

## **‘Negotiated spaces’ for representation in Mumbai: ward committees, advanced locality management and the politics of middle-class activism**

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### **ABSTRACT**

In Mumbai, new forms of cooperation between local government and citizens were established several years ago in order to improve the quality of services at neighbourhood level, and the representation of local residents vis-à-vis the Municipal Corporation. This paper examines the question of which residents are represented in these new arrangements, which groups of citizens are excluded, the mandates and processes by which they negotiate with the state, and the current outcomes of such cooperation.

Two forms of cooperation are compared: local representation through councillors and that through neighbourhood groups working directly with the executive wing of local government. Data was collected through interviews within 2 administrative wards (ward committees) and with 60 residential ALMs in the administrative wards of Mumbai where they are active.

The results show that ALMS were set up primarily in middle-class areas, in a mixture of residential and institutional ALMs. They have developed a range of issues beyond the SWM initiative, pertaining to issues of security, neighbourhood upgrading, and removing people carrying out informal economic activities. In this manner, they are expanding their rights to public space in their own neighbourhood, and excluding people working in the informal sector from access to such public space. At a higher scale level (citywide), they are putting forward their own candidates for wider political representation of their interests.

Councillors are mainly channels for low-income groups, who approach them not only for the areas for which they have a mandate, but seek to expand their mandate into new areas. This contrast in groups represented between councillors and ALMs has created conflicts between political parties and these ALMs as civil society organisations.

Conclusion is that civil society organisations are currently helping middle-class citizens in expanding their claim on public space in the city's neighbourhoods, and on political space by developing their own political representation. The flip-side is the increasing exclusion of low-income groups on the streets, and conflicts between current political parties and civil society organisations.

## **INTRODUCTION**

The discussion on the new ways in which governments have moved from providing services directly to working together with the private sector and citizen movements is well-established in different parts of the world (Pierre and Peters, 2000; Kooiman, 2003; Baud, 2004; WB, 2003). Such governance processes have provided new opportunities for non-government actors to work together with different levels of government. Local city governments see this as an opportunity to direct policy implementation outwards through the involvement of non-governmental organizations (NGOs, private sector, community-based organizations (CBOs)). This movement includes not only public-private arrangements as well as public-community arrangements (ppps/pcps) but also setting up inter-organizational networks – urban platforms of various types, which are said to provide better opportunities for various citizen groups to promote their claims (Harris, 2003: 2542). These new arenas in which citizens are requested by local governments to work with them in determining local needs and providing basic services to citizens have been termed 'invited spaces' (Cornwall, 2004).

In the 1990s, the debate on governance showed a fairly neo-liberal slant; the idea was that the private sector could provide basic urban services in a more efficient and effective manner than government could (cf. WB, 2003). This view has been partially revised, in that it is now recognized that under certain circumstances governments themselves can best provide services (natural monopolies, lack of market demand), and that the variety of arrangements needs to reflect differences in institutional context (WB, 2003). However, the interaction between government and citizens also requires wider issues to be raised – namely, who participates, what kind of processes occur within the interface, and what kind of outcomes it produces.

The debate is currently centered on such issues; being framed in terms of 'deepening democracy', asking whether institutionalization of invited spaces (through form and process) is sufficient to make them inclusive and substantive, i.e. to lead to 'more just and equitable societies' (Gaventa, 2006). The question we wish to raise in this paper is what happens in such relationships and networks in the urban context of one large Indian city, where there are a variety of interfaces between local government and citizens, and what the potential is for such 'invited spaces'. We will address three issues: (1) who is 'invited', (2) the substance and process of partnering and (3) the perceived outcomes for both invited and excluded groups of citizens.

The increase in 'invited spaces' is occurring in a period in which decentralization initiatives in many countries have provided local urban governments with mandates for working directly with local citizens. There are several contrasting views about the value of this process; some authors

consider it to be a sign of increased democracy that the central state is reduced in favor of local arrangements, others feel it is a hollowing-out of the state (cf. Gaventa, 2006). The question decentralization primarily raises regards the shifts in the relationship between central and local scales of government, and the extent to which it provides effective channels for citizens to make their voices heard.

This is not necessarily always the case. Luckham et al. (2000) distinguish four types of 'democratic deficits' (quoted in Gaventa, 2006);

- hollow citizenship, where different groups of citizens have different rights and obligations
- no vertical accountability, so that citizens cannot hold their governments and ruling elites to account
- weak horizontal accountability, particularly of local executive government, and
- lack of international accountability, as multinational corporations and international organizations bypass national governments.

Our position is that when decentralization is accompanied by new forms of local representation, such 'invited spaces' can become the focus of new forms of collective action and engagement with government. However, it remains to be seen whether these spaces offer only the possibility to citizens of masking their views heard as 'consumers of services' or whether they are actually recognized as citizens with rights.

In terms of the issue of which citizens are 'invited', India provides an interesting example, with decentralization and new forms of local representation for citizens, as well as strong civic engagement with local authorities. It has put in place decentralization legislation and new forms of local representation for citizens. The 74<sup>th</sup> Constitutional Amendment from 1992 provided for a policy of urban decentralization, which has been ratified and implemented to different degrees by state governments. In Mumbai its implementation led to the formation of 16 ward committees, consisting of locally elected councilors and ward officers (the administrative side of government). Although the design to include NGOs and CBOs as advisory members in these committees is only partially implemented, the Constitutional Amendment has strengthened citizenship by allowing residents to elect representatives who can play a role in decision making at the (electoral and administrative) ward level.

The first question concerns which groups of citizens are 'invited' to participate in public-community arrangements? Are different groups of citizens differentiated by local governments, and accorded different rights according to their status? There has been a discussion in India on the decreasing rights of the urban poor who are living in non-authorized slums. Local and state courts are increasingly treating these groups of citizens as 'trespassers on public land', with no rights to basic housing and services. This is in contrast to the housing policies which have been in place for decades (cf. Ramanathan, 2006; Ramanathan and Dupont, 2005 on Delhi; Desai on Mumbai), which have focused on rehabilitation schemes for citizens living in slums<sup>i</sup>. This

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<sup>i</sup> Of course, the implementation of such rehabilitation schemes and housing programs has always been very uneven in the last 40 years (see Desai, 2003; de Wit, 1997; van Eerd, 2003).

suggests that very real differences exist in the rights of different groups of urban citizens in reality.

The second question concerns the mandates local government gives to citizen groups and representatives, what activities citizens carry out and what rights they claim, and what interface citizens themselves prefer to have with local government. What degree of collective action do citizens' groups have, and is there a significant degree of interface with government, compared to the mandates elected representatives have?

Finally, the question arises whether 'invited spaces' – through either direct connections or through elected representatives - actually lead to a better quality of life in the city. We define quality of life as 'the extent to which basic needs and rights of local citizens are reflected in the activities carried out within the interface between local government and citizens'. This includes both their rights as consumers to receive basic public services as well as their political right as citizens to co-determine and obtain their right to direct and indirect representation (cf. Cornwall, 2004; Kabeer, 2002; Fung and Wright, 2003).

In this paper, we are contrasting two types of invited spaces provided by government. The first concerns the case of a program initiated by the Municipal Corporation of Greater Mumbai (MCGM) to improve basic solid waste management services called Advanced Locality Management (ALM) since 1996, which has grown into a larger movement of citizen-local government interface. The second concerns the formation and functioning of local political representation processes established in the same period. Since 1992, administrative ward committees have been established, and two elections for councilors have been held. We analyze the main issues taken up in this article, contrasting the situation of these two 'invited' spaces.

## **THE CASE OF MUMBAI**

Mumbai is the capital of Maharashtra, one of India's most developed states, with a population of some 16.4 million people (Greater Mumbai or Corporation area)<sup>ii</sup>. The population consists of a variety of groups, with people from the state itself forming only about 40% of the population. Large proportions of the population are migrants from other states and other countries. The growing economy has led to an influx of migrants looking for employment in both the top end of the formal labor market as well as in the lower-end in informal economic activities.

The city is a trading hub, with strong links to international companies, ICT and creative industries, and (business) services. Currently, two types of economic activities dominate: first, capital-intensive service sectors like finance and producer services, software development, mass media and entertainment, communications and information technologies, and residential and commercial real estate and property development; and second, labor-intensive production of electronics, garments, plastics and consumer goods in small-scale workshops in informal settlements.

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<sup>ii</sup> The Mumbai Metropolitan region has a population of almost 24 million people (Sivaramakrishnan, Kundu, and Singh 2005).

Mumbai started out as a manufacturing city, with the cotton textile industry remaining dominant until the 1940s. Automation then resulted in the reduction of jobs from 200,000 to 60,000 workers from the 1970s-1990s (Pacione, 2006). The loss of formal employment in cotton mills was accompanied by development of 'unregistered production units' using downgraded technology to which a large part of manufacturing was contracted out<sup>iii</sup>. Displaced textile workers with few opportunities relocated to informal economic activities, in which employment increased from 49% in 1971 to 66% of the total workforce in 1991 (Pacione, 2006).

In contrast, finance insurance and real estate services expanded during the 1970s and 1980s, and employment growing by 43% (Pacione, 2006). Combined with the entry of international financial groups to Bombay's stock exchange, this stimulated related service industries. Other tertiary sector activities include culture industries, tourism, off-shore printing and publishing and data processing for international companies. Other tertiary sector activities include provision of higher education for S. Asian and sub-Saharan African countries and labor-intensive medical and nursing facilities. The growth of the urban economy was 8% in 2004 and 2005 (Pacione, 2006).

This new private sector is associated with the growth of the middle class, and a concomitant consumer lifestyle. The expansion is noticeable in the growth of middle-class housing and suburban sprawl, as well as in civil society groups which demand better services and accountability from the urban local bodies, putting new energies into the politics of local governance.

Such growth and expansion of lifestyle pose great challenges for urban government in expanding housing, services, and basic infrastructure to all those they recognize as citizens of the city. At the moment, it is estimated by Risbud (2003) that 54% of the population lives in slum areas (according to Census 2001 definition)<sup>iv</sup>. The majority of the slums are in the inner western suburbs, where 58% of the slum population is concentrated<sup>v</sup>. Slums are not a homogenous category, ranging from areas where pavement dwellers live, to chawls and Zapadpattis (cf. Risbud, 2003). Slum areas are treated as illegal housing areas, unless they go through the process of regularization<sup>vi</sup>. Until such time, residents receive no rights to proof of residence or basic services from the local administration. This is becoming increasingly an issue, as the middle class and elite are demanding slums be removed because of their illegal status (through public interest litigation) (cf. Patel S., C. Cruz and S. Burra 2002).

The Municipal Corporation of Greater Mumbai (MCGM) is responsible for a wide range of services to its residents. These include solid waste management, water supply, drainage and sewerage systems, and public roads. It runs hospitals, health centers, primary schools and a local bus service. City planning also resides with the MCGM; it implements development plans and sanctions building proposals<sup>vii</sup>. The planning function is jointly undertaken with the Mumbai

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<sup>iii</sup> See e.g. Van Wersch, H. (1992) *The Bombay Textile Strike, 1982-83*. Delhi: Oxford University Press.

<sup>iv</sup> Risbud bases her discussion on the report prepared by YUVA and Montgomery-Watson (2000-2001) for Slum Sanitation within the Mumbai Sewerage Disposal Project.

<sup>v</sup> Pavement dwellers and chawls – i.e. premises for rent constructed originally by factory owners – are included in slums.

<sup>vi</sup> This has to be done under the auspices of the state Slum Development Authority.

<sup>vii</sup> As per the Development Control Rules

Metropolitan Regional Development Authority (MRDA) and the Maharashtra State Government Department of Housing (MHADA). The former has jurisdiction over the agglomeration area and the latter over city-wide infrastructure when foreign funding is obtained<sup>viii</sup>.

The largest department in terms of employment is the conservancy department (solid waste management), whose staff are also the most strongly unionized. This is in keeping with the situation in other large cities in India, which show similar patterns of staffing and organization (Baud et al. 2004). Adding new employees to this department has often been a debated issue as it is seen to increase the strength of an outspoken trade union. To cut down expenditures and reduce deficits a policy of restriction on new staff recruitment has been practiced since 1995.

## RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The analysis of the two types of 'invited spaces' has taken place as follows. The analysis of the political representation at electoral ward level was carried out by Nainan in 2001 as part of a post-graduate study on NGO participation in the decentralization process in Mumbai (Nainan, 2001). The data collected for analyzing the decentralization process to ward committees consisted of strategic discussions with 4 councilors, 2 ward officers, and NGOs and CBOs (24) working in various areas of Mumbai. It was also complemented by interviews with councilors who are party leaders (3) and ward officers (4), and further interviews with 14 councilors in different wards (see table 2a). It was followed up by a study of a large (administrative) ward in the North of Mumbai, where 13 councilors and 3 ward officers were interviewed and observed for a three-month period (Vogel, 2005).

The analysis of the ALM program has taken place within the framework of a larger comparative study of three mega-cities in India on new forms of urban governance<sup>ix</sup>. In that research project, a number of smaller studies have been carried out on which we draw for a background knowledge of the decentralization processes in Mumbai (Nainan, 2001), and on the first phase of the ALM program (Redkar, 2004). The bulk of the data on ALMs and their activities was collected by undertaking a sample survey from the complete list of ALMS provided by MCGM on ten administrative wards (out of 24 administrative wards<sup>x</sup>). Almost thirty percent of the 217 ALMS found in these ten administrative wards were interviewed, using a standard questionnaire developed on the basis of exploratory interviews with active ALMs (see table 1). Interviews were conducted with the leaders of the ALM's who were identified on the basis of them holding position of either a President or secretary in the ALMs. Residential ALMS were selected, as our interest was in the extent to which citizens were organizing; the ALMS based at commercial company premises or government offices were not included<sup>xi</sup>. These interviews were

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<sup>viii</sup> The MCGM has a yearly budget of 12000 crores Rs. (about 300,000,000 US\$) and over 150,000 regular employees. It is probably the largest Municipal Corporation in India (Sivaramakrishnan, Kundu, Singh, 2005). Its revenues come from octroi and property taxes in almost equal proportions, and it is one of the few Corporations which generate the major part of their revenues internally (Rath, 2006).

<sup>ix</sup> An Indo-Dutch Programme on Alternatives to Development (IDPAD); project during phase Five 2003-2006.

<sup>x</sup> The full list of ALMS was compiled only in April 2006, as a result of the discussions held in 2005 on the lack of a complete overview with the MCGM.

<sup>xi</sup> The University of Amsterdam works with the Centre de Sciences Humaines (CSH) group in clubbing two sets of data on ALMs in Mumbai; the sample survey carried out by Zerah was carried out mainly in two wards (H-west and H-east), consisting of 60 interviews. The combined results will be published later.

complemented by interviews with councilors and MCGM officers to get their perspectives on the ALM program<sup>xii</sup>. Secondary data such as lists of ALMs, newspaper articles as well as documents put up on the Karmayog website were also studied.

**Table 1 Census and sample of ALMS in selected administrative wards in Mumbai<sup>xiii</sup>**

Administrative wards	Census of ALMS	Contactable ALMs	Sample of ALMS
E-ward	12	4	-
H-East	14	5	8
H-West	56 (73 in 2005)	24	23
K-East	19	5	-
K-West	63 (23 in 2005)	25	-
M-East	25	16	9
M-West	19	5	18
P-south	12	1	-
P-North	24	2	-
R-North	24	2	
R-Central	13	3	
R-South	27	7	

Source: Karmayog site: April 2006

**Table 2 Councilors: census of selected wards and councilors interviewed**

Administrative wards	No. of councilors in concerned wards	No. of councilors interviewed
E-ward	9	
H-East	11	....
H-West	7	
K-East	15	2
K-West	13	....
M-East	11	2, 8
M-West	8	3
P-south	6	
P-North	13	13
R-North	15	7
R-Central	9	

<sup>xii</sup> We would like to thank Mrs. Nutan Shivtare for interviewing different stake holders, Harpreet Kaur for developing notes which feed into this article and Seema Redkar for introducing the research team to various ALMs for a set of exploratory interviews.

<sup>xiii</sup> The list of ALMs is a formal list. A second column in the Karmayog site indicates which ALMs were actually active in terms of the researchers being able to contact them (only 26%).

<b>Administrative wards</b>	<b>No. of councilors in concerned wards</b>	<b>No. of councilors interviewed</b>
R-South	7	3
<b>Total in relevant wards</b>	<b>124</b>	<b>38 (31%)</b>

NB: only wards which have ALMs are covered in this table.

## **PRODUCING ‘INVITED SPACES’**

In opening up new ‘invited spaces’, what mandates did local government in Mumbai give and what groups did it recognize? To what extent did the invited groups claim more or different spaces than those provided?

The MCGM has two sides: the political and the executive (see Figure 1). These two wings of the MCGM have simultaneously produced invited spaces in the city of Mumbai. Within the ‘deliberative wing’, elected representatives became part of ward committees at the level of the administrative wards (24). Within the executive wing a space was created for Advanced Locality Management (ALMs) at neighborhood levels<sup>xiv</sup>. In this section we examine how these two invited spaces differed in their membership, mandate and which groups of citizens it recognizes.

The deliberative wing of the MCGM consists of the 227 municipal councilors directly elected by the city’s voting population; Each councilor is allocated an annual budget of Rs 2 million (\$ 43,478) to undertake developmental work in their constituency<sup>xv</sup>. The executive wing includes its employees (around 160,000 employees). These two wings of local government come together at the administrative ward level (24), which each have a ward office and a wards committee. There are 16 ward committees formed, combining between 15-20 electoral wards in each committee. The councilors, the ward officer, and possibly co-opted CBOs (to a maximum of three) form the ward committees.

The two arms of the MCGM compete with each other for power and resources. The conflict between these two groups has its roots in the relationship between the government of Maharashtra and the MCGM. Despite the passing of the 74<sup>th</sup> Constitutional Amendment which aimed at strengthening local self-government, power within the MCGM is with senior IAS officers appointed by the State Government (Pinto, forthcoming; Nainan and Baud, forthcoming). Competition becomes fiercer when different parties rule the city and the State - Shiv Sena has ruled the MCGM since 1985 while the state has been ruled by Congress<sup>xvi</sup>. Thus the control of the MCGM by State appointed IAS officers is much resented by the elected representatives of the City.

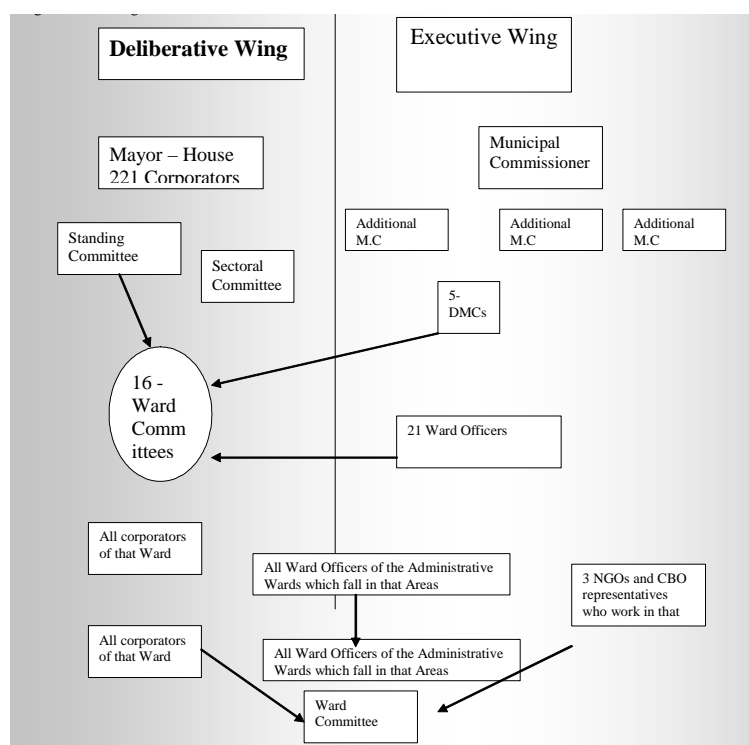
<sup>xiv</sup> Since this initiative, further decentralisation is taking place to the electoral ward level, where the initiative has named them Local Area Citizens Committees (LACCs).

<sup>xv</sup> Each councillor is paid a sitting allowance for attending meetings of the BMC (Rs 2,700 per month). They also get a free bus pass to travel by the BMC-owned public transport utility BEST within the city during their term of office.

<sup>xvi</sup> with the exception of 1995- 2001 when Shiv Sena also ruled at the state level.

The elected councilors have a strong mandate from low-income voters in slum areas. It is estimated that at least 167 wards of the 227 (about 73% of election wards) are slum wards, and the rest are mixed. An analysis of voting patterns of the 1997 corporation elections shows that slum residence is correlated with high levels of voting (Baud, Pfeffer, Sridharan and Nainan, 2006). This suggests that councilors will represent the needs of slum residents as they recognize them as their main constituency (see also Vogel, 2005).

The two main spaces identified are then the ward committee which comes under the Deliberative Wing, and the ALMs which come under the Executive Wing, both of which models emerged around 2000-2001.



**Figure 1. Mumbai Corporation government: administrative and political wings**  
Source: Nainan, 2001

Most ALMs were formed between 2002-2005. Since then, the process has slowed down. ALMS have come up either in housing colonies (Parsi colony, Tata power colony) or in Christian communities of Bandra (H-West) and Andheri (K-West), building on existing organizations. A large role of the Christian community is probably due to the role played by the basic Christian communities which are attached to churches and church based NGOs. ALMS were also being promoted by organizations such as Action Good Governance Network India – AGNI- an advocacy NGO with close ties to Bombay First, a lobby of the new commercial sector<sup>xvii</sup>.

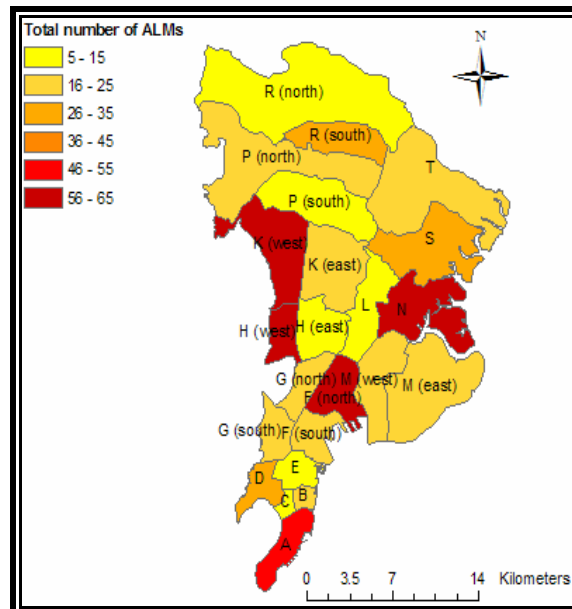
<sup>xvii</sup> The web page of AGNI identifies its role as “AGNI helps citizens form a body called an ALM” and then goes on to describe the steps involved in forming an ALM, getting linked to the local ward office.

**Table 3 Year of establishment of ALM by administrative ward in Mumbai**

Year of Establishment of ALM	H/West	M/East	M/West	R/South	total
1998-99	2	1	2	0	5
2000-01	0	1	6	1	8
2001-02	2	0	2	0	4
2002-03	6	2	1	2	11
2003-04	7	0	0	0	7
2004-05	2	3	4	4	13
2005-06	0	0	0	3	3
99-2000	0	0	2	0	2
Not Available	4	2	1	0	7
<b>Total</b>	<b>23</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>18</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>60</b>

Source: sample survey in 4 wards (2005)

ALMs are unevenly spread across the city (Figure 2). The spatial coverage is much stronger in some administrative wards than in others. A study of ALMs found that only 67 of the 700 ALMs on the MCGM list could be contacted. Useful data could only be gathered from 45, of which 22 were in M-ward (Palnitkar et al, 2005). These findings confirm those in this study where the largest numbers of ALMs were found in M-Ward.



**Figure 2. Spread of ALMs by administrative ward in Mumbai (Karmayog website April 2006)<sup>xviii</sup>.**

<sup>xviii</sup> The official picture presented here is somewhat nuanced by knowledgeable insiders, who indicate that the ALMs in A ward in majority are not functioning ones.

<b>Wards Committee</b>	<b>Number of Councilors</b>
A,B&E	16
C&D	13
F/South and F/North	19
G/South	10
G/North	13
H/East and H/West	18
K/East	15
K/West	13
P/South	8
P/North	14
R/South	8
R/North	15
M/East and M/West	19
S&T	20
L	14
N	12

**Figure 3. Number of councilors by ward committees per administrative wards**

### **MEMBERSHIP IN ‘INVITED SPACES’**

The ward committee includes all 10 to 20 elected councilors with the Ward Officer as their member secretary. There is also a provision for nominating 3 NGOs/CBO members to the ward committee. The advisory membership for NGOs/CBOs to the ward committees is tightly controlled by the councilors, who use this arena to voice needs and gain claims of the low income residents (Vogel, 2006; Nainan, 2001). Currently, the NGO/CBO seats in the ward committees are largely occupied by political party nominees (Nainan, forthcoming).

The ALMs on the other hand have been formed by housing co-operative societies (or their federations) and street-based Residents’ organizations. They vary in membership, size, and composition. ALMS which mainly include residents have between 100-200 people (13 ALMs) or 200-300 people as members (14 ALMs). Eight of the ALMs are much larger (>500 residential members each). These members usually reside in housing society complexes (high-rise buildings), which have a mandatory organization for collective measures in and around the housing complex. This makes it relatively easy to build up a further agenda on an existing structure.

Two-thirds of the ALMs from the sample survey also have commercial establishments as members. 34% have up to ten commercial establishments as members, and 20% more than ten. There are differences between the wards in the extent to which commercial establishments are

members. R-South and M-West have the most ALMs with commercial members, whereas in H-West and M-East only half the ALMs have commercial members. The number of political party members is limited; in M-West and R-south 20% of the ALMS have political party members (table 6). ALMs have contrasting views on membership of political party adherents – some consider it a good channel into party support for their issues; others want to avoid party politics because they could undermine their capacity to push through their own agenda.

**Table 4. Number of Resident Members by ward**

Number of Resident Members	Name of the Ward				Total
	H/West	M/East	M/West	R/South	
Less than 50	6	3	3	1	13
51-100	0	0	2	4	6
101-200	4	1	6	2	13
200-300	7	2	3	2	14
300-400	2	2	1	0	5
400-500	1	0	0	0	1
500-1000	2	0	2	0	4
1000 more	1	1	1	1	4
<b>Total</b>	<b>23</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>18</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>60</b>

**Table 5. Number of Commercial members by ward**

No. of commercial members	Name of the Ward				Total
	H/West	M/East	M/West	R/South	
0	12	4	4	1	21
1-10	10	2	10	5	27
> 10	1	3	4	4	12
<b>Total</b>	<b>23</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>18</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>60</b>

**Table 6. Number of political party members**

Number of Political Party Members	Name of the Ward				Total
	H/West	M/East	M/West	R/South	
0	22	8	14	8	52
1	1	1	2	1	5
2	0	0	1	1	2
3	0	0	1	0	1
<b>Total</b>	<b>23</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>18</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>60</b>

The membership of the two 'spaces' shows a clear divide, based on the citizens they aim to represent. It also shows a different geographic-scale level. While the slum residents and their

ward councilors are represented through the Ward Committee at the administrative ward level, middle-class communities are represented at the colony or street level through the ALMS.

## **MANDATES GIVEN BY GOVERNMENT**

The Mandate of the Ward Committee is based on the 74<sup>th</sup> Amendment to the Constitution from which the State government has selected a number of areas which it recommends for implementation. Implementation at the ward level has been diluted to a platform for responding to civic grievances of citizens and giving budgetary recommendation along with a small budget to undertake projects<sup>xix</sup>.

The mandate of the ALMs was provided by the Executive Wing of the MCGM, while dealing with solid waste management<sup>xx</sup>. As a ban on new staff recruitment existed within the MCGM, the Executive Wing evolved new strategies to expand solid waste collection to larger sections of the city by contracting-out such activities. One strategy was to involve housing cooperative societies and their associations in solid waste management, using the concept of Advanced Locality Management (ALM)<sup>xxi</sup>. Thus the mandate for ALMS derives from the attempts by senior officers to solve a problem within given constraints. Therefore, despite a lack of a state-level mandate the ALMS have good access to various executive departments within the MCGM.

An ALM is to cover a neighborhood or street with about 1,000 citizens, and to be registered by the municipal ward office. The issues addressed by the ALM are to include garbage clearance, composting, drainage, water supply, beautification, encroachments, road excavation, pothole filling, roads and pavement leveling, surfacing, and management of stray animals<sup>xxii</sup>. Many residents have taken the responsibility of segregating garbage at source, recycling and composting. At a later stage, street waste pickers were also involved in recycling waste (Redkar 2004). The MCGM supported the initiative by addressing grievances of residents with alacrity (Palnitkar and Jain, 2005).

There is overlap between the ward committee and the ALMs in their focus, as both address issues of solid waste management. However, ALMs are organized user groups, whereas Ward Committee members are elected representatives voicing the concerns of all citizens living in the ward. The role of both is distinct, as ALMs are engaged in maintenance and operation services, whereas the Ward Committee has a planning and decision-making role.

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<sup>xix</sup> a) redress common grievances of citizens, connected with local municipal services

b) Make recommendations on existing proposals for expenditures in the ward before they were forwarded to the Commissioner

c) Grant administrative approval and financial sanction to existing plans for municipal works within the area of the Ward Committee up to a limit of Rs 500,000 (11,500 US\$)

d) And move on any other powers the Corporation may delegate to a Ward Committee.

<sup>xx</sup> SWM is one of the major activities of local governments, which absorbs a major part of their staff and finances.

<sup>xxi</sup> An alternative model was developed for low-income areas, called Slum Adoption Program, also directed toward more effective solid waste management.

<sup>xxii</sup> Web page of AGNI

## CLAIMING 'SPACE'

The second question concerns what 'space' the two types of groups claim for themselves in addition to the mandate provided by government.

Councilors have expanded their mandate formally and informally in several ways. Formal claims were established when the councilors persuaded the state and local government to implement the ward committee legislation. Informally, councilors in north Mumbai spent major amounts of time responding to individual slum citizens' demands for basic amenities, which could be seen as part of their mandate, but also on counseling women with family problems, which is not (Vogel, 2005). Other councilors were also constrained to comply with demands made by their political party leaders and real estate development activities in their areas (Nainan, 2006).

The original mandate for the ALMs consisted mainly of monitoring and improving one of the most visible basic services at neighborhood level – solid waste management (SWM). This was supported by the MCGM by its cleaning of construction waste from roads and more effective collection of waste at neighborhood level. This is reflected in the number of ALMs which carry out this activity as part of their program. They are involved in segregation of dry and wet waste and house-to-house collection. 80% of the ALMs are involved in either of these activities, with 10% working in collection activities (mainly in M-West), and 90% involved in segregation.

However, the ALMs have started branching out into other activities, mainly concentrating on monitoring basic services in their neighborhood and including other issues which members consider important. Table 7 shows which activities ALMS are doing in the various wards.

**Table 7. Activities taken up by the ALMs per ward in abs. no. and %**

	Name of the Ward				
	H/West	M/East	M/West	R/South	Total
Activities taken in Water Management	4 (17)	3 (33)	1(6)	4 (40)	12 (20)
Activities taken up in sewerage management	8 (35)	5 (56)	7(39)	6 (60)	26 (43)
Activities in solid waste management	20 (87)	6 (66)	15 (83)	8 (80)	49 (82)
Park/street beautification	16 (70)	6 (66)	9 (50)	4 (40)	35 (58)
composting	1 (4)	-	4 (22)	-	5 (8)
Maintenance in the housing society	2 (8)	3 (33)	9 (50)	2 (20)	16 (27)
<b>Total number of ALMs</b>	<b>23</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>18</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>60</b>

Source: sample survey 2005

NB: none of the ALMs dealt with Electricity management.

NB: % are given in parentheses

Table 7 shows that the second widespread activity concerns 'street beautification' or greening. Many streets still have open concrete drains along the side of the road. The importance given to sewerage management is also shown by the fact that more than 40% of the ALMs have cleaned and closed street drains. ALMs close these drains by constructing and filling planters over them, and planting bushes and trees along the roads. Almost 60% of the ALMs have beautified the streets in their own neighborhood. Almost 30% of the ALMs are also more active in maintaining the area around the housing complexes, as well as the complexes themselves in their

neighborhoods. This seems to be a spin-off of a higher level of group interaction and commitment to collective activities. Finally, some 20% of the ALMs have taken up activities in water management.

These data confirm the impressions of ALMs found by Zerah (2006), who distinguished two types of ALMS – the ‘civic-minded’ ALMs and those based on ‘utilitarian mobilization’. The latter includes ALMs concerned mostly with specific issues of their own area. They use their bargaining power, even with political representatives, and exert continuous pressure over a short period of time. Once their objective is achieved, the ALM becomes much less active. The former type of ALMs shows a ‘civic’ type of mobilisation, positioning themselves as civic-minded people with broader interests. Such ALMS are usually very active and their members were active before the creation of the ALMs (participation in local newsletters, involvement in beautification schemes).

In conclusion, we can say that in both the ‘invited spaces’ created by local and state government, councilors and the ALMs have gone beyond their original mandates and are actively taking up issues that concern their constituency – be it that councilors are found to be focused much more on low-income residents who feel powerless and the ALMs represent middle-class residents who are feeling more powerful in their own neighborhoods. Although the ALMs started out with a focus on improving the rights of citizens as ‘consumers of services’, they have gradually started to realize that they need a role in ‘setting the political agenda’.

## **INTERFACE WITH THE GOVERNMENT**

The interface with government at the administrative ward level is embedded in the set-up of the ward committee, where ward officers and councilors have to work together. The situation since the 74<sup>th</sup> Amendment has changed fairly radically. Before the formation of the Ward Committee, the councilor visited the ward officer to get projects sanctioned and implemented, sharing with them a portion of the money involved. Now, the Ward Officer has to be present at the monthly meetings of the Wards Committee, and to get administrative sanctions from the councilors to implement projects<sup>xxiii</sup>.

Relations between councilors and ward officers are usually tense. Elected representatives consider ward officers to be blocking the effective serving of their ‘clients’, while the officers perceive elected representatives as lacking the necessary education to make ‘engineering’ decisions.

Outcomes of discussions with councilors in two wards indicated the following views (Nainan, 2001). The majority of the councilors felt the establishment of Ward Committees gave them more powers<sup>xxiv</sup>. The councilors listed the positive changes experienced as follows:

- Clearer budgetary provisions for their wards; with monitoring systems in place;

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<sup>xxiii</sup> Sharing of money from getting projects cleared or cuts from contractors still remains part of the process.

<sup>xxiv</sup> Four councilors were interviewed for this study: two from each ward. Three of them were from different political parties. The fourth was an independent, and one of the four was a woman. In the one ward, the majority of the councilors were Shiv Sena, whereas in the other ward, the representation was across the board.

- Better monitoring of project implementation, with officers reporting on project progress;
- Pressurizing non-performing officers by calling them to joint meetings of Ward Committee Members and MMC officials;
- Councilors have to come up with proposals for their wards, so they keep in touch with their constituency's needs and grievances;
- Speedier provision of services;
- Rise in status as public official.

Although the newly acquired powers are limited, already some Wards Committee members are searching for means to expand their powers. Because budget allocations to the wards are now published, transparency between the administrative and elected representatives has increased. The question is whether they will be willing to share it further with NGOs, when these become members of the Wards Committee. Information on the ward budgets has not percolated down to members of the community or to the NGOs interviewed, none of whom had any information about the ward budgets in 2001.

However, councilors also have a regular interface with the deliberative wing of government through their city-wide council and its Committees. This interface has not been systematically analyzed by anyone as yet; preliminary interviews indicate that the councilor-party bosses (citywide) relations are very influential in determining allocations of councilors to committees, dominated by the party in power (Vogel, 2005).

The ALM program also provides for direct and regular contact with local government. However, local government consists of a number of different departments providing services all over the Corporation area, as well as the area-based ward offices, which have a mandate for carrying out particular activities in one administrative ward only. The survey examined several possible interfaces by activity; with the ward office in their area, with different Corporation Departments, with state government organizations, or with NGOs/ private companies. Finally, ALM relations with local councilors and party politicians were considered.

Two-thirds of the ALMs were aware of the ward office, with no significant differences between the four wards. Representatives visited the ward office for the following reasons: to raise grievances and complaints (72%), to seek help (63%), and to get expert advice (62%). They also held their ALM meetings with the ward officer and councilors at the ward office. These should be held once a month. However, practice varies by ward office, according to the interest the ward officer takes in the initiative.

**Table 8. Awareness of Ward Office among ALMS by ward**

	Name of the Ward				Total
	H/West	M/East	M/West	R/South	
<b>Yes</b>	17	5	14	5	41
<b>No</b>	1	2	1	3	7

<b>Not Applicable</b>	5	2	3	2	12
<b>Total</b>	<b>23</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>18</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>60</b>

Source: survey among ALMs 2005

The ALMs have a preference for working with the executive side of government in their various activities. They work almost twice as often with the ward officer as with the ward councilor in their main activities of SWM, sewerage and water issues (Table 9).

**Table 9. % of ALM working with ward officers and councilors in main activities**

	<b>Working with ward officers</b>	<b>Working with councilors</b>	<b>Working with wards committee</b>
SWM	55	20	8.3
Composting	50	20	5
Sewerage	30	20	1.7

Source: survey among ALMs 2005

ALMs also work with the specific Departments of the MCGM at the city-wide level. Almost half the ALMs had contacts with the sewerage department, 70% worked with the SWM Department, 34% with the garden Department, and 10% with the water Department. This reflects the focus of the activities promoted by the ALMs and the interest of the SWM Department, with which the program originated.

ALM leaders indicated that trust had gradually built up with the Corporation officers, which improved the response they received from officers on their complaints, although that varied from issue to issue. The ALMs also indicated that their experiences with higher officers at the Corporation level were more co-operative than at the ward level.

Although the awareness amongst ALMs on Wards Committees is high, it does not translate into approaching the Ward Committee or councilors to address their issues (Table 9). Two-thirds of the ALM leaders did contact the councilor; however, only half of them visited the councilor occasionally on issues in which the councilors have some role to play. The experience of ALMS with politicians within the wider city is not one of co-operation; 10 % of the ALMS feel that politicians were not interested in ALMs, 7% felt that the politicians did not know enough about ALMs, and 7% felt that politicians see ALMs as competitors (Table 10). Councilors also feel antagonistic toward ALMs, as indicated in the newspaper quotes (see Box 1).

**Table 10. Experiences of ALM members with politicians**

	<b>Actual</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
No experience with politicians	37	61
Probable reasons for not supporting ALMS		
Did not know about ALMS	4	7
Politicians did not like ALMS	1	2
They are not interested	6	10
Councilors view ALMs as political competitors	4	7

	<b>Actual</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
ALM members do not approach them	2	3
Probable reason for Supporting ALMs		
Selective support for votes	5	8
co-operative	2	3
<b>Total</b>	<b>61</b>	<b>100</b>

**Box 1 Councilors' perception of relations with ALMS**

The Councilors complained that they are the elected representatives of the ward, and best suited to tackle civic problems. According to them, citizens' groups cannot think beyond their lanes and are unwilling to listen to reason. They keep on insisting that a particular work be done immediately and this leads to a clash of interests.

In the words of BJP councilor, "Elected representatives are better suited to tackle problems like lack of funds and labour for example. We understand them but these citizens' groups are unwilling to listen to reason and insist on a particular work being done immediately" (TOI, 17-2-05).

According to an NCP councilor, "Citizens will create the impression that Councilors are incompetent and NGO's are doing all the work. NGO's are already represented in the ward committees along with the Councilors. So the LACC's are really not required" (TOI, 17-2-05).

A Congress Councilor , "Gang war. That's the only word to describe their working."(Indian Express, 1-7-05 )

A Congress party woman Councilor, "I cannot do any work because of the ALMs. Please get this harassment stopped." (Indian Express, 1-7-05)

The ALMs were also asked about possible requests for bribes which they had received from government or elected officials. This turned out to be low: 7% experienced requests for bribes by politicians and 8% by Corporation officers. However, in contrast, when asked to identify problems faced by the MCGM, 52% of those interviewed felt the problem lay in corrupt practices of the Corporation.

The majority of the ALMs were very positive about the current changes in the MCGM and were optimistic about its future. 62% identified the problems of the MCGM to lie in its co-ordination with different agencies; 57% of the interviewed believed it was due to the quality of municipal staff , and half the respondents stated it was to do with the politics of the MCGM.

This implies that the two interfaces for citizens and local government represent different constituencies and do not work together. The ALM-executive government departments work with middle-class citizens and the councilors and ward officers in the ward committee work with low-income groups.

**INTERFACE OF ALMS WITH NGOS**

Write more general introduction on widening rift between ALMs and councilors because of the ALM network with AGNI. It also led to the weakening of the existing trade union within the sector where the ALMs were mandated. There was a power shift within the existing network of local government and trade unions, which weakened the latter.

The Action for Good Governance Network India (AGNI), an NGO, was established in 1999 and functions as network and advocacy group on local governance issues in Mumbai. Among its key leaders are ex-bureaucrats and media people. AGNI was assigned an informal role in facilitating the formation, networking and capacity building of ALMs and ALM networks. Thus from their very formation the ALMs came in contact with AGNI and often became members of its network. The network was further strengthened as AGNI took on the role of representing the political voice of middle-class citizens at city and state level. Among the various campaigns which it took up, AGNI's efforts to scuttle an MCGM workers' strike brought it into the limelight (Box 2).

#### **Box 2: AGNI's actions against Municipal workers' union**

On the eve of Diwali in Oct 2000 140,000 workers of the MCGM went on a two-day strike called by the largest union of municipal workers<sup>xxv</sup>, after the Mayor of Mumbai refused union demands for higher bonus and ex-gratia payments. This strike hampered the functioning of the city, as taps dried up, garbage piled up on the streets, and municipal hospital staff joined the strike. (26-10- 2000, Indian Express).

As a strategy to control the growing disruption of life in the city nearly 200 councilors decided to support strikers' demands by passing a unanimous resolution to pay 65 percent of the bonus to municipal employees. However, AGNI's vice-chairman, (IAS), former Municipal Commissioner and Chief Secretary of the Maharashtra government, approached the High Court of Bombay asking for urgent interim relief on his petition admitted in 1997, which challenged high salaries and bonus to civic employees.

The Bombay High Court restrained the MCGM administration from giving in to worker demands and struck down the councilor resolution. The Municipal Workers Union leader was reported to have challenged the "citizen groups and non-governmental organizations to lift garbage from the roads... no one will be available as nobody has the stamina to do the kind of work that BMC workers do" (2000, rediff.com/ news).

Under similar conditions the following year in October 2001, (Times news network) AGNI along with various member ALMs, pressurized State Government to put an end to municipal workers threat to strike the second time based on the essential services maintenance. The union did not go ahead with the strike and since then it has only issued threats or undertaken one day strike keeping essential services untouched.

#### **EXPANDING SPACES, EXCLUDING OTHERS?**

Finally, the question is taken up what changes in citizenship these invited spaces have brought about in the neighborhoods where ward committees and ALMS are active (for the groups involved, as well as for other groups in the neighborhood who are excluded).

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<sup>xxv</sup> Municipal Mazdoor Union, lead by Sharad Rao with George Fernandes as its leader who had by then joined the BJP lead coalition government and was Defense Minister in 1998. BJP has an alliance with the Shiv Sena in Maharashtra.

Wards Committees generally see NGOs and CBOs as representatives of residents with complaints and protests, so that the relation is generally one of confrontation. They make an exception for a few CBO organizations using service delivery strategies, which partner with government at the local level. This occurs largely in sectors such as education, health and solid waste management<sup>xxvi</sup>. Generally, NGOs do not work with the deliberative wing of the MCGM at city level, and the relation with ward councilors is full of conflict and confrontation for all types of NGOs. NGOs perceive councilors as political opportunists, corrupt and sometimes as criminals. NGOs recognize themselves to be a threat to the councilors' power base, and are perceived by them as competitors.

NGOs work more generally with the executive arm of the MCGM at city level. The majority of the NGOs associate with the administrative Departments for services at ward level. Organizations with a good relation with the Central Departments of the MCGM may have a less close or even conflictive relation at the ward level.

This means that councilors especially and Ward Officers to a lesser degree prefer not to expand the space for middle-class citizens who are organized in NGOs or ALMs. Councilors on Wards Committees see their constituency as being low-income residents, who need their political clout to gain access to resources, such as housing, basic and social services. However, they want to keep them dependent on themselves, and be the 'brokers' through whom resources are channeled when they are directed toward low-income residents – e.g. the SAP program (see Desai, 2006)<sup>xxvii</sup>.

ALMs prefer not to deal with the political side of government, but have a strong preference for the executive wing at either city or administrative ward level. The survey of sixty ALMs showed that 70% perceived positive results in their quality of life from the ALM work, in terms of cleaner roads, regular garbage pick up, more green spaces and organized group. This suggests that they have been able to claim more public policy and implementation 'space' as user groups.

However, exclusionary processes are also taking place. In the wards where ALMs are active, people from the slum areas are usually not included. The original idea of the SWM Department of the Corporation was that both slums and higher-income areas would work together in improving SWM. However, the slum representatives (youth who were interested in taking up cleaning activities) were said to feel intimidated by the ALM meetings. The use of the English language and formalized processes requiring writing and reading written proposals led to the gradual exclusion of slum representatives (Redkar, pers. com. May, 2006).<sup>xxviii</sup>

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<sup>xxvi</sup> Two of the three sectors in which NGOs are in partnership with the BMC - Health and Solid Waste Management - are programmes with international funding, in which there are national guidelines which clearly prescribe NGO participation. Even with the executive wing of the BMC, participation of NGOs is easier said than done. NGOs are included at the implementation level only under severe prescriptive conditions.

<sup>xxvii</sup> In the slum areas where the Slum Adoption Program was promoted by the MCGM by contracting out solid waste collection and slum cleaning to CBOs, its implementation has strengthened the existing patron-client relationships between slum residents and local councilors.

<sup>xxviii</sup> Such slum areas now generally fall under the Slum Adoption Program (SAP) established in 1998 as part of a cleanliness drive by the MCGM (Redkar, 2004). Within SAP, CBOs are treated as commercial entities, supported by municipal financing for carrying out solid waste management collection and segregation activities (Desai, 2006).

Zerah's survey also indicates that ALMs in other wards have lobbied to exclude groups from their neighborhoods, particularly hawkers on the streets (Zerah, 2006)<sup>xxix</sup>. In our survey, examples were also found of exclusion of other groups as well as efforts for inclusion of marginalized groups. The general direction of PIL at this moment in India suggests that in further studies it will be important to include both sides of the picture – both the increasing inclusion of mainly middle-class citizens in interfaces with the executive side of government, as well as the exclusion of vulnerable groups who are not well represented (cf. Ramanathan, 2006).

## **EFFECTS ON SERVICE DELIVERY AND POLITICAL RIGHTS?**

This section deals with the question of what the outcomes of 'invited spaces' have been for the quality of services provided and the political rights of different groups of residents. In the middle-class (and elite) areas where the majority of ALMs were formed, ALM respondents have indicated that service delivery has improved (70% of respondents). Particularly the responsiveness of local MCGM employees has been greater than before.

In low-income areas, the lack of ALM action has meant that service delivery presumably has not changed, unless it has done so under the Slum Adoption Program.

If we look at citizenship rights, there is a clear expansion of 'spaces' – beyond the mandate and interface provided in the initial 'invited spaces'. Middle-class citizens through their collective action in ALMs, are opening up further 'negotiated spaces' in two ways. They are claiming more and better services on a priority basis, and are organizing to exclude groups from their neighborhoods they feel are 'unwanted' (slums, hawkers, unorganized economic activities). Secondly, they are moving from user groups to chooser groups as citizens, claiming a larger political space at ward and city level, although this is heavily contested.

The political negotiating of space has shown up most clearly in a number of recent developments around ALMs and LACCs. Since the success of ALMs in high-income areas (around 2004), the MCGM-executive wing wants to expand the program of ALMs to all electoral wards, and to include councilors into this set-up. The idea was that a local area committee consisting of the ward officer, residents and councilors would have weekly meetings, and have an expanded mandate (beyond SWM) to deal with complaints. The first LACCs (about 30) started pressurizing the councilors in the electoral wards in terms of their effectiveness. When the councilors began to feel threatened, they organized a protest at the city-wide Council level, and urged the Municipal Commissioner of the MCGM to disband all such committees (TOI, 19-2-05). As a result, a proposal is now on the table with the MCGM that LACCs should work at an intermediary level between electoral and administrative wards, so that the contestation between political representatives and CBOs would be reduced. In the meantime, ALMs (and LACCs) are starting to put forward their own candidates for the local elections of 2007.

## **CONCLUSIONS**

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<sup>xxix</sup> This phenomenon seems to be restricted to the one administrative ward where Zerah did her fieldwork. It was not confirmed for the other wards in a later survey by Baud and Nainan in the other wards.

Coming back to the main question raised in this paper – namely, whether ‘invited spaces’ provides effective channels for citizens to make their voices heard, we can draw the following conclusions. There are contrasting ‘invited spaces’ in Mumbai which each provide effective channels for their particular social constituency. The ALMs provide a channel for the middle-class residents to directly deal with the executive wing of local government; the ward committees provide ‘effective’ channels for vulnerable groups to address local government on individual basis to improve their quality of life situation. The opportunity for collective action which the ALMs have, is not usual in the case of the councilors and Wards Committees. The role of the political parties at the city level limits the autonomy of the councilors in certain areas, and keeps them as well as their constituencies dependent on higher political authorities.

The widening space of the ALMs is reflected in the negotiating process, which is taking place in the ALM-executive wing of local government. There the mandate provided is being expanded, and widened to include other political spaces at higher scale levels (e.g. the Citizen Action Group working at city and metropolitan level). Its effectiveness can be deduced from the backlash of political representatives, who fear a diminishing of their power.

Finally, this means that we find two models of what we prefer to call ‘negotiated spaces’. For low-income vulnerable groups of citizens, the political space remains the one through which they are able – to some extent – negotiate rights. For middle-class citizens, an ‘executive space’ is opening up which increases their direct negotiating power with local government, and provides a basis for collection organization to expand their rights at the city wide level. To what extent do we find a ‘democratic deficit’ in these contrasting models? It is clear that different groups of citizens have different rights and obligations in Mumbai – and that power is shifting slowly in favour of the middle class. This can make slum dwellers and vulnerable groups even more dependent on the political will of representatives working for them. Vertical and horizontal accountability has increased for the middle-class, as citizens can now hold their government to account to some extent.

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