

Chapter 3

Democratic Urban Citizenship and Mega-project Development in Globalizing Mumbai*

Liza Weinstein

Over the past two decades, research on the globalization of urban development and the rise of global cities has shed new light on the conditions of local democracy and opportunities for democratic urban citizenship. Among its contributions, this research has revealed that pro-business local governments have promoted globally oriented development to the exclusion of more representative or inclusive politics, thus hindering opportunities for democratic participation (Brenner 2004; Fainstein 2001; Logan and Molotch 1987; Swyngedouw 1996). Meanwhile, a second strand of research has revealed that global cities may actually be creating the conditions for otherwise disenfranchised groups to enact citizenship claims and gain democratic voice (Boudreau 2000; Brodie 2000; Holston 2008; Isin 2000; Sassen 2002, 2006). Representing the second strand, Saskia Sassen (2006: 315) writes:

If we consider that large cities concentrate both the leading sectors of global capital and a growing share of disadvantaged populations—immigrants, poor women, people of color generally, and, in the megacities of developing countries, masses of shanty dwellers—then cities have become a strategic terrain for a series of conflicts and contradictions.

By engaging directly in these conflicts, seemingly powerless actors gain a form of political presence, or what Holston (2008) has called ‘insurgent citizenship’. Although, while these scholars have identified important democratic implications of these engagements, they may be treating the

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conflicts and actors too generally and, in doing so, overstating the opportunities for democratic participation. On the other hand, those identifying the political disenfranchisement entailed in global city formation have emphasized the specificities of these conflicts, but have failed to account for the 'actually existing' democratic spaces remaining or emerging in globalizing cities.

This chapter seeks to explain the emergence of democratic citizenship produced through conflicts and engagements around globally oriented mega-project developments currently underway in Mumbai, India. In the process, it aims to carve out a middle ground between the generally polarized assessments of the democratic implications of global city formation. Based on an analysis of the ongoing Dharavi Redevelopment Project (DRP)—a US\$2-billion housing and infrastructure mega-project designed to transform Mumbai's largest 'slum' settlement into a multi-use, mixed-income township, and attract global real estate investment to India's commercial capital—it argues that by participating in the project's planning process, some residents, workers, and activists have acquired political presence and a form of democratic citizenship. By examining the specific nature of the conflicts, it becomes clear, however, that the opportunity to engage has not been available to all disadvantaged populations equally. Consequently, this chapter argues that the form of democratic citizenship produced through the engagement of poor and working-class people in the struggles around globally oriented urban development is inherently uneven, open only to those groups with the political resources required for participation.

The first section reviews some of the recent scholarship on the relationship between global city formation and democratic urban citizenship. Highlighting the polarized nature of this literature, this section concludes that a detailed focus on the specific conflicts and actors involved in globally oriented development schemes may offer a more balanced perspective on the democratic implications of global city formation. The subsequent sections discuss the actors involved in the specific conflicts surrounding the DRP and the government's broader efforts to 'globalize' Mumbai. This narrative suggests that democratic inclusion may be emerging in spaces we may least expect it to. As the state government and DRP administrators have sought to create a hospitable arena for domestic and foreign investment—including a receptive, if not overtly supportive local community—they have worked to build support among certain groups in Dharavi, specifically those groups with the desire, resources, and opportunities to delay the project and generate negative publicity for already skittish investors. Seeking inclusion in key decisions about the project's planning process, these groups have

garnered a form of urban citizenship not available to all of Dharavi's 'disadvantaged populations'. The final section considers the implications of this case for understanding the uneven nature of democratic urban citizenship in Indian cities and cities throughout the world.

DEMOCRATIC CITIZENSHIP IN THE GLOBAL CITY

Concerns about the democratic consequences of the globalization of urban space arose along with the first identification of global or world cities in the late 1980s as strategic spaces created by the increasingly super-national character of financial and production systems (Friedmann 1986, Harvey 1985, Sassen 1991). In his now classic 'world city hypothesis', Friedmann (1986) hypothesized that the residents and workers in world cities are socially and economically polarized, clustered at the ends of the labour market spectrum. Sassen (1991) made a similar recognition, positing that the concentration of producer services in global cities corresponds to the growth of employment among both the professionals who service the global economy and the poorly paid, often immigrant workers who service the professionals. But because these early accounts of global cities were made by economic sociologists and geographers, the consequences of global city formation were generally framed as economic and spatial disparities, rather than in terms of political inclusion and democratic representation. However, implicit in these analyses was the consideration of the unequal distribution of power, including political power, in global cities.

Meanwhile, much of the research conducted by political sociologists and urban political economists in this period on pro-business or neoliberal shifts in urban politics was fed into the growing study of governance in globalizing cities. One of the seminal pieces in this vein was Logan and Molotch's *Urban Fortunes*. Logan and Molotch (1987: 13) observed that 'the pursuit of exchange values so permeates the life of localities that cities become organized as enterprises devoted to the increase of aggregate levels of rent through the intensification of land use'. Although Logan and Molotch's identification of the 'growth machines' that coordinate the promotion of urban growth above all other objectives of local governance is rooted in the study of urban political regimes, they break from regime theory by emphasizing the new competitive frame that marks urban politics in an era of capital mobility and inter-urban competition.

Over the next decade, a group of scholars brought these insights together with the study of global cities, identifying the so-called 'glocal' or neoliberal forms of governance as exclusionary or undemocratic. Such

forms, it is suggested, include 'new elite coalitions on the one hand and the systematic exclusion or further disempowerment of politically and/or economically already weaker social groups on the other' (Brenner and Theodore 2002; Keil 2002; Swyngedouw 1996: 1499, Ward and Jonas 2004). Reflecting upon this literature, Purcell (2006: 1921) notes that 'there is a pervasive (if not thoroughly examined) sense that urban neo-liberalization threatens urban democracy. Partly as a result of this literature, there has been much interest recently in new ways to democratize the decisions that produce urban space'.

Another strand of research, however, presents a different assessment of the democratic opportunities available to the economically weaker residents of globalizing cities. Situating their inquiry more in notions of citizenship than in analyses of democratic forms of governance, this research nonetheless posits that the characteristics of global cities create the conditions for the enactment of democratic practices and the expansion of certain democratic rights (Boudreau 2000; Brodie 2000; Holston 2008; Isin 2000; Sassen 2002). These theorists suggest that as the sovereignty of the nation state is challenged by the shift of power and authority to the transnational or global scale, the nation becomes a less effective guarantor of citizenship rights. Consequently, the urban scale, and particularly the global city, emerges as a site for the potential enactment of citizenship claims. According to these scholars, global cities have emerged as both a site in which disadvantaged groups have come to renegotiate political rights and as an issue invoked in these negotiations (Holston 2008; Isin 2000; Sassen 2002).

This argument is grounded in studies of social movements and protest politics, as the right to challenge the actions of state and non-state actors in global cities is conceptualized as a fundamental expression of democratic citizenship (Boudreau 2000). These theorists consider the movements emerging in and in response to the conditions of global cities to be some of the most articulate expressions of citizenship in the era of globalization. As Isin (2000: 6) suggests,

Being at the interstices of global networks of flows and commodities, services, capital, labor, images, and ideas, the global city, as both a milieu and object of struggle for recognition, engenders new political groups that claim either new types of rights or seek to expand modern civil political and social rights.

Furthermore, by engaging directly with the powerful actors operating in global cities, such groups acquire a form of political power. As Sassen

(2006: 217) writes, ‘The fact that the disadvantaged in global cities gain “presence” in their engagement with power but also vis-à-vis each other does not necessarily bring power, but neither can it be flattened into some generic powerlessness.’ Although careful not to claim that this engagement with power equates directly with political power, these theorists’ assessments of the democratic opportunities within global cities are clearly more optimistic than the critics of neoliberal or ‘glocal’ governance.

While the first strand of research highlights the disproportionate power held by urban regimes and globally oriented growth machines to set political agendas and deny access to certain groups and their interests, the second strand emphasizes the contested nature of agenda-setting in global and globalizing cities. This latter group acknowledges that by participating in contestations, so-called disadvantaged groups help shape these agendas, even if in subtle or seemingly insignificant ways. This is an important recognition, providing a corrective to the often monolithic conception of power presented by the critics of neoliberal governance. However, closer examinations of specific contestations reveal that although participation has given some groups political presence and enabled these groups to attain a form of recognition akin to democratic citizenship, the urban poor and working classes do not have equal opportunities to engage in these conflicts. As the following case study of the DRP reveals, only certain groups within Dharavi have possessed the political resources required for access to the negotiations and conflicts entailed in global city formation. These are the groups that have held symbolic power and other means to capture the attention of the DRP’s project administrators, thus creating space for themselves in the negotiations. These somewhat intangible political resources, not typically included in analyses of urban democracy and global city formation, have enabled these groups to make claims and seek recognition. Consistent with those theorizing the presence of global urban citizenship, I find that contestations over the transformation of Dharavi and the globalization of Mumbai have given some groups expanded opportunities to participate in democratic politics and make citizenship claims. However, breaking from these scholars, I find that the possession of even these less tangible political resources is uneven, thus barring some groups’ access to the contestations.

REDEVELOPING DHARAVI

Until quite recently, the settlement of Dharavi was a marshy swamp on the northern edge of Bombay Island populated by members of the Koli fishing caste. The area began its transformation, first to an industrial settlement

and later to a slum, in the 1870s with the establishment of the area's first leather tannery. Dharavi's population soon expanded with the migration of Muslim leather workers and low-caste Hindus from the southern state of Tamil Nadu. By the 1930s, leather workers were joined by Kumbhar potters from the Saurashtra district of Gujarat. Other groups settled and, over time, Dharavi became a hive of snack food manufacturing, scrap-dealing, recycling, machine repairing, and a slew of other industries, due to an abundance of cheap land, limited administrative oversight, and an influx of migrant workers. By the time the first survey of Dharavi was conducted in mid-1980s, the area was home to approximately 300,000 people and countless productive enterprises (Sharma 2000). Despite its productivity, Dharavi remained extremely poor; infrastructure was limited; housing and sanitation were unhygienic; and industrial activities were dangerous and highly polluting.

Given these conditions, most of the slum improvement and housing programmes undertaken in Mumbai (Bombay) over the past 40 years have, at least to some extent, focused on Dharavi. In 1985, the Indian Government's Prime Minister Grant Programme allocated more than 8 million dollars for the improvement of Dharavi's infrastructure and housing stock. Other housing programmes introduced in the 1980s and 1990s resulted in the replacement of thousands of Dharavi's single-storey hutments with mid-rise apartment blocks. Today, the 1-square-mile settlement houses countless industries and commercial enterprises and approximately 1 million residents, with roughly half living in mid-rise buildings and the other half in single-storey hutments.

Unlike earlier housing and infrastructure programmes, the DRP was not initiated by government to address Dharavi's poor living conditions and inadequate infrastructure. Rather, it was designed by a private architect and developer, Mukesh Mehta, as a for-profit development scheme. In the late 1990s, Mehta returned to Mumbai after decades of living and working as a property developer in the area around New York City. Recognizing the potential value of Dharavi's centrally located land, he soon devised a plan to use the state's existing slum policy to redevelop the entire square-mile settlement. His plan proposed the replacement of the remaining single-storey hutments with high and mid-rise buildings, thus freeing up hundreds of acres of land for market rate development. Consistent with the existing policy, the profits from these market rate developments could be used to subsidize the housing for the current slum residents. After years spent trying to launch the project independently, Mehta found his plan constrained by state regulations and the difficulty of securing financing and so he began

seeking government backing for the project. In January 2004, the State of Maharashtra endorsed his plan and it was reborn as a state-sponsored project, part of the state's broader efforts to transform Mumbai into a global city. Mehta's role on the project shifted from that of a private developer to a consultant hired by the state to manage the project.¹

The plan divides Dharavi into five sectors of roughly equal size, each of which will continue to house most of the current residents, and much of the commerce and industry currently located in that sector. Each household deemed eligible for 'rehabilitation'² will receive a 265-square-foot apartment in a mid-rise building in their current sector. Although the apartments will be given free of charge, the residents will have to pay municipal taxes and maintenance fees, which are expected to raise the housing expenses for most Dharavi residents. It is estimated that 90,000 new apartment units, divided throughout the five sectors, will be constructed under the plan.³ These units will be financed by five private developers or developer consortia, in exchange for additional land and increased height allowances to construct market rate commercial properties. Given Mumbai's high land prices and the desirability of Dharavi's location, developers are expected to recoup their expenses and make considerable profit from the sale of the market rate constructions. These expectations were revealed when expression of interest (EOI) documents were invited in June 2007 and 78 development firms applied to bid on the project.

The broad features of the DRP, including the cross-subsidization financing formula, are simply a continuation of the current slum housing policy, in place since the early 1990s. The project's novelty lies in its scale, the support it has garnered from government and local elites, and its solicitation of participation by large domestic and international developers. The DRP is the first government-sponsored scheme allowing and encouraging bidding by foreign investors and global real estate developers. Although the project administrators claim that the most qualified developers will be selected for the project, there has been a clear preference throughout the planning process for international developers. The project administrators have taken steps to elicit interest abroad, making frequent presentations about the project around the world, particularly in the US, Canada, the UK, Dubai, and Singapore. When developer interest was invited in June 2007, the tender was published in newspapers in more than 20 countries, as well as throughout India. Of the 78 developers interested in bidding on the scheme, over a third were non-Indian firms (Deshmukh 2007).

Given these efforts to attract international investment and use the project to help facilitate Mumbai's transformation to a global city, it seems

unlikely that the planning for the DRP would be an inclusive process. As I describe in the remaining sections, however, the political resources and symbolic power held by certain groups in Dharavi has compelled the state to engage more directly with them than might be expected. Considering the ability of these groups to mobilize public opinion likely to generate negative publicity and create further complications for cautious investors, the state has worked to disarm these opponents and prevent oppositions from arising. In doing so, it has engaged in an unprecedented way with these groups, facilitating a kind of democracy through cooptation. This form of democratic urban citizenship is not the product of high liberal ideals, but, as I argue, emerged in response to practical, and largely material, considerations.

DEMOCRATIZING DEVELOPMENT

When the Maharashtra government decided to endorse the DRP and carry out Mehta's plan as a government initiative, officials recognized that the project's planning should be presented as consensual and participatory. Mehta attributes the then housing secretary Suresh Joshi with helping him recognize the importance of local support in the project. In 2003, as the chief minister's cabinet debated endorsement of the project, Mehta and Joshi began reaching out to the city's housing advocacy organizations, most of whom had expressed suspicion towards Mehta's plan. As Mehta recalls:

It was (Suresh) Joshi's idea to call all of these groups together. He said that we should call together these groups and make a presentation and give them a chance to voice their concerns. Then they could never say that they were not notified.⁴

Another consultant in Mehta's office concurs that they had taken a systematic approach in the early years to build support, or at least notify potential opponents about the project:

[Joshi] was very methodical. What he did initially, before the cabinet had passed it...was he took literally every type of stakeholder, starting with the NGOs, the slum dwellers, senior politicians, MLAs [Members of the Legislative Assembly], corporators [city council members], the ward officers. I mean literally every single stakeholder and we made presentations to each one of them and had thorough discussions with them where they were allowed to raise (questions)—in fact, we told them in those meetings, we want you to ask the toughest, the nastiest questions possible and we're not worth our salt if we can't answer your questions.⁵

According to Mehta, a few criticisms of the plan were voiced in those meetings. Mehta contends that these groups could not find anything wrong with the plan, but chose to maintain their opposition purely for political reasons. Responding to this claim, Priya Shah, the head of a prominent housing organization, once explained her reticence to me:

Our visions are so different. There is no conversation to be had. We cannot arbitrate with him. We cannot enter into criticism with him. He wants us to talk about his grand plan, but there's nothing to talk about. We would rather publish criticism of the plan than talk to him about it.⁶

Shah claims to have recognized the disingenuous character of these meetings, seeing them as little more than public relations stunts. But it was also apparent that Mumbai's community of housing activists was somewhat unsettled by Mehta's and Joshi's openness. More comfortable with letter writing and protest politics to have their voices heard, they did not quite know how to respond to this apparent willingness to include them in the planning process.

But even whilst many of these groups remained suspicious of Mehta's intentions and refused to engage in direct negotiations with the project administrators, these meetings provided Mehta a certain degree of legitimacy. The project, which had up to this point been designed and promoted by a single entrepreneurial developer with the political support of only the housing secretary, could now be presented as a government supported initiative with broad support and the involvement of local NGOs, politicians, and community members. When government announced their official backing of the DRP at a cabinet meeting in January 2004, the project was presented as a collaborative effort, developed in consultation with all of Dharavi's major stakeholders.

In addition to these meetings, Mehta had also set up an office in Dharavi in the late 1990s and spent time discussing the plan with Dharavi residents. While local leaders within Dharavi dispute Mehta's claims that he was a visible presence in Dharavi in these early years, he maintains that he had become integrated in community institutions. When the project is criticized as a top-down scheme—as it has been throughout the planning process—Mehta retorts that this time in Dharavi, discussions with residents that took place both informally and in meetings with the heads of more than 50 cooperative housing societies shaped the plan considerably (Menon 2004).

Years later, while sitting in his car as I accompanied him to appointments with government officials and private sector partners, Mehta recalled

how those early meetings had forced him to compromise on his original vision. He drew a map of the plan he had originally wanted to pursue. The map showed a cluster of high-rise buildings along Dharavi's perimeter, adjacent to the train tracks that form the southern and eastern edges of the settlement. The rehabilitated slum dwellers would be re-housed in 20-storey buildings along the perimeter and their homes would face out on a golf course. The market rate buildings would be clustered on the other side of the golf course, along Dharavi's northern and western edges, adjacent to the nearby office complex. Looking longingly at the map, he said that it was a good plan that should have made everyone happy. The residents would have had access to transportation, the commercial occupants would be near the Bandra Kurla Complex (BKC) and the city would have a golf course and park as a public amenity. But, as he explained:

I had to give up this plan because of the iterative process that revealed that slum dwellers didn't want to move from the place in Dharavi where they are now. People objected to a golf course on principle. So I changed the plan and came up with the sectors.⁷

He conceded that this 'iterative process' ultimately improved the plan, but it was clear that he felt his original vision was superior.

Despite these consultations and a process that Mehta claims was open to considerable public scrutiny, project planning remained a private endeavour with limited democratic oversight. Mehta established MM Consultants, a private entity subcontracted to draft the plan and manage its implementation, and most planning activities were centralized in this office. Critics generally describe his Dharavi meetings as one-way interactions in which he would simply present the plan to audiences who had no opportunity to respond or critique it. According to some attendees, the plan he presented sounded like a fantasy. An attendee at one of these meetings quipped that Mehta had proclaimed that he would 'make Dharavi like America' (Bunshe 2004). Even as Dharavi residents attended these meetings, most remained suspicious of Mehta's promises and assurances that there would remain a place for them in a redeveloped Dharavi.

RESIDENT CONSENT AND OPPOSITION

These suspicions were confirmed at an infamous meeting in mid-2004.⁸ The state had recently announced its endorsement of the scheme and many residents were concerned about the security of their housing tenure and whether they would continue to have access to employment. Rumours had

been circulating about the scheme for years and many saw the meeting as an opportunity to clarify the actual elements of the project and voice their concerns. As the attendees entered the meeting, they were asked to sign what most believed was an attendance sheet, but later learned was a statement of written consent for the project. When, after the meeting, it was learned that hundreds of Dharavi residents had unknowingly given their consent to a scheme that many of them actually opposed, a vocal public opposition to Mehta and his scheme emerged.

Speaking about the incident years later, Mehta still angrily blames the officials in the Slum Rehabilitation Authority (SRA) who he claims were attempting to sideline the project and deliberately mislead meeting attendees. He claims that government bureaucrats, concerned about retaining their 'turf', had intentionally tried to sabotage his credibility among Dharavi residents. Officials in the SRA, meanwhile, refer to the incident as an unfortunate miscommunication. Regardless of whether the attendees were deliberately misled and by whom, most observers, including Mehta, recognized that the incident undermined his credibility and had the potential to disrupt the project. This was revealed when activists quickly mobilized to oppose the scheme. In response to the public outcry, the signatures were eventually discarded and no further attempts were made to collectively acquire resident consent.

In addition to highlighting the contested nature of the project, this event was the first in a series of disputes about the 'resident consent clause' of the Slum Rehabilitation Scheme (SRS) in the case of the DRP. At the time of this meeting in mid-2004, the policy governing the project stipulated that the scheme would require the written consent of at least 60 per cent of Dharavi's residents in order to proceed.⁹ As SRA officials explain its rationale, the consent clause was a measure to prevent unscrupulous builders from coercing residents to participate in the scheme. Most believe that the consent clause has done little to prevent such abuses, as residents now claim to be coerced to give their official consent. But while the effectiveness of the consent requirement has been questioned, residents and housing advocates have viewed the clause as the only democratic check on the SRS. With authority held by builders and the SRA, the only input residents have had in the scheme is the granting of their consent.

After the meeting, opposition to the DRP began to mount. Although the emergence of an opposition movement in mid-2004 can only partially be attributed to this incident, it is frequently cited by project opponents as evidence of Mehta's dubious character. Shekhar Varde, a Mumbai-based housing activist and former politician, once explained to me that the incident

simply affirmed what many had understood about the scheme for years: that Mehta was attempting to trick Dharavi residents and steal the land out from under them. The incident proved to be a political opportunity effectively seized by the project's most vocal opponents.

One of the groups that assumed leadership at the time was the People's Responsible Organization for United Dharavi (PROUD). Typically shying away from contentious politics, PROUD has its roots in church-based community organizing, mobilizing residents to make demands for improved civic infrastructure and the protection of their housing security. At times, however, PROUD has taken a more confrontational stance. In the early 1980s, when municipal authorities notified roughly 80 Dharavi families that their homes would be imminently demolished, PROUD's leadership mobilized in response and managed to prevent the demolition (Chatterji 2005). Seeking again to protect the housing security of Dharavi residents, the advocacy organization took a strong stance in mid-2004 in opposition to the DRP.

Among those working with PROUD at the time was Ramesh Khandare, a Dharavi resident who had been an active member of the local branch of the Communist Party. Using his community newspaper to disseminate information about the project, Khandare became one of the project's most visible opponents. On 4 July 2004, Khandare and hundreds of critics of the scheme, including representatives from all of Maharashtra's major political parties, staged a protest march in Dharavi and formed the Dharavi Bachao Samiti (Menon 2004). Under Khandare's leadership, other protests were held over the next several months. Speaking to a newspaper reporter at an event in August 2004, a prominent housing activist explained that because Dharavi was built by its residents, they should be involved in its redevelopment. Mehta, he explained, had not involved them in the plan (Menon 2004).

These project opponents did not have a clear set of demands, but simply opposed the way the project had been handled. All opponents were clear to assert that they too wanted Dharavi 'to be developed'. They wanted residents to have better quality housing, access to sanitation facilities, and less dangerous work spaces, but they were sceptical that the DRP would bring these benefits to the area's current residents. A leader with Dharavi Bachao Samiti whose family has lived in Dharavi for four generations, expressed the general concern held by most of the opponents:

In Dharavi, the poor people are suffering. But government doesn't want to solve that. The actual motivation is to take the highly valuable land. They don't want to help the people.¹⁰

Organized now as an opposition movement, the activists felt they could better ensure that the benefits of redevelopment remained in Dharavi.

COOPTING THE OPPOSITION

When I arrived in Mumbai to begin fieldwork in September 2005, the opposition movement that had seemed strong a year before had all but disappeared. Khandare had stopped publishing his community newspaper and the city's housing activists had moved on to other concerns. I soon came to realize that two factors explained the movement's dormancy: project delays and the relatively successful cooptation of project opponents. Because there had been no significant activity on the project since the state endorsed it in January 2004, many residents and opponents had grown sceptical that it would ever be implemented. When I asked project critics about the movement, some responded by asking why they should actively oppose a scheme that will exist only on paper.

The movement's dormancy was also an outcome of a tactical change adopted by Mehta and the SRA. Recognizing that participatory rhetoric had been insufficient to secure community support and prevent a visible and politically harmful opposition movement from arising, the state began a series of more substantive negotiations with certain groups identified to have more symbolic authority and the opportunity to mobilize.

In late 2004, Mehta recognized the need to respond to the protestors and to work to build support within Dharavi. He began meeting with representatives from PROUD and requested meetings with the scheme's most vocal opponents. Although Ramesh Khandare and Priya Shah still refused to meet him, PROUD's leadership was more than willing to discuss ways in which they could be involved in the planning process. The willingness of PROUD to negotiate with Mehta created a split in the opposition movement. A project opponent once explained to me, 'PROUD started out nicely; now they are not functioning properly.' He noted that because 'they are good friends with Mukesh Mehta,' he decided to join Dharavi Bachao Samiti instead and work with them to undermine the scheme.¹¹ Other vocal opponents disassociated themselves from PROUD and many accused them of taking money from Mehta in exchange for their support.

Ashwin Paul, a community organizer who remained active with PROUD, adamantly refutes this charge, insisting that he and others simply recognized that Mehta's plan could be beneficial to Dharavi's residents. Furthermore, if they worked with Mehta, they could help ensure that the residents benefitted from the scheme. As Paul explained:

“This will be PROUD’s role, to hold them to these promises. PROUD will have to keep people aware of the promises and keep demanding that the builders and SRA keeps them. PROUD can mobilize the people to pressurize them.”¹²

With Mehta apparently willing to invite PROUD into the planning process, Paul recognized that they could play an important role.

These more convivial relations were revealed at a meeting I attended early on in my field work.¹³ At a town-hall-style meeting held in the upstairs auditorium of Dharavi’s Saint Anthony’s Church, I noticed Ashwin Paul sharing the lectern with Mehta, along with representatives from other Dharavi-based organizations. As Mehta presented his plan to the roughly 70 Dharavi residents gathered for the meeting, Paul and the other representatives sat quietly, offering their silent endorsement of the project. Even after the audience turned more antagonistic and began arguing with Mehta about his plans for implementation, his efforts seemed more legitimate because of this apparent community support. Other meetings like this were held over the coming months, following roughly the same format of Mehta making a Powerpoint presentation that detailed the plan’s most attractive features, and then opening the floor to questions. Mehta openly welcomed criticism in these meetings, requesting that his critics make their opposition public. With less vocal opposition and the legitimating presence of community groups, discussions about the DRP took on a more consensual tone.

In addition to these public displays, Mehta and SRA officials also began holding a series of more targeted negotiations with the leaders of particular communities in Dharavi. Recognizing the need to establish firmer ties within Dharavi, the SRA had hired Mrs Shinde as the Chief Community Development Officer for the project. Charged with managing community relations, she had become a visible presence in Dharavi and was referred to affectionately by many of my informants. Speaking in her office one day, Shinde explained the importance of what she referred to as Dharavi’s ‘sensitive populations’, those with symbolic claims to housing or productive space in Dharavi.¹⁴ She explained the importance of addressing these groups’ demands because of the symbolic recognition they had both in Dharavi and throughout the city.

Two of the most important sensitive populations Shinde identified were the Kolis and the Khumbars. As Dharavi’s original inhabitants, the Kolis have a politically important position in the city. Also, as long-time Dharavi residents with recognized leases on their land dating back to the late 18th century, the Kolis have made significant investments in Dharavi and

have constructed some of the nicest homes in the area (Rajyashree 1986). The prospect that these homes could be demolished and replaced with 269-square-foot apartments has invoked ire both in and outside of the community. Dharavi's Kolis are also a politically active group, frequently running for and holding office on Shiv Sena party tickets.¹⁵ This political presence has provided them a particular bargaining position in the planning for the DRP, as Shinde explained. Mehta also echoed this sentiment, explaining that among all of Dharavi's communities, 'they are the most important and government recognizes it, because they are the original "sons of the soil"'.¹⁶ Given this position, however, and the robust legal claims on their land, they have been the most difficult community to negotiate with. While acknowledging the importance of the Kolis, both Mehta and Shinde explained that they are putting off substantive negotiations until the other features of the plan are settled.

The Kumbhars, on the other hand, have a more disputed position in Dharavi's legal and symbolic landscape. Residents of Dharavi since the 1930s, the Kumbhar potters had resettled in Dharavi after the pollution from their kilns caused problems in other, more desirable parts of the city (Lynch 1979). Upon resettlement, the Kumbhars were given a lease to their land in Dharavi, which they claim protects them from resettlement under the DRP. Government officials, however, contend that the Kumbhars' lease expired decades ago and that, unlike the Kolis, they have no legal claims to their land. Yet, as one of Dharavi's oldest settlements, Mehta and Mrs Shinde recognize that Kumbharwada, in many people's minds, is Dharavi.¹⁷ Furthermore, because they have resided in Dharavi since before its emergence as a slum, neither do the Kumbhars consider themselves slum dwellers, nor are they considered so by most Mumbai residents. Instead, they are generally thought of as members of a traditional Hindu labouring caste, giving them a heightened status in Dharavi.

Another group recognized as a critical constituency in Dharavi is the area's industrialists, whose engagement was actively elicited in the early planning process. This group is ethnically and occupationally diverse, comprising Tamil leather workers and snack food manufacturers, north Indian Muslim scrap dealers and soap makers, and Maharashtrian garment manufacturers. Many of these groups have lived in Dharavi for generations, working in shops built by their fathers or grandfathers. These groups give Dharavi its industrial character and their productivity is publicly commended. Aside from their symbolic position, Dharavi's industrialists are also politically influential. As one of the settlement's wealthier groups, the industrialists, especially the scrap dealers, are recognized to be regular contributors to

the election coffers of local politicians. As a result, these groups have been invited to play a significant role in drafting the DRP's industrial policy, including what activities will be allowed to remain in Dharavi and how much space manufacturers will receive under the plan.

Sitting in a small air-conditioned office amidst Dharavi's scrap piles and recycling plants, Ahmed Khan, a wealthy scrap dealer and head of Dharavi's largest industrial cooperative, expressed his satisfaction with the DRP's planning process. Khan had been living in Dharavi for almost 40 years, having relocated with his family from the northern state of Uttar Pradesh after several bad seasons in agriculture. With the support of relatives working in Mumbai's scrap business, he set up one of Dharavi's first plastic processing plants. His business grew over time and he now employs more than 75 workers, all of whom live in Dharavi. Given this history and his contributions to the area's productivity, he explained his importance to the redevelopment efforts:

Dharavi is both a residential and a commercial space and it must remain as both. Finding space for the residents is less of a problem than for us. They will build tall. Government will make a profit and this will be good for everyone. But we are Dharavi. We have seen this area when it was in bad condition. We want to see it when it is in good condition.... If they don't meet our demands, we won't support the project...and they need our support.¹⁸

In order to garner this support, Mehta and Mrs Shinde had held several meetings over the preceding months with Khan and other industrialists to discuss the plan's industrial policy. He seemed genuinely satisfied with the negotiations, asserting that 'the industrialists have had a say in the decisions about the plan' and elaborating that they were 'consulted about the whole industrial policy'.¹⁹ While he recognized that compromises would be reached, he expressed confidence that the industrialists would be well accommodated under the plan.

While these efforts were being made to win over the industrialists, as well as the Khumbaras and Kolis, Shinde and Mehta continued holding public forums and worked to elicit the support of the city's prominent housing activists. Shinde's office also printed pamphlets in the six major languages spoken in Dharavi and distributed details of the plan throughout the area. While the information dissemination, public forums, and private negotiations did not represent a major shift from the earlier, more rhetorical approach to democratic participation, what seemed to change most was the urgency with which Mehta and SRA officials undertook these activities.

Despite these efforts and the growing appearance of local support, government officials remained concerned that they would not be able to secure resident consent required by the SRS. Although the consent requirement had been reduced to 60 per cent, it was becoming apparent that even that level would be difficult to secure. Consequently, efforts were being made to eliminate the consent rule altogether in the case of the DRP. In the months leading up to its elimination, however, government officials denied that such efforts were being made. On mentioning some opposition to the scheme that I had observed in Dharavi, a high ranking official in the SRA contradicted me, explaining that there was almost universal resident support for the project. 'Although 70 percent consent is required,' he explained (even though the consent had already been reduced to 60 per cent by this time), 'the SRA is attempting to secure resident support at 85 per cent.'²⁰ He explained that this higher consent standard would be easy to garner given the support for the project and the efforts being made by Mehta and Shinde to expand this support in the community. But in November 2006, the state government adopted the housing policy that codified elements of the DRP. Included in the policy was the clarification that because the DRP, unlike other SRS projects, was an official 'government' scheme, it would not be necessary to elicit official resident consent for the scheme. While this clarification was presented as a minor detail, its consequences for the planning process were significant.

Sitting in a conference room at Mehta's office soon after the consent requirement was eliminated, I asked how the change would affect his efforts to secure local support. With consent being no longer required, I asked him if he still needed to engage the Kolis, the Kumbhars, and the industrialists in the planning process? He admitted the importance of eliminating the consent clause, acknowledging that it had been a barrier to implementation, but he mused that these groups still had power. 'India is an anarchy, not a democracy. If people have vested interests, they can stop something.'²¹ When I pressed him to explain how these groups could stop the project, he explained that they could undermine his efforts and create delays. The energy he was expending at this point in the process, trying to bring these groups on board, he explained, would pay off down the road with a smoother implementation.

He suggested the importance of a smooth implementation, in part, because of the project's efforts to secure the participation of the somewhat elusive international developers. With a regulatory context perceived to be cumbersome, overly bureaucratic, and corrupt, international development firms have generally found it financially unviable to invest in Mumbai's

land markets (Nijman 2000; *Times of India* 2005). In addition to these barriers, there has also been a history of project delays and projects abandoned because of local opposition and direct agitation.²² But as Mehta explained:

This project will show that if it's done in a systematic manner, and the government is involved, they can hold your hand through the process. So if you want to buy an open track of land and invest a hundred million dollars or you want to do it in clumps, both can be done without fear of the ten different issues that could possibly arise on a project.²³

His efforts to build local support for the scheme and draft a policy able to withstand legal challenges represented efforts to dispel these perceptions and make Mumbai a more attractive site for investment.

THE PROJECT AND ITS OPPONENTS GO GLOBAL

The fruits of Mehta's labour were revealed in June 2007 when developer interest was invited on the scheme and 78 firms submitted applications to bid. On 1 June 2007, an advertisement, published in newspapers in 20 cities around the world, 'invite[d] international developers to transform Dharavi, one of the largest slum pockets in the world, into an integrated township of Mumbai with all modern amenities and complete infrastructure'. The advertisement promised that the scheme would be both a profitable opportunity and a chance to participate 'in a noble cause with a plentitude of rewards'. Seventy-eight firms, organized into 26 developer consortia, submitted EOI forms to the Government of Maharashtra by the time the invitation period closed at the end of August 2007. Of the 26 consortia, almost all included at least one foreign investment or development firm, including firms from the US, Dubai, the UK, China, and South Korea. In January 2008, the 26 consortia were whittled down to 19 by a government committee evaluating the financial and technical viability of the consortia (*Indian Express* 2008a).²⁴ Meanwhile, the bidding has been delayed by investor concerns arising from the current global financial conditions.

Responding immediately to the invitation of investor interest in the summer of 2007, Dharavi Bachao Samiti and other project opponents revitalized the opposition movement that had been dormant for two and a half years. A series of direct actions were held and local opponents made appeals to transnational activists to help pressure the State of Maharashtra and Government of India to intervene in the development process. Meanwhile, fearing that such actions might frighten skittish investors, the state

responded quickly, exhibiting an unprecedented willingness to address the demands of activists and resident groups.

In late May 2007, as the Maharashtra government was preparing the invitation of EOIs, housing activists announced their plans to undertake acts of civil disobedience. A prominent housing activist explained to a newspaper reporter that if the global tender issued by the state government was found to be unacceptable, then the residents would take to the streets, blocking roads and railway lines, in protest (*DNA* 2007). Although they did not create blockades when the tender was issued on 1 June 2007, thousands of protesters, including members of the Dharavi Bachao Samiti and representatives of all of the state's major political parties (except the ruling Congress Party) came out two weeks later to protest the DRP. Some protesters shaved their heads and most wore orange hats and t-shirts in solidarity (*Hindu* 2008). Despite the strong stance taken by the protesters, project opponents continued to insist that they did not oppose the merits of the scheme, but simply wanted to be included more directly in the planning process. Other demands were more specific, such as the demand that the size of housing units be increased (from 225 square feet per unit to 400 square feet per unit), that more Dharavi residents be deemed eligible for the scheme (from those who could prove residency in Dharavi since 1995 to those who could prove residency since 2000), and that a detailed survey of Dharavi residents be initiated before the scheme is implemented (Tare 2008).

In addition to staging protests and submitting their demands to the state government, Mumbai-based activists solicited the support of prominent activists and scholars from outside India including Professors Arjun Appadurai, Partha Chatterjee, and Saskia Sassen, former under-secretary-general of the United Nations, Shashi Tharoor, and the former president of Ireland, Mary Robinson. In the letter addressed to the Indian prime minister and the chief minister of Maharashtra, the signatories expressed their 'profound sense of disquiet' and requested that the project be looked at afresh and the support of the larger community be secured before the government proceeded with the scheme (*Hindu* 2007).

Over the next several months, the Government of Maharashtra responded by addressing certain demands of the transnationally linked activists. In March 2008, the state commissioned a detailed census of Dharavi to be carried out by the Pune-based research firm Mashaal (*Indian Express* 2008b). The chief minister announced the following month that the size of housing units constructed under the scheme would be increased from the original 225 square feet to a compromised 269 square feet (Ghadyahlpatil 2008). Also, in April 2008, the Indian Supreme Court found in favour of

legal claim and extended eligibility to residents who had resided in Dharavi since 2000 (Menon 2008). Although they continued to press for the unmet demands—including larger housing units and the reinstatement of the consent clause—the Maharashtra government exhibited an unprecedented willingness to accommodate the activists. As the government now prepares to select the project's five developers, it has continued to assure them that investing in the DRP will be smooth and profitable. In the process, the state has been compelled to construct a relatively inclusive space within which activists and certain groups within Dharavi have been engaged in the project's planning process.

DISCUSSION: FRAGMENTED URBAN CITIZENSHIP

With a focus on a globally oriented mega-project currently underway in Mumbai, this chapter reveals that the ongoing globalization of the South Asian city may be facilitating the creation of a more inclusive space in which certain groups have gained access to the highly contested field of global urban politics. Even while the DRP's administrators may not have been driven by liberal democratic values, they have come to recognize the pragmatic and material utility of creating a more inclusive space for certain disadvantaged populations. According to this narrative, although Mukesh Mehta and certain government officials initially viewed inclusion as little more than a rhetorical device, a mobilized opposition soon made them aware that rhetoric was insufficient and that the more meaningful engagement of project opponents would be necessary for the project's realization. As a result, Mehta and SRA officials undertook activities designed to garner more substantive support from within Dharavi. Among these activities, they co-opted a respected Dharavi-based organization; held town-hall-style meetings in which they publicly confronted and debated project critics; disseminated propaganda to convince residents of the project's benefits; and negotiated directly with groups deemed influential and symbolically important. Although these activities did not prevent opposition from arising once the global tender was issued in June 2007, officials had learned that a quick response was most advantageous and they worked to address many of the activists' demands and quieten the mobilization.

While this case supports the observation made by Sassen, Isin, and others that the formation of global cities may be facilitating the creation of new democratic spaces and new forms of urban citizenship, it also reveals that only certain groups possess the symbolic power and political resources required to gain access to these spaces. In Dharavi, these groups have included

the so-called special populations or those with the legal and symbolic power to mobilize public opinion and facilitate a broader opposition movement. As in the case of the Kolis, Kumbhars, and even the industrialists, their historic claims on space and religiously conferred occupational positions provided them disproportionate influence and the means to capture the attention of the DRP's project administrators. While caste position and historical claims on space are not typically considered political resources that can help groups gain political access and citizenship rights, the possession of these resources has proved useful for these groups to gain access to the negotiations surrounding the DRP. Although the same resources are not likely to prove as advantageous in other instances of globally oriented urban development, this case reveals the importance of symbolic power. It also reveals that when groups are not in possession of such resources, they are less able to command the attention of project administrators and broader publics, and can be barred access to the negotiations and contestations that give shape to the globalizing city.

In this chapter, I have argued for the need to consider the fragmentations and barriers that may mark the forms of democratic urban citizenship created by globalization and global city formation. While scholars of global urban citizenship have demonstrated that the right to challenge the actions of the growth machines that drive urban political agendas in globalizing cities represents a fundamental expression of democratic citizenship, their theorizations have not adequately revealed the barriers that prevent some groups from challenging these actions. Consequently, when considering how disadvantaged populations may gain presence in global and globalizing cities by engaging directly with power, it is important to identify the specific means by which groups are able to engage with power. While in this case, the opportunity to shape public opinion and mobilize domestic and transnational activists has given certain Dharavi-based groups the opportunity to engage with power, the means in other cases are likely to be distinct but similarly important to recognize.

NOTES

1. Mehta's consultancy fee is one per cent of total project expenditures, which are estimated at US\$2 billion, making Mehta's share approximately US\$20 million.
2. 'Rehabilitation' refers to the onsite resettlement of slum-dwellers into mid-rise buildings. Eligibility is based upon whether residents can prove continuous occupancy in their current dwelling since 1 January 2000. It is difficult to assess the number of residents currently ineligible, but a conservative estimate places this population at about 200,000 people or a quarter of Dharavi's current population.

3. This estimate is based on early projections provided by Mashaal, the research firm hired to conduct a census of Dharavi in advance of the DRP. This number will likely be revised once their census is completed and the estimates are made available.
4. Discussion on 14 November 2006.
5. Discussion on 19 June 2006.
6. Discussion on 14 November 2006.
7. Discussion on 18 August 2006.
8. This meeting occurred before I began my fieldwork and I was not present for it. It was described to me, however, by several informants throughout my research period. Some of the accounts I was given have conflicting details and I have not been able to corroborate their accounts. Consequently, my description of the meeting remains vague.
9. The consent clause is discussed in the Development Control Rules of Greater Mumbai, DCR 33(10), the policy governing all projects entailing the rehabilitation (or re-housing) of slum dwellers in mid-rise buildings. Although the policy requires resident consent at the 70 per cent level, the SRA quietly reduced the consent requirement to 60 per cent for the DRP in 2004. Few activists or housing advocates and practically no Dharavi residents were aware of the rule change until years later. Public officials with whom I spoke in 2005 and 2006 were cagey about the consent clause, sometimes explicitly citing the 70 per cent figure, although it had been reduced to 60 per cent months earlier.
10. Discussion on 20 September 2006.
11. Discussion on 20 September 2006.
12. Discussion on 27 June 2006.
13. Meeting held on 8 May 2006.
14. Discussion on 17 October 2006.
15. The Shiv Sena is one of the dominant political parties in Maharashtra, representing the right of the political spectrum. At the state level, the Shiv Sena is currently part of the political opposition. In Mumbai, however, the Shiv Sena holds the largest number of seats in the municipal corporation. Koliwada's political importance is partially due to the Kolis' support for the Shiv Sena, while the remaining districts in Dharavi are considered Congress strongholds.
16. Discussion on 14 November 2006.
17. The association of Dharavi with Kumbharwada can be discerned, for example, in the newspaper articles highlighting the impacts of the plan on Dharavi residents, focusing disproportionately on the implications for the Kumbhars.
18. Discussion on 7 September 2006.
19. Discussion on 7 September 2006.
20. Discussion on 14 February 2006.
21. Discussion on 14 November 2006.
22. In a high-profile example, the scandalized energy firm Enron had attempted to construct a power plant 80 miles south of Mumbai, but was met with considerable protests in the mid-1990s. Although these mobilizations were not the only political problem facing the project, they provided the state justification to stall on implementation. The power plant was still not completed in 2001 when Enron collapsed under the weight of scandal (Mehta 2000).
23. Discussion on 19 June 2006.
24. After the casualties of the global financial crisis of 2008–09, however, four consortia were forced to withdraw from consideration, including one consortium that had included the now defunct financial firm Lehman Brothers (Tembhekar 2009).

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