborer to come for work, he would come. Now, we do not find any laborers. *Mazdoor milta nabin*.¹⁵

These Thakkar settlements are within the new SEZ boundary. Dominant-caste landowners own dry lands within the SEZ boundary, but they live in the main village settlement outside the boundary. Of all the landowners who gave up their lands for the new developments, it is only the Thakkars who have had to be relocated to new settlements. In May 2012, Bharat Forge completed its construction of the new Thakkar resettlement colony, located around 15 minutes from the main village settlement of Kanersar where the non-tribal population lives. Eighty five Thakkar households

¹⁵ Interview with author, 4 January 2011.

were relocated to this new settlement, which is spatially segregated from the rest of the village, but is much closer to it compared to the locations of the previous Thakkar settlements on the hills.

3.3 EXPLAINING THE ABSENCE OF LAND COOPERATIVES ALONG THE PUNE-MUMBAI HIGHWAY

Agrarian landowners and bureaucrats along two of these highways – the Pune-Sholapur and Pune-Nashik highways – experimented with innovative forms of land cooperatives to distribute the benefits of highway urbanization more equitably among the small and marginal landowners. Two variables account for the more top-down processes and exclusionary outcomes along the Pune-Mumbai Expressway – the politicized decision-making along an infrastructure corridor and the missing resistance from dominant-caste agrarian landowners.

*Politicized decision-making along an infrastructure corridor:*¹⁶ Some of India’s most contentious land consolidation processes are along infrastructure corridors – besides the Pune-Mumbai Expressway, the Yamuna Expressway and the Bangalore-Mysore Infrastructure Corridor. Infrastructure corridors are generally master-planned. The master-planning process gives top state-level politicians privileged access to information on the routing of these infrastructure corridors, and on the locations of specific urban developments along them. These politicians often purchase the land along these corridors, before the master plan is made public and through *benami* [fictitious] companies, so that they can benefit from the windfall gains of the post-corridor land value

¹⁶ Sanjoy Chakravorty’s 2012 book, *The Price of Land*, argues that the difference between land acquisition projects that have escalated into conflicts, and those that have taken place relatively smoothly and in the absence of the media glare, is the presence or absence of politics: when major political parties enter the land acquisition process for their own opportunistic political gains, they distort the land market. Chakravorty’s recommendation for the new Land Acquisition Act is for the creation of instruments to “defang both the state and the political parties.” Though I agree with Chakravorty’s analysis on the negative impacts of the politicization of land conflicts, I find it difficult to separate the politics of land from the economics of land, and am skeptical to suggest that a de-politicization of the land markets can lead to more equitable and conflict-free processes.

increment. At other times, politicians influence the master-planning process to accommodate projects that are personally beneficial to them. Along the Bangalore-Mysore Infrastructure Corridor, politicians from oppositional political parties – the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) and the Janata Dal Secular (JD-S) – are machinating against one another to gain monopolistic control over the new corridor developments. Designating a highway as an infrastructure corridor makes it the target of opportunistic rent-seeking, with politicians abusing their privileged access to information to make locational decisions of personal advantage. Besides corruption, the industrial location literature also has countless examples of the poor expertise of the government in directing industries to locate in particular places. The Pune-Nashik highway reflects a more pragmatic approach where the state intervenes only to the extent of building a network of highways and then leaves it to the market to sort out the locational decisions of private-sector firms. This is an important insight for policy-makers, as India launches one of its most ambitious infrastructure corridor developments, the 1483-kilometer Delhi-Mumbai Infrastructure Corridor that cuts across six Indian states and union territories.

Ironically, when political interests focus on those highways that are classified as corridors, the other highways are freed from negative politicizations. The focus of political attention on the Pune-Mumbai Expressway developments seems to have distracted top state-level politicians like Sharad Pawar from the Pune-Nashik highway, which continues to develop as a more market-driven agglomeration of industrial firms.

Missing resistance from dominant-caste agrarian landowners: The Sahyadri mountain range along the Pune-Mumbai Expressway is home to large numbers of tribals. India's 70 million strong tribal population – composed of more than five hundred endogamous communities (Guha, 2010) – is concentrated in the ecologically fragile upland and forest regions. Dominant-caste landowners occupy the low-lying plains – like the regions along the Pune-Sholapur and Pune-Nashik

highways – and they are few and far between in the forest regions along the Pune-Mumbai Expressway. The resistance against the urban developments along the Pune-Sholapur and Pune-Nashik highways was spearheaded by the dominant-caste landowners, a politically powerful constituency that has been the backbone of Indian democracy since Independence (Vanaik, 1990; Varshney, 1998). The numerical strength and political organization of dominant-caste interests makes them a key pillar in maintaining the stability of Indian democracy, and, as the next chapter shows, successive eras of agrarian land reforms and policies have carefully accommodated the interests of this group. A dominant-caste landowner and his political constituency were the key protagonists in the formation of the voluntarily formed shareholding companies along the Pune-Sholapur highway. Politically savvy bureaucrats along the Pune-Nashik highway recognized the high probability of having the highway urban developments derailed unless they made these developments attractive to the dominant-castes. The bureaucrat-mediated land cooperatives are instrumentally rational arrangements to appease the protesting dominant-caste landowners, and make them partners, not detractors, in the new highway developments.

The Pune-Mumbai Expressway lacks the critical mass of dominant-caste groups needed to successfully change the terms of the highway developments. Besides, the tribals, as a historically disadvantaged group, lack the political power of the dominant-castes in shaping land policy. Amongst India's historically disadvantaged groups – the tribals, Dalits and Muslims – the tribals are the most politically fragmented, and consequently, most impoverished. The Dalits, for instance, have mobilized themselves into a pan-Indian political force. They are a formidable voice in India's democracy, with Dalit-centered political parties - like the Bahujan Samajwadi party - playing an increasingly important role in Indian electoral politics. Dalits have held top political positions in the country, including as Union Cabinet Ministers and as judges of the Supreme Court. Tribals do not have a unified political party, neither have they ascended to the top echelons of politics.

Scholars have pointed to the geographic, structural and historical reasons for the deeper disenfranchisement of tribals compared to the Dalits. Geographically, the tribal population is spatially concentrated and isolated in the upland, forest belts (Guha, 2010). Dalits, on the other hand, live in “mixed villages” alongside the dominant and other castes (Ibid). The geographic dispersion and integration of Dalits amongst other caste groups makes them a more pervasive force in impacting electoral outcomes. For instance, in India’s general elections, the tribal vote may only account for 50 – 60 constituencies, whereas the Dalit vote accounts for more than 300 (Ibid). Structurally, the Dalits are unified as a caste-bloc by their shared experiences of caste-based oppression and untouchability. On the other hand, the lack of a shared history of oppression – some tribal groups were oppressed by forest officials, others by the developmental state through its dam-building projects, and yet others by private sector mining companies – stood in the way of forging a pan-Indian tribal identity that could supercede their intra-community differences (Ibid; Sitapati, 2010). Historically, the Indian National Congress, since its formation at the end of the 19th century and particularly post-Independence, has tried to correct its image as an upper-caste Hindu party through aggressively reaching out to Dalits and Muslims. But, the tribals have remained a neglected marginalized group. Their political isolation has been exacerbated by their relative invisibility within the mainstream media, which is quick to take up Dalit and Muslim oppressions, but rarely discusses tribal issues (Guha, 2010).

The experiences of the Thakkar groups along the Pune-Nashik highway are markedly different from those along the Pune-Mumbai Expressway. Interspersed among other caste groups within the low-lying Pune-Nashik region, the Khed Thakkars incidentally benefit from the negotiations between the Revenue Department bureaucrats and the dominant-caste landowners that led to the formation of the land cooperatives. As pointed out in the introduction, the Khed

Thakkars have private property rights to their land, and their territorial politics is one of redistribution, whereas the Pune-Mumbai Expressway is characterized by a politics of recognition.

The next two chapters trace the formation of the Magarpatta and Khed cooperatives, with particular attention to the role of the dominant caste landowners in the creation of these institutions.

Chapter 4

CITIES OF SUGAR: THE MAGARPATTA MODEL OF LAND CONSOLIDATION

The Magarpatta model of land consolidation has attracted some attention from policy-makers, the media and academics for its successful resolution of a seemingly intractable problem – of consolidating land efficiently, without displacing agrarian landowners. It has received unreserved acclaim as “inclusive capitalism (India Knowledge at Wharton, 2008; WSJ) and a “unique model of a company of farmers” (Ganguli, 2008). Some studies are more cautious in their celebration of Magarpatta, pointing instead to the vacuum in political leadership in India in managing urban development and the ability of some “urban stakeholders” like Satish Magar in opportunistically forming ad-hoc coalitions to advance their own interests (Sami, 2012).

My research takes a more *longue durée* approach to analyzing Magarpatta’s collective institution in land. I trace the origins of the collective institutions along the Pune-Sholapur highway to the region’s thriving history of sugar cooperatives in the 1950s to 1970s. I argue that the dominant-caste agrarian landowners articulated their interests from the 1950s to 1970s through the institutional form of sugar cooperatives. Within the new context of liberalized land markets, these sugar barons are diversifying from sugar cooperatives to shareholding companies in land. However, not all regions in India have a rich cooperative history. India’s two largest and most successful cooperative experiments – the dairy and sugar cooperatives – emerged in the states of Gujarat and Maharashtra respectively. These states have a common agrarian history. A large part of both these states came under the Bombay Presidency during colonial rule in the early 19th century. Since the cooperatives as an institutional form have persisted in the Pune region for almost a century, and local landowners and bureaucrats are re-working this existing institution to meet contemporary urban challenges, it is important to ask the question: why did cooperatives emerge in the area covered by the former Bombay Presidency and not in other regions in the country? What are the implications of this institutional history on the transferability of the idea of land cooperatives to

other regions within India that are facing similar land consolidation challenges? The answers to these questions point to the continuities and changes between post-Independent agrarian politics (of 1950s – 70s) and contemporary land conflicts. The continuity is the role of dominant-caste politics in shaping India's agrarian, and now urban, land policies. The difference is the recent scarcity of urban land and the attendant high demand for agricultural lands for conversion, and the changing aspirations of the dominant-caste landowners in desiring a transition to an urban economy.

The emergence and spread of land cooperatives along the Pune-Sholapur highway is linked to the implementation of successive phases of agrarian land reforms. The oligarchic nature of land ownership by the upper castes and the existence of a vast majority of impoverished peasants and landless laborers made land reforms a top priority in the newly independent India. The first phase of land reform was implemented soon after Independence, in the 1950s, for the abolition of *zamindars*, or propertied, non-cultivating landowners. The second phase of land reform focused on land ceiling and tenancy abolition. These moments of land reforms are critical junctures that re-arranged agrarian social relations through the redistribution of land, and *Maratha-Kumbis* used sugar cooperatives as institutional instruments to consolidate power and retain/strengthen their social position after these times of agrarian restructuring. In this chapter, I use the Bangalore region as an institutional foil to the Pune region, to compare and explain why cooperatives emerged in Western India (in the Bombay Presidency area) and not in Southern Karnataka (where the Bangalore region is located). The Bangalore region is an instructive comparison because it has a critical mass of dominant-caste agrarian landowners, the *Vokkaligas*. Unlike the *Maratha-Kumbis* in the Pune region who consolidated power through the formation of sugar cooperatives, the *Vokkaligas* chose not to form sugar cooperatives in the 1950s after the implementation of the first phase of land reforms. The Bangalore region is also rich in sugar cultivation, but all the processing of sugarcane takes place

in private, not cooperative, sugar factories. Both of these regions have different agrarian histories and land tenure systems, which influenced the institutional forms that have emerged along their highways to manage contemporary urbanization - collective property institutions in Western Maharashtra and individual property institutions in Southern Karnataka.

The Magarpatta model of voluntarily-formed shareholding companies in land works only for those regions that have a sugar cooperative history, because agrarian landowners keen on making the urban transition exploit the same political and social linkages that made the sugar cooperatives powerful institutions in the 1950s-70s to respond to contemporary urban challenges. It is more difficult to voluntarily bring together agrarian landowners who lack a past history in collective action. The sugar cooperatives thrived in certain regions of Western Maharashtra, including the Pune and Sholapur regions. The region along the Pune-Nashik highway, on the other hand, is rich in cabbage and onion cultivation, and lacks sugar cooperatives. The next chapter traces the formation of bureaucrat-mediated land cooperatives along the Pune-Nashik highway that does not have a cooperative history. This chapter focuses on those land cooperatives that have sugar cooperatives as their institutional predecessors.

The first section of this chapter traces the linkages between the first phase of land reforms and the formation of cooperatives in the Bombay Presidency area soon after Independence, the second section on the linkages between the second phase of land cooperatives and the growing popularity of sugar cooperatives in the 1970s, and the third section on the diversification of sugar barons from sugar to land. I conclude with a delineation of the variables that made voluntarily formed shareholding companies possible along the Pune-Sholapur highway.

4.1 FIRST PHASE OF LAND REFORMS AND COOPERATIVES

During colonial rule in the 1920s and 30s, the nationalist movement, the Indian National Congress, made the first overtures towards a socialist agenda of land redistribution. The famine outbreaks of the late 19th and early 20th centuries and the agrarian hardships during the years of the Great Depression stirred peasants to organize themselves into large-scale organizations like the Kisan Sabha [farmers' movement] (Dhanagare, 1976; Hardiman 1992). The peasant organizations demanded the abolition of the *zamindars* [landlords] – the non-cultivating propertied class inserted by the British between the cultivators and the colonial state. The Indian National Congress supported these peasant struggles for a number of reasons. The abolition of *zamindars* and intermediaries made an important political statement about the Indian National Congress. The *zamindars* represented the anti-nationalists and the abrogation of their powers resonated with the nationalist freedom struggle (Kohli, 1987: 67-70). More pragmatically, the *zamindars*, as local centers of power, posed a political threat to the Indian National Congress and the abolition of *zamindari* advanced the Congress' interests in consolidating power in the soon-to-be independent India (Herring, 1983; Kohli, 2010). Soon after Independence in the late 1940s and 1950s, the democratically elected Congress party implemented its first phase of land reforms, mainly focused on the abolition of *zamindars* and intermediaries.

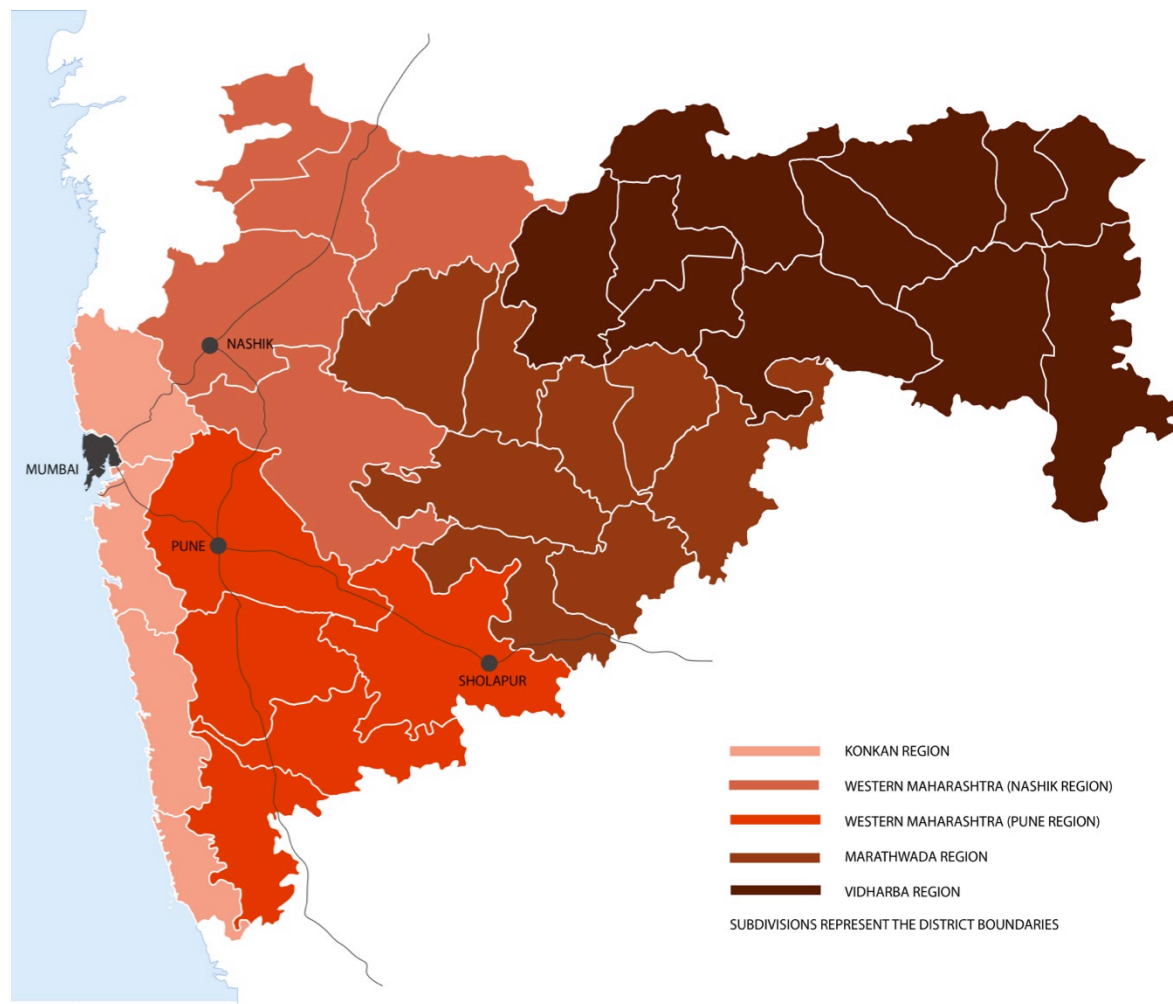


Figure 4.1: Agrarian systems in Maharashtra

The implementation of the first phase of reforms had different impacts in different parts of the country. India has a diversity of agrarian systems, some with a thicker layer of intermediaries and others with less. Maharashtra can be broadly classified into five regions, with distinct agrarian systems (Shah and Sah, 2002). The central region of the state – the Marathwada region – emerged from a *zamindari* system. The eastern region – Vidharba – had a *malgujari* system, where the unit of revenue collection was the village, not the household. In this region, the powerful intermediary was the village headman who was responsible for the assessment and collection of revenue at the village scale. The southwestern coastal region – Konkan – had a *kehoti* system which traced its origins to the

Muslim rule of the 15th century, where the intermediary was the revenue farmer. Western Maharashtra – in which the Pune region is located – had the *ryotwari* system. The *ryotwari* system was the only agrarian system that did not have intermediaries, and the cultivators – *ryots* – paid taxes and interacted directly with the state. Though these agrarian classifications are helpful starting points, they are not watertight systems. Not all *ryotwari* systems lacked intermediaries. A vestige of Muslim rule from the 15th century, the Bombay Presidency had *inams* and *jagirs*, a class of intermediaries who were gifted land by the rulers for military and/or good service (Bhuskute, 2002, Deshpande, 2002). Sometimes, entire villages were gifted to the *inamdars* and *jagirdars* (Ibid). Some of the Western Maharashtra villages, particularly those in the Pune region that become centers of sugarcane cooperatives, had *jagirdari* and *inamdari* systems (Attwood, 1992; Deshpande, 2002). This region also had unrecorded intermediaries like the revenue officials (Ibid). The Western Maharashtra region (Nashik region) was predominantly *ryotwari*. This had important implications for the first phase of land reforms.

The peasant struggles of the 1920s and 30s were led by the dominant castes – a class of cultivators that worked for the *zamindars*, *jagirdars*, *inamdars* and other intermediaries. These dominant caste cultivators became the backbone of the peasant struggles and the national movement (Varshney, 1998; Vanaik, 1990) and they applied pressure on the Congress to implement its first phase of progressive land reforms for abolition of *zamindars*. The socialist faction within the Congress, under the leadership of Nehru, argued that the land reforms legislation would be incomplete without the formation of cooperatives (Pandey, 1994). They recognized that agricultural markets in newly Independent India were interlocked, i.e. the dominant-caste cultivators were locked in patron-client relationships with *zamindars* and moneylenders, on whom they were dependent for work and credit. Commodity cooperatives provided institutional support – in the form of credit, production inputs like fertilizers and seeds, and marketing services – to the beneficiaries of land

reforms, i.e. the dominant-caste cultivators, so that they can participate successfully in the market economy. At the same time, unlike communal ownership of land, commodity cooperatives upheld the ideals of private property – cultivators had private property rights to their agricultural lands. Thus, the idea of cooperatives befitted the ‘mixed economy’ ideology of newly Independent India (Ibid).

The first phase of land reforms with its focus on abolition of *zamindars* saw the emergence of a new class of regional elites in different parts of the country – amongst others, the *Maratha-Kunbis* in Maharashtra and the *Patidars* in Gujarat. The successful implementation of the first phase of land reforms provided the context within which a new constituency of regional elites – the dominant caste landowners – emerged to initiate the formation of cooperatives and demand state support for cooperatives. This explains why dairy cooperatives started in the *Patidar*-dominated regions of Gujarat and the sugar cooperatives in the *Maratha-Kunbi*-dominated regions of Western Maharashtra.¹⁷

But, the emergence of new regional elites – the dominant-caste peasant entrepreneurs – in the wake of the first phase of land reforms is not enough in itself to explain the mobilization of support for the formation of cooperatives. Other regions that witnessed a successful implementation of land reforms – like West Bengal, Uttar Pradesh, Southern Karnataka – did not emerge as hotbeds of cooperatives. In his monograph on Western Maharashtra’s sugar cooperatives, Attwood

¹⁷ See Baviskar, B.S, “Milk and Sugar: A Comparative Analysis of Cooperative Politics” for an insightful comparison of the differences in the politics associated with Maharashtra’s sugar cooperatives and Gujarat’s milk cooperatives. Due to a number of political and technical reasons, Gujarat’s milk cooperatives were controlled by a technocratic agency, with the U.S educated Dr. Verghese Kurien leading the organization. On the other hand, Maharashtra’s sugar cooperatives became institutions of patronage for the *Maratha-Kunbis* and the political party, the Congress. It is not surprise, then, that the Patidars are not making the transition to urban real estate development in Gujarat using the institutional linkages established by the milk cooperatives, unlike the Maratha sugar barons who are.

compares Maharashtra to West Bengal and Uttar Pradesh (1992). Though West Bengal had a progressive communist party with a strong ideological commitment to rural development, Attwood argues that the urban and rural elite in West Bengal, called the *bhadra lok*, came from the same upper castes. Maharashtra's urban elites were upper caste Brahmins, but the rural Maratha elite had a distinct caste identity: this "creative tension between rural and urban interests is the underlying cause of constructive grass-roots leadership in Maharashtra" (Ibid: 304). Unlike West Bengal, Uttar Pradesh has "peasant-caste leaders [with] political power and a distinct ideology favoring the interests of farmers" (Ibid). But, the state does not have cooperatives because of the large number of peasant castes, including Ahirs, Jats, Kurmis and Gujars, each of which dominates certain areas. The lack of a numerically dominant peasant caste detracts from a large enough constituency that can exercise control over state-level politics.

Attwood's explanation for the uniqueness of Western Maharashtra's cooperatives - a distinct caste/class of peasant entrepreneurs, and a critical mass of these peasant entrepreneurs to influence state-level politics - does not explain the lack of cooperatives in Southern Karnataka. The *Vokkaligas* are a numerical majority in Southern Karnataka, they have a strong presence in state-level politics, and they have a distinct rural identity. The *Vokkaligas* did not mobilize support for the formation of cooperatives because of Southern Karnataka's pre-Independent agrarian land history. The Mysore princely rulers in colonial Southern Karnataka wanted direct control over their subjects, and they leased out their lands to, and collected revenue from, their tenants without any intermediaries (Pani, 1983). On Independence, these tenants who went on to become agrarian landowners - the *Vokkaligas* - had the agricultural expertise to successfully compete in a market economy and did not rally the state for the formation of cooperatives. As mentioned earlier, Southern Karnataka is also rich in sugar cultivation, but, unlike Western Maharashtra's sugar cooperatives, the sugarcane in the region was, and continues to be, processed by private sugar

factories.

Whereas the *Maratha-Kunbis* were eager to form sugar cooperatives to enable them to become more successful market participants after the first phase of land reforms, they enlarged existing sugar cooperatives and formed new ones in the 1970s as institutional instruments to circumvent the second phase of land reforms.

4.2 SECOND PHASE OF LAND REFORMS AND COOPERATIVES

The focus of the second phase of land reforms, implemented in the early 1970s, were the land ceiling act - the redistribution of surplus lands beyond a certain threshold acreage to the landless – and tenancy reforms – for the reallocation of land from the non-cultivating owner to the tenant. These reforms were aggressively pursued by Indira Gandhi, who was keen on centralizing power and saw the land ceiling act as an effective means of weakening the power base of the regional *Maratha* sugar barons. But, since land reforms are a state subject, different state governments had the authority to implement the reforms in the form legislated by their state legislatures, and at their own time.

The *Maratha-Kunbis* in Western Maharashtra who had pushed for the abolition of agrarian intermediaries in the first phase of land reforms, resisted the second phase by implementing the land ceiling act with loopholes that allowed them to evade redistribution. The Act defined family to include husband, wife, unmarried daughters and minor sons. The dominant caste landowners, who belonged to large joint families, circumvented the act through re-allocating and registering their lands under different family members' names (Pani, 1983; Chandra et al, 1999). Another loophole was the exemptions granted to cooperatives: “land held or leased out to...cooperative societies approved in the prescribed manner by the state government” were exempted from the land ceiling

law. The decade 1962-1972 witnessed a growth in cooperative membership. During this period, the membership in Western Maharashtra's sugar cooperatives increased by 12.7% (Subramanyam and Taimni, 1976: 319). The *Maratha-Kunbi* sugarcane growers exercised control over their laborers through tenancy, and the cooperatives provided an institutional loophole through which the landowners could maintain control over their lands and tenants.

In contrast, the land ceiling and tenancy acts were aggressively implemented in Karnataka. The land ceiling legislation was first introduced in Karnataka in 1961. The 1974 amendment to the act removed the tenancy exemptions from the 1961 act for widows, minors, unmarried daughters and mentally or physically challenged family members (Pani, 1983; Thimmaiah and Aziz, 1983). It also drastically reduced the ceiling threshold from 27 standard acres to 10 units (Pani, 1983). Though Karnataka's tenancy and land ceiling reforms "sound radical, [they] retained the status quo" (Ibid), primarily because of the different form of agrarian control in Southern Karnataka. In an incisive analysis of the agrarian systems in Southern Karnataka from princely rule in the 19th century to the 1970s, Pani argues that the dominant caste *Vokkaligas* exercised control over the low castes not through land tenancy but through indebtedness. In other words, *Vokkaligas* maintained their superior position in the social hierarchy not as landlords but as the main sources of credit for the small cultivator households.

In terms of land ownership, since the 19th century to the late 20th century, a very small percentage – less than 5 percent – of Southern Karnataka's agriculturalists come under the category of "tenants" (Epstein, 1973; Pani 1983). As pointed out earlier, the agrarian system established by the Mysore princely rulers led to a dominant class of cultivators, with tenants remaining an almost insignificant category within the region's pre- and post-colonial modes of production. Yet, when the tenancy reforms were implemented in this region in 1971, the rates of implementation exceeded 100

percent. In other words, the number of tenants to whom land was granted after the implementation of the 1971 tenancy legislation far exceeded the number of tenants present in the region pre-1971. Pani attributes this finding to the “dominant caste tenancy” prevalent in the region. The low-caste, marginal cultivators lacked the resources to cultivate their small plots of land themselves and instead leased their lands to dominant caste landowners for cultivation. On the passing of the tenancy legislation, dominant caste landowners, as tenants, claimed the lands of the marginal groups. Other scholars have pointed to the capture of the land tribunals by dominant caste landowners (Natarajan, 1980; Thimmaiah and Aziz, 1983). Land tribunals were set up to implement the 1971 tenancy reforms act – their main function was to adjudicate tenancy claims. These tribunals have been criticized for their procedural limitations. Mostly staffed by dominant caste landowners, the tenancy applications were not surprisingly decided in favor of the dominant castes. The tenancy reforms, then, actually benefited the dominant caste tenants. They had the insidious outcome of depriving marginal, low-caste landowners of their small plots of land and reducing them to agricultural laborers.

In terms of credit, a combination of three factors makes the Southern Karnataka system quite different from other regions in the country (Pani, 1983). First, indebted cultivators in this region borrow not for agricultural investments but for frequently recurring household consumption needs. Debtors are not bonded to the lender because of a single debt over a large duration but are dependent on the lenders for frequent, immediately needed small consumption loans repayable over short periods of time. Second, more than 60 percent of cultivators in Southern Karnataka depend on “landlords” and “agriculturalist money-lenders” for their consumption loans, and not on the independent class of “professional money lenders.” Third, more than 80 percent of cultivators borrow based on their personal security (60 percent) or on no security (12 percent). These credit systems without any material security are possible only in tightly-knit village societies where it is not

easy for debtors to abscond, and where the survival of financially distressed cultivator households depends on getting urgently needed loans without any security from lenders through long-cultivated patron-client relationships. Since the *Vokkaligas* have always owned small tracts of land, and have maintained their control over the lower castes through credit systems, the land ceiling reform did not affect their land ownership.

The difference in the form of agrarian control between Western Maharashtra and Southern Karnataka meant that the dominant caste landowners in the former region resorted to the formation of sugar cooperatives to circumvent the second phase of land reforms; the credit-based form of agrarian control in the latter precluded the need for forming cooperatives or other institutions to circumvent land redistribution.

4.3 DIVERSIFYING FROM SUGAR TO LAND

From the 1950s through the 1970s, the dominant caste landowners in Western Maharashtra controlled the region materially and politically through the sugar cooperatives – materially, because the decisions of the sugar cooperatives were made by an elected Board of Directors, and it was only the more affluent dominant caste landowners that had the financial and organizational resources to contest these elections; politically, because it was through the sugar cooperatives that the ruling Congress party mobilized its rural constituents. The Maratha faction within the Congress monopolized control over the region and the state through capturing two important institutions of local governance – rural local governments (*Panchayati Raj* Institutions) and sugar cooperatives (Lele, 1981; Khekale, 1999). The sugar cooperatives were tightly intertwined with local and state politics, and the interdependence between the sugar barons and Congress politicians was a mutually beneficial one. The sugar cooperatives were advantageous to the Congress as key contributors to political campaigns. The large sugarcane growers diverted the cooperative surpluses for financing

political campaigns, with the result that input prices to small sugarcane growers registered significant drops during the electoral years (Banerjee et al, 2001). The small Maratha-Kunbi sugarcane growers did not challenge the large growers because the sugar cooperatives at least guaranteed them an assured income.¹⁸ The Congress party, on the other hand, recognized the sugar barons as local centers of power and offered many of the cooperative Board of Directors tickets to contest in state elections (Khekale, 1999; Lalvani, 2008). Elected membership to the sugar cooperative board became stepping-stones to Member of Parliament positions in the state government (Ibid).

Western Maharashtra's sugar cooperatives soon degenerated into institutions of patronage. The financially distressed cooperatives were propped up by heavy state subsidies - 90 percent of sugar cooperative finances came from debts from the cooperative banks with state guarantees, and over three-quarters of the 10 percent equity was a direct handout from the state budget (Jadhav, 2008). The 1980s saw the rise of the Shiv Sena and the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) as strong oppositional parties in the state. The Shiv-Sena and BJP have often entered into opportunistic alliances in the state against the Congress, and one of their most effective strategies for weakening the power base of the Congress was through a frontal attack on the sugar cooperatives. In the past decade, they have been rallying for a lifting of the "zoning of sugarcane" – removing sugarcane zones, which will allow sugarcane farmers to sell cane to factories outside their zone – and for a reduction in state subsidies for cooperatives (Rattanani, 1997).

¹⁸ Personal interview, Amit Narkar, National Center for Advocacy Studies (NCAS), Pune. Based on Narkar's experiences of working for over ten years in the sugar-rich regions of Western Maharashtra, he recounted interviews with small sugarcane growers who admitted to the blatant corruption of the sugar barons controlling their cooperatives, but continued to support the barons: "He is a *badmaash* [rogue], but whatever we are, it is because of him" (when Amit Narkar asked a small sugarcane grower on why he continuing voting for a corrupt sugar baron in the cooperative elections).

In the wake of these changes, coupled with the generally poor performance of Indian agriculture and the growing agricultural labor shortage, sugar barons have been diversifying from the commodity of sugar to the other lucrative commodities like “land, liquor and learning” (Mehta, 2010). These sectors have been identified as the “least liberalized and least transparent” sectors in India today, which make them most prone to political capture and corruption (Ibid).

The Magarpatta experiment is part of a larger process of the movement of former sugar producers out of agriculture into the money-spinning sectors of “land, liquor and learning.” The sugar barons in other regions around Pune district also have long, deep cooperative histories, but these regions are not urbanizing at the same explosive rate as the Pune region. One of these sugar barons, and one of the most powerful politicians not only in Maharashtra, but also at the Central Government level – Sharad Pawar – has been active in setting up wine cooperatives in his home constituency of Baramati, located around 100 kilometers from Pune along the Pune-Sholapur highway. Pawar’s constituents of sugar growers have been shifting to wine grape cultivation. Pawar has been taking active steps to change liquor regulations to protect and promote Maharashtra’s nascent wine industry. For instance, in the past decade, the Maharashtra state government nearly doubled the special excise duty on imported wine, while simultaneously lowering the liquor sales tax from 20 to 4 percent (Rattanani, 1997; Bhattacharyya, Undated). Sharad Pawar’s political fortunes hinge on keeping his home constituents happy, and the wine cooperative model is not surprising given his political dependence on these sugar growers-turned-grape growers.

In other examples of diversifying sugar barons, the regional elites with long-time control over the Kolhapur sugar cooperatives now own one of the largest educational empires in the state – the D. Y. Patil group of educational institutions. Sugar barons are also adapting the institutional form of cooperatives into new arrangements for educational institutions. Most of these are being set up as trusts. These trusts are legal entities that are separate from the cooperatives, and sugar barons

and their family members retain control over them through their designation as “life-long trustees” (Baviskar, 2007). The members of the sugar cooperatives are pressured to make donations to these trusts and it is not uncommon for cooperative board members to siphon cooperative profits into these activities that are personally advantageous to them.

The transition from one type of commodity cooperative to another is not as easy as it sounds. Comparing sugar and land, it is relatively easy to convince sugarcane cultivators to join a cooperative because sugarcane is a highly perishable commodity – sugar cannot be extracted from it unless it is processed within 24 hours of harvesting (Sastry, 2011). This creates a strong incentive for sugarcane cultivators to send their crops to the sugar cooperative. Landowners, on the other hand, have the option of holding on to their land in anticipation of higher market prices, and it takes more effort to convince them to join a land cooperative. Also, sugarcane cultivators face lower risks in joining a sugar cooperative because they are, at most, risking one harvest by turning over their crops to the cooperative. Members of a land cooperative, on the other hand, face higher sunk costs and higher opportunity costs in placing all of their land in the cooperatives. It takes more convincing and stronger degrees of trust for landowners to come together in a collective land enterprise than it does to join a sugar cooperative. The long history of trust between Satish Magar’s family and the agrarian landowners of the Magarpatta area was crucial to the formation of the Magarpatta shareholding company in land.

4.4 MAGARPATTA: TOO UNIQUE TO REPLICATE?

A combination of unique factors, which are not easy to come by in the Indian agrarian countryside, made the transition from sugar cooperatives to shareholding companies in land possible

in Magarpatta. These variables include the consolidated pattern of land ownership, the past history of collective action, and a politically and economically savvy local leader in Satish Magar.

Consolidated pattern of land ownership: The formation of voluntarily initiated shareholding companies in land is an exercise in collective action. Though both Western Maharashtra and Southern Karnataka trace their agrarian history to the *ryotwari* system, and both regions are characterized by peasant proprietorship, Southern Karnataka has smaller landholdings and is more egalitarian in land distribution. According to the 2000-1 agricultural census in India, around 8 percent of Sholapur landowners are classified as marginal, i.e. having landholdings of less than 1 hectare, or 2.4 acres, in size, and another 8 percent are classified as large, i.e. having landholdings of over 50 acres in size.¹⁹ In contrast, the average size of operational landholdings in Southern Karnataka varies from 2 to 5 acres, with more than 25 percent of landowners classified as marginal and less than 5 percent classified as large. It is difficult to bring together a large number of fragmented landholdings in a collective action enterprise. Western Maharashtra, with its dispersed regional elites who control larger tracts of land, is more amenable to mobilizing agrarian support for collective institutions in land.

Past history of collective action: Agrarian landowners like Satish Magar exploited the same political and economic linkages that made the sugar cooperatives possible in the 1960s and 70s for the contemporary shareholding companies in land. Similar to the Magarpatta case, the shareholding cooperative companies emerging as a response to land conflicts in China also depend on past histories of collective action (Hsing, 2010). In the metropolitan fringes of Guangzhou and Shenzhen, organized village collectives have been at the forefront of retaliations against the urban governments' requisitioning of agrarian lands from collectives for sale to industrialists and property developers. Negotiations between village collective and urban governments have led to the re-

¹⁹ Agricultural Census of India, accessed online at agcensus.dacnet.nic.in

organization of village collectives into shareholding cooperative companies, with the urban government returning a certain percentage of appropriated, re-zoned land to these shareholding companies.

Nevertheless, the presence of a past history of collective action alone does not assure the formation of institutions for the collective ownership and/or control over land. The peri-urban areas of Mexico City are characterized by *ejidos* – communally owned agricultural land with usufruct property rights. In response to the intense urbanization pressures from a metropolis swelling beyond its city boundaries, the *ejido* members did not form shareholding companies in land as in the Pune, Guangzhou and Shenzhen cases. Instead, *ejido* members sold their lands individually to those who could not afford the high rents of Mexico’s housing market, and with the mediation of illegal developers, these peri-urban areas have now burgeoned into large-scale informal settlements (duBroff, 2009). Conversely, the Khed case lacked a past history in collective action, but the agrarian landowners successfully organized themselves into a land cooperative that owns and controls 15 percent of the shares of the new industrial development.

Politically and economically savvy local leadership: Agrarian landowners like Satish Magar are quite rare. Satish Magar has strong personal and political connections with national-level politicians like Sharad Pawar. It is only because of his political networks that that Maharashtra state government introduced the integrated township policy that made urban developments like Magarpatta possible. In fact, Satish Magar was one of the key individuals in drafting this policy. Satish Magar’s personal relationships with state-level politicians enabled him not only to navigate India’s land regulations, but also to frame a new legislation that will facilitate his Magarpatta shareholding company to replicate similar township projects in other regions. As I will point out in the next chapter, most dominant caste agrarian landowners in the Pune region have the aspirations

to make the transition from an agricultural to urban/industrial economy, but they lack the political and economic resources of the Magars to make this transition themselves.

Most agrarian regions in India are characterized by fragmented landholdings, an endemic problem of lack of clarity over land titles, and the absence of a single joint family like the Magars with control over local and state-level politics. This means that the Magarpatta model of highway urbanization is too unique to replicate in other regions of the country. Besides the practical considerations of replicability, how do we evaluate the Magarpatta model of urban development in terms of democracy and social equity? The next section addresses this normative question.

4.5 MAGARPATTA: A DESIRABLE MODEL TO REPLICATE?

The positive outcome in the Magarpatta model is that agrarian landowners capture all of the land value increments of the newly converted highway lands. But this model of highway urbanization has two shortcomings: i) in its reproduction of existing class and caste hierarchies, and ii) in streamlining land regulations at the discretion of certain (privileged) groups.

Reproduction of existing class and caste hierarchies: The main protagonists and beneficiaries of this land collective are the dominant-caste Magars, and the low-order sugar cooperative members continue to be under the patronage of these sugar barons-turned-real estate barons. The Magarpatta model, then, represents a reproduction of existing class and caste hierarchies. The powerful sugar barons materially and politically controlled the small and marginal sugarcane growers through a monopolistic control over the sugar cooperatives. As these highway regions urbanize, sugar barons like the Magars continue to hold sway over the small and marginal landowners through their lead roles in the formation and working of the shareholding companies in land. However, the past decade has seen some stirrings of resistance by the low-order sugarcane

growers against the sugar barons, and this may have implications on the future urbanization of these regions.

An unpacking of the members of the sugar cooperatives into the sugar barons and the low-order sugar growers requires a disaggregated analysis of the Maratha-Kunbi caste bloc. The Maratha-Kunbi cluster is made up of the Marathas, who are the larger landowners and have a strong political presence in the state, and the Kunbis, who are generally small and marginal landowners. The numerical majority of the Kunbis made it politically expedient for the Maratha leadership in newly independent India to forge a larger Maratha-Kunbi identity that was based on a common battle against the upper-caste Brahmins and a common “material experience as peasantry” (Lele, 1981; Palshikar and Deshpande, 1999). With the decline in Congress dominance and the rise of oppositional political parties like the Shiv Sena and BJP in the 1980s, the Congress control over the Maratha-Kunbi caste block started to show signs of fracture. The poor Marathas started deserting the Congress because of the perception that the party supported a few rich Maratha elites to the neglect of the small and marginal Maratha landowners (Palshikar and Deshpande, 1999). The vitriolic caste politics of the 1980s, largely fueled by oppositional parties to the Congress, led to the incorporation of the Kunbis as a separate caste group that could avail itself of affirmative action reservations for education and public sector jobs (Ibid). This led to a further fragmentation of the Maratha-Kunbi caste bloc. In the past decade, small and marginal sugarcane growers have started calling for higher sugarcane prices and protesting against the Maratha sugar barons’ control over the sugar cooperatives (Gadgil, 2012; Wadke, 2012). It remains to be seen whether Western Maharashtra’s small and marginal landowners can organize themselves to break the Maratha hegemony over the region’s politics and economy, and what would be the implications of these changes in caste alliances on the urban transition.

Streamlining land regulations at the discretion of certain (privileged) groups:

Maharashtra's integrated township policy streamlines the land regulations process to expedite the conversion of agricultural lands to urban uses. It removes earlier restrictions on the sale of agricultural lands to a non-agriculturalist. It also exempts these townships from the Urban Land Ceiling and Regulation Act that limits the size of urban landholdings by individuals. The rationale for the integrated township policy is to "liberalize supply of land for urban growth and infrastructure...[and redefine] the role of the public sector in this process [as] facilitator and regulator of town planning, environmental and social welfare norms instead of a controller and provider of land for urban growth" (Joshi, 2009).

Some of the regulations governing the conversion of agricultural land to urban land are outdated. The procedure was intentionally made restrictive during colonial times because agricultural revenue was a major source of revenue for the colonial government. This ceases to be a relevant criterion in guiding land regulations in the contemporary context. Agricultural land revenues have not been revised since Independence. In one of the villages in the Khed region, the agricultural land revenue collected in 2010 was an insignificant Rs. 3374 [USD 68].

But, other justifications for a more stringent process for agricultural land conversions remain as relevant today as they did when they were framed in the 1950s and 60s. Besides the goal of redistribution, the other rationale for the Urban Land Ceiling and Regulation Act was to curb "speculation and profiteering from land" (Ravindra et al, 1997). The restriction on the sale of agricultural land to non-agriculturalists was intended to protect the small and marginal agricultural landowners from the "unwary and fraudulent dispossession" of their lands by speculative developers (Ibid). Since the state has the power to acquire land through eminent domain for public purposes, the "cumbersome process" of land conversion was designed to "give adequate opportunity to the

landowner to contest compulsory acquisition of his land, and where acquisition must be made, to ensure that his claims for proper compensation are met” (Ibid: 90).

The chief architect of the integrated township policy was Satish Magar. The policy was drafted and passed within a year. Without adequate procedures for public deliberations, this policy was clearly drafted to benefit a certain segment of real estate developers. The excessive streamlining and expediting of the land conversion process deprives it of “procedural due process,” the legal safeguard of giving landowners, particularly the small and marginal landowners, reasonable opportunity to respond to these urban proposals.

In practice, the Magarpatta model of land consolidation is not as equitable as it appears on the surface. The successive phases of land reforms were initiated by, and benefited, the dominant caste *Maratha* landowners. As these highway villages transition into an urban economy, the dominant caste landowners continue to dominate the highway decision-making processes.

The next chapter looks at another model of land consolidation, the bureaucrat-mediated land cooperatives exemplified by the Khed case, and analyzes if this model of voluntarily-formed cooperatives is more easily replicable, and more democratic and equitable in its outcome, than the Magarpatta model.

Chapter 5

ADVERSARIAL COOPERATION: THE KHED MODEL OF LAND CONSOLIDATION

India's agrarian to industrial transition along infrastructure corridors will be scripted by cases like Khed. The Khed case has a more complex cast of institutional actors compared to Magarpatta. The landholdings in Khed are more fragmented – though families like the Kelkars exercise control over the Dalits and tribals, their landholdings are not as consolidated as the Magars. Of the 941 acres acquired for the Khed development from Kanersar village, nearly 275 acres, or 30 percent of the acquired lands, are locked in litigation; 550 acres of the 946 acres of acquired lands, or 60 percent of the acquired lands, in Nimgaon village are in court.²⁰ These are not uncommon statistics. Property disputes are a common problem with agrarian land that is passed on generation by generation to descendants of large joint families. The Khed area lacks a local leader like Satish Magar with the political and cultural capital to make large-scale urban changes. The landowners within the Khed SEZ area – encompassing four villages – are not a socially homogenous group like the Magars. Forming a land cooperative in areas like Khed involves huge transaction costs in bringing together a large number of fragmented landowners in a collective experiment.

5.1 INVENTIVE BUREAUCRATS

The protagonist who initiated the Khed land cooperative was the Revenue Department bureaucrat, Shyam Patil. Through their daily engagements with agricultural land tax collection and resolution of land disputes, bureaucrats like Shyam Patil are embedded in the social life of these highway regions. They spend long periods of time in particular geographic locations, and are familiar with local power structures and politics. It takes such socially embedded bureaucrats to navigate the messy land records and resolve any land disputes. It also takes such on-the-ground bureaucrats to

²⁰ Source: File with the details of landholdings for the SEZ project, compiled by the Maharashtra Industrial Development Corporation (MIDC).

seize the right time to strike a deal that has benefits for groups that otherwise have conflicting interests. I outline the clever timing of the Khed land cooperative through focusing on the benefits of the Khed institutional arrangement for the Revenue Department, the private sector firm Bharat Forge, the industrial parastatals MIDC, the dominant caste landowners and the marginalized tribal landowners.

5.1.1 REVENUE DEPARTMENT

The Revenue Department bureaucrats mediate the land consolidation process between the industrial parastatals and the agrarian landowners. MIDC had a good working relationship with the Pune District Collector [the district-level bureaucrat in charge of the Revenue Department], because the latter had been an MIDC bureaucrat for five years before moving to the Revenue Department. Shyam Patil had also been an MIDC bureaucrat before being transferred to the Revenue Department in 2004.

As MIDC bureaucrats, they had been involved in 2003 in the land acquisition for Phases 1 and 2 of an information-technology (IT) park, called Hinjewadi, on the outskirts of Pune. The agrarian landowners had received cash compensation from MIDC for their acquired lands. By 2007, when MIDC and the Revenue Department approached the villages around Hinjewadi for acquiring more land for Phases 3 and 4, they were met with stiff opposition. Current landowners had learned from the past experiences of those who gave up their agricultural land for Phase 1 of the IT park in the early 2000s, and the raw deal they got in accepting then-prevalent market rates as compensation for land that is now almost ten to twenty times in value. Recognizing that the earlier landowners had not received their fair share of the land value increment, current landowners refused to give up their land for the future phases of industrial expansion.

In areas that lacked past experiences of collective action, the Revenue Department bureaucrats realized that including agrarian landowners as equity members of a land cooperative can cultivate relations of trust among these landowners and the bureaucracy, thus increasing chances of collaboration for future industrial/urban expansions. When I met with him in January 2011, the Pune District Collector was visibly proud of his accomplishment in successfully negotiating with protesting landowners and convincing them to be partners within the new highway development: “Farmers who had earlier protested with Medha Patkar and other prominent social activists have now given their consent to the development and are now our partners in this [Khed] development.”

5.1.2 BHARAT FORGE

The media and activists have harshly criticized private sector firms acquiring agricultural lands as “land grabbers” and industrial parastatals like the MIDC as “real estate brokers” (Lakshmikantha, 2010; Angad, 2012) Bharat Forge and MIDC are canny enough to recognize that negative publicity from these protests can hurt their image and even terminate their projects.

The CEO of Bharat Forge, Baba Kalyani, is the brother-in-law of the Managing Director of the private sector consortium, Nandi Infrastructure Corridor Enterprises (NICE). In 1994, the Karnataka state government selected the NICE consortium to build the Bangalore-Mysore Infrastructure Corridor – a six-lane private tolled expressway - along with five private townships along the corridor. According to the build-own-operate-transfer contract, the infrastructure corridor would be transferred to the government after 30 years, and the townships along the corridor would be sold to the private consortium. The NICE corridor and its five townships have been mired in litigation since 1994, with non-governmental organizations (NGOs) challenging the acquisition of agricultural lands for private township development. In October 2012, the Karnataka Lokayukta Court – an anti-corruption ombudsman organization – upheld the charges against the NICE

consortium, and ordered it to return the INR 720,000,000 [USD 14,400,000] of toll collected to the state government.

The NICE experience is a harsh eye-opener to private industrialists and developers, that coercive land acquisition can lead to interminable delays, and even terminations, at a later stage. It is not surprising that Baba Kalyani learned from the mistakes of his brother-in-law, and took a more reconciliatory route of land consolidation.

5.1.3 MIDC

The role of the industrial parastatal in contexts like Khed, which have more fragmented land ownership, is crucial. Following the protests by the dominant-caste landowners, the MIDC acquired their agricultural lands for the Khed joint venture company through the use of eminent domain. But instead of paying landowners cash compensation, they were paid a non-monetary compensation in the form of shares. The acquisition of land through eminent domain was a pragmatic decision.

India, and most developing countries, face the endemic problem of poor land records and unclear land titles. Most agricultural lands have encumbrances, including mortgage claims and restrictions on the alienability of agricultural lands (instituted soon after Independence to protect agrarian landowners from speculative transactions on their land). The wide variety of encumbrances on agricultural land makes direct land transactions between the private sector firm and the agrarian landowners a risky proposition for the private sector firm. For instance, if, as in the Khed case, the industrial firm purchases 3,500 acres of land for an industrial development, and if even two acres of that land has encumbrances, the entire project will be stuck in court till the property dispute is settled. It is to the advantage of the private sector that the parastatal is involved in land acquisition. When land is acquired by the state and is transferred to the private sector, the transferred land is

declared free of encumbrances. MIDC here plays a crucial role of delivering unencumbered land to the Khed joint venture company.

5.1.4 DOMINANT CASTE AGRARIAN LANDOWNERS

The dominant caste agrarian landowners, like the Kelkars in the Khed case, lack the political and economic resources of the Magars to make this transition themselves. However, they are powerful enough as local leaders to effectively block any urban developments that are not beneficial to them, and the Khed bureaucrats had to negotiate with them, placate them and win their support in order for the Khed project to continue. Due to structural changes in the agrarian economy – including the shortage of agricultural labor and the rising value of appropriately located agricultural land for urban uses – dominant caste landowners aspire to participate in India's urban/industrial economy, but only with the requisite safety nets to mitigate the risks of an uncertain transition.

Agricultural labor shortage: One of the main push factors out of agriculture is agricultural labor shortages. A common refrain heard among dominant-caste landowners along the Pune highways is the phrase “*mazdoor nahi milte*” [workers are not found]. The availability of alternative factory jobs has led to intense labor shortages in these highway regions:

Earlier, the villagers used to come for work - Thakkars, others. Once the land payment was made, people work less. Earlier, the Thakkars used to work from morning to night, now they do not. The nearby places - Chakan, Rajgurunagar, there is *chota-mota* [small] MIDC work there, people have gone to work there. Earlier, we used to pay INR 60, now no one comes for less than INR 100. And they come at 11 and leave at 5, take a break for lunch. This is everywhere. Here [in Khed], because of the land money [compensation for 85 percent of the land], it is more.²¹

²¹ Interview with author, 4 January 2011.

Urban aspirations: Besides the agricultural labor shortage, the push factor towards an urban/industrial economy is the agrarian aspiration to be a part of the ‘India Shining’ growth story. Of the 20 Maratha-Kunbi landowners I spoke to in Kanersar, the first village that had agreed to give up its land for the Khed SEZ, all of them were educating their children in private, rather than government schools, and they were unanimous in wanting their children to leave agriculture and join industry. For these Maratha-Kunbi landowners, one of the most attractive benefits of the land compensation package is the assurance that one family member will be guaranteed admission to the Khed Industrial Training Institute (ITI), a joint initiative for vocational education institute between the Government of India and Bharat Forge. The ITI graduates will almost certainly be employed in the Khed industrial development. Not surprisingly, admission to the Khed ITI is coveted:

We have an agreement now with the ITI. It is not difficult to get admission there. It is based on marks in the 10th standard. A person from every family gets admission to the ITI. The Thakkar families do not go there because they do not have education.²²

Of the 20 Kanersar landowners, 14 of them have some service/industrial business in addition to their agricultural fields. A smaller number of Nimgaon landowners – 4 out of the 20 interviewed – have service businesses. The MIDC has targeted benefits for the *Sarpanches* of both Kanersar and Nimgaon – these political leaders have been guaranteed construction and earthmoving contracts for the new industrial development. Though they lack prior experience in the construction and earthmoving sectors, a Bharat Forge employee conceded that these construction contracts were necessary as “confidence-building measures.” Of the 14 Kanersar landowners, 12 of them had transportation companies to transport agricultural produce from Khed and surrounding areas to Mumbai. The only *Maratha-Kunbi* who expressed nostalgia for an earlier, agricultural way of life is an attorney, who studied in the law college in Rajgurunagar (the nearest town to Kanersar) and now

²² Interview with author, 11 June 2011.

lives and practices law in Pune. Having fulfilled his aspirations of becoming a city-dweller, he nostalgically recalled India as a country that is “known through its agriculture,” and evoked romanticized images of the Indian farmer through slogans like “*jai jawan jai kisaan*” [hail soldier, hail farmer - a patriotic slogan by the Prime Minister, Lal Bahadur Shastri, in the 1960s, to boost the morale both of Indian soldiers in the war against Pakistan and of farmers to increase agricultural production and reduce India’s dependence on imports]. The *Maratha-Kumbis* who were experiencing urbanization and industrialization without leaving their villages welcomed these developments with the view that “we are becoming like Mumbai, like a city, with city life.”

Managing the risks of an in-situ agrarian to urban transition: Despite its advantages, the transition from an agrarian to urban/industrial economy is fraught with uncertainties and risks. The Khed case illustrates some of the uncertainties posed by highway urbanization. The Khed industrial development is being delayed by changes in political and bureaucratic administration. Both the District Collector at the time of the negotiations, and his mediating bureaucrats including Shyam Patil, have been transferred to other administrative departments, and the Khed landowners have lost their main liaison with the MIDC and the Revenue Department. The lack of visible construction on the site, despite the land negotiations being completed in 2008, is a legitimate cause of anxiety for the dominant-caste landowners:

If the company's share dividend had started, that would have been good for us. We gave up their land four years back. I gave up 15 acres of land, but have not received the dividend on my 2.25 acres [15 percent of the 15 acres that the landowner is the shareholder of]. For my 2.25 acres, I should have received INR 120,000 interest. But for four years now, I have not received anything.²³

²³ Interview with author, 6 June 2011.

What assurance do we have that the SEZ will be completed? Will they give us jobs or not?²⁴

Besides these delays, agrarian landowners face the typical market risks of real estate development of financial profitability. Changes in interest rates, in material costs, in demand for the industrial services being provided by the SEZ, and a number of other changes can seriously affect expected project returns. In case of losses to the Khed SEZ, the agrarian landowners pay the high price of losing their landed assets in an unprofitable industrial venture.

It was in anticipation of these risks that the dominant caste agrarian landowners protested against the initial Khed proposal in 2006. Following the protests, the Revenue Department and MIDC re-drew the boundaries of the Khed SEZ: the earlier 2006 proposal included fertile and dry lands within the SEZ boundary, but the 2008 proposal moves away from a Cartesian rigidity to a more zig-zagged boundary that only encompasses the dry lands on the hills and leaves the fertile lands on the plains untouched. The dominant caste landowners in the Khed region own multiple plots of land, sometimes in joint ownership with others, at several geographically dispersed sites.²⁵ Despite their anxieties over the status and performance of the Khed industrial development, the dominant-caste landowners continue farming on their fertile agricultural lands. If the Khed industrial development does not do well and undergoes losses, they still will have their fertile agricultural lands to fall back on. The land cooperative offered these landowners the possibility of making profits from dry lands that were otherwise left unused.

Clever bureaucrats like Shyam Patil re-negotiated the land compensation package to facilitate an easier transition for dominant-caste landowners from an agrarian to urban economy. It is important to underscore that the dominant caste landowners oppose parting with their fertile lands not because of the economic value of these lands – after all, along the highways, location has

²⁴ Interview with author, 7 June 2011.

²⁵ Source: File with the details of landholdings for the SEZ project, compiled by the Maharashtra Industrial Development Corporation (MIDC).

trumped fertility as the metric for determining land value – but because these lands are their safety nets in the transition from a lower productivity but secure agrarian present to a higher productivity but uncertain industrial future.

5.1.5 MARGINAL TRIBAL LANDOWNERS

As owners of marginal plots of dry land, tribal landowners – the Thakkars - benefit as members of the Khed land cooperative. Though the negotiations for a mutually acceptable land compensation package between the agrarian landowners and the bureaucrats did not involve the Thakkars, the latter - particularly the younger generation male Thakkars – approve of the Khed SEZ. In fact, these Thakkars did not participate in the 2006 protests against the SEZ, and were willing to give up their lands for the industrial development in exchange for the initial proposal of 100 percent cash compensation.

The enthusiasm of the Thakkars in joining the land cooperative and making the urban transition is surprising, given that they face lower opportunities and higher risks in making this transition compared to the dominant caste landowners. Unlike the dominant caste landowners who hedge their bets of an uncertain transition through only giving up their dry lands, the Thakkars only own single plots of dry land. By agreeing to join the land cooperative, they are giving up all of their landed assets for the new industrial developments. For the dominant caste landowners, one of the most attractive inducements for giving up their land for the Khed industrial development is the guarantee that a member of each landowning/shareholding family is entitled to admission to the vocational industrial training institute (ITI), the Khed ITI. The Thakkars, on the other hand, lacked the basic educational qualifications of a high school degree to avail of the ITI guaranteed enrolment benefit. The literacy rates of the 25 Thakkar households I interviewed are a sample of the poor educational levels of the Khed tribals:

Table 5.1: Literacy levels of Thakkar adults above 18 years from 25 households²⁶

	Men	Women
Primary school (1 st – 4 th grade)	16	42
Middle school (5 th – 7 th grade)	22	6
High school (8 th - 12 th grade)	18	4
Diploma/ITI	3	2
College	-	-

Despite the bleaker opportunities and higher risks, the Thakkars have their own rationales for joining the Khed land cooperative. Their cost-benefit calculus in making the urban transition is markedly different from that of the dominant caste landowners.

Dry lands and informal factory jobs: Two changes brought about by highway urbanization are particularly favorable to the Thakkars. First, the Thakkars benefit from the change in the functional orientation of land from fertility to location. Through long histories of sociospatial segregation, the Thakkars owned the driest, most agriculturally unproductive lands along the highways, and the dominant caste landowners owned the most fertile lands. In other words, these highway villages were characterized by a neat mapping of social power with land ownership. The recent demand for highway lands, and the Indian state's policy to acquire dry lands as far as possible in the interests of food security, has made the Thakkars' dry lands, desirably located close to the highways, a coveted market commodity. This restructuring of the land market is unsettling historically produced sociospatial hierarchies, with the highway-proximate dry lands of the Thakkars increasing in market value, and fertile lands located far from the highway declining in value. Besides the change in the valuation of highway lands, the Thakkars also benefit from the availability of alternative informal work in the factories coming up along the highways. Before highway

²⁶ The Thakkars living in the four Village Panchayats of Kanersar, Nimgaon, Dhawadi and Shirur who gave up their lands for the new SEZ have been relocated to a new settlement. Through a random sample selection, I interviewed 25 of these Thakkar households. The interviews were conducted in the new relocation settlement, approximately four months after relocation.

urbanization, the Thakkars were solely dependent on the dominant caste agrarian landowners for employment opportunities as agricultural laborers on the latter's lands, but the factory jobs – albeit of an informal nature – allows them to reduce their dependence on the dominant caste landowners as the only employment generators in the region.

Breaking away from relations of dependency on dominant caste landowners: Before highway urbanization, the Thakkars worked through various forms of tenancy – ranging from bonded labor to seasonal leasing – on the lands of the dominant castes. After highway urbanization, the younger generation male Thakkars lacked the educational qualifications to join the ITI. Nonetheless, they are making the transition to an industrial economy through finding work as daily-wage or contract laborers in the factories along the Pune-Nashik highway. The Thakkars are also in high demand in the hyper-active construction industry. The tight labor market of the construction industry – construction work has to be completed in certain months before and after the monsoons – gives them more bargaining power with their employers. The account of Somu captures the shift of the Thakkars from an agrarian to industrial economy:

For 18 years, I've worked at the *Maratha's* house, only in one house. He has large fields - his fields are grand. That's why they kept me, and others, there permanently for 18 years. In 1986, I was paid INR 7 *coolie* [daily wages]. I stopped working for him in 1994. We have to work according to our free will. I wanted to work with *swatantrata* [independence]. Now, I work for a construction contractor as a daily wage labourer. He gives me INR 150 [USD 3] per day. If I work permanently, he will give me INR 180 [USD 3.6] per day. I do not work permanently for anyone. If there is a problem with someone, then I will change to someone else.²⁷

²⁷ Interview with author, 9 June 2012.

Somu's assertive language of *swatantrata* – a Hindi word that translates to “political selfhood” and has a strong resonance with India's freedom struggles against the colonial state – and “free will” is partly because of the availability of informal jobs in the construction industry. These jobs – albeit of poor working conditions, and lacking in security and benefits – increase Somu's bargaining powers not only with his industrial employers, but also with the dominant caste landowners. The tribals now commonly negotiate their daily wages with agricultural landowners using the wage rates set by the industrial informal economy as the standard: “The construction contractor pays me INR 150 [USD 3] per day. Why should I work on their [dominant caste landowners'] land for less?”²⁸

The factories along the Pune-Nashik highway are reluctant to hire local labor as permanent employees, both because they lack of requisite skills and because of a fear of unionizing. Though they are asserting their autonomy from dominant-caste agrarian landowners, the tribals are entering a poorly paid, exploitative informal economy that lacks any obligations on the part of the state or employers in guaranteeing informal workers basic benefits and security.

Disaggregating the Thakkar household: Not all members within the Thakkar household approve of the younger generation male members' decisions to give up their land for the new industrial development. Women and the older generation Thakkars would have preferred to hold on to their single plots of dry land.

Of the 25 Thakkar households interviewed, women in 18 households were unhappy that they no longer have dry lands in which to graze their goats. Since relocation to the new settlement, these households have sold their goats. Mothers complained that the goats provided their children with their daily dose of milk, but now, with no goats, and with the unaffordable price of milk in the market, they have had to remove milk from their children's diets.

²⁸ Interview with author, 15 June 2012.

The Thakkar males in their 40s are less enthusiastic than the younger generation about joining the informal industrial economy. One of the Thakkars I interviewed, Nandu, who is in his forties, tried industrial work for sometime, but is now back to agricultural work. His experience reflects the riskiness of these unprotected informal factory jobs:

In the 1980s, I used to work on the *Maratha's* lands. Five years back, I stopped doing this. The factories here were giving us contract work. I was ready to do any work. They [the factory owners] give the contractor INR 10,000 [USD 200] per month, he [the contractor] will give us INR 4000 [USD 80] per month. The contractor got me work in the auto parts factory. I had to assemble all the auto parts in a line, lots of heat involved in the work. No 'surety.' No 'safety' [he uses the English words surety and safety]. Even if I die or have some injury, there's no surety. I can break my arm and they will not do anything. That is why I left a year back. Now, I get INR 150 [USD 3] per day for agricultural work.²⁹

Whereas the Thakkars in their 40s and 50s, like Nandu, are wary of mechanization, the Thakkars in their 60s and older lack the physical strength to work in factories. Most of them expressed dissatisfaction over their sons' decisions to give up their lands for industry. Dairy farming has been a common supplemental occupation along these highways since the 1970s. In the earlier decades, before highway lands became a hot market commodity, the Thakkars used the village common lands for grazing their cattle. Some of them grazed their livestock on the dry lands owned by dominant caste landowners. If their families had been working on the lands of the dominant caste landowners for generations, norms of reciprocity obliged the dominant caste landowners to allow their laborers to graze their cattle on their lands for free. The past decade has seen a rampant privatization and commodification of village common lands for urban development (Gidwani and Baviskar, 2011). As Thakkars are now breaking away from the old norms of dependence and

²⁹ Interview with author, 9 June 2012.

reciprocity from dominant caste landowners, the latter have started charging a monthly rent for the use of their dry lands for grazing.

Highway urbanization enfranchises certain members within the Thakkar households, while disfranchising others. The younger generation Thakkars, those in their 20s and early 30s, are most resolved in breaking all links with dominant caste agrarian landowners, and are reckless in lurching into an uncertain informal industrial future. Women are worried that they no longer have access to milk – the sale of their goats and the unaffordable prices of milk in the market are depriving their children of basic nutrition. The Thakkars in their late 30s, 40s and 50s are wary of the risks to safety posed by mechanization. Nandu's words sum up these apprehensions well: "Even if I die or have some injury, there's no surety. I can break my arm and they will not do anything." The older generation lack the physical ability and strength to work in industrial jobs, and the loss of their dry land deprives them of the only sources of livelihood they are familiar with - agriculture and dairy farming. Thus, a physically disabled, uneducated, female senior within the Dalit and tribal collectivity encounters multiple disadvantages of gender, age and physical ability in making the urban transition.

5.2 KHED: HOW REPLICABLE IS IT?

The dominant caste landowners aspire to be a part of the 'India Shining' growth story, and are eager to make the urban transition, but under conditions that will mitigate the risks and uncertainties of the transition. The marginal tribal landowners welcome the urban transition because of the possibility it offers in moving from a caste-ridden agrarian reality to a caste-free industrial future. I call this coming together of two historically antagonistic groups – the dominant caste and tribal landowners – in a collective land experiment, for markedly different instrumental reasons, adversarial cooperation.

Inventive bureaucrats like Shyam Patil can play a crucial mediating role in bringing together different social groups with conflicting interests in a collective land experiment. In the previous chapter, I compared Western Maharashtra to Southern Karnataka to explain how past institutional and land reforms histories facilitated the formation of voluntarily-formed shareholding companies in land in the former region, and not in the latter. Similarly, a comparison with the Bangalore region in Southern Karnataka is instructive in an analysis of bureaucrat-mediated land cooperatives. Like Khed, the Bangalore region lacks a past cooperative history, and has a more egalitarian pattern of land ownership that proved to be a hindrance to collective action in land consolidations. The Khed region overcame these constraints through the mediations of inventive street level bureaucrats. The Bangalore-Mysore Infrastructure Corridor, on the other hand, continues to be mired in litigations and activist protests, and the bureaucrats in this region have not experimented with innovative solutions as in Khed. How unique are bureaucrats like Shyam Patil in the Indian agrarian countryside? I answer this question through a comparison of the Khed region with the Bangalore-Mysore region in Southern Karnataka.

Consolidating land for meeting the demands of urban expansion is not a new exercise in India. The earliest precedents for the consolidation and conversion of agricultural lands into urban lands are the colonial projects of the 19th century. The colonial government set up parastatals called the City Improvement Trust Boards (CITBs) in the late 19th century to acquire agricultural lands outside the city boundaries for the building of India's first planned suburbs (Nair, 2005). The CITB activities were partly a move to relocate the native poor from slums to these "model hygienic suburbs" in response to the plague epidemics sweeping through colonial cities (Ibid, Kidambi, 2007; Legg, 2007) and partly a legitimization of colonial rule through demonstrating the civilizing effects of these rationally planned suburbs over the unsanitary and chaotic native settlements (Ibid). The

colonial government framed the Land Acquisition Act – India’s eminent domain legislation - in 1898 to enable the conversion of agricultural lands in the peripheries into CITB planned suburbs. After Independence in 1947, the demand for urban land continued with the expansion of Indian cities under Nehru’s policies of state-led industrialization.

It is at this point that the institutional histories of the Bangalore and Pune regions start to diverge. The planning of new suburbs, and the extension of infrastructural services (mainly water supply and sanitation) to them, is a capital-intensive activity. Cities like Mumbai and Pune in Maharashtra, with a flourishing industry and large tax bases, had the financial capabilities to manage these capital-intensive expansions of serviced land (NIUA, 2004). Cash-strapped cities like Bangalore, on the other hand, turned to international financial institutions like the World Bank, which recommended the setting up of parastatals for more efficient land and service delivery (Sivaramakrishnan and Green, 1986). In response to fiscal pressures, the Bangalore Water Supply and Sewerage Board (BWSSB) was set in 1964, and the Bangalore Development Authority (BDA) was set up in 1976 as a successor to the CITB. Pune does not have land and water parastatals, and its land, water supply and sanitation responsibilities continue to be managed by the local government.³⁰

Historically, local governments in India have been viewed with distrust, and, as public corporations, strict legal limits have been imposed on them to curb their private, economic activities (Frug, 1980). In India, local governments cannot leverage municipal lands for for-profit activities. Municipal lands can only be used for public uses, including hospitals, schools, and parks (Sridhar and Reddy, 2010). On the other hand, in the Bangalore region, the BDA has emerged as one of the most powerful [quasi] public organizations. The main source of revenue for the BDA is land

³⁰ Though it does not have residential or water parastatals, the state of Maharashtra does have an industrial parastatal – the Maharashtra Industrial Development Corporation (MIDC).

disposition, i.e. the BDA acquires land for residential development through eminent domain, it services these lands, and then sells the serviced residential plots at the prevalent market value.

The local government in Pune does not have residential parastatals, and has had to experiment with innovative, non-coercive models for assembling land, and for capturing some of the land value increment of the serviced land. One of these models is the Town Planning Scheme, also called land pooling or land readjustment, where the local government brings together disparate agrarian landowners within a certain boundary and re-assembles their fragmented, agricultural landholdings into serviced plots of regular dimensions. The new serviced plots will be of higher value than the fragmented plots, and the local government distributes the land value increment between itself and the landowners. Though the Karnataka Town and Country Planning Act has enabling legislation for land pooling schemes like the Town Planning Scheme, Bangalore bureaucrats have never used these schemes for consolidating land. The reliance on urban parastatals like the Bangalore Development Authority (BDA) to acquire land through eminent domain precluded the need for local governments to get involved in non-coercive land consolidation activities (Ravindra et al, 1997). Not surprisingly, local bureaucrats in the Bangalore region lack the institutional capacity to implement land consolidation projects like Khed. More broadly, the regions in India that relied heavily on residential parastatals with their eminent domain powers are less successful in resolving contemporary land conflicts because of a lack of institutional capacity among local bureaucrats in experimenting with, and dealing with the nitty-gritties of, non-coercive land consolidation methods.

5.3 KHED: A DESIRABLE MODEL TO REPLICATE?

Unsettling agrarian caste hierarchies: The positive, but incidental, outcome from the Khed case is that, with the rising market value of their dry lands, and with the availability of alternative informal work, marginal tribal landowners are unsettling agrarian caste hierarchies and

imagining more emancipated, caste-free industrial futures for themselves. However, informal industrial work has its own forms of exploitation. But, the recent raft of ambitious social welfare programs launched in India over the past two decades offers some hope for an improved status for tribals in India's growth story. These programs include the 2008 Unorganized Sector Workers' Social Security Bill (USWSSB) to cover informal workers' disability, health and old age insurances, and the 2006 National Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme (NREGS) that guarantees one adult members of every rural households 100 days of employment, or unemployment allowance, every year. Unlike the dominant caste landowners, tribals like the Khed Thakkars have no way of hedging their bets during the transition, thereby exposing them to higher risks. State welfare programs like the USWSSB and NREGS provides them with the essential safety nets while making a precarious transition.

In a seminal article on the democracy and economic transformation of India since liberalization, Partha Chatterjee offers an explanation for the emergence of a welfare state in India (2008). With the rapid growth of the Indian economy, more and more primary producers are being alienated from their means of production, and are entering an unprotected informal economy. The political conditions of a functioning electoral democracy makes it imperative for the Indian state to extend welfare services to these informal workers; otherwise, there is the threat that they may turn into "dangerous classes." Recent social welfare programs are creating a new contract between the state and its citizens. Informal workers are targeting their demands to the state and not to exploitative employers or landowners (Agarwala, 2006). They are demanding welfare rights – like health and unemployment insurance – instead of workers' rights – like minimum wages. These changes are leading to new forms of state-society politics. As Agarwala points out in her analysis of India's informal organizations, "on the one hand, [these movements] could grow to shape the state's role in workers' lives across all sectors of the economy; on the other hand, the movement could fall

backward into a scenario where the state continues to extend its responsibilities to its workers, but in an ad hoc manner that eventually mirrors traditional patron-client relations” (Ibid: 440). As India’s marginalized agrarian groups transition into the informal industrial economy, it shifts the focus of the discourse on enfranchisement of India’s marginalized populations from impoverished peasant groups to the informal industrial sector.

Institutional ambiguities: The joint venture company – Khed Economic Infrastructure Private Limited (KEIPL) - is a complex assemblage of a land cooperative, an industrial parastatal, and a private sector firm, set up with the intention of leveraging the comparative advantages of these different institutions. The land cooperative is essential in gaining the trust and consent of agrarian landowners. The endemic problem of poor land records, unclear land titles and property disputes in India makes direct land transactions between private sector firms and agrarian landowners risky for the private sector. However, when land is acquired by the state and transferred to the private sector firm, the transferred land is declared free of encumbrances. The parastatal plays a crucial role in negotiating with a large number of fragmented landowners and conveying encumbered land to the private sector. The private sector firm has the technical and financial expertise to deal with such large-scale industrial/property developments.

Complex hybrid institutions like KEIPL leave many questions unanswered. In this complex interlinking of a cooperative with a private for-profit company, whose interests—agrarian landowners or industrialists—is the KEIPL accountable to? How are clashes in interests reconciled within the organization? In terms of allocation of land value increments, why does the land cooperative own only 15 percent of the Khed company shares? Bharat Forge has committed an undisclosed amount towards the Khed SEZ, but more work has to be done on the identification, allocation and pricing of risks in these complex joint venture companies so that the private sector is compensated only to the extent of their risk component. Researchers and policy-makers need to

turn their attention to these questions on accountability, and risk pricing and allocation, as these will form the basis of evaluating the equitability of these cooperatives in allocating land value increments amongst different institutional actors.

Chapter 6

LAND COOPERATIVES AS REDISTRIBUTIVE REGIONAL INSTITUTIONS

The 2011 Kannada³¹ movie, *Puttakkana Highway*, follows the travails of Puttakka, a marginal rural landowner, after the state government announces its decision to acquire agricultural lands in Puttakka's village for the construction of a highway. Puttakka has four acres of land where she has buried her husband. Adamant that she will not give up her land, she tries everything within her meagre means to hold on to her land, including a visit to the state capital, Bangalore, to appeal to state-level politicians. She discovers the harsh realities of development when her daughter, deprived of their land and agricultural livelihood, turns to prostitution to make ends meet. The film ends with Puttakka walking away from her land in helpless anger.

The director of *Puttakkana Highway* drew inspiration from the ongoing fracas over the Bangalore-Mysore Infrastructure Corridor. He portrays Puttakka as lacking the capabilities to have her voice heard, as powerless against an authoritarian state. Puttakka's helplessness in reel life finds parallels in real life in the media accounts and activists' narratives of the highway land conflicts. A Bangalore-based activist described his interview with a marginal landowner whose lands had been notified for acquisition for the Bangalore-Mysore highway: "When I asked her [the landowner] what she would do if she lost her land, she replied: I will commit suicide. She said this quietly, as though this were the only option open to her." *Puttakkana* and the woman interviewed by the activist helplessly resign themselves to these injustices, either through silently surrendering their land or through committing suicide. Media accounts of the land conflicts along highways focus on the farmers' protests against a juggernaut state: "The great land grab: India's war on farmers" (Shiva, 2011), "In India, fresh clashes over rural land as farmers stand up to government" (Denyer, 2011).

³¹ The regional language of the Indian state of Karnataka, in which Bangalore city is located.

But, as evident from the diverse Thakkar responses to highway urbanization, the experiences of residents of India's urbanizing villages cannot be captured by the simplistic framing of farmers v. industrialists, or rural v. urban interests. As I pointed out in the introductory chapter, the experiences of the highway Thakkars can be characterized as a politics of redistribution, a politics of recognition, or a politics of exclusion, depending on their relationship to their land. In my research that focuses on the politics of redistribution, we can further categorize agrarian landowners into three types:

- Rural capitalists, like Satish Magar, who blur the distinctions between industrial/urban capitalists and agrarian landed elites. With strong personal and political connections with national-level politicians like Sharad Pawar, and with the educational and cultural capital available only to the highest echelons of urban India, the agrarian landed elites like the Magars are undistinguishable from India's urban/industrial capitalists.

- Agrarian aspirants like the Kelkars in the Khed case along the Pune-Nashik highway are more common than rural capitalists like Satish Magar. These agrarian aspirants desire participation in an industrial/urban economy, but they lack the political and economic resources of the Magars to make this transition themselves. The Kelkars were clear that they were not in the same league as Baba Kalyani, the CEO of the private sector firm in the Khed development, Bharat Forge: "15 percent of the land belongs to us, the remaining land is with the government and the *bada-bada* [big] industrialists, like Kalyani, Bajaj, Tata."³² However, they are powerful enough as local leaders to effectively block any urban developments that are not beneficial to them, and negotiated solutions like the land cooperatives are institutional solutions to placate them and win their support.

³² The private sector firms, Bajaj and Tata, are not part of the Khed development. But, "Bajaj and Tata" – two of India's oldest and largest industrial families – is a common colloquial metonym in India for rich industrialists.

- Marginal agrarian groups – in this study, the tribals – who are not part of the negotiations between the agrarian landowners and the state, but who benefit incidentally from this transition in two ways: the highway industrialization opens up alternative informal, factory work besides the only economic opportunity hitherto available to them as agricultural laborers for dominant-caste landowners, and the rising value of their dry lands now makes them the owners of an attractive market asset.

The urban transition along Pune’s highways alerts us to a new form politics in these highway regions. The most rapid urbanization in India is taking place not within cities, but in-between cities, making it imperative to understand the politics driving these contemporary processes of urbanization. The urban-rural divides blinds us both to the intra-urban and intra-rural conflicts (for instance, the caste-based conflicts between dominant-caste and tribal landowners) and to the urban-rural coalitions that are being formed between agrarian and industrial elites. For instance, the growing work on the hegemonic role of India’s middle class in driving the “world-class” aspirations of Indian cities focuses exclusively on the urban middle class to the neglect of the rural middle class. My work orients attention to agrarian social groups like the dominant caste landowners in Khed, many of whom have urban aspirations for their children, and are excited at the possibility of their highway villages becoming “like Mumbai.” The aspirations of this numerically large and politically important constituency cannot be ignored in any analysis of India’s urban transformation. After all, it was the urban aspirations of an agrarian landowner, Satish Magar, that led to the framing of an urban land policy for integrated townships. The politics of these in-between highway regions is most visibly articulated in the dynamics of restructuring land markets along Pune’s highways and in the emergence of new hybrid institutions like land cooperatives to reconcile the conflicts accompanying India’s urban transition.

6.1 COMPARING THE INSTITUTIONAL OUTCOMES ALONG PUNE'S HIGHWAYS

With the more active and direct role of the private sector in land development, on-the-ground public and private actors are experimenting with new forms of hybrid institutions that are now forming a new, and important, part of India's institutional landscape. Do certain modes of land consolidation – pure state, pure market or hybrid - lead to more democratic processes and socially equitable distributional outcomes? I use the empirical cases offered by Pune's natural experiment to answer this question.

The pure state model of land consolidation, which is best exemplified by the Pune-Mumbai Infrastructure Corridor, is more prone to political capture and corruption. The Indian state has been acquiring land through eminent domain since Independence, but it is only in recent times that these coercive land acquisition practices have met with such violent opposition that it threatens the stability of Indian democracy. One reason is that contemporary urban processes are spilling beyond city boundaries into agricultural lands. When parastatals and other state agencies started acquiring the agricultural lands of dominant caste landowners, these agrarian landowners retaliated with protests. As I pointed out earlier, the dominant castes are part of the tripartite ruling coalition, and the state cannot ignore these protests by a politically important constituency. The second reason is the political economy of the media. Since liberalization of the Indian economy in 1991, the country has seen a proliferation of private news channels that broadcast 24/7. These protests now have high visibility, as regional and national news channels are quick to scoop in on these events, and have the power to amplify local protests into national headlines. The political risk of alienating the dominant castes and the higher visibility of protests due to a liberalized media is making it more and more difficult for the state to acquire land coercively through eminent domain.

The pure market model of land consolidation is largely an exercise in voluntary collective action. There are few agrarian regions in India that have the unique set of background conditions – a consolidated pattern of land ownership, a past history of collective action through commodity cooperatives – that made the Magarpatta and the other Pune-Sholapur urban developments possible. Besides, when a few agrarian landowners take the lead in forming land cooperatives during an urban transition, the entrenched power structures of an agrarian economy remain unchallenged. In the Pune-Sholapur cases, the main protagonists and beneficiaries of the land cooperative are the large, dominant-caste sugarcane growers (like Satish Magar’s family) and the low-order sugar cooperative members continue to be under the patronage of these sugar barons-turned-real estate barons. The Magarpatta case also highlights that these purported pure market models of land consolidation require an active role of the state. Satish Magar’s close political connections with top state-level politicians led to active state intervention in changing land conversion and integrated township regulations, which set the legal framework within which the Magarpatta development could take place.

The pure state model of land consolidation – through eminent domain – is becoming politically risky and untenable. The pure market model requires a set of background conditions that are too unique to replicate. India’s agrarian to urban transition will be scripted by cases like Khed, which is representative of the more general condition of India’s agrarian systems. Most agrarian regions in India have fragmented land ownership and lack a past history of collective action. The Pune-Nashik cases point to the crucial negotiating roles that bureaucrats have to take on to resolve the complicated land politics of an urbanizing country. The Revenue Department bureaucrats had the technical expertise to sort through arduous and messy land records. They had the political savvy to bring together different social groups with conflicting interests in a collective land experiment. The complexities of bringing together diverse social groups, all of whom are trying to maximize their

own benefits and minimize their risks during an uncertain urban transition, demands politically savvy and flexible planners/public officials like the Revenue Department bureaucrats. Within the planning literature, the communicative model has focused on the crucial role that planners like the Khed bureaucrats play in transforming conflicting interests into practical plans for change. The communicative model has particular salience in the contemporary context of a globalizing economy, where large urban conurbations like the highway regions are become contested sites of co-habitation amongst diverse social groups with competing interests. The communicative planners - who are variously called “cultural brokers” (Wulff, 1976), “deliberative practitioners” (Forester, 1999) and “consensus planners” (Innes, 1996) - experiment and innovate with new negotiated institutional arrangements to cope with the new challenges of an urbanizing, globalizing and liberalizing society. One of these negotiated solutions along Pune’s highways is the land cooperative. Since negotiation is a key variable that can lead to new hybrid institutional arrangements, I turn to the role of negotiations in mediating land allocation conflicts along India’s highways.

6.2 THE ROLE OF NEGOTIATIONS IN MEDIATING HIGHWAY LAND CONFLICTS

Successful negotiations do not depend only on the skill of public officials in bringing together diverse social groups and building consensus amongst them. The process leading to the formation of the Pune land cooperatives alerts us to the background conditions needed to make land-use negotiations happen. Here, I elaborate on three of these conditions: the inclusion of protests as a legitimate form of communication, the strengthening of local democratic institutions, and the equalizing of power relations through some form of material redistribution.

6.2.1 PROTESTS AS A LEGITIMATE FORM OF COMMUNICATION

As I pointed out earlier, a key variable that distinguished the Pune-Mumbai highway from the Pune-Nashik one is that dominant caste agrarian landowners protested against the highway developments in the latter case. The Pune-Mumbai highway lacked a critical mass of dominant caste protestors. As mentioned earlier, the electoral importance of the dominant caste landowners and the increased visibility to protests due to the proliferation of 24/7 private news channels made it politically untenable for the Revenue Department bureaucrats to ignore these dominant caste protests. But, the larger background condition that made it impossible for the state to ignore or repress these dominant caste protests is the acceptance of protests as a legitimate form of political communication. Communicative theorists recognize that participatory planning processes can be genuinely representative of diverse voices only if the accepted modes of discourse are made more inclusive. This means that a democratic process of negotiation should not privilege dispassionate argument alone as a rational mode of communication, as argument – “the construction of an orderly chain of reasoning from premises to conclusion” (Young, 2002: 37) - is the speech culture of educated and privileged social groups. Privileging argument then biases the negotiation towards the speech cultures of the more socially privileged (Ibid), making it imperative to include other modes of discourse – such as storytelling (Forester, 2000) and the expression of fears and dangers (Healey and Hillier, 1995) – as accepted forms of communication. But rarely are protests included within this repertoire of legitimate political communication, when, in fact, protests are often the most accessible modes of dissent amongst the more marginalized groups against the perceived unfairness of the decision-making process.

6.2.2 STRENGTHENING LOCAL DEMOCRATIC INSTITUTIONS

Besides highlighting the importance of protests as a legitimate form of communication, the dominant caste protests also alert us to a serious shortcoming in the formal land allocation process along the highways. Elected rural local governments, or *Village Panchayats*, are the most basic of India's democratic institutions. Despite the presence of these elected local governments, dominant caste agrarian landowners registered their grievances against the highway urbanization process not through the formal democratic channel of *Village Panchayats* but through the extra-formal route of protests. This points to the limited power given to rural local governments in the formal planning procedure for highway land allocation.

Rural local governments have some power in the formal land conversion process from agricultural to non-agricultural land, but it is severely limited. After the industrial firm or property developer gets a land conversion permit from the Revenue Department and other parastatal agencies, the last step is a building permit from the rural local government. Without the *Village Panchayat's* granting of the building permit, the land conversion process is not complete. However, the *Village Panchayat* can deny a building permit only if the proposed development contravenes the public purpose, i.e. if the development negatively impacts the health and safety of residents. In more concrete terms, the *Village Panchayat* "can take action if there is water or air pollution, if people from nearest villages give us a requisition with the signature of 20-30 members complaining of pollution from the industries."³³ *Village Panchayats* in India have rarely exercised this power to deny building permits to industries or residential developments. The rare exception is the 2003 Kerala case of Perumpatty *Village Panchayat*.³⁴ The *Panchayat* cancelled the building license of the Coca Cola factory

³³ Interview with author, December 2010.

³⁴ <http://www.righttowater.info/ways-to-influence/legal-approaches/case-against-coca-cola-kerala-state-india/>

when local residents complained of water scarcity and drying up of wells due to indiscriminate groundwater extraction by the factory, and groundwater contamination from the factory's chemical effluents. Coca Cola appealed to the Kerala High Court. The Court dismissed the appeal, stating that "the *Panchayat* has the power to independently consider as to whether the setting up of an industrial unit within its area would adversely affect the people of the locality, even if authorities like the Pollution Control Board, District Medical Officer, etc., grant permission."³⁵ Though the Kerala case is a significant step forward in strengthening the power of local governments vis-à-vis private firms and mobile capital, it circumscribes the power of local governments to matters relating to the "public purpose."

In other words, local governments have no voice in deciding the economic futures of their villages. They do not have the political power to weigh in on important economic decisions like: is industrial development desirable for their villages, are SEZs the appropriate forms of industrial development, and what are the negotiating terms between the villages and the private sector firm? It is because of this circumscribed role for local governments within the formal highway land allocation process that dominant caste landowners turn to other extra-formal modes of dissent like protests.

6.2.3 NEW ECONOMIC OPPORTUNITIES FOR MARGINALIZED GROUPS

As is evident from the decentralization literature, one of the main challenges with local democratic institutions is that they are often hostage to local elite capture (Dreze and Sen, 1996; Manor, 1999). In the Khed region along the Pune-Nashik highway, members of the Kelkar joint family make up eight of the fifteen elected representatives within the *Village Panchayat*. Five of the remaining seven representatives are dominant caste landowners who occupy important economic

³⁵ Ibid.

and social positions within these villages. The Central Government in India passed electoral quota legislation in 1991 to reserve a certain percentage of electoral seats within *Village Panchayats* for marginalized Dalits and tribals in proportion to their population within the village. These formal “democratic fixes” (Young, 2002), though crucial, are not enough to remedy the distortions in the formal decision-making process due to structural inequalities and unequal power relations.

The marginalized tribal groups in the Khed villages were not included in the negotiations that took place between the Revenue Department bureaucrats and the protesting agrarian landowners. However, as owners of marginal plots of dry land, the tribals did incidentally benefit from the negotiated solution of the land cooperatives. Though the benefit to the Khed Thakkars was an incidental outcome of the negotiations, the changed market valuation of the Thakkars’ highway-proximate dry lands and the availability of alternative informal work in the factories coming up along the highways is destabilizing traditional agrarian caste hierarchies. The rampant agricultural labor shortage all over India is an indicator of these changing caste-based labor agrarian labor relations. Low-caste groups are using the changed market valuation of their landed assets to challenge caste power and to demand more respect for their labor and recognition for themselves.

One of the main criticisms of the communicative model which views democratic negotiations as the route to transformative outcomes is that inclusive political argument, in itself, is not enough to level unequal power structures. The critics of the communicative model argue that an “intervening stage of mobilization is required” that changes the consciousness of marginalized groups which, in turn, can lead to a challenging, and unsettling, of existing power structures (Fainstein, 2003: 178). The restructuring of land markets during an urban transition opens up new economic opportunities for marginalized tribal groups in the form of a changed market valuation for their landed assets and the availability of alternative sources of employment that reduces their economic dependence on dominant caste landowners. These economic changes, combined with

changes to the formal democratic process through reserving electoral seats within *Village Panchayats* for Dalits and tribals, are necessary fixes to empower India's most disadvantaged groups.

Having laid out some of the background conditions that can facilitate more inclusive negotiation processes - the inclusion of protests as a legitimate form of communication, the strengthening of local democratic institutions, and the equalizing of power relations through some form of material redistribution – I now turn to a serious limitation of Pune's land cooperatives.

6.3 LAND VALUE CAPTURE AS AN INSTRUMENT OF REDISTRIBUTION

A lesson from the Pune cases is that however inclusive the planning process is, negotiations done on a project-to-project basis can lead to socially and spatially exclusionary built environments. Along Pune's highways, agrarian landowners, bureaucrats and private sector firms are negotiating with one another, not with the intention of advancing a regional vision for the highways, but with the instrumental rationality of maximizing their own interests during an uncertain urban transition. Negotiated solutions like the Khed joint venture company is effective means of allocating land value increments equitably amongst competing social groups, but they also lead to the production of fragmented built environments.

Fragmented built environments: The Revenue Department bureaucrats negotiated with the protesting agrarian landowners to build consensus for the Khed SEZ development. Satish Magar, in the Magarpatta case, brought together agrarian landowners in a collective land experiment to build an integrated township.

But, the integrated townships and SEZs are far from ideal forms of urban development. The integrated townships are more commonly referred to as “gated communities” in the urban planning literature (Blakely and Snyder, 1997; Caldeira, 2001; Libertun, 2006). Unlike apartments and other urban building typologies that restrict public access to lobbies, elevators and other shared amenities within the private development, gated communities restrict public access to traditionally public spaces like streets and sidewalks. For instance, milk is traditionally delivered in India by *doodhwalas* [milkmen], who collect the milk cartons either directly from cattle owners (more common in peri-urban areas and in the highway villages) or from the outlets of large milk companies, and distribute these packets on bicycle to individual households within a few neighborhoods. To increase the perception of Magarpatta as a “secure township that does not allow outsiders,” the shareholding company is planning to restrict *doodhwalas* from entering the township. A company employee told me that residents will rely on the hypermarkets, like Star Bazaar, which are slated for development within the integrated township, for their everyday grocery needs. Besides restricting public access to traditionally public spaces, gated communities also privatize public services that are traditionally provided by local governments. In Magarpatta, the private utilities company, the Magarpatta City Property Management Services (PMS), owned by Satish Magar’s brother provides and maintains the township services, including electricity, roads, plumbing, and internet. Here, residents who can afford to live within the township privilege “exit” over “voice,” i.e. these upper classes, in response to the poor, unsatisfactory delivery of public services by local governments, “exit” into privatized enclaves instead of exercising their political “voice” to demand better public services.

Like gated communities, SEZs have met strong trenchant criticism as “zones of exception” and “special exemption zones,” i.e. “differently administered spaces of graduated or variegated sovereignty” that have been carved out from within the territory of the nation-state for “for economic freedom and entrepreneurial activity” (Ong, 2006: 7, 16; Menon, 2009). India’s SEZ

policies have drawn sharp invectives for a number of reasons. Analyzing data on the location of SEZs, the Delhi-based research think-tank, Center for Policy Research, concludes that all of India's SEZs are located in the most industrially developed regions and do little to mitigate regional imbalances in economic growth (which is one of the main purported justifications for SEZs) (CPR, 2009). The economist, Jagadish Bhagawati, argues that "SEZs are a sort of scaffolding with which you climb into more openness...But [in India], now that you have the building, why do you need the scaffolding?" (Narayanan and Nair, 2006).

This "secession of the successful" (Reich, 1991) into privatized residential and industrial enclaves produces starkly unequal environments of ghettos juxtaposed against citadels. The choices of the rich of "exit" over "voice" poses a threat to democracy (Hirshman, 1970) because gates and barricades allow certain citizens to secede from social contact (Blakely and Snyder, 1997). The decline of social contact erodes the very foundations of the social contract amongst citizens, of working towards the ideals of the common good and general welfare (Ibid). The production of these fragmented built environments points to the third background condition needed to ensure that highway land negotiations lead to socially equitable built environments – redistributive value capture instruments.

Regional redistributive value capture instruments: The negotiated solution of land cooperatives along Pune's highways leads to a relatively equitable distribution of land value increments of the newly converted highway lands among the various caste groups of agrarian landowners, the private sector firm and the parastatal. The *Village Panchayats* have a circumscribed role in these negotiations and are excluded from partaking of the land value increment. A stronger role for local governments in these formal planning processes is imperative as these are the most basic units of democracy. But, the inclusion of local governments in the planning process in itself

will not lead to an amelioration of sociospatial inequalities along the highways. One reason is that local governments may be hostage to elite capture and elected representatives may make decisions that are advantageous to themselves and to their social groups, and not for the larger public good. Even if local governments are made inclusive through “democratic fixes,” they may not have the resources and capacity to negotiate deals that are most beneficial to their citizens vis-à-vis state-level bureaucrats and private sector firms (Weber, 2007). Another reason is that even if local governments have the capacity to negotiate and capture some of the land value increment for their political jurisdiction, this may do little to lessen sociospatial inequalities. For instance, if the group of highway villages within which large urban/industrial developments are located are successful in capturing the land value increments and in re-investing these increments in improving the public services within their political jurisdictions, it can worsen the sociospatial inequality between the revenue-rich highway regions in which these new urban developments are located and those which do not have any new revenue-generating urban/industrial developments. Relying on successful project-by-project based negotiations misses the opportunity of using land value capture as an instrument of redistribution (Furtado, 2000 ;Fainstein, 2012).

Redistributive value capture instruments include policies like linkage fees and inclusionary zoning. Linkage fees are regulatory land use programs generally applied to new office developments, with the justification that new office developments will increase the demand for housing, and office developers should bear the cost of the “negative externality” – of increased housing demand – generated by their development. Nowadays, linkage fees are imposed regardless of any essential nexus between the new development and housing demand. Linkage fees will ensure that the township and SEZ developers pay a certain amount per square foot of development to a trust fund earmarked for improving services and constructing affordable housing along the highways. Inclusionary zoning is a land use regulatory program that reserves a certain proportion of new

residential construction for affordable housing. Inclusionary zoning regulations for all new urban developments will open up integrated townships and SEZs to low-income social groups.

Timing of redistributive value capture policies: However, getting redistributive policies passed and implemented is not easy, especially as power social groups that benefit from the status quo will stand in the way of these reforms. The timing of these reforms matters and now is an opportune moment for equity planners in India to get these reforms passed. During an interview with a private township developer in the Pune region, I was surprised to learn that the developer wanted to reserve a certain percentage of land within the integrated township for affordable housing. These inclusionary intentions, however, did not stem from altruistic reasons, but from the practical concern that some of these developments were inaccessible by reliable public transit, leading to shortages in domestic maids, chauffeurs and other workers needed to service these middle-class and high-income residential enclaves. Besides these pragmatic market demands for inclusionary zoning, these fragmented and unequal sociospatial built environments pose serious threats to political stability. Spatial inequality is more visible than other forms of inequality – like, for instance, income inequality – and it can generate mistrust and alienation, eventually triggering various forms of social unrest (UN-HABITAT, 2008). It is these moments that equity planners can seize to introduce redistributive value capture policies that can channel some of these land value increments towards public uses and towards impoverished highway regions.

Pune's land cooperatives are far from ideal institutions of democracy and social equity. However, they do provide the empirical moorings around which new theories on regional institutions can be articulated. As traditional institutions like urban and rural local governments flounder in managing land markets in the rapidly urbanizing highway regions, on-the-ground

bureaucrats and agrarian landowners are innovating with new institutional arrangements like land cooperatives. These emergent regional, hybrid institutions deserve attention both because they are not adequately captured within our current institutional frameworks and because they open up new possibilities for managing these contemporary processes of urban change. My dissertation takes a first step in this direction.

APPENDIX

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

My research is based on seventeen months of fieldwork, divided into three phases.

Phase 1: June – October 2010

During this period, I was a research affiliate at the Center for the Study of Regional Development, Jawaharlal Nehru University, New Delhi. I spent these initial months of fieldwork in Delhi so as to interact with policy makers, NGOs and academics who are working on issues of land in India. Starting my research in the national capital gave me a birds-eye view of the main planning challenges confronting those working on land. I asked all my Delhi interviewees for cases that, to them, exemplified best practices in land management. Some of the examples mentioned were the Town Planning Scheme in Ahmedabad and the Magarpatta township in Pune. The Pune case had received little attention in the scholarship at the time I started my fieldwork, and for the unique research possibilities it opened up (discussed in the introductory chapter under the “Research Design” section), I decided to focus on Pune’s highways as the centerpiece of my study.

Phase 2: November 2010-April 2011

Having decided on the Pune highways, I was looking for another region that could provide an institutional contrast to Pune. The Bangalore region provided a useful foil for a number of reasons – this region too was rich in sugarcane cultivation, but it lacked a sugar cooperative history; it had a critical mass of dominant caste landowners who were protesting against the highway

developments, but neither the agrarian landowners nor the bureaucrats in the region had innovated with new institutional solutions to resolve these conflicts.

During these six months, I identified the largest urban developments along the Pune and Bangalore highways, and selected the cluster of villages within which these developments were located as the main sites of my study. Along the Pune highways, the main villages were the four *Village Panchayats* of Kanersar, Nimgaon, Dhawadi and Shirur. I also spent a month in the Magarpatta region, interviewing agrarian landowners who managed the township, those who lived within it and those who lived in the surrounding area, just outside the township. I spent a week in Lavasa along the Pune-Mumbai Expressway, and also in Sinnar, the area where another bureaucrat-mediated land cooperative similar to Khed is being proposed. Along the Bangalore-Mysore Infrastructure Corridor, I selected a cluster of three *Village Panchayats* – Ittamadu, Bidadi and Byramangala, located around 30 kilometers from Bangalore city - as these were the sites of the most rapid industrialization along this highway.

Through open-ended interviews with the institutional actors listed below, I mapped out the main institutional actors in the land consolidation process for these developments.

The respondents for the open-ended interviews included:

Elected representatives

- . Elected representatives of the four *Village Panchayats* along the Pune-Nashik highway and the three *Panchayats* along the Bangalore-Mysore Infrastructure Corridor
- . Members of the [State] Legislative Assembly (MLA) for these Bangalore and Pune districts

Bureaucrats

- . Revenue Department street-level bureaucrats who maintain the land records at the village level; these bureaucrats are called ‘village accountants’ in the Bangalore region and ‘thalatis’ in the Pune region
- . Revenue Department *tahsildar*, Sub-Divisional Officer and District Collector (the three ranks of bureaucrats, the former two at the *taluk* [made up of a cluster of *Village Panchayats*] and the latter at the district levels) for Bangalore and Pune
- . 3 bureaucrats at the parastatal, the Maharashtra Industrial Development Corporation (MIDC)

Private sector firm

- . 4 employees of Bharat Forge, the private sector company involved in the Khed SEZ
- Magarpatta shareholding company*
- . Satish Magar, the brainchild behind Magarpatta
 - . 2 employees within the Magarpatta shareholding company

On the basis of these interviews, I learned that caste is a central analytic in structuring the experiences of the urban transition. To get a better understanding of the caste-based opportunities, risk and aspirations of these highway residents, I decided to focus on semi-structured interviews with the dominant-caste and marginalized caste agrarian landowners in these villages.

Phase 3: May to July, 2011, and June to August, 2012

The questions for the semi-structured interview (questionnaire attached below) emerged from the previous rounds of open-ended interviews with the institutional actors involved in the highway developments. I conducted the following caste-stratified interviews:

- . Dominant caste agrarian households in Kanersar: 20
- . Dominant caste agrarian households in Nimgaon: 10
- . Tribal (Thakkar) households of all 4 Khed *Village Panchayats*: 25
- . Dominant caste agrarian households in Ittamadu: 20
- . Dalit households in Ittamadu: 25

Each interview lasted around 60 minutes. I am fluent in Kannada and Hindi, and conducted all the dominant caste, and the Dalit interviews myself. Many of the Thakkars speak only Marathi, a language that I can understand but cannot speak, and I had a translator for the 25 tribal interviews. I was present with the translator during all of the interviews. All interviews were conducted in the agrarian landowners' homes.

QUESTIONNAIRE FOR DOMINANT CASTE LANDOWNERS

(The land section of the Bangalore dominant castes questionnaire is slightly modified and the specifics of the Bangalore land conflicts are included)

INTRODUCTION

Why don't you tell me a little bit about yourself? Maybe you could start off telling me a little bit about your family.

(Intent: Warm-up to establish rapport, get a sense of family context.)

Probe:

Your name
Your age
Family members living with you - names of adult family members
How long lived here?

1. EDUCATION

Education of respondent: Never went to school/ 5th Standard/ 9th Standard/ 12th Standard (PUC)/ Diploma/ Graduate/ Post-Graduate

Education levels of all family members (adults and children): Never went to school/ 5th Standard/ 9th Standard/ 12th Standard (PUC)/ Diploma/ Graduate/ Post-Graduate

What do you want your child to become when he/she grows up?

2. POLITICS

Have you been an elected representative an any level? If yes, details – when, which political party.
Have any of your family members been elected representatives? If yes, details.

3. JOBS

Tell me about your typical workday. For example, describe a typical workday from last week.

If the respondent has a non-agricultural job:

If working for someone else:	If owner of business:
Name of employer	When started?
How long worked there?	Number of employees
Salary	Capital for it
Type of work	Current projects

QUESTIONNAIRE FOR DOMINANT CASTE LANDOWNERS (Continued)

Many people around here have been telling me about agricultural labor shortage. Have you been facing any shortages for your field?

How many workers worked on your fields in the past? 20 years back? 10 years back?
Form of payment then. If in cash, how much?
How many workers now?
Form of payment now. If in cash, how much?

4. LAND

How much land do you own?

Do you have a 7/12 (<i>saath barab</i>) [title] for your land? Any restrictions on use of land?
If joint ownership of land on 7/12, the names of the other landowners.
Number of acres
What grown on the land? Who works on the land?
Is the land irrigated? If yes, what kind of irrigation (public irrigation, wells, others)?
Who paid for the irrigation?
Other uses for your land – cattle grazing, medicinal plants, others? Any revenue from these additional uses of land? How much?

A big company is now being built in this area, and the land on this hill is part of the new project.

Chapter 7 Tell me about this new project – what is it? Who are the industrialists involved? What is the current status of the project? Has your village elected its representative? If yes, who is the representative? (Get a sense of how much the respondent knows about the project).
Who initially told you about the company?
Your view on the company that's coming up?
How much land have you given up for it? Did you agree to part with the land in the beginning itself? If yes, what benefits did you foresee from the project? If no, have you changed your mind since? What caused the change?
Details on the compensation you received. (They should have received compensation for 0.85% of the land given up, and are shareholders for the remaining 0.15%. Do they understand that they are shareholders of the company?) What was promised? What was actually received?
Tell me in detail (with names) of the people you interacted with during this project negotiations - government officials, <i>Village Panchayat</i> members, industry representatives, local Thakkar leaders, others. If they have local Thakkar leaders, are these leaders members of the <i>Village Panchayat</i> ?

QUESTIONNAIRE FOR DOMINANT CASTE LANDOWNERS (Continued)

5. CREDIT

Tell me about the biggest expenditure you've had in your life (wedding, others?)

How did you pay for this expenditure (sold land, borrowed money from landowner, others)?

Probe: If the father/family borrowed money, from whom, what were the terms of repayment; did he/family repay the loan through working on the lenders' lands?)

When was the last time your family lent money to someone else?

QUESTIONNAIRE FOR THAKKARS AND DALITS

Recognizing the interlocked nature of these agrarian economies – the interconnectedness of land, labor and credit in structuring social relations and hierarchies – my questionnaire was organized into four modules: education, jobs, land and credit (the land section of the Dalits questionnaire is slightly modified and the specifics of the Bangalore land conflicts are included):

INTRODUCTION

Why don't you tell me a little bit about yourself? Maybe you could start off telling me a little bit about your family.

(Intent: Warm-up to establish rapport, get a sense of family context.)

Probe:

Your name
Your age
Family members living with you - names of adult family members
How long lived here?

1. EDUCATION

Education of respondent: Never went to school/ 5th Standard/ 9th Standard/ 12th Standard (PUC)/ Diploma/ Graduate/ Post-Graduate

Education levels of all family members (adults and children): Never went to school/ 5th Standard/ 9th Standard/ 12th Standard (PUC)/ Diploma/ Graduate/ Post-Graduate

What do you want your child to become when he/she grows up?

2. JOBS

(Intent: My sense is that there is an agricultural labour shortage in this area. Many of the Thakkars, who previously worked as agricultural labourers, now work as daily wage labourers in the new factories that are coming up in Khed. This section is to understand changes in the Thakkars' employment since before industrialization started in this area, and now.)

Tell me about your current job. For example, describe your typical workday from last week.

If the respondent has a job:

Location, distance – how do you get there?
Pay, hours of work (daily wage, contract labor, others)
Description of work – what do you do when you're there? (If working on someone's land, details on the landowners name, acres of land, crop grown, details of work)
How long have you been working there?
How did you get this present job?

If the respondent does not have a job:

What was your last job? Why did you stop working there?
Are you currently looking for a job? What kind of job (agriculture, industry, others)?
How are you supporting your family now (food, other expenditures)?

QUESTIONNAIRE FOR THAKKARS AND DALITS (Continued)

Tell me about your last agricultural job.

Did you work on others' lands? (details on the landowners' name, acres of land, crop grown, details of work).
Location, distance – how do you get there?
Pay, hours of work (daily wage, contract labor, others)
How long did you work there? Did you father (previous generation) also work with the same landowner?
When did you stop working there? Why?
Your relationship with your previous landowner now?

3. LAND

How much land do you own?

Do you have a 7/12 (<i>saath barah</i>) [title] for your land? If no, did the government grant you the land? Details on this: If government granted land, when did they get this land? Any restrictions on use of land?
If joint ownership of land on 7/12, the names of the other landowners.
Number of acres
What grown on the land? Who works on the land?
Is the land irrigated? If yes, what kind of irrigation (public irrigation, wells, others)? Who paid for the irrigation?
Other uses for your land – cattle grazing, medicinal plants, others? Any revenue from these additional uses of land? How much? Any benefits from land (security, daughter's dowry, others)?

A big company is now being built in this area, and the land on this hill is part of the new project.

Tell me about this new project – what is it? Who are the industrialists involved? What is the current status of the project? Has your village elected its representative? If yes, who is the representative? (Get a sense of how much the respondent knows about the project).
Who initially told you about the company?
Your view on the company that's coming up?
How much land have you given up for it? Did you agree to part with the land in the beginning itself? If yes, what benefits did you foresee from the project? If no, have you changed your mind since? What caused the change?
Details on the compensation you received. (They should have received compensation for 0.85% of the land given up, and are shareholders for the remaining 0.15%. Do they understand that they are shareholders of the company?) What was promised? What was actually received?
Tell me in detail (with names) of the people you interacted with during this project negotiations - government officials, <i>Village Panchayat</i> members, industry representatives, local Thakkar leaders, others. If they have local Thakkar leaders, are these leaders members of the <i>Village Panchayat</i> ?

QUESTIONNAIRE FOR THAKKARS AND DALITS (Continued)

4. CREDIT

Tell me about the biggest expenditure you've had in your life (wedding, others?)

How did you pay for this expenditure (sold land, borrowed money from landowner, others)?

Probe: If the father/family borrowed money, from whom, what were the terms of repayment; did he/family repay the loan through working on the lenders' lands?)

Do you have daughters/sisters? Yes, No

If yes, are they married? Yes No

If yes, how did you/your father/your family pay for your daughter's/sister's wedding (sold land, borrowed money from landowner, others)?

Probe: If the father/family borrowed money, from whom, what were the terms of repayment; did he/family repay the loan through working on the lenders' lands?)

(For interviewer: Do you see any new improvements to the house, any two wheelers? Cars? Any large electrical items? If yes, details on how they raised finances for these large expenses? My assumption is that many of the new purchases have come from the compensation money for the land.)

Cost of purchase
Where did you get the money for this purchase?
What have you spent your land compensation money on?

Other observations

A description of the basti, total number of homes, whether it has access to basic services (water, sanitation, electricity), other assets (cows, cars).

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