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ABSTRACT

This analysis studies relations between slum-dwellers and the state to understand the growth of slums during an era of economic success in Mumbai. I argue that a dialectical relationship between the state and slum-dwellers perpetuates frictions and allows the state to deny services to its most disenfranchised citizens. Negative perceptions construct slum-dwellers outside the social order as "liminal citizens." Yet, on the other hand, the government has very little power to subvert or influence slum-dwellers because it chooses to define them as non-citizens. As such, slum-dwellers have the power to manipulate and innovate completely outside the formal system, creating a "shadow hegemony."

Invisible Lives
Stories of Innovation and Transition in Mumbai

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> Someone has said that the urban poor are invisible people.
> … You sell everything imaginable on our street corners – at a price the poor can afford.
> And yet we never see you.
> … And that is why you are invisible – because WE DON'T WANT TO SEE YOU
> We don't want to see you because you challenge and disturb us.
> You make us feel uncomfortable.
> Because if you are treated as less than human, it is we who treat you thus.
> So your pain shows the rest of us our inhumanity. [1]
>
> Stephen Kim Soo Whan

Accoring to the government of India, a slum is "a compact area of at least 300 population or about 60-70 households of poorly built congested tenements, in unhygienic environment usually with inadequate infrastructure and lacking in proper sanitary and drinking water facilities." This describes how slums are perceived: dirty, unsanitary, cramped and overflowing. When slum-dwellers comprise 6.5 million people in a city of 12 million, as they do in Mumbai, this dirty and unsanitary space becomes a "nuisance to public health" and the security of the city.[2] Slum-dwellers are the "parasites" of Mumbai.

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[1] Stephen Kim Soo Whan, "A Place to Live, "in *India's growing slums,* ed. Josh Desrochers, (Bangalore: Centre for Social Action, 2000), 13.

[2] The Government of India. "Slum Population: Census 2001." (2001). http://nuhru.in/files/Slums% 20in% 20India%20-%20An%20Overview.pdf?download, (accessed April 1, 2007).

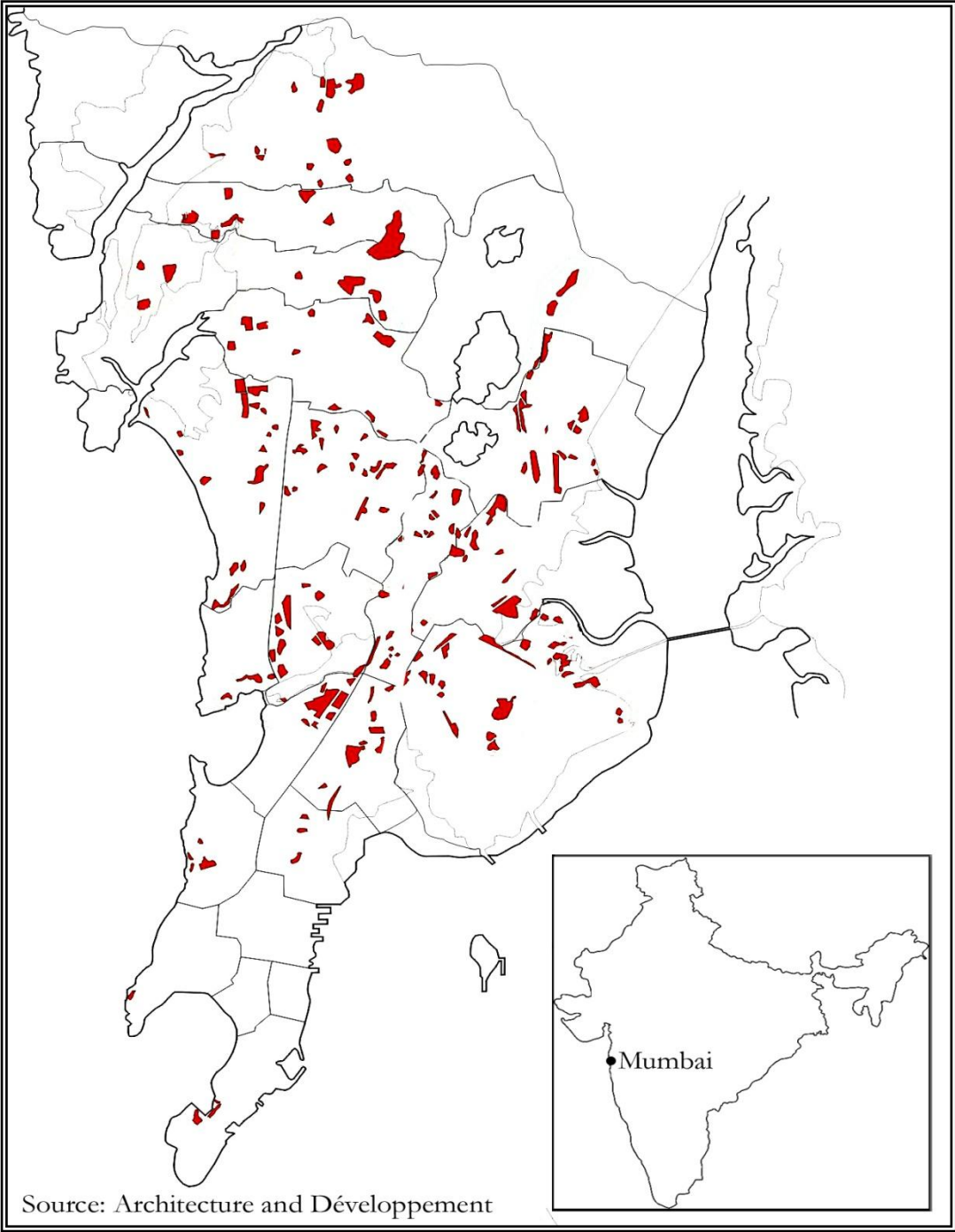Source: Architecture and Développement

Figure 1. Map of Mumbai's Slums.

Mumbai is a city of contradictions. As the economic powerhouse of India, Mumbai has driven the country's growth since liberalization began in the early 1990s, yet it is home to the nation's largest slum population. High-rise buildings housing millionaires are situated next to sprawling slums. As the city's economy grows, so do its slums. Although simple economic theory posits that growth increases overall incomes, this is far from the case in Mumbai. The government denies slum-dwellers basic social services and slum development policies repeatedly fail. Why then, does the government deny these services to its most disenfranchised residents? Without these services, how do slum-dwellers survive outside the government's system?

I argue that a dialectical relationship between the state and slum-dwellers allows this contradictory system to persist. To define and understand this relationship, I utilize two concepts. First, I propose the government and the affluent elite construct slum-dwellers as "liminal citizens," or a transitional group. Second, I argue in reaction, slum-dwellers redefine their identities and incorporate strategies of survival, constructing a "shadow hegemony" that defies the state. Construction of this citizenship suggests one reason the government does not provide services in slums. Liminal citizenship is essentially non-citizenship. Slum-dwellers are believed to be dangerous criminals who steal land and precious resources within the city, yet their cheap labor sustains the economy. These and other negative perceptions, construct slum-dwellers outside the social order, placing them in an isolated liminal space. In section two, I address how the government and affluent construct this liminal citizenship, which influences the failed slum development policies. Yet, the lives of slum-dwellers are not hopeless or at the whims of the powerful; within slums, they have their own space to innovate.

The government has very little power to subvert or influence slum-dwellers because it chooses to define them as non-citizens and generally ignores their existence. As such, slum-dwellers have the power to manipulate and innovate completely outside the formal system, creating a "shadow hegemony." I define this shadow hegemony as a process of innovation – of reconfiguring their identity, maximizing their resources and designing strategies of survival – in which the cultural productions and informal economic systems designed by slum-dwellers dominate. Often unintentionally or indirectly, these acts defy the state's construction of the liminal citizenship. However, the shadow hegemony is not all-encompassing. Some state services cannot be reproduced by slum-dwellers, preventing them from fulfilling all of their needs. Slum-dwellers have varying degrees of success in this informal system, as religion, caste, ethnicity

and class differ dramatically in Mumbai slums. [3] I analyze how different groups identify themselves to prevent from reifying and homogenizing this diverse population. In section three, I analyze how slum-dwellers create their identities and incorporate strategies of survival.

Looking specifically at these strategies also allows one to understand how the construction of this liminal citizenship is perpetuated. Slum-dwellers sometimes seize land, water and resources from the government because they are denied services. In doing so, they reinforce the government's negative perceptions of them, weakening their ability to receive services. This relationship generates a continuum of destruction and reconstruction, cultural production and counter-production, denial of resources and theft of resources. Thus, we find a dialectical relationship between the state and slum-dwellers in which these actions and reactions sustain each other.

Government, academic and public perceptions of slum-dwellers influence the way development policy is implemented. In the conclusion, I briefly address the potential for reframing liminal constructions based on work by local development organizations. I believe that if we look at the poor as innovative individuals, development is no longer a despairing venture. When we view the poor as marginalized, powerless and hopeless, it is hard to imagine effective policy. But, if we analyze the innovations and strategies of survival of the poor, we can see both how development can parallel their own ingenious systems and how to reframe perceptions of them.

This analysis attempts to describe relations between slum-dwellers and the state to understand the growth of slums during an era of economic success in Mumbai. Undoubtedly, this description cannot possibly consider the varied nature of development and the extent of social problems in Mumbai and elsewhere. However, I believe analyses of unequal social relations, processes of marginalization and the innovations by the poor are critical to understanding what development means and how it can be accomplished. My aim is to provide a new perspective on this discussion utilizing concepts of liminality and shadow hegemony.

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[3] Although this article does not delve into the Indian caste system or religious divisions, these prominent facets of Indian society require acknowledgement. Most slum-dwellers are from lower castes and Muslim, which is likely a contributing factor to their status. Although these divisions could be understood through a liminal framework, the background and scholarship needed to broach these topics is beyond the reach of this analysis.

I. Review of the Literature: Incorporating a Cultural Lens

> Culture is part of the story – part of the formation of agency, of
> effective markets and institutions – but is often left out. … In this
> particular sense, culture is ignored at our peril, in terms of both
> development effectiveness and understanding.
>
> Rao and Walton, *Culture and Public Action*

Scholarship on liminality, urban poverty, the informal sector and slum experiences provides a theoretical starting point that substantiates my analysis of Mumbai's social structure and the lives of slum-dwellers. Anthropological scholarship on liminality brings forth a theoretical basis for my argument, which is attuned to the slum-dweller context. Urban planning literature and critiques of government policies support my basic assumption that the government fails to provide services to slum-dwellers and explain the role of government perceptions in this failure. This literature also provides background for a new application of liminality. Informal sector scholarship explains the tendencies and importance of the economy in which slum-dwellers find employment and services outside the formal government structure. Ethnographic research and non-traditional literature, such as fictional novels and documentaries, provide a basis for discussing strategies of survival and illustrate the shadow hegemony of slum-dwellers. This literature also describes the strategies of survival that contribute to government perceptions, which sheds light on the dialectical relationship.

My aim is to integrate a cultural perspective with economic concepts to achieve a greater awareness of the exclusionary government system in Mumbai and slum-dwellers' experiences within this system. I employ an approach similar to Vijayendra Rao and Michael Walton. Their theories integrate traditional economic and anthropological theory to explain development policies. As Rao and Walton argue, "A culturally informed perspective is thus not so much a prescription as it is a lens – a way of seeing," which confronts "*why* economic and social factors interact with culture to unequally allocate access to a good life."[4] Similarly, the concepts of liminal citizenship and shadow hegemony are my lenses for interpreting strategies of survival in the informal sector to understand the growth of slums in Mumbai.

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[4] Vijayendra Rao and Michael Walton, "Introduction", in *Culture and public action*, eds. Vijayendra Rao and Michael Walton (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2004), 4, 9.

Liminality and Slums

The concept of liminality provides a unique understanding of the social order in Mumbai. I contend the government and affluent in Mumbai construct slum-dwellers as "liminal citizens." Liminality is understood as a transitional state. In the case of slum-dwellers, this state lies between their former secure habitat (often in a rural village) and formal recognized homes in the city, placing them in unrecognized hutments in slums. Arjun Appadurai, who studied slum organizations to advocate grassroots development, has called these people "citizens without a city."[5] Throughout the past century, anthropologists have expanded the application of liminality to explain transitory states in diverse cultures and circumstances.

Arnold van Gennep was the first to conceptualize liminality in *Rites de Passage*. Van Gennep discusses "liminal personae," or "threshold people," who are individuals in transition between understood states.[6] He describes a "state" as a fixed or stable condition that includes childhood, adulthood, motherhood and all of the pre-ordained categories of human progression.[7] Utilizing this concept, Victor Turner analyzed the rituals and symbols of the Ndembu in Zambia.[8] He expands on van Gennep's definition of a state, arguing it can also designate "a stable or recurrent condition that is culturally recognized," which includes titles such as legal status and profession.[9] Turner also provides a more tangible definition of liminality, stating, "They [liminal beings] are at once no longer classified and not yet classified…[they] are at the very least 'betwixt and between' all the recognized fixed points in space-time of structural classification."[10] Both analyses primarily focus on societies in which the transition period eventually ends. This does not appear to be the case for slum-dwellers. Nevertheless, the characteristics attached to liminality can still be applied to slum life.

Specific characteristics are identifiable in all liminal beings, and each is remarkably relevant to the lives of slum-dwellers. Turner, van Gennep and Mary Douglass identify four characteristics of liminality: isolation, lack of rights, "invisibility" and "pollution." Van Gennep explains how the concept of liminality

[5] Arjun Appadurai, "The Capacity to Aspire: Culture and the Terms of Recognition," in *Culture and public action,* eds. Vijayendra Rao and Michael Walton (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2004) 72.

[6] Arnold van Gennep, *Rites de passage* (London: Toutledge & Paul, 1909), 21.

[7] Ibid., 26.

[8] Victor Turner, *The forest of symbols; Aspects of Ndembu ritual* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1967).

[9] Ibid., 93.

[10] Ibid., 66-67.

is ideal for understanding conditions of the "isolated" individual, whose isolation is due directly to his or her transitional state.[11] Lacking a connection to any understood life or position prevents the transitional being from achieving social acceptance. Like all transitional beings, slum-dwellers are isolated by their governments and the upper classes of society, preventing them from accessing simple services. This isolation entails in itself a lack of rights, which I identify as a distinctive characteristic of liminal citizenship.

Indeed, Turner argues liminal beings lack all rights due to the structure of liminality: "they have not status, property, insignia, secular loathing, rank, kinship position, nothing to demarcate them structurally from their fellows. Their condition is indeed the very prototype of sacred poverty."[12] This description is similar to the lives of slum-dwellers who lack rights to their homes, political recognition and services from their government. Like lack of rights, "invisibility" is identifiable in liminal beings.

Turner also posits that a liminal individual is ambiguous without the characteristics of previous or future states, and therefore "invisible," which has two significant implications.[13] First, negativity and negative symbols are attached to the liminal individual. This negativity is drawn from the location of liminal beings who "(1) fall into the interstices of social structure, (2) are on its margins, or (3) occupy its lowest rungs."[14] Slum-dwellers, often called "parasites" by the upper classes and the area's media, are placed on the margins of Mumbai's society, both in location and social structure.[15] Second, invisibility confuses "all of the customary categories," making the individual "polluting."[16] Douglas, who analyzes hygienic standards in religion to understand pollution and taboo, discusses how polluting individuals are seen as dangerous because they are considered at fault for their condition or actions.[17] Her analysis of perceptions of "dirt" supports my examination of how the government and affluent construct slum-dwellers as liminal citizens in Mumbai, placing them outside the social order. I employ the term "contaminated" because polluting denotes a status that is imposed rather than experienced, and I focus on how slum-dwellers experience and innovate on their liminal status.

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[11] Van Gennep, 26.

[12] Turner, 98.

[13] Ibid., 94-5

[14] Ibid., 125.

[15] John Desrochers, "Introduction,"in *India's growing slums*, ed. John Desrochers (Bangalore: Centre for Social Action, 2000), 15.

[16] Turner, 97.

[17] Mary Douglas, *Purity and danger: an analysis of the concepts of pollution and taboo* (London: Ark Paperbacks, 1966), 113.

These characteristics of liminality are strikingly applicable to Mumbai slum-dwellers, but the context in which slum-dwellers live requires a new application of the concept. Turner, van Gennep and Douglas analyzed temporal transitions between recognized societal categories in stable and predictable societies, which are significantly different from Mumbai's society. Slum-dwellers have not yet achieved formal citizenship and this transition is not likely any time in the near future. Therefore, my application of this concept necessitates a spatial rather than temporal analysis. However, recent anthropologists, realizing a greater possibility for the application of liminality, have begun studying societies in unique transitional states.

Liisa Malkki uses the concept of liminality to understand the national identity of Hutu refugees from Burundi, a society in transition without a pre-ordained final state.[18] Like the Hutu refugees, whose migration placed them in a liminal state, slum-dwellers lack formal recognition in Mumbai. These cases are unique in that migration was not an expected transition, yet they are distinctly liminal. Malkki utilizes a spatial analysis of liminal identity, expanding upon the characteristics described by van Gennep, Turner and Douglas. She argues that refugees are "invisible" in "the domain of policy," which includes governments and humanitarian organizations.[19] The refugees are also perceived as contaminated; they are an "abomination" and "a dangerous category because they blur national (read: natural) boundaries."[20] Like refugees, slum-dwellers are "invisible" in urban planning policies and perceived as dangerous criminals, which I argue, reflects their liminal status. She also criticizes discourse that identifies refugees as "the problem," when many other social factors have contributed to their condition.[21] This "problem" rhetoric also characterizes prominent development discourse about slum-dwellers.

However, Malkki's analysis primarily focuses on the reconstruction of refugee Hutu identities, rather than their liminal state. In contrast, I argue that the government and affluent construct slum-dwellers as liminal citizens, which contributes to limited government services in slums despite phenomenal economic growth throughout India. To analyze the construction of the liminal citizen and slum-dwellers' reaction to this status, I incorporate literature from political science and urban planning, the informal sector and ethnographies.

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[18] Lisa H. Malkki, *Purity and exile: violence, memory, and national cosmology among Hutu refugees in Tanzania* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1995).

[19] Ibid., 6.

[20] Ibid., 8.

[21] Ibid., 8.

Urban Planning: The Structure of Cities

Urban poverty has always been an element of cities; accounts of slum-like conditions date back to the first cities in China and Western Europe. Substantial literature within the disciplines of political science and urban studies provide valuable perspectives on the urban poor, government policy and the structure of urban societies. This literature contributes to my application of liminality because it describes how the state and affluent construct slum-dwellers as liminal citizens and explains the failure of development policies. State-society relations theory establishes the division between the government and slum-dwellers, supporting a spatial study of liminality. State theory contributes to an analysis of failed development policies and the uneven distribution of state resources. Utilizing urban planning literature, I attune the characteristics of liminality to Mumbai's urban setting, emphasizing how government actions (or lack thereof) contribute to the construction of the liminal citizen.

A spatial (rather than temporal) analysis of liminality necessitates a discussion of the respective spaces, rather than the periods of transition. The liminal citizen can be distinguished by the location of his or her home. I reframe traditional state-society relations theory to describe the primary spatial division between the government, which is largely influenced by the wealthy classes, and slum-dwellers in Mumbai. Joe Migdal, at the forefront of this form of analysis, states:

> [State strength] has been accompanied by attacks on the identities and lives of the most vulnerable elements in society, minorities and the poor. The struggles for social control in the Third World … have been over the control of these peoples. For vulnerable individuals, that struggle for control of their lives has frequently been little more than a conflict between the evils of exploitative local powers and the 'justice' of an aggrandizing state intent on transforming them.[22]

Migdal describes a weak state vying for power against "strongmen" and other state agencies. The capacity of the state depends on the structure of society, he argues, and "strongmen," or individuals who hold substantial power in society, prevent the state from achieving social control.[23] These strongmen benefit from a weak state because they provide strategies of survival for the poor. The weak states Migdal analyzes are ineffective, sometimes destructive and streaked with

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[22] Joel Migdal, *Strong societies and weak states: state-society relations and state capabilities in the Third World* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1988), xx-xxi.
[23] Migdal, 28.

corruption. This description is similar to the structure of Mumbai's society; however, my analysis places emphasis on the slum-dwellers' personal strategies of survival rather than those provided by strongmen.

Based on the negative perception of slum-dwellers in Mumbai, I question the extent which the government, or any strongman, wants complete social control over slum-dwellers. Undoubtedly, powerful slumlords profit by selling land to slum-dwellers, but they do not vie for power against the government. Indeed, they are closely tied to developers and government officials through bribes. These relations often reinforce the precarious living circumstances of slum-dwellers, as homes are demolished as easily as they are secured. Thus, slum-dwellers are under constant threat from both the affluent elite and the government. In this case, the poor must design their own strategies of survival. While Migdal focuses on a society's power-wielding individuals, I am interested in how slum-dwellers survive within what I believe to be a liminal space. This change in focus (from strongmen providing strategies of survival to slum-dwellers creating their own strategies) allows for an understanding of the categorical order in Mumbai. Focusing on the strategies of survival designed exclusively by slum-dwellers also allows one to see a shadow hegemony that reconfigures the marginalization of their social space. Within this shifted context, the public officials and influential upper classes represent the state while slum-dwellers represent the society that I studied.

With the exception of the politicians themselves, few would deny the corruption and failure of the government of Mumbai to implement effective urban planning policies that support the poor. While state-society relations theory distinguishes the spatial divisions in Mumbai, state theory supports an analysis of the ineffectiveness of government policy and actions. Without deeply entering the realm of state theory, and with no intention of disregarding many critical theories in the field, I have utilized only one theory on the state to support my analysis. The "prosaic state" concept Joe Painter discusses, argues the state is "heterogeneous, constructed, porous, uneven, processual and relational."[24] Painter also purports that prosaic theory forces recognition of the gap between state claims and actions, as well as uneven distributions of resources. Recognizing these factors contributes to an analysis of failed slum development policies. P.K. Das, describing the housing policies in Mumbai, acknowledges this ultimate failure of the government: "While every policy is launched in the name of the poor, the attack against and the denial of the barest amenities to the

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[24] Joe Painter, "Prosaic Geographies of Stateness," *Political Geography* 25, no. 7 (2006): 754.

poor sharpen and intensify with each announcement."[25] While politicians regularly promote slum development, no plan has yet shown dramatic on-the-ground improvements.

Moreover, acknowledging the heterogeneous and interconnected nature of the state highlights the relationship between bureaucrats and the wealthy elite. R.N. Sharma and A. Narender, critiquing urban planning policies in the last decade, argue powerful interests often influence the state and encourage government inaction. They describe a "growing unholy alliance among bureaucrats, political leaders and [the] business class."[26] As Migdal explains, politicians in India often sell their influence for fixed prices.[27] Therefore, the wealthy classes often re-interpret planning policies intended for the poor and, through bribes, utilize them to their own benefit.[28] The government's tendency to favor the rich is illustrated in many of Mumbai's slum upgradation policies.

Urban Planning and Liminality

Urban planning scholarship provides insightful critiques on government policy in Mumbai and parallels the characteristics of liminality. This literature contributes an awareness of Mumbai's urban structure and the negative sentiments toward slum-dwellers, both critical for understanding the construction of the liminal citizen. Like the work of Rao and Walton et al., which employs a dialogue between cultural and economic theory, I integrate these generally political and economic analyses with the cultural concept of liminality to describe the construction of the liminal citizen.

Urban planning literature often reviews government policy and its implication. These writers characterize the state-society relationship in Mumbai as double-sided and "schizophrenic."[29] For example, many slum-dwellers work for the upper classes, yet in public they are deplored for their unhygienic living conditions.[30] In addition, the state often ignores or even endorses informal economic activities at the same time it tries to stop them.[31] This paradoxical

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[25] P.K. Das, "Slums: The Continuing Struggle for Housing," in *Bombay and Mumbai: the city in transition*, eds. Sujata Patel and Jim Masselos (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003), 225.

[26] R. N. Sharma and A. Narender, "Policies and Strategies for Slum Improvement and Renews – The Bombay Experience," in *Urban explosion of Mumbai: restructuring of growth*, ed. M. D. David (Mumbai: Himalaya Publishing House, 1996), 218.

[27] Migdal, 252.

[28] Sharma and Narender, 217.

[29] Robert Neuwirth, *Shadow cities: a billion squatters, a new urban world* (New York: Routledge, 2005), 271.

[30] Ibid, 271.

[31] Kalpana Sharma, *Rediscovering Dharavi: stories from Asia's largest slum* (India: Penguin Books, 2000), xix.

relationship displays how slum-dwellers can blend between outsiders and citizens in their liminal state, as Turner stated, "they are at once no longer classified and not yet classified."[32] This status is particularly convenient for the government because slum-dwellers' labor supports economic growth, yet they are denied citizenship and social services. The characteristics of liminality – isolation, lack of rights, invisibility and contamination – are identifiable in urban planning literature.

The government and wealthy citizens of Mumbai isolate slum-dwellers, which elucidates their status as "others" or non-citizens. Urban planning literature describes this status and sheds light on their isolation. As Neuwirth, who traveled to slums worldwide to understand the lives of slum-dwellers, explains:

> To call a neighborhood a slum immediately creates distance. A slum is the apotheosis of everything that people who do not live in a slum fear. To call a neighborhood a slum establishes a set of values – a morality that people outside the slum share – and implies that inside those areas, people don't share the same principles. Slum says nothing while saying everything. It blurs all distinctions. It is a totalizing word.[33]

The location of homes in Mumbai can be understood as a line of separation, separating the "true" citizens from the "others." George Glmelch and Walter Zenner, responding to the perception that poverty is generational, emphasize how the poor are perceived as the "other: people who are socially different, *isolated* from normal citizens and threatening to society."[34] These "others," these liminal citizens, are not allowed complete entrance into society, van Gennep's metaphorical home.[35] Gita Dewan Verma, who critiques urban planning policies in India because they favor the wealthy, narrates a story like van Gennep's metaphor to depict the isolation of slum-dwellers in India.[36] She describes "others" who were not provided for by their family and "were left to fend for themselves in ways not envisaged in the Plan."[37] These "'others' were forced to accept, and even expect, their conditions and limited support from their 'family.'"[38] This isolation separates slum-dwellers from the "citizens" of

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[32] Turner, 66-67.

[33] Neuwirth, 16-17.

[34] George Gmelch and Walter Zenner, *Urban life: readings in the anthropology of the city* (Prospect Heights: Waveland Press, 2002), 280. Emphasis mine.

[35] Van Gennep, 26.

[36] Gita Dewan Verma, *Slumming India: a chronicle of slums and their saviours* (New Delhi: Penguin Books, 2002), xv.

[37] Ibid., xvi.

[38] Ibid., xvi.

Mumbai, which may contribute to the lack of government services and formal titles in slums.

Lack of rights is especially applicable to slum-dwellers' experiences. Urban planning literature suggests that slum-dwellers' lack of rights discourages development. Sharma explains that because slums are located in some of the most uninhabitable locations, slums lack infrastructure necessary for the government to provide basic services, yet the government will not provide infrastructure because the slum-dwellers do not legally own the land.[39] Verma, expanding upon her story about slum life, explains, "Even as they continued to contribute to the household kitty, they lost their right to be settlers, and gained instead the dubious 'right' to remain unsettled with minimal services till they were resettled."[40] This "right to remain unsettled" can be seen as the right to nothing; it captures the slum-dwellers' liminal citizenship.

The "invisibility" of liminal beings originates from their marginal place in society, explains Turner. Urban planning theorists extensively discuss this marginal position in the case of slum-dwellers. The "default condition of civic invisibility which characterizes the urban poor," described by Appadurai, is evident in Mumbai's development plans. [41] Slum-dwellers play almost no role in government development plans, which never consider their ability to improve their own lives.[42] Mike Davis, who analyzes the "urbanization of poverty," argues that urban planning is an "instrument of the growing marginalization of the poor."[43] This marginalization is evidenced by slum-dwellers' limited political influence. Rajendra Vora and Suhas Palshikar, describing identities and marginalization in slums, argue that slum-dwellers "have no role in the substantive politics of the city."[44] In the margins of society, slum-dwellers exist only as votes in the eyes of most politicians as "nobody assigns [them] any further political role."[45] This invisibility allows for misconceptions of the urban poor who "contaminate" the city.

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[39] Sharma, 8.

[40] Verma, xvi.

[41] Appadurai, 78.

[42] Gmelch and Zenner, 279.

[43] Davis, 69.

[44] Rajendra Vora and Suhas Palshikar, "Politics of Locality, Community, and Marginalization," in *Bombay and Mumbai: The city in transition*, eds. Sujata Patel and Jim Masselos (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003), 179.

[45] Ibid.

Negative perceptions of slum-dwellers are a recurring theme in urban planning literature that describes how slum-dwellers are perceived as "contaminated." Parasites, eyesores, cancer in the community, encroachers and thieves are all terms commonly used for slum-dwellers. [46] Sharma and Narender explain these perceptions, "The 'invasion of squatters' in the cities is seen as an 'assault' on private property and the affluent live in a state of terror."[47] This perception of contamination has several important consequences. Slum-dwellers are seen as dangerous criminals, and similar to the refugees studied by Malkki, they are "the problem." Undoubtedly, many criminals live in the slums because they can avoid the government, but the majority of individuals living in slums have no other options. The actions and rhetoric of political parties, particularly Shiv Sena, emphasizes the negativity attached to slum-dwellers.

The rise of Shiv Sena, a Hindu nationalist party, parallels the growth in Mumbai's population, particularly its slums. Although the party is not currently in power, its rhetoric and actions in slums are similar to the Congress Party. Thomas Blom Hansen studies Shiv Sena's reign to understand identity and violence in Mumbai. He explains how Shiv Sena placed "the blame for all hardships … onto non-Maharashtrians."[48] Although much of Shiv Sena's rhetoric attracts poor Hindu young men into its ranks, slums were not better off when the party was in power. Hansen explains how the Sena ran "demolition drives against 'unauthorized structures' (not least in the Muslim parts of the city) or new slums."[49] Justifying this act, former Shiv Sena politician, Madhukar Sirpotdar, stated:

> All the slums should have been demolished and the entire slum population should have been asked to go. There is no place for them to stay here in the city. Unless the city implements this mercilessly this problem will never be gotten rid of. We don't say don't come to Mumbai. You are welcome here. But if you are going to construct free housing on land owned by the government, you are not welcome.[50]

Similar negative perceptions and accounts in urban planning literature, government rhetoric and local newspapers provide critical data on how the

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[46] John Desrochers, "Slum Profiles," in *India's growing slums*, ed. John Desrochers (Bangalore: Centre for Social Action, 2000).

[47] Sharma and Narender, 215.

[48] Thomas Blom Hansen, *Wages of violence: naming and identity in postcolonial Bombay* (Delhi: Permanent Black, 2001), 45.

[49] Ibid., 205.

[50] Neuwirth, 131-2.

liminal citizenship is constructed and perpetuated. Employing Douglas' theories on pollution and taboo, I analyze these perceptions and social constructions to understand their potential impact on slum development in Mumbai. In the next section, I establish the literature on the informal sector that informs my understanding of slum-dwellers' strategies of survival.

Informal Sector Research

The role the informal sector plays in providing strategies of survival is critical to this analysis. Simply defined, the informal sector, also known as the hidden, shadow, unorganized, parallel and unrecognized economy, consists of all economic and social activities working externally of government frameworks and without legal recognition.[51] Research on the informal sector has been primarily economic in nature, yet ethnographers have also broached this topic. I take an approach similar to ethnographies, utilizing slum-dweller stories to understand the informal sector's role in slum life. The informal sector is crucial to understanding how slum-dwellers innovate and create their shadow hegemony. By choosing to ignore and disregard slums, the government has no power to oversee slum-dwellers' activities. Indeed, slum-dwellers have the power to work outside the government through these informal mechanisms. I therefore believe the informal sector sheds light on the shadow hegemony of the poor because the informal world dominates in slums. Emphasizing the power of informality in slums, Sharma argues, "This is 'enterprise' personified, an island of free enterprise not assisted or restricted by the State, or any law. It brandishes in illegality."[52] However, by "brandishing in illegality," the informal mechanisms are dialectically connected with negative perceptions of theft and criminal behavior, ultimately perpetuating liminal constructions, which are addressed in the following section.

Initial development research considered the informal sector a "traditional" or "marginal" economy, encompassing shoeshine boys and beggars. [53] Beginning in the 1970s, a new field of literature emerged that incorporated a broader understanding of the concept of an informal sector and its important role in providing employment to the poor. Ian Livingstone proposed one such theory,

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[51] Ivo Havinga and Viet Vu, "Informal Sector in the 1993 System of National Accounts," *United Nations Statistical Division*, (April 2005, 2), http://www.unescap.org/ STAT/meet/sna-april2005/sna_informal_sector1.pdf (accessed January 4, 2006).

[52] Sharma, 78.

[53] International Labor Office, *Employment, incomes and equity: a strategy for increasing productive employment in Kenya*, (Geneva: ILO, 1972).

arguing the informal sector absorbs the demand for formal employment.[54] This
"sponge" theory is central to understanding how the informal sector generates
survival strategies when the government does not. Although Livingstone's
theory focuses on employment, I expand his "sponge" theory to study how slum-
dwellers fulfill their needs within the informal economy.

The informal sector is critical to life in Mumbai. As Suketu Mehta, who moved
to Mumbai to understand the city of his childhood, explains, the informal sector
"has a service for every human need."[55] He states, "You have to break the law to
survive. … The 'parallel economy' a traveling partner of the official economy, is
always there, just turn your head a little to the left or right and you'll see it. To
survive in Bombay, you have to know its habits."[56] Further emphasizing Mehta's
point, both Sharma and Neuwirth describe the extent of the informal sector in
slums, where one can find factories, showrooms, businesses and workshops
selling any imaginable good without formal services such as garbage pickup or
sewers.[57] In the case of housing, Sharma explains, "The absence of any planning
for housing for workers in industrialized areas inevitably results in informal
housing settlements."[58] The situation with water is similar. In the poorest
slums, one water tap can serve several thousand people and only run a few hours
per day, often in the early morning hours, forcing those who wake up too late to
buy from informal sources.[59] However, although the informal sector supports
slum-dwellers' subsistence, it is not a secure economy and its beneficence varies
between individuals. The characteristics of the informal sector elucidate both the
necessity and challenges of informal life. The International Labour Office (ILO)
identified the characteristics of the informal and formal sectors in this way:[60]

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[54] Ian Livingstone, "The 'Sponge Effect': Population, Employment, and Incomes in Kenya," T*he Challenge of employment and basic needs in Africa: essays in honour of Shyam B.L. Nigam, and to mark the tenth anniversary of JASPA* (Nairobi: Oxford University Press, 1986), 162-172.

[55] Suketu Mehta *Maximum city: Bombay lost and found* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 2004), 455.

[56] Ibid., 177.

[57] Neuwirth, 123

[58] Sharma, 30.

[59] See Swaminathan, Mehta, Sharma, and Appadurai.

[60] International Labor Office.

Figure 2. Characteristics of Formal and Informal Sector Acitivities.

Characteristics of informal sector activities	Characteristics of formal sector activities
- ease of entry; - reliance on indigenous resources; - family ownership of enterprises; - small scale of operation; - skills acquired outside the formal school system; - labor-intensive and adapted technology; - unregulated and competitive markets.	- difficult entry; - frequent reliance on overseas resources; - corporate ownership; - large scale of operation; - formally acquired skills, often expatriate; - capital-intensive and often imported technology; and - protected markets (through trade licenses).

Although these sectors are ultimately connected, delineating the two allows for an understanding of the division in Mumbai's society. As Hansen describes, "On the other side is the informal world of the *zopadpattis* (slums) and chawls (working-class residences), where self-employment, marginalization, and exclusion are the fundamental social conditions."[61] The ease of entry, small-scale operations and labor-intensive production allows slum-dwellers to survive, although they are isolated, invisible and own next to nothing. An individual with minimal capital and few skills can access employment and purchase goods informally, allowing survival in a world in which access is restricted by the location of one's home.

Although the informal sector provides a system for slum-dwellers to innovate and survive, it brings varied levels of success. Nor does informality guarantee safe, healthy or secure working conditions. Most informal companies function

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[61] Hansen, *Wages of violence*, 71.

similar to sweatshops, lacking health and labor standards.[62] Individuals working in these "temporary, menial, physically dangerous and socially degrading forms of work," are what Sandeep Pendse has labeled Mumbai's "toilers."[63] Although these economic and theoretical approaches describe the characteristics of informality, they do not depict day-to-day life in an informal world.

Informal Life

Utilizing ethnographies, literature and films, I depict the strategies of survival of slum-dwellers within the informal sector to understand how they innovate as liminal citizens. For example, the life of Subra, a street boy who lives in a train station in Mumbai, puts a face on the characteristics described by the ILO report and theory on liminality. [64] He explains, "It's been very difficult for me. No food. I had to beg and steal." He has swept trains and shined shoes to pay for his daily meals. "I sell water now. … Sometimes we wash them well, sometimes we don't … and we sell them for five rupees a bottle [less than one cent].[65] I have to lift a lot of weight and my shoulder gets sore." But Subra can only make enough money to survive each day. If he makes any more, it will be stolen from him in his sleep. But when he doesn't sell things, "I feel like crying." Subra's story illustrates the difficulties the poorest individuals face while working informally, as well as the potential dangers of informal products. He works long hours to survive each day, yet he cannot save his money to invest in his future because he will be robbed. On the other hand, his explanation of selling dirty water bottles illustrates the hazards of informal purchases.

The government also makes Subra's survival difficult. The police "used to beat us, snatch our money and ask us for bribes. We had to polish their shoes for free. If we didn't, they'd throw us out of the station." Because Subra is a squatter in the train station, the government does not provide him with the basic amenities that would allow him to attend school. Instead, he is threatened by the police. Wealthy people passing through the train station also call him *tapoori*, a degrading term for homeless boys. The treatment he endures from the police officers exemplifies how he is isolated and perceived as contaminating. Subra's experience illustrates the difficulties the poorest individuals face in the informal

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[62] Sharma.

[63] Appadurai, 72.

[64] Alan Handel, *Tapoori* (New York: Filmakers Library, 1998).

[65] Approximately 52 rupees to one dollar as of March 30, 2009. http://www.commodityonline.com, (accessed April 1, 2009).

market. However, the majority of slum-dwellers can find at least some success through manipulation of the informal system.

Slum-dweller stories also provide a unique understanding of housing issues in informal life. Living in a slum is essentially living informally because slum hutments are products of the informal market. The situation depicted in *I Love Behrampada*, a documentary film on a Mumbai slum, is ubiquitous of many slums throughout Mumbai.[66] The settlement started as four huts in a marshland, and in just a little more than 40 years, 50,000 people inhabited Behrampada. The slum-dwellers in this settlement made an uninhabitable piece of land into a community by gathering nearby sand and rocks and filling in the marsh. These slum-dwellers built their huts through hard labor, minimal capital and ingenuity, highlighting the ILO's characteristics of the informal sector. Even some hutments, beginning as pieces of wood and cardboard, slowly grew to pucca homes.

The condition of their initial settlement emphasizes how slum-dwellers are isolated, as they took root on leftover marshland. "We made this place what it is. There was nothing then, just water up to there [pointing at her waist] … This road didn't exist, it was made by us," said an elderly woman who was one of the first to settle in the slum. The evolution of the slum community occurred notwithstanding their lack of rights, because their homes were built utilizing informal mechanisms. This story reveals the strategies of survival available in the informal sector, which slum-dwellers can exploit to improve their conditions when the government does not threaten their slums. These varied experiences of Subra and the slum-dwellers in Behrampada emphasize the value of stories because they provide more than a summary of economic principles.

Despite these improvements, there are limits to the shadow hegemony and the extent of the informal sector. Certain services, like water, health care and sanitation facilities cannot be provided sufficiently in the informal market. As such, these goods are often expensive and, at times, unsafe. Several studies have established that informal water sources can be anywhere from 20 to 40 times more expensive than municipal supply.[67] The unsanitary conditions of homes decreases overall productivity as slum-dwellers are often sick and high water prices prevent savings and investment, both of which make survival more difficult for the poorest slum-dwellers.

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[66] Madushree Dutta, *I live in Behrampada* (Fremont, CA: India Relief and Education Fund, 1994).

[67] United Nations Human Settlements Programme, *Water and sanitation in the world's cities: local action for global goals* (London: Earthscan Publications Ltd, 2003), 19.

The informal sector is important to this analysis because its diverse and simple markets allow slum-dwellers to access strategies of survival. This sector is dominant because slum-dwellers can use it to work outside the government, even though individual gains vary. Economic theory provides this background, but the theory does not elucidate the daily experiences of informal life. These accounts are critical to understanding how slum-dwellers survive despite the construction of a liminal citizenship. Like the documentary films that describe Subra's life and Behrampada, I employ slum-dweller stories in ethnographies, film and novels.

Slum Life: Ethnographies and Novels

Accessing the three basic necessities of human survival — shelter, food and water — are daily challenges for many slum-dwellers. The section on urban planning established that the government does not provide services to slum-dwellers, and the section on the informal sector detailed the means by which slum-dwellers survive. This section focuses on how slum-dwellers experience their liminal citizenship and, briefly, the innovations that allow them to work around the formal system. I describe these innovations (how slum-dwellers reconfigure their identity and design strategies of survival) in detail in section three to portray the shadow hegemony in slums. In this process, they make the space in slums their own.

To see the "shadow hegemony" of slum-dwellers, one must look inside this liminal space to see how the poor react and innovate. Every day, slum-dwellers practice ingenuity. Subaltern theory provides such a perspective. Coined by Gramsci, subalterns proactively work to improve their lives, even against the state, within their capacity. Homi Bhabha defines subalterns as marginal, "denied and excluded," they are the "minority groups whose presence was crucial to the self-definition of the majority group: subaltern social groups were also in a position to subvert the authority of those who had hegemonic power."[68] Bayat Asef, discussing discourse on urban poverty, argues this perspective can allow one to determine the "silent, protracted but pervasive advancement of the ordinary people on the propertied and powerful in order to survive and improve their lives."[69] Their actions may be "small-scale, local or even individualistic."[70]

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[68] Homi Bhabha, "Unsatisfied: Notes on Vernacular Cosmopolitanism," in *Text and nation: cross-disciplinary essays on cultural and national identities*, The Quiason lecture series, eds. Laura García-Moreno and Peter C. Pfeiffer (Columbia, SC: Camden House, 1996), 204.

[69] Bayat Asef, "From 'Dangerous Classes' to 'Quiet Rebels:' Politics of the Urban Subaltern in the Global South," *International Sociology* 15, no. 3 (2000): 545.

[70] Ibid., 549.

We can see this shadow hegemony in slum-dwellers innovations, when they reconfigure their cultural identities and design strategies of survival. However, these strategies often reinforce perceptions that support the construction of the liminal citizenship. Thus, the liminal citizenship and shadow hegemony are dialectically connected. To describe these innovations, I employ ethnographic research, novels and films: ethnographies provide factual data on survival strategies, while fiction and film flesh out an incomprehensible life.

Ethnographic scholarship by individuals who have interviewed Mumbai slum-dwellers deepens our understanding of the specific strategies the poor use to survive. Shashi Shekhar Jha, Sharma and Neuwirth are my three primary sources for detailing these strategies, while Vora and Palshikar, Hansen and Anand Patwardhan describe identity in slums. Jha interviewed slum-dwellers throughout the city to study the impact of government relocation schemes.[71] Sharma's research focuses on slum-dwellers and their economy in Dharavi. Neuwirth lived in a Mumbai slum to understand slum-dweller strategies of survival. Vora and Palshikar discuss urban marginality and its impact on slum identity, while Hansen analyzes how the Shiv Sena provided an identity for slum-dwellers. Patwardhan's documentary, *Father, son and holy war*, analyzes masculine identity in India and its relationship to violence.[72] To enhance this portrait, I also draw on novels because they describe an impenetrable reality in a relatable form.

Literature undoubtedly has different aims from social science, yet its distinct style can extend social analysis. Morroe Berger evaluates how social science and novels represent reality.[73] Berger contends that a novelist "selects and emphasizes to reveal a portrait of a special world that is self-contained while resembling the real world in varying degrees."[74] Although novelists often exclude or emphasize certain real world characteristics, the stories of slum-dwellers in the novels I utilize are extractions I compare to ethnographic accounts. This narrative form supports my thesis because it can provoke an understanding of an incomprehensible reality. As Berger explains, "The novel's virtue is rather that it makes broad conclusions clearer by presenting concrete detail and arousing sympathy for the characters. A novel's dramatic effect may

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[71] Shashi Shekhar Jha, *Structure of urban poverty: the case of Bombay slums* (Bombay : Popular Prakashan, 1986).

[72] Anand Patwardhan, *Father, son and holy war* (New York, NY: First Run Icarus Films, 1994).

[73] Morroe Berger, *Real and Imagined Worlds: The novel and social science* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1977).

[74] Ibid., 219

thus reinforce social truth."[75] I employ these depictions to describe the liminal status of slum-dwellers, and therefore reinforce the "social truth" of slum life.

Realistic fiction can support an analysis of politics, history and society, as novels are a product of the author's own culture and society. Describing the importance of Indian novels, M.L. Pandit states, "Literature is fundamentally an expression of life through the medium of language. It is the criticism of life. It reflects the social surroundings of the writer's time. It is also the mirror of the society."[76] Further, Terry Eagleton, arguing that politics have always been characteristic of literature, believes novels can describe "the way we organize our social life together, and the power-relations which this involves; [as]… the history of modern literary theory is part of the political and ideological history of our epoch."[77] History can also be conceptualized in literary form, argues Eagleton, because literature "is less an object of intellectual enquiry in its own right than a particular perspective in which to view the history of our times."[78] Emphasizing this point, Nila Shah purports that novelists depend on certain socio-political and historical settings to develop characters.[79]

For example, Natalie Zemon Davis uses fiction narratives in 19th century French pardon tales to understand social constructions of the time.[80] She argues fiction can "present an account that seems to both writer and reader true, real, meaningful and/or explanatory."[81] These narratives, seemingly real, have extracted social constructions and conceptions even if their stories are not true.[82] In the same manner as Davis, I utilize novels about slum life to achieve a greater understanding of how slum-dwellers experience liminal citizenship and exert shadow hegemony.

Three novels that have greatly assisted in my understanding of life in India are *A fine balance*, *Chinnamani's world* and *The silver castle*. *A fine balance* by Rohinton Mistry details the life of two tailors who leave their homes after caste violence

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[75] Ibid., 218.

[76] M. L. Pandit, "Fiction Across Worlds: Some Writers of Indian Origin in Canada," in *The fiction of Rohinton Mistry: critical studies*, ed. Jaydipsinh Dodiya (New Delhi : Prestige Books, 1998), 11.

[77] Terry Eagleton, *Literary theory: An introduction* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1983), 194.

[78] Ibid., 195.

[79] Nila Shah, "Novel as History: A Study of *Such a Long Journey* and *A Fine Balance*," in *The fiction of Rohinton Mistry: critical studies*, ed. Jaydipsinh Dodiya (New Delhi : Prestige Books, 1998).

[80] Natalie Zemon Davis, *Fiction in the archives: pardon tales and their tellers in sixteenth-century France,* The Harry Camp lectures at Stanford University (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1987).

[81] Ibid., 3.

[82] Ibid., 4.

and arrive at "the city by the sea" where they live in a slum.[83] Mukunda Rao's *Chinnamani's world* tells the story, through the eyes of a young slum boy named Chinnamani, of slum-dwellers in Bangalore who organized a housing committee to gain formal titles.[84] *The silver castle*, written by Clive James, describes the life of a boy born on the pavements of Mumbai, how he entered the world of Bollywood, and his tumultuous fate.[85] Despite tendencies to dramatize the lives of slum-dwellers, the novels depict circumstances similar to ethnographies and allow the reader to relate to the characters.

My analysis was limited to novels written in English, probably excluding many powerful novels written in Marathi, Hindi and Urdu. However, I believe each novel provides a unique perspective on slum life in India. As an Indian expatriate living in Canada, Mistry provides a critical perspective of Indian society and the atrocities during the Emergency. Supporting Mistry's work, Shah states, "The novel reflects a total view of socio-cultural implications of contemporary society."[86] Rao, a professor of English in Bangalore, depicts a fictional story in his home city. James provides a Western perspective on poverty in Mumbai, as an Australian living in England. Every author sympathizes with the slum-dwellers and often negatively references the Indian government and its ineffective policies. Furthermore, all three novels end dramatically, highlighting the authors' frustrations with the current social circumstances. This unfortunate end does not need to be the case for slum-dwellers in Mumbai whose fortunes are not sealed in a narrative. These apparent biases, however, do not prevent a detailed account of strategies of survival that parallel ethnographic research in each of the novels.

The fiction embodies the permanent state of impermanence that characterizes slum life. Any day the water tap could be turned off. Any day government officials could demolish homes and destroy the few possessions of slum-dwellers. In this ever-threatened status, slum-dwellers attempt to earn enough income to improve their homes or move from the slum. I employ slum stories in ethnographies and literature to understand how slum-dwellers interpret and experience each characteristic of liminality: the state of isolation, lack of rights, invisibility and perceptions of contamination.

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[83] Rohinton Mistry, *A fine balance: a novel* (New York: Vintage International, 1995).

[84] Mukunda Rao, *Chinnamani's world* (New Delhi: Penguin Books., 2003).

[85] Clive James, *The silver castle: a novel* (London: J. Cape, 1996).

[86] Shah, 116.

Novels and ethnographies provide insight on how slum-dwellers perceive their isolation. For example, in *Chinnamani's world*, the young slum boy analyzes how his life is different from wealthier boys who look down on him. "The keri people were 'poor.' He had heard the word repeated like a refrain in a song, like a chant, a swear word, a curse, an excuse, as something that set them apart from others, *like an animal from human beings.*"[87] As Chinnamani began to understand his isolation, he became frustrated that he and his parents owned so little. Connected to this isolation is a lack of rights, preventing slum-dwellers from accessing formal goods and services.

Housing and water conditions accentuate the lack of rights of slum-dwellers. "The materialities of housing — its cost, its durability, its legality, and its design — lie at the very heart of slum life," argues Appadurai.[88] Selvan, the head of the housing committee in *Chinnamani's world*, frustrated with threats of eviction, said, "Land, a piece of land, which you can call your own. A house that wouldn't be blown away in a storm. A roof, a solid roof under which you can die in peace, in the presence of your dear ones. Tell me, what else can you desire for? Isn't that our greatest desire, our lifelong dream?" Emphasizing the way fiction can reflect reality, a slum woman from Behrampada parallels Selvan's statement after threats of eviction. After learning her home may be relocated, she asserts, "We've lived here so long, yet faced so many problems. … When our homes grow old, they make us leave. Once we're settled, they'll push us out again. Will we never have a place that is home?" These sentiments reflect the challenge slum-dwellers face without formal titles, yet as the informal sector displays and I describe in section three, slum-dwellers work around the government to improve their homes.

Lacking clean water is also an insecurity requiring daily endeavors. Madhura Swaminathan, describing social conditions in Mumbai, found that one tap serves an average of 203 users, but in some cases, 8,600 people use one tap for their daily water supply.[89] The tailors in *A fine balance* also have trouble at the water tap. When the tailors first moved to their slum, a woman explained to them, "Remember, you have to fill up early. Wake up late, and you go thirsty. Like the sun and moon, water waits for no one."[90] Managing inadequate homes and supplies of water is a challenge for the poorest slum-dwellers.

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[87] Rao, 84. Emphasis mine
[88] Appadurai, 76.
[89] Swaminathan, 96.
[90] Mistry, 168.

Without right to a formal title, slum-dwellers are urban invisibles. Invisibility
implies marginality, as if slums do not exist in the eyes of the government.
Invisibility is also apparent in the novels and ethnographies. Appadurai describes
how invisibility influences daily life:

> Their inability to document their claims to housing may snowball into a general
> invisibility in urban life, making it impossible for them to claim any rights to
> such things as rationed foods, municipal health and education facilities, police
> protection, and voting rights. In a city where ration cards, electricity bills, and
> rent receipts guarantee other rights to the benefits of citizenship, the inability
> to secure claims to proper housing and other political handicaps reinforce one
> another.[91]

He highlights how invisibility prevents slum-dwellers from accessing basic
services from the government. In a similar experience, the tailors in *A fine
balance* visited a government office to receive a ration card and were told:

> "A jhopadpatti [slum] is not an address. The law says ration cards can only be
> issued to people with real addresses."
>
> "Our house is real," pleaded Ishvar. "You can come and see it."
>
> "My seeing it is irrelevant. The law is what matters. And in the eyes of the
> law, your jhopdi doesn't count."[92]

Because their home is located in a slum, it is invisible to the government,
preventing the tailors from receiving government support like "real" addresses.
However, this invisibility does not extend to negative perceptions of the slums.

Perceptions of contamination are strikingly evident in ethnographies, film and
novels. The scheme to relocate Behrampada, the slum that grew from
marshland, provides an example of how slum-dwellers are perceived as
contaminating and the consequence of these perceptions. As the wealthy would
say to their children, "Don't act too smart, Behrampada's right there, they'll cut
you to bits."[93] After the Bombay riots, the dominantly Muslim slum was
considered dangerous to the surrounding apartment complexes and many citizen
associations tried to force the slum-dwellers out. As one slum-dweller stated,
"They act like this is a den for terrorists." The wealthy felt insecure and believed
that the slum-dwellers had unrightfully taken valuable land, even though the

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[91] Appadurai, 72.

[92] Mistry, 177.

[93] Dutta, *I live in Behrampada*.

slum-dwellers worked years to make the land inhabitable. The belief that slum-dwellers are thieves is another common conception that exemplifies contamination. Chinnamani experienced this stereotype while at a theater with friends. The ticket seller shouted at them, "'Aye, what are you doing here?' He saw a potential thief in every slum boy. … 'Don't stand there; go, go away from here, or I'll call the police.'"[94] The conception that all slum-dwellers are thieves is not unfounded, as many slum-dwellers "steal" resources to survive.

Often, slum-dwellers steal the very resources they are denied, indirectly exerting their shadow hegemony. Mehta explains how the poor "have to steal the water they need, from pipelines passing their land on the way to customers whom the municipality deems legitimate users of water. Up to a third of the corporation's water is stolen by the poor."[95] In stealing water, slum-dwellers provide services themselves. Explaining how slum-dwellers challenge their liminal status through theft of land, Neuwirth states:

> They are excluded, so they take … But they are not seizing an abstract right, they are taking an actual place: a place to lay their heads. This act – to challenge society's denial of a place by taking one of your own – is an assertion of being in a world that routinely denies people that dignity and the validity inherent in a home.[96]

These strategies of survival that incorporate stealing land and water illustrate how perceptions of contamination can be confirmed, continuing the production of the liminal citizen. As such, there is a continuum in which denial of services leads to theft and then further denial. Beyond theft, slum-dwellers incorporate other strategies to reconfigure the liminal citizenship imposed upon them. They create counter-cultural productions and utilize the informal sector to find strategies of survival. Cultural productions include attachment to rural villages, community building and identification with religious and ethnic groups. In the informal sector, slum-dwellers create their own rules and mechanisms for improvement. "Without any laws to support them, they are making their improper, illegal communities grow and prosper," posits Neuwirth.[97] In section three, I describe these innovations, including theft, informal tactics and cultural reproductions, in detail.

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[94] Rao, 106.
[95] Mehta, 124
[96] Neuwirth, 311.
[97] Ibid., 306.

Through an integration of anthropological, economic and political theory, I seek to understand why slum-dwellers do not receive basic government resources and how they survive. I suggest there is a dialectical relationship between the state and slum-dwellers that continues slum growth in Mumbai. To describe this relationship, I argue that the state constructs slum-dwellers as "liminal citizens" and slum-dwellers counter this by creating a "shadow hegemony." Scholarship on liminality describes the characteristics of a liminal category. State-society relations and urban planning literature discuss the construction of liminality by the government and the failure of development policies. Informal sector scholarship provides economic theory and descriptions of informal life critical to understanding strategies of survival. Ethnographies and novels enhance this understanding of slum-dwellers' stories, supporting an analysis of how slum-dwellers innovate within liminal constructions. In the following sections, I will expand this study, further examining the construction of the liminal citizenship and the innovative capacity of slum-dwellers. Next, I turn to these constructions, the relations between slum-dwellers, the affluent and the government, and the failure of development policies in Mumbai.

II. Constructing a Social Order: Perceptions of Contamination and Development Policy

> In the rest of the Third World, the idea of an interventionist state strongly committed to social housing and job development seems either a hallucination or a bad joke, because governments long ago abdicated any serious effort to combat slums and redress urban marginality.
>
> Mike Davis, Planet of Slums

I argue that the dialectical relationship between the state and slum-dwellers sustains slum growth during an era of economic success. To describe this relationship, I address the state's construction of the liminal status and slum-dwellers' reactions. This section focuses on how the state constructs slum-dwellers' liminal citizenship and implements policies. In the first section, I analyze public perceptions of contamination, which contrast the importance slum-dwellers' labor provides to Mumbai's economic growth. The second section addresses the trends and failures associated with urban planning policies. I also analyze how public perceptions, lack of will and corruption may contribute to policy inadequacies.

Danger and Lawlessness: Perceptions of Contamination

Douglas' analysis of pollution and taboo provides a theoretical starting point for examining perceptions of contamination. Utilizing her theoretical principles, I evaluate rhetoric that depicts slum-dwellers as "dirt" and "disease," which, I argue, reflects their marginal position outside the social order. This status invokes additional negative perceptions from the state and affluent. Slum-dwellers' homes are perceived as crossing a physical social barrier that incites fear, along with perceptions of danger and lawlessness. Further, their liminal status persists because government authorities ignore them. As such, slum-dwellers become the "development problem" in Mumbai.

Dirt "is the by-product of a systematic ordering and classification of matter, in so far as ordering involves rejecting inappropriate elements," explains Douglas. An analysis of these rejected elements involves reflection on those who "confuse or contradict cherished classifications" in the realm of the "ambiguous and anomalous," or liminal.[98] Further, this ambiguous status, found in the study of "dirt," describes the construction of the social order.[99]

Government officials and members of the wealthy classes commonly believe slum-dwellers are dirty, unsanitary and unhealthy "parasites," reflecting their liminal status and marginalization. Additionally, caste ideologies of pollution strengthen these classifications of slums because many lower caste Hindus are slum-dwellers. Highlighting the perception of "dirt," Shiv Sena leader, Bal Thackeray, promoted a massive removal of slums to resolve "the major problem of dirt."[100] Similarly, Chinnamani's teacher called him and other students "'Dirty dogs'… The bitter words had singed Chinnamani's heart." The media also uses dirt and disease metaphors to describe slums. A recent article in *DNA India* labels slums as a "cancer" and "burden" that are "choking the city … spreading thick and fast across Maharashtra" after a recent report found six major cities held 50 percent of the country's slum population.[101] This language homogenizes 6.5 million people into one category of "dirt," despite the diversity within slums, reflecting their status outside the understood social order.

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[98] Douglas, 37.

[99] Ibid., 3-6.

[100] Hansen, *Wages of violence,* 208.

[101] Aditya Ghosh, "Slum cancer spreads to six more cities in Maharashtra," *DNA India*, February 27, 2006, http://www.dnaindia.com/report.asp?NewsID=1015260 (accessed January 12, 2007).

Indeed, their homes are not accepted within the city. Crossing a barrier, Douglas explains, "is treated as a dangerous pollution. … The polluter becomes a doubly wicked object of reprobation, first because he crossed the line and second because he endangered others."[102] In this case, the line is the city limits, implying that slum-dwellers are "outsiders" who only belong to rural villages. Government authorities, including Prime Minister Manmohan Singh, tell slum-dwellers to "go back home" when their huts are demolished.[103] The slum-dwellers in *Chinnamani's world* were told the same by a government official, "Why do you all come here and give us trouble? … In another week's time you must all vacate the land and go back to your villages."[104] However, for many slum-dwellers, there is no "home" other than the city. The second implication of crossing a social barrier, endangering others, produces a criminalized status.

Douglas argues that lawlessness and danger are symbolically relevant to a marginal and liminal condition.[105] Such perceptions are common in Mumbai, as many affluent individuals consider slum-dwellers to be dangerous criminals. Describing perceptions of criminality, Sharma argues that because slums are "illegally" acquired, the state and affluent assume slum-dwellers must also be involved in other illegal activities, "thus, they are rendered non-people, their only image is as breakers of the law."[106] Preity Zinta, a popular Bollywood actress, exemplifies these sentiments. After the Mumbai bombings, she called for "drastic" measures to maintain security by checking migrants and slums. Zinta told a Mumbai newspaper, "We seriously need to think of the city's security. Stop the unchecked influx of migrants in the city. Check the slums."[107] She implies that Mumbai will not be safe while slum-dwellers live there. These perceptions of danger and lawlessness provoke action against slum-dwellers.

Many wealthy Mumbaiites fight legal battles against slum-dwellers through citizen associations. This terminology of "citizen" association dichotomizes the social order, implying slum-dwellers are not citizens. Navin Mithal, a wealthy flat-owner, worked with an association to remove a slum that blocked drainage from his building. He claimed to the police, "It is a fight between law-abiding

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[102] Douglas, 140.

[103] "Mumbai Inc to Lobby for Slum Demolition." *Indo-Asian News Service*, February 17, 2005, http://web.lexis-nexis.com (accessed April 27, 2006).

[104] Rao, 218.

[105] Douglas, 98-100.

[106] Sharma, 128.

[107] "Mumbai Should not be an Easy Target: Preity," *Indo-Asian News Service,* July 21, 2006, http://web.lexis-nexis.com (accessed January 7, 2007).

citizens and people who have taken the law into their hands."[108] To Mithal, slum-dwellers are fighting the law by building homes without permits, inconveniencing the true citizens of Mumbai. Slum-dwellers' challenges become twofold: first they have no opportunity to find secure housing and second the act of finding a home is perceived as challenging the law. A news article describing the incident called Mithal an "activist" and his work a "crusade."[109] Mithal's "crusade" displays how the state and wealthy elite identify slum-dwellers as lawless and therefore outside the social order.

Liminal categories can be condemned, accepted or ignored; however, "cultural categories are public matters. They cannot so easily be subject to revision," explains Douglas.[110] Yet, ignoring them only "affirms and strengthens the definitions to which they do not conform."[111] This is precisely how politicians address slum-dwellers, adumbrating their liminal citizenship. Politicians view slum-dwellers as vote banks that can be intimidated or persuaded. This portrays a political process that retains only a democratic appearance.[112] Their circumstances are never actually accepted and their cultural categories never understood. "In this sense, slums as a locality only occupy the margins of city politics," explain Vora and Palshikar.[113] As such, politicians can gain votes without providing substantive improvements on the ground.[114] These broad claims are illustrated in *Chinnamani's World* when the slum committee visited a government official:

> "Sir," she said, "just last month the chief minister himself declared in the assembly that the government would build pucca houses for the slum dwellers."

> The Secretary scowled. "That's a ten-year project to build Bangalore into a mega-city," he said gruffly. And of course the government would be evolving a new scheme to tackle the problems of the slums, too. But it would take time.[115]

The same contradictory rhetoric is apparent throughout Mumbai's electoral history.

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[108] Nauzer Bharucha, "Activist Threatened for Opposing Illegal Slums," *The Times of India*, July 6, 2002, http://web.lexis-nexis.com (accessed January 12, 2007).
[109] Ibid.
[110] Douglas, 40.
[111] Ibid., 40.
[112] Vora and Palshikar.
[113] Ibid., 179.
[114] Das, 225.
[115] Rao, 162.

Calls for slum development are followed by inaction and demolition drives, illustrating how political parties ignore slum-dwellers and therefore reinforce their liminal citizenship. The Congress Party generally disregarded slum growth throughout the city while in power, but promoted development during elections to ensure a strong voting base.[116] Similarly, when Shiv Sena ran in 1995, the party claimed it would provide 400,000 homes for slum-dwellers, yet as I later show, the party's slum development plans failed miserably.[117] Shiv Sena "seeks to ensure marginalization of the 'unwanted' sections of society," argue Vora and Palshikar.[118] Thus, the Sena supports the construction of the social order by marginalizing and ignoring the "unwanted." During the 2004 elections, the Congress party promised it would extend the 1995 cut-off date for slum legalization to 2000. However, months after the elections, the party attributed its election claims to a "printer's devil."[119] This statement allowed the government to bulldoze post-1995 slums during the 2004-2005 demolition drives.

These perceptions have important consequences Douglas does not discuss because she analyzes traditional societies in which the liminal phase has a distinct ending. Since slum-dwellers are seen as lawless and dangerous, development projects become slum eradication plans, rather than plans to support the city's poorest residents. Slum-dwellers have become the "development problem." An editorial piece by Vir Sanghvi, titled "Bring on the Bulldozers" illustrates this perspective:

> My view has always been that if you allow slums to come up wherever there is vacant land - and this is exactly what happens in Bombay - then you can forget about ever improving the quality of life in our cities. There are laws against encroachment and they must be respected. The slum-dwellers should be offered alternative accommodation.[120]

Re-iterating this sentiment, a representative from a homeowners association calling for the removal of Behrampada said, "It [the slum] should leave because… then progress can occur."[121] However, this perception of progress without slums

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[116] Vora and Palshikar, 178.

[117] Das.

[118] Vora and Palshikar, 181.

[119] "Promise to Protect Mumbai's Pre-2000 Slums Typo: Congress," *The Indian Express*, May 3, 2005, http://web.lexis-nexis.com (accessed January 7, 2007).

[120] Vir Sanghvi, "Bring on the Bulldozers," *The Hindustan Times*, February 4, 2006, http://www.hindustantimes.com/news/181_1617283,00300001.htm (accessed January 7, 2007).

[121] Dutta, *I live in Behrampada*.

disregards the importance of slum-dwellers to the wealthy classes and Mumbai's economy.

Mumbai's Working Class

The majority of slum-dwellers fulfill crucial occupations and the needs of the rich, which supports the economy, yet they do not receive government services. Thus, they lack both formal citizenship and adequate income. Correa explains, "Rich and poor enjoy symbiotic relations. This is not always understood by the rich who often conveniently overlook the fact that they need the poor to run the city – not to mention their own households."[122] Slum-dwellers are taxi drivers, maids, cooks, cleaners, police officers, rickshaw drivers, street hawkers, industrial workers, construction workers and much more. They essentially fill the working class jobs of the city, supporting economic growth, yet their wages cannot sustain formal housing.

"The state wants their labour, but it doesn't want to give them somewhere to live," claims A. D. Golandaz, member of Bombay's Committee for the Right to Housing.[123] Golandaz' sentiment highlights the precarious living circumstances of slum-dwellers despite the importance of their labor to the city's economy. Laxmi Chinnoo, who was interviewed by Neuwirth, lives under an overpass in Mumbai "in one of those metaphysical line in the dirt homes" and works for two wealthy families.[124] In sum, she is paid 800 rupees per month ($20), which must sustain her and her daughters.[125] Laxmi's case is far worse than many slum-dwellers, who on average earn 100-250 rupees per day ($2.50 to $5.00).[126] Yet, this higher wage is still not adequate to pay for even the cheapest flat, which on average costs Rs 4,000 per month.[127] Thus, slums grow throughout Mumbai because they provide affordable housing. Rents are so high that a wide array of individuals with varying incomes live in slums.

Highlighting the contradictory relationship between slum-dwellers and the government, Allahjan, a slum-dweller whose home was demolished in 2005, said, "What can the rich people do about our fate? They give us jobs that feed us … If there is anyone who can help, it's the government. It is throwing us

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[122] Sharma and Narender, 201.
[123] Peter Foster, "Slum Dwellers Crushed in the Rubble of a Brave, New Bombay," *The Daily Telegraph*, May 13, 2005, http://web.lexis-nexis.com (accessed January 7, 2007).
[124] Neuwirth, 129.
[125] Ibid., 130.
[126] Foster, "Slum Dwellers Crushed in the Rubble".
[127] Ibid.

out."[128]   However, rather than helping, the government has a long history of inaction and violence against slum-dwellers.

Government Schizophrenia

This section addresses slum rehabilitation polices at the state and city level in Mumbai and potential explanations for policy failures. Urban planning schemes from 1970 to the present illustrate the government's schizophrenic nature and lack of will. I suggest perceptions of contamination influence policy rhetoric and implementation. I also analyze the government's bureaucracy and relationship with the wealthy classes. The policies analyzed in this section are primarily designed and implemented by the state of Maharashtra and the city's municipal government, as these bodies play the largest governmental role in slum development and eviction in Mumbai.

Since independence, slum development plans have centered on two major debates. The predominant theory asks builders to fund and design housing projects. These policies call for the destruction of slums and the construction of new and usually large-scale housing. The second theory includes "self-help" programs and title gifting to slum-dwellers. This grassroots form of development is rarely implemented because the government is indifferent to providing slum-dwellers with titles and recognition.[129] Consequentially, policies have favored the first model, yet re-housing has been rare and inadequate.

In the 1970s, the state of Maharashtra passed several acts that have set the current trend in development policies. These laws highlight how perceptions of contamination influence the creation of policies based on "health" standards. The Maharashtra Slum Areas (Improvement, Clearance and Redevelopment) Act of 1971 designed plans for slum development and called for slum-dwellers to improve their residences under the guidance of the state. In cases where the slums were unfit for development, the state required buildings to be demolished because they were considered dangerous to public health. However, only 120 slums were improved. Jha argues, "The Act, not in words but in intent and action, has marked the hundreds of thousands of people living in appalling health and sanitary conditions as posing a threat to 'the citizen,'" emphasizing that

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[128] "Poor Struggle in Shadows of India's Richest City," *The Hindustan Times*, February 1, 2006
    http://www. hindustantimes.com/news/181_1614022,000600010004.htm (accessed January 7,
    2007).
[129] Sharma and Narender, 213.

perceptions of "dirt" influence policy.[130] Thus, "the citizen" benefits and slum-dwellers are evicted. In 1973, the Maharashtra Slum Improvement Act reinforced many negative aspects of the 1971 Act. It stated:

> Existing slums are becoming a source of danger to health, safety and convenience of the slum dwellers and also to the surrounding areas and generally a source of nuisance to the public. … Moreover, the Board may use such force as may be reasonably necessary for the purpose of getting the premises vacated, if any occupier does not vacate the premises.[131]

The issue of health and "nuisance to the public" were reiterated, and the Act was strengthened by the use of force "as may be reasonably necessary." This Act emphasizes how slums are "the problem," justifying slum eviction. Furthermore, Jha found that none of the slums relocated after the Act were provided with basic amenities by the government, but thousands of slum-dwellers were evicted. He argues, "Providing basic amenities is indirectly recognizing 'illegal' slums."[132] Thus, perceptions of lawlessness and illegality, based on the status of slum-dwellers, reinforce the government's disinclination to provide services.

Following these acts, thousands of slums were demolished under two critical laws, the Maharashtra Vacant Lands (prohibition of unauthorized structures and summary eviction) Act of 1975 and the Urban Land Ceiling (& Regulation) Act (ULCRA) of 1976. The former act supported the eviction of hundreds of thousands of slum-dwellers on the grounds of public health, again emphasizing perceptions of dirtiness that influence state policy.[133] The ULCRA was a source of controversy throughout Mumbai until it was revoked in 1999. The Act was designed to provide land to the poor at a reasonable price by allowing the government to acquire private land. However, due to influences from lobbyists representing builders, the Act was filled with vague exemption clauses that could prevent landowners from giving up their land.[134] With these exemption loopholes, corrupt officials manipulated the law to provide land to the wealthy, preventing the poor from gaining any benefit.[135] Municipal Commissioner of Bombay J.B. D'Souza claimed political ability falls short of promise because:

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[130] Jha, 45.

[131] Ibid.

[132] Ibid., 51.

[133] Ibid., 65.

[134] Ibid., 185.

[135] Harini Narayan, "In Search of Shelter: The Politics of the Implementation of the Urban Land (Ceiling and Regulation) Act of 1976 in Greater Mumbai," in *Bombay and Mumbai: the city in transition* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2003), 190.

> Each fresh application of a law presents our rulers with new opportunities they
> seldom miss. For example, the ULCRA … offered endless opportunities to the
> authorities to exploit the loopholes of the law. The loopholes in the law have
> been shamelessly exploited by the so-called authorities and their political
> masters.[136]

After the Act, land and flat prices rose 300 percent, further preventing slum-
dwellers from accessing formal land markets.[137] The thirty-year reign of the Act
only resulted in construction of 4,500 flats, none of which had price controls that
were needed to support the poor.[138] Authorities could have used the ULCRA to
give slum-dwellers land, yet the deficiency of distribution highlights the
government's lack of will.

In the 1980s, the World Bank and the government of Mumbai organized the
Slum Upgradation Program (SUP). The SUP was one of the few programs
designed to promote "self-help" and provide titles to slum-dwellers. Its main
purpose was to improve slum areas through implementing small projects,
maintaining amenities and involving slum-dwellers in their development.[139]
However, this project had limited success due to inaction by government officials
and ineffective monitoring, again emphasizing the government's lack of will.[140]
Furthermore, the SUP did not apply to private lands, where 55 percent of slum-
dwellers lived. The program was further hindered by the New D.C. Rules,
which incorporated private builders to support the projects. As a result, land
designated for slum development was sold to the wealthy, and slum-dwellers
were relocated to other areas.[141]

Following India's liberalization in 1991, slum development schemes have
increased the role of private developers and builders, which now construct 90
percent of homes.[142] Housing policies now focus on privatization, and homes are
"viewed merely in real-estate terms."[143] In 1991, the Congress Party
government passed the Slum Redevelopment Scheme (SRD). The SRD focused
primarily on large re-development plans in which developers would build flats
for slum-dwellers and sell excess land to make profit. However, the scheme

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[136] Sharma and Narender, 217-8.
[137] Jha, 40.
[138] Narayan, 187.
[139] Sharma and Narender, 203.
[140] Ibid., 209
[141] Ibid., 208.
[142] Narayanan, 202.
[143] Das, 217.

lacked adequate incentives as the government only provided builders with Rs 20,000 per family and builders feared limited profit.[144] Nor did the slum-dwellers have any faith in the builders who had already evicted many slums without providing homes. Das argues this plan created "a devious network" between developers, landowners and financial institutions "in which the slum-dwellers find no place."[145] Not only did this plan fail to create new homes, but also the government disregarded basic improvements in slums.[146]

The Shiv Sena-BJP Government designed the Slum Rehabilitation Scheme (SRS) in 1995. The SRS was nearly identical to the SRD and included aspects of the 1971 Maharashtra Slum Areas (Improvement, Clearance and Redevelopment) Act. However, the government did not provide any compensation to developers, who, like the SRD, were encouraged to build homes for the poor on slum land and sell the excess for profit. Following the SRS, violations of housing rights and human rights abuses increased. Slum-dwellers were also in a greater position of ambiguity under threats of displacement.[147] The Shiv Sena-BJP Government included a 1995 legalization date for slum-dwellers, which also proved ineffective. In many cases, pre-1995 slums have been demolished. Furthermore, slum-dwellers often had to bribe officials for identity cards. Following these acts, there has been little substantial change in development policy.

In 2004-2005, following Prime Minister Singh's call to make Mumbai "the Shanghai of India," the municipality of Mumbai, under the Congress Party, evicted thousands of slum-dwellers without proper rehabilitation. [148] Under the banner of "progress," and with the support of the majority of builders, industrialists and wealthy classes, 90,000 homes were destroyed and 400,000 slum-dwellers were left homeless.[149] BJP chief Nitin Gadkar welcomed the move, commenting, "It is a question of the city's survival."[150] Opposing Gadkar and Mumbai officials, Shakil Ahmed, a member of the group called Fearless Movement, said, "This was a man-made tsunami… If this was a natural disaster the UN would be here setting up refugee camps."[151] The failure of the last thirty

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[144] Ibid., 214

[145] Ibid., 217

[146] Ibid., 219.

[147] Das, 210.

[148] Foster, "Slum Dwellers Crushed in the Rubble".

[149] Ibid.

[150] Parikshit Joshi and Sandeep Nnithan, "Slum Banged," *India Today*, March 7, 2005, http://web.lexis-nexis.com (January 7, 2007).

[151] Foster "Slum Dwellers Crushed in the Rubble".

years of policy necessitates an analysis of the multifaceted state system within India.

Complex Networks: Bureaucracy, Corruption and Political Influence

The Indian government is known for its complicated bureaucratic nature, rampant corruption, and ties with the wealthy classes, which holds true in the areas of slum development and upgradation policies. Commenting on this corruption, Ishvar in *A fine balance* claims, "'But before there can be homes or shops for people like us, politicians will have to become honest.' He held up his index finger, crooked it, then extended it. 'The bent stick may straighten, but not the government.'"[152] This metaphor reflects the state's inefficacy and disregard for its poorest citizens.

An intricate network of authorities, politicians, bureaucrats and lawmakers within the government of Mumbai influence policies. Fuller and Harriss argue that the Indian state is a decentralized system in which various organs work in competition with each other. [153] Describing this complicated structure, Painter states, "The act of passing legislation in the first place also depends on the … small decisions of parliamentary drafters, elected politicians, civil servants and all those who influence them. … Thus, the outcome of state actions is always uncertain and fallible."[154] Indeed, the state, in all its forms, rarely has the will or ability to provide dramatic improvements in the lives of slum-dwellers. Due to this corruption and inefficacy, the majority of comprehensive development plans continue to remain where they began, on paper.[155] Oftentimes, within this decentralized system of laws, regulations and government bodies, policies have the opposite effect, benefiting the wealthy.

The majority of officials in Mumbai have a strong relationship with the wealthy classes, often through bribes. Nandini Gooptu argues, "The town planning schemes evolved as avenues to further the interests and aspirations of the propertied and the instrument of the growing marginalization of the poor."[156] This "unholy alliance" or "nexus" has turned politicians into "brokers" for the

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[152] Mistry, 455.

[153] C. J. Fuller and J. C. Harriss, "Introduction: The Anthropology of the Modern Indian State," in *The everyday state and society in modern India,* eds. C. J. Fuller and V. Bénéï (London: Social Science Press/Hurst & Co, 2001), 23.

[154] Painter, 761.

[155] Sharma and Narender, 202.

[156] Neuwirth, 69.

rich.[157] Policy after policy implemented under the banner of slum improvement benefits the wealthy classes. Unlike the wealthy, who can negotiate the terms of governance and manipulate policies to their own benefit, the stability of the poorest slum-dwellers' homes depends on powerful slumlords, developers and government officials.

Although slum-dwellers are detached from their government, wealthy slumlords broker slum land and sell plots through bribes to government officials. These slumlords do not provide stable strategies of survival to slum-dwellers or work in direct competition with the government. They actually have close relations with government officials and developers, argues Hansen, "Mumbai's official face and the life of its affluent elite are intimately interwoven with … massive corruption, organized crime, and communal politics." [158] This situation is unstable and precarious, however, because slumlords negotiate demolition drives as easily as they reserve land for the poor. Slum-dwellers therefore only receive indirect recognition through these brokers, illustrating another way their liminal status is constructed. Slumlords also illustrate how higher income slum-dwellers can manipulate the informal market for their own benefit; as Hansen argues, they are "ubiquitous, informal, and impossible to fix within the boundaries of formal law."[159] However, this informal process of acquiring land is necessitated by failed development policies, which government officials repeatedly justify.

Development Delusions

The state of Mumbai often claims slum development is impossible. However, I believe the majority of these claims are unfounded and illustrate the unwillingness of the state and city governments to implement policies for their poorest citizens. Probably the most common justification for political failure is based on land being unavailable and unaffordable. Government officials also claim slum-dwellers prefer their conditions because they refuse to move into new homes.

As an island city, land is a scarce resource in Mumbai. Rents are inflated and much of the city is cramped. As a result, the government often claims that land is unavailable for slum-dwellers. However, a study by the People's Union for

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[157] Sharma and Narender, 218.

[158] Thomas Blom Hansen, "Governance and State Mythologies in Mumbai," in *States of imagination: ethnographic explorations of the postcolonial state,* eds. Thomas Blom Hansen and Finn Stepputat (London: Duke University Press, 2001B), 221.

[159] Hansen, *Wages of violence*, 188.

Civil Liberties in 1985 found that there are 3,000 to 10,000 hectares of available land in the city, and slum-dwellers would only need 1,350 hectares, including open spaces and roads.[160] Although this report is outdated, using a projection of 6.5 million people, slum-dwellers would only need 3,500 hectares of land. Furthermore, the government has legal right to acquire land and provide slum-dwellers with homes under the Maharashtra Slum Areas (Improvement, Clearance, and Redevelopment) Act of 1977. Since the 1980s, the government has acquired 7,800 hectares within the city and 20,000 hectares in "Navi Mumbai," (New Mumbai) yet only an insignificant percentage has benefited slum-dwellers.[161] Although the land is available, the redistribution never occurs.

Justifying the lack of redistribution, the government argues it cannot afford to build homes and give away land to the poor. This claim contradicts the reality of infrastructure projects within the city. Money is always available to fund large investment projects in wealthy areas.[162] Furthermore, slum development plans are often excessively expensive because they involve ambitious plans that displace the poor rather than support social infrastructure through grassroots methods.[163]

The government also claims that slum-dwellers prefer to live in slums because they sometimes refuse to relocate. However, they often refuse to relocate for several legitimate reasons, reflecting the inadequacy of government programs and the need for slum-dwellers to participate in development policy. For example, both Neuwirth and Sharma found that slum-dwellers would sell their right to a flat to pay for their daughter's wedding, their debt or a family member's medical care. New locations for redevelopment are often far away from workplaces and lack adequate facilities compared to original residences. New housing plans also disregard the culture and community created in slums, which I discuss in the following section.

The construction of slum-dwellers' liminal citizenship has far reaching consequences. Douglas' analysis of pollution and "dirt" sheds light on how slum-dwellers are feared, criminalized and placed outside the social order. Thus, slum-dwellers have become the "development problem" in Mumbai, influencing how the wealthy and the government react to slums. Despite the importance of slum-dwellers' labor to the success of Mumbai's economy, the government does not provide services in slums. The state of Maharashtra and the municipality in

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[160] Sharma and Narender, 214.
[161] Narayan, 201; Sharma and Narender, 215.
[162] Sharma, 11.
[163] Sharma and Narender, 219.

Mumbai fail to implement effective long-term slum upgradation policies. The failure of these policies illustrates that the state is bureaucratic, wealthy-biased and unwilling to implement sound development in slums. Further, the excuses for policy failure, such as inadequate land and cost, cannot be justified. Thus, slum-dwellers survive outside the state. As Davis states, "Often squatting becomes a prolonged test of will and endurance against the repressive apparatus of the state."[164] The needs, identities, desires and strategies of survival of slum-dwellers are the subjects of the following section.

III. Innovating Space: Creating a Shadow Hegemony

> They have found ways to get water, even if water is not supplied, to build houses even when there is not security of tenure and no financial help.
> … It is the story of men and women who have survived despite our indifference, despite the hostility of the state, people who are also citizens of Mumbai.
>
> Kalpana Sharma, *Rediscovering Dharavi*

Within the constructed liminal space in slums, slum-dwellers reconfigure their identities and incorporate strategies of survival. The government has little control over their lives within this space because it has defined them as non-citizens and plays no role in their daily lives. This freedom from government oversight allows slum-dwellers to work almost entirely outside the formal system. I argue that slum-dwellers have a shadow hegemony within this space, which allows them to innovate by reconfiguring their marginal environment. I find that the process of innovation is piecemeal, or "fractured," meaning slum-dwellers cling to outside identities and maximize all possible resources. By acknowledging the fractured system, one can see how slum-dwellers innovate and manipulate within a social system that attempts to marginalize them and deny them even the right to a home. Their strategies, however, are not always adequate or without consequences, maintaining the dialectical relationship between the state and slum-dwellers.

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[164] Davis, 38.

Cultural Productions: Slum-dwellers' Identities

Slum-dwellers construct their identities by creating new cultural productions within their shadow hegemony. They produce their identities with "fractured" dreams, hopes and a rural attachment within the urban environment. However, these identities vary dramatically, as slums comprise individuals from different religious, class, ethnic and caste backgrounds. Noting this diversity, Neuwirth states, "There are many different types of squatters, with different needs, different incomes, different aspirations, different social standings, different stories."[165] The youth cling to Mumbai's central popular culture symbol, Bollywood, to find their dreams. In revolt, young Hindu men participate in violent political parties that appeal to their desires to act against the state. However, these varied identities make a cohesive political identity within slums difficult. Within these reconfigurations, one sees the shadow hegemony in their ability to remake the system to continue their lives.

One major survival strategy and identity tactic of slum-dwellers is to see themselves in a transition to a better life. Thus, they reframe their non-citizen, liminal status as a transitional period. Mehta describes this transience, "The modern metropolis is a collection of transients, on their way from somewhere to somewhere else."[166] The tailors in *A fine balance* also speak to this transient lifestyle:

> "But we don't want to stay too long."
>
> "Nobody does," said Rajaram. "Who wants to live like this?" His hand moved in a tired semicircle, taking in the squalid hutments, the ragged field, the huge slum across the road wearing its malodorous crown of cooking smoke and industrial effluvium. "But sometimes people have no choice. Sometimes the city grabs you, sinks its claws into you, and refuses to let go."[167]

Ishvar and Om saw their hut as a temporary roof, not a home. Most slum-dwellers dream of a better life. For example, Sharma found slum-dwellers in Ambedkar Nagar slum believe the temporary inconvenience of living in a slum will pass, they hope, when they receive a photopass from a government official.[168] This desire highlights how slum-dwellers see themselves as transients; they see their status as a temporary shelter preceding success. As James notes, "People too poor to have lodgings in the slum… dream of getting into it the way

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[165] Neuwirth, 14.
[166] Mehta, 510.
[167] Mistry, 172.
[168] Sharma, 23.

the people who live there dream of getting out."[169] Although James portrays a dramatized perception of slum-dwellers' dreams, as many have found identity in slum communities, the inhospitable conditions of the worst-off slums leave few content. Another tactic for reframing their status is forming communities within slums.

In many slums, one finds an adaptation to the cramped and inhospitable environment through cultural production. Slums often have tight-knit communities or they reproduce their rural villages, reconfiguring the liminal condition imposed upon them and exerting their shadow hegemony. Mehta interviewed a woman in Jogeshwari slum who refused to move into an apartment building, despite the inhospitable conditions in her slum. She claimed, "There's too much aloneness. A person can die behind closed doors of a flat and no one will know. Here, she observed with satisfaction, 'there are a lot of people.'"[170] Mehta, acknowledging this desire, argues, "The people have formed a community, and they are … attached to its spatial geography, the social networks they have built for themselves, the village they have re-created in the midst of the city."[171] These villages in the "midst of the city," are common throughout slums in Mumbai. Sharma observes that the Tamil section of Dharavi "is a skillful recreation of a village in Tamil Nadu."[172] In bringing their rural environment forward, some slum-dwellers reject the isolating urban environment and construct their shadow hegemony. Many of the youth in slums use a different tactic to compose their identity.

The love for Bollywood films, particularly among street and slum children, exemplifies how an identity can be created through dreams. By connecting with Bollywood, these children are, albeit unintentionally, creating cultural productions that reconfigure the liminal constructions imposed upon them. In this process, they create their shadow hegemony by bringing their dreams to the forefront. Mehta describes Bollywood films as "distilleries of pleasure," where many youth dream of working. For example, one aspiring actor tells Mehta of Mithun Chakraborty, a star that slept on footpaths who "came up in life."[173] Young men and boys identify with these films because the scenes of powerful, masculine men who always marry the beautiful women despite all odds appeals to their dreams for a better life. The street boys in the documentary *Tapoori* try

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[169] James, 65.
[170] Mehta, 55.
[171] Ibid., 55.
[172] Sharma, xxvi.
[173] Mehta, 390.

to make enough money each day to watch Bollywood films in a dark, shabby room at Victoria train station. A pastor, describing their passion for Bollywood said, "They know all the songs and a lot of them dream about being someone. … These children have infinite dreams."[174] These dreams could be seen as a piecing together of a new, positive identity. Like the street boys in *Tapoori*, the boys in the novels are also attracted to Bollywood.

All of the novels I analyzed mention pleasure the younger generation draws from Bollywood films. Chinnamani would fall asleep most nights thinking of the brave princes and beautiful women he saw at weekly film showings, which always gave him hope when frustrated with slum life. As a small boy, Sanjay visited "The Silver Castle," a building where many Bollywood movies are filmed. This experience drove Sanjay to survive in destitute circumstances on the street in hopes of one day becoming a Bollywood actor. James states, "None of us…would ever get to where we are going unless a picture of it, however inaccurate, was already in our minds."[175] The attachment to Bollywood is not the films themselves, but the entrance into another world far greater than what these children have ever experienced. For those two to three hours, they not only escape, but also gather pieces of their identities and dreams, however inaccurate.

Young men also revolt against the state by participating in violent political parties such as the Shiv Sena. Hansen, who studied the sources of violence in Mumbai, argues that Shiv Sena is appealing to slum-dwellers because of the masculine and empowering rhetoric of its leader, Bal Thackeray. Thackeray appeals to their "need for a group identity amid turbulent city life."[176] Shiv Sena is organized through Dadaism, which "invokes images of a masculine, assertive, often violent local strongman, whose clout lies in self-made networks of loyalty rather than in institutionalized action and discourse."[177] For many young men from slums, who have faced persecution from the wealthy and the government their entire lives, the Sena provides masculine power through rejection of institutionalized organization, reflecting one way slum-dwellers exert power. Shiv Sena gives slum-dwellers an outlet with which they can compose their identities and strive for the power that has been taken from them in liminal citizenship.

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[174] Handel, *Tapoori*.

[175] James, 27.

[176] Hansen, *Wages of violence*, 52.

[177] Ibid., 72.

Shiv Sena played a substantial role in the Bombay riots, calling for Hindu men not to be "impotent" and fight for their manhood. The Mumbai riots can be seen as a violent reaction to the government's marginalization and disregard of slums. Hansen argues that for slum-dwellers and other participants in the riots, rioting was "overruling and defying the state, of celebrating an ethnic majoritarian justice."[178] This defiance and anger, he states, is due to the "social resentment and frustrated hopes for social mobility among still broader sections of Bombay's poor and marginalized population."[179] The need for a masculine identity among Hindu men during the national riots is a central theme in *Father, son and holy war*, a documentary on violence in India. Anand Patwardhan began his documentary searching for why violence was perpetuated throughout India and realized the answer lies in the construction of male identity.[180] Rustom Bharucha, in analysis of Patwardhan's documentary, explains that *Father, son and holy war* touches on "hegemonic masculinity," manifested in "consolidations of power that produce a construction of 'what it means to be a man' in very specific ways, which are then propagandized at mass levels through popular consent."[181] The "hegemonic masculinity" took hold for many slum-dwellers because it supported their construction of a shadow hegemony that revolted against the state.

However, this fight for manhood destroyed many lives, both Hindu and Muslim. Shiv Sena, although it appealed to young men in slums, is still a political party connected with the state system. Vora and Palshikar argue Shiv Sena's promises of power and success became "instruments of extortion."[182] Most of the extreme destruction occurred in poorer neighborhoods where, in many cases, primarily Muslim slums were burned or ransacked as the police stood by. This violence encouraged counter-violence, until Bombay neared all-out war. Because these young Hindu and Muslim men clung to their religious identities and violence to counter the construction of their liminal citizenship, they hurt other slum-dwellers. With destroyed homes and livelihoods on both sides, the fragments of hope were shattered for many. The violence in slums during the riots illustrates how slum-dwellers connect to identities outside the slum that could have opposing reactions.

Thus, political identities are rarely constructed within slums. Vora and Palshikar found that Dharavi is a "political vacuum" where few slum-dwellers participate in

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[178] Hansen, "Governance and State Mythologies in Mumbai", 225.

[179] Hansen, *Wages of violence*, 72.

[180] Patwardhan, *Father, son and holy war*.

[181] Rustom Barucha, *In the name of the secular: contemporary cultural activism in India* (Dehli: Oxford University Press, 1998), 143.

[182] Vora and Palshikar, 108.

political activities or parties. Although many organizations are working within slums to support political movements, the diversity within slums makes a coherent movement difficult. However, a lack of a cohesive political identity is sometimes replaced by a communal identity, such as participation in groups like Shiv Sena. Despite these divisions, slum-dwellers also support each other across social barriers. In *Father, son and holy war*, a Muslim helped a Hindu family rebuild their home after it was burned during the riots. These contrary identities – clashing religious violence, a lack of political identity and communal support – highlight the varying ways slum-dwellers construct their identities in reaction to the state. A closer analysis of specific strategies of survival illustrates another way slum-dwellers construct their shadow hegemony.

IV. Informal Mechanisms: Strategies of Survival in Slums

Slum-dwellers incorporate their strategies of survival within an informal world. In doing so, they exert a shadow hegemony through informal institutions that counters the liminal citizenship imposed upon them. Acknowledging the extent of the informal market, Mehta states, "the underworld is the overworld; it is somehow suspended *above* this world and can come down and strike any time it chooses."[183] Furthermore, the fractured system is especially apparent when observing slum-dwellers' strategies of survival; they maximize everything to try to meet their needs. In this process, however, slum-dwellers often maintain perceptions of contamination. Finally, without access to certain government resources, such as water, toilets and education, slum-dwellers face challenges that cannot be compensated through the informal sector.

The conglomeration of goods bought and sold in the informal sector resembles a fractured system and illustrates how slum-dwellers work outside the state. James, describing the informal economy of Mumbai in *The silver castle*, believes that the city continues to function with a daily influx of migrants because nothing is wasted. He states, "Nothing imperishable escapes collection, right down to the scrap of polythene, the nail and the pin. There are shops that specialize in dead batteries. Every form of rag is collected, every form of paper."[184] And in each step of collection and sale there is an exchange, so that anyone can find an income, even if it requires ragpicking (picking through and selling garbage). This description is nearly identical to Sharma's accounts of Dharavi:

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[183] Mehta, 134.
[184] James, 25.

The streets are lined with hawkers selling everything, from safety pins to fruits, and even suitcases. Behind them are a mad array of shops. Satkar jewelers, ration shop, Bhupendra Steel, Husain Hotel, Swastik Electric and Hardware, Shreenath Jewelers and Mumbai Polyclinic – that is a typical collection on 90 Feet Road.[185]

The impeccable range of goods for sale, from steel to any imaginable service to bits of garbage, illustrates not only the ingenuity of Mumbai's poor in finding jobs and basic necessities, but also the fractured system in which everything available is maximized.

The efficiency and "rules" of the informal sector also demonstrate how slum-dwellers create their own mechanisms for survival. The street hawkers market is self-regulating and excruciatingly organized. Animal acts, shoe shiners, beggars, trinket sellers and water boys mark their territory and do not take kindly to competition in their respective neighborhoods. Harumar, a shoeshine boy in Mumbai, explains the rules. "We are about 25 shoeshine boys on the Veer Nariman Road and we keep good relations with each other. We are permanently placed here and allow no other 'boot polishwala' in this area, nor are we permitted anywhere else," he said.[186] The informal system maintains itself and supports participants by designing and enforcing these "rules" outside the state. Although the economy provides income and jobs, the extent of individual success varies dramatically.

Workers in the informal economy can improve their lives or just barely survive. Many individuals with a little luck and an ability to manipulate the informal market can go literally from "rags to riches." Sharma argues, "It is a story of ingenuity and enterprise… it is a story that illustrates how limited is the term 'slum' to describe a place that produces everything from suitcases to… gold jewelry."[187] These individuals have utilized informal mechanisms, exerting the shadow hegemony, to improve their lives. However, there are others with far worse luck and circumstances for whom the informal market only provides survival. "It is usually the weakest and smallest shoulders that have to bear the heaviest burdens of informalization," Davis notes.[188] For example, Anwar, a street boy and ragpicker in Mumbai, said, "Sometimes I feel it would be better to die than live this life…It's the kind of life where the best you can hope for is just

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[185] Sharma, 271.
[186] Jha, 133.
[187] Sharma, 78.
[188] Davis, 181.

to survive." In a parallel statement, James notes after Sanjay's tumultuous end, "They don't starve any more, but they hardly live. Think of your own life minus all the things worth living for: wouldn't that be a kind of death?"[189] Within this extensive, organized and sometimes difficult market system, slum-dwellers find the means to build their homes.

The "Invisible Housing Market"

Slum-dwellers' homes symbolize their strength, determination and ingenuity, as well as their precarious situation. They build homes on leftover land, in cramped conditions, and literally piece by piece, which highlights the utilization of a fractured system. Neuwirth, emphasizing slum-dwellers' assertion of a shadow hegemony, argues, "So they have seized land and built for themselves. With makeshift materials, they are building a future in a society that has always viewed them as people without a future. In this very concrete way, they are asserting their own being."[190] However, they steal land to build their homes, reinforcing negative perceptions that construct liminal citizenship. As such, the dialectical relationship between slum-dwellers and the government continues.

Slum-dwellers build their homes on sporadic pieces of land including marshes, garbage dumps and areas near railway tracks, and build on both low and steep pieces of land.[191] As James describes, "For a long stretch, on the left side of the road as you drive up, a low-level shanty town scaled down for crouching people is … a sort of ribbon development for the unfortunate. Nothing has been omitted from the picture of deprivation."[192] James' description of slum settlements, although undoubtedly overly dramatic, is indicative of many of the worst-off slums. Like this slum next to the road in *The silver castle*, Gita Jiwa and Sureka Gundi built small tents on strips of land between roads and traffic triangles.[193] These arbitrary bits of land point to the piecemeal process of maximization that allows slum-dwellers to acquire land and build homes. Mistry, supporting their use of excess land, states, "Empty land sitting useless – if homeless people can live there, what's wrong?"[194]

Slum-dwellers compensate for limited land access by maximizing every inch within slums. Mahalingam, reporting for *Business Today*, describes Dharavi as a

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[189] James, 25.
[190] Neuwirth, 21.
[191] Swaminathan, 92.
[192] Ibid., 91.
[193] Neuwirth, 112
[194] Mistry, 163.

"black hole of a settlement" because "houses are so closely packed to each other that no man can stretch an arm and walk down a lane" and sunlight cannot hit the ground even at high noon.[195] In these cramped "beehives," "Eight, nine, or ten people [live] in a small room. Sleeping one over the other on big shelves, from floor to ceiling, like third-class railway berths," claims Mistry in *A fine balance*.[196] Despite the theatrical retelling of cramped life in slums, on average, 6 to 8 people live in a 10 square foot hut.[197] Within this cramped and piecemeal space, slum-dwellers construct their homes.

The way slum-dwellers maximize everything at their disposal to build pavement shanties and huts reflects their ability to work within the informal sector and exert their shadow hegemony. Initially, these homes are made of hazardous materials and barely protect inhabitants from outside conditions.[198] James describes, albeit dramatically, how pavement shanties begin:

> Bombay pavement shanties join together in long lines because they are all made of the same scarce materials: rags, bags, the ever-precious kindling and the very occasional, jealously guarded piece of tin or sheet plastic. … They are composed of not much more than an old grain bag lined with random collection of rags and paper stuck on any old how, usually just by accumulated dirt.[199]

In these tight conditions, people create small hutches to hold their possessions so that every item has a place, set above the dirty street.[200] The tailors in *A fine balance* lived in a hut in a slum with a mud floor "partially covered with planks. …The walls were a patchwork, part plywood and part sheet metal. The roof was old corrugated iron, waterproofed in corroded areas with transparent plastic."[201] When the monsoons hit, their home began to leak and they had to huddle in a dry corner at night.[202] However, notwithstanding their liminal citizenship, slum-dwellers manage to improve their homes.

Slum-dwellers improve their homes by purchasing bits of plastic, metal, bricks and wood in what Davis calls the "invisible housing market."[203] After saving up,

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[195] T. V. Mahalingam, "Life in the Other India," *Business Today*, January 14, 2007, http://web.lexis-nexis.com (accessed January 24, 2007).
[196] Mistry, 461.
[197] Mahalingam, "Life in the Other India".
[198] Swaminathan, 92.
[199] James, 3.
[200] Neuwirth, 111.
[201] Mistry, 161.
[202] Sharma, 182.
[203] Davis, 40.

Ishvar and Om were able to purchase a tarp to stop leaks, a kerosene stove and small items to make their small hut more habitable. Sanjay, in *The Silver Castle*, would furnish his room in his "exiguous spare time. … He accumulated a pallet to lie on, a palliasse to cover it, a basin to wash in and some boxes for his belongings. He even found some broken bits of a mirror … to give him an image of himself: fractionated, but then so was he."[204] This broken mirror symbolizes the fractured system that slum-dwellers utilize to build their homes, maximizing everything.

Unlike the novels, where both the lives of the tailors and Sanjay ended adversely, slum-dwellers in Mumbai improve their homes over many years. Shaik Banu Bitton said, "Each time I had the money I did one thing and then another… I did each wall when I had enough money. One time brick, one time concrete, one time roof."[205] In Dharavi, David's home was initially made of chatai, but "slowly we managed to improve it by putting half-brick walls and tin sheets."[206] Neuwirth contends that slum-dwellers, "by building their own homes, are creating their own world," in which their shadow hegemony dominates.[207] Their ability to build even two-story, cement homes illustrates how some slum-dwellers can survive and succeed exploiting the informal sector. However, these acts are not without consequences, as the land utilized to build their homes is not legally their own.

Although these improvements are impressive in daunting circumstances, no matter the condition of their homes, slum-dwellers are still threatened by displacement. In taking land, perceptions of illegality and "dirt" are reinforced. As addressed in the previous section, these perceptions encourage the perspective that slum-dwellers are the "development problem" and that destroying slums is the only way to achieve progress. However, slum-dwellers do not "go back home" like they are told when their homes are destroyed. Sometimes, within hours, they rebuild in the same location or on the street. This continuum of destruction and reconstruction illustrates the dialectical relationship between slum-dwellers and the government.

Mohammed Allahjan, one of the slum-dwellers who lost his home in the 2004-2005 demolition drive, moved to the pavements. Six weeks later, his daughter died of jaundice. Frustrated by the loss of his home and daughter, he said, "We

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[204] James, 82.
[205] Neuwirth, 114-5.
[206] Sharma, 29.
[207] Neuwirth, 306.

lost our homes because the city is being spruced up. So, Mumbai will be for the rich only, is it?"[208] Allahjan, although he was worse-off and angrier after the demolition, continued to work in the city. Neera Adarkar, an activist opposed to the drive, highlights this fact, "Because you don't want the poor or the ugly, you can't wish them away."[209] Rather, the space where slum-dwellers live is always reconfigured after destruction through rebuilding their homes and reconfiguring their identities.

The characters in the novels also experienced demolition schemes. Ishvar and Om's hut was bulldozed. Their neighbor, angered by the demolition, shouted in despair, "Heartless animals! For the poor there is not justice, ever! We had next to nothing, now it's less than nothing! What is our crime, where are we to go?"[210] In a nearly parallel statement, Mukadam, a slum-dweller interviewed by Jha, said, "Where do the poor get justice? (Only the one who has money is heard)."[211] However, the state's plan was unsuccessful because Rajaram continued to work in the city and Om and Ishvar continued to work as tailors. Nevertheless, building homes without a formal title is often much less difficult than recreating other government services.

Limits to Success: Water, Toilets and Education

Although I argue that slum-dwellers impose a shadow hegemony within slums, the poor cannot easily recreate certain services. The limits to the informal sector are apparent in three simple government services not provided to slum-dwellers: water, toilets and education. Their isolation from these resources supports the construction of the liminal citizenship and illustrates the dialectical relationship between the state and slum-dwellers.

Water, a culturally important symbol in Indian society, is one of the greatest challenges for slum-dwellers. David Mosse discusses the power of water in rural India and the way it shapes identity. He argues that flows of water distribution "are a part of the construction of social identities and political domains."[212] He calls urban slum-dwellers "ecological refuges" forced to emigrate because they lack resources to work in the hinterland, which in turn continues their struggle

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[208] *The Hindustan Times*, "Poor Struggle in Shadows of India's Richest City".
[209] Ibid.
[210] Rao, 20.
[211] Jha, 130.
[212] David Mosse, *The rule of water: statecraft, ecology and collective action in south India*, Oxford India paperbacks (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003), 4.

for basic resources.[213] Emphasizing the symbolism of water in shaping identity and transience, Mosse states, "Give due importance to water in the making of social and political life; to its part in shaping social memory, identity, and politics of the present or promises of the future. Water produces both the transience of the moment, and the enduring connections of landscape and history."[214] For slum-dwellers, inadequate distributions of water are an inherent aspect of their constructed liminal citizenship. Within this political and cultural context, slum-dwellers must access water to survive.

Government water provisions are completely lacking. Mehta explains that only 70 percent of water demands are fulfilled in Mumbai, and the excess demand is primarily in slums. However, the government of Mumbai claims that 99 percent of citizens receive adequate water, indicating the assumption by municipal authorities that slum-dwellers do not have a right to water.[215] Furthermore, water is distributed based on location and size of a building, meaning a wealthy two-person family receives more municipal water than a 10-member family in a slum.[216]

Indeed, water taps are rarely sufficient; they often have low water pressure and sometimes run dry in the summer.[217] In one section of Dharavi, water connections were provided 25 years ago, yet the population in the settlement increases daily.[218] Mosse argues this unequal distribution system perpetuates the uncertainty of water, thus limiting slum-dwellers' ability to create an adequate informal distribution system.[219] If there is water, it is not necessarily safe or clean. One study found that 14 percent of the water in Santosh Nagar slum, considered "well-provided for," had contaminated water.[220] Jha interviewed slum-dwellers who the government had relocated. He asked Ahmed Kassim Mukadam, "Is the water supplied clean and considerably germ free?" Mukadam replied, "You can see the worms with the naked eye. We have to strain the water through a cloth before using it."[221] This insufficiency forces many to find alternate sources of water.

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[213] Ibid., 9.

[214] Ibid., 298.

[215] Amitabh Kundu and Muchkund Dubey, *India, social development report* (New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 2006), 59.

[216] M.K. Gokhale, "Bombay's Water Supply System – Future Challenges," in *Urban explosion of Mumbai: restructuring of growth,* ed. M. D. David (Mumbai: Himalaya Publishing House, 1996), 69.

[217] Jha, 130.

[218] Neuwirth, 122

[219] Mosse, 7.

[220] Swaminathan, 96.

[221] Jha, 130.

Without water access, slum-dwellers have two options: steal it or buy it informally. In many cases, slum-dwellers steal water from large water pipelines running through the city. Theft is a tactic through which slum-dwellers assert their rights to basic services. Discussing why slum-dwellers steal, Swamy, a development worker in *Chinnamani's world*, said, "Greed, the slum dwellers were not above greed, he said. And why should they be? 'Why should we expect them to be simple, unselfish and honest?' he had asked. 'Why not first demand it of the wealthy people? *Why should you expect a beggar not to steal?* After all it is to oppress the poor people, isn't it? [*sic*]'"[222] When given very little to sustain one's life, theft is a real and sometimes necessary option. However, stealing water further supports perceptions of contamination.

Individuals without opportunities to steal water, particularly those living on the pavements, must buy their water from informal sources. The informal water market is not as reliable or safe as the housing market. James describes the difficulty of finding water in *The silver castle*, "The water wouldn't have been sufficient even if it had been clean, which it never was, just as it was never cool. On the Bombay pavement, clean, cool water takes time and effort to come by."[223] James also describes a bottled water market that parallels the bottles of water sold by the young boys in *Tapoori*. Using an old bottle-capping machine, bottled water was filled with ordinary tap water and sold by Sanjay and other boys to tourists. Similarly, the boys in *Tapoori* did not always clean their water bottles sufficiently before selling them to people passing through the train station.[224] Not only is the water dirty and unsanitary, it is also excruciatingly expensive. Slum-dwellers pay more for water than the upper classes. Thus, informal water markets cannot compensate slum-dwellers' isolation from government services.

In an urban environment, access to toilets is similar to the social power of water discussed by Mosse. Slum-dwellers are defined by their lack of access to sanitary facilities, which is an embarrassing challenge that emphasizes the limit of their shadow hegemony. Without access to toilets, slum-dwellers must defecate in public places, which reinforce their unclean environments and perceptions as "dirt." Appadurai titled this challenge "the politics of shit."[225] Davis highlights the division between the rich and poor, "Constant intimacy with other people's waste, moreover, is one of the most profound of social divides. Like the

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[222] Rao, 249. Emphasis mine.
[223] James, 2.
[224] Handel, *Tapoori*.
[225] Appadurai, 78.

universal prevalence of parasites in the bodies of the poor, living in shit … truly
demarcates two existential humanities."[226] In this case, the "dirt" in slums is
directly due to their inability to access government resources. Emphasizing how
slum-dwellers are isolated by their lack of toilets, Appadurai argues, the
"distance from your own shit is the virtual marker of class distinction."[227] In the
same way flows of water construct identities and politics, lack of access to toilets
separates slum-dwellers from the social order. Although many slums have built
effective toilet systems, services are still lacking for the majority. The limit of
their shadow hegemony is also apparent in access to education.

Education provides a means to improve one's conditions, yet slum-dwellers
often face restricted access. Without formal education, slum-dwellers continue
to find only informal jobs. The slum-dwellers from Behrampada experienced
this due to the location of their homes, "Prison and haven are now one. …
Schools refuse admission to our children because they're from Behrampada."[228]
The young children in Behrampada who could not attend public schools, unlike
their neighbors in high-rise apartments, begin life without an education that
could enable them to leave the slums. Chinnamani, who had the highest grades
in his class and wanted to use his education to find a good job and buy a home for
his family, was unable to attend school at the slum where he was relocated.
Facing the same situation as Chinnamani, Bhaskar, a boy interviewed by Jha, "has
now to give up the New Activity School because there is no way he can bus it
from the god-forsaken area in Malad, where they have been dumped."[229] Sanjay
became aware of his limited education during parties held by the upper classes.
Although Sanjay had attended these parties, he could not comprehend the
conversions, which were often in English. "He had learned that there were limits
to what you could learn by yourself. There were too many words that could not
be found in the dictionary. They were the common property of those who had
grown up with them, and if you had grown up alone, too bad."[230] Without
education, slum children often do not have an opportunity to leave their slums or
dramatically change their circumstances. Although there are some opportunities
for education within slums, these schools cannot support all of the children who
wish to receive an education.

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[226] Davis, 138.

[227] Appadurai, 80.

[228] Dutta, *I Live in Behrampada*.

[229] Jha, 131.

[230] James, 223.

Slum-dwellers' inability to compensate for these services through the informal market illustrates how their liminal citizenship prevents them from accessing resources that could improve their circumstances. Despite these limits, however, their ingenuity within slums should be recognized. They construct a shadow hegemony utilizing a fractured system in which they cling to outside identities and maximize every possible resource. They recreate their liminal space by reconfiguring new identities through attachment to the rural village, dreams and participation in violent political parties. They utilize informal mechanisms to find survival strategies, allowing them to work and build their homes. Yet, in this process, they often steal land and resources that reinforce the construction of the liminal citizen. Thus, we find a dialectical relationship between the state and slum-dwellers. The limits to their informal mechanisms and ability to create new opportunities oblige a new perspective of slum life. The potential for reframing their liminal citizenship and the lessons from the shadow hegemony are addressed in the final section.

V. Conclusion: Reframing Liminal Construction—Work by the Alliance

In reframing an understanding of slum life, I argue there is a dialectical relationship between the government of Mumbai and the city's slum-dwellers. The government and affluent elite construct slum-dwellers as liminal citizens and slum-dwellers react to this status by creating a shadow hegemony. A continuum is created in which negative perceptions are reinforced through slum-dwellers' strategies of survival. If slum-dwellers are perceived as contaminating and ignored by their government, how could their status be reframed? Moreover, how do their strategies of survival shed light on possible directions for development?

Douglas argues that, if looking at liminal beings positively, we can "try to create a new pattern of reality in which it [ambiguity] has a place."[231] So, how can we create this "new pattern of reality"? A complete answer to this question is neither realistic nor possible here. However, certain steps toward reframing the status of slum-dwellers should be addressed, and in doing so, I hope to shed light on how slum-dwellers can find a place in the social order. In changing the liminal status of slum-dwellers, it may be possible to generate policies that parallel and support their shadow hegemony.

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[231] Douglas, 39.

This article has attempted to delineate several characteristics of slum-dwellers' lives and to reveal and analyze the underlying implications of their status. Eschewing a purely economic understanding of the poor, I sought a culturally oriented framework for understanding in an effort to stimulate new concepts that could be applied to alter their circumstances. In the first section of my analysis, I describe the implications of the divide between the wealthy and poor in Mumbai. If the concept of the liminal citizen were acknowledged, strategies could potentially be developed to change these perceptions. The perception of contamination could be reframed to recognize the importance of slum-dwellers to Mumbai's economy and the households of the wealthy.

In the second half of my analysis, I describe the shadow hegemony of slum-dwellers by detailing how they configure their identities and design strategies of survival. These ingenious strategies prove that the poor have the knowledge and skills necessary to develop themselves. Sharma, acknowledging their skills, argues they "certainly know what they want. They have survived without any assistance from the state. Some of them have devised solutions to their problems that are realistic and workable." The government could encourage further growth within the city by acknowledging and paralleling these tactics in development policy. Based on the complex scenario I have described, such a simple description does not do justice to the challenges facing non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and slum-dwellers' associations. However, some organizations within the city are slowly working toward new terms of recognition by acknowledging the need to rethink slum life and bring forth slum-dwellers' ingenuity.

An analysis by Appadurai sheds light on how we can begin to reframe the status of the poor. Appadurai argues the key to "changing the terms of recognition" is through strengthening the "voice" of the poor to "debate, contest, and oppose vital directions for collective social life as they wish."[232] He defines this as a "capacity to aspire," in which the poor have the capacity to navigate their own future and lives. He argues that the Alliance, a group of three community organizations in Mumbai, have made steps in this direction. The Alliance is composed of SPARC, an NGO formed by professionals concerned with the urban poor; the National Slum Dweller's Foundation, a community based organization from Mumbai; and Mahila Milan, a community organization run by poor women. All three organizations work toward improving conditions within slums through "self-help" projects, which parallel their shadow hegemony.

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[232] Appadurai, 66.

As an individual who hopes to one day participate in changing the terms by which the poor are recognized, I believe a cultural understanding of economic conditions may be an ideal starting point. In discussing the relationship between slum-dwellers and the state as dialectically connected, I have tried to offer one reason why slums continue to grow during an era of economic success. I hope to stimulate new methods for cultural understanding, eschewing portrayal of the poor as criminals and thieves. Organizations such as the Alliance work to bridge the gap between the urban poor and their government. Through such small acts of empowerment and negotiation, long-term acknowledgement, and perhaps development, may be possible.

I believe one of the greatest challenges for human society today is to ensure that economic policy does not dehumanize the poor, and in this respect I have tried to offer a perspective that may suggest ways to redress inequity in Mumbai. India's economic success has not brought prosperity to its poorest urban citizens, and until the current cultural and political structures change, there is little chance for equal growth. However, recognizing and understanding how the government and wealthy create the liminal citizenship could be a first step to attempting to rethink empowerment and create policy in a way that parallels slum-dwellers' shadow hegemony. Further work in this direction may alter the conditions of the most disenfranchised. My goal in this analysis is to contribute to a greater understanding of slum life. This invisible life needs to be understood if prosperity is to reach those who need it the most.

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