JNNURM as a Window on Urban Governance
Its Institutional Footprint, Antecedents, and Legacy

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Owing to its scope, the Jawaharlal Nehru National Urban Renewal Mission is an excellent window for understanding the evolution of urban governance in India, despite its closing in 2014. The JNNURM's aspirations were belied by its realities of progressive centralisation, degraded local capacities, commercially-oriented infrastructure development, and intercity and intra-city inequalities. We identify and discuss three signatures that shaped its conceptualisation, operationalisation, and outcomes: flexible networks of policy actors and advisors; mobile policy ideas, best practices, and norms; and the pervasive role of consultancies. These signatures appear to endure, to varying degrees, in new urban programmes, with potentially far-reaching ramifications for urban governance.

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1 Background and Objectives

Urban (re)development as a tool of Indian statecraft and governance is a relatively recent phenomenon and marks a significant shift away from post-independence policies of urban containment and the primacy attached to rural development.[1] Although India remains a predominantly rural nation—with only about 34% of its 1.3 billion people residing in urban areas even now (United Nations 2015)—the rise in the political and economic prominence of a handful of key cities and megacities, including seven expected to exceed 10 million persons by 2031 (United Nations 2015), has been the driving force underpinning the more recent interest in urban issues.[2]

The Government of India (GoI) also became interested, following nearly a decade of economic liberalisation in the 1990s, in "providing infrastructure to propel growth" (Personal interview with A4).[3] Over the past decade, the government has devoted a great deal of effort to establish programmes in order to steer urban infrastructure development.

Unveiled in 2005, the Jawaharlal Nehru National Urban Renewal Mission (JNNURM) was an ambitious—and landmark—manifestation of this interest. Under the JNNURM, the government committed ₹50,000 crore over 2005–14, which was to be jointly matched by state and city governments. This massive commitment, which was directed towards 65 of India's largest and most influential cities, was raised to ₹66,000 crore (MoUEPA and MoUD 2005a; Ramachandran 2011).

Besides its obvious physical manifestations across urban India—such as the provision of buses and flyovers, trunk sewers, and water mains—owing to its massive financial outlays, the JNNURM also focused, importantly, on the "technologies of governance" (Gopakumar 2015), involving a significant overhauling of urban governance via sweeping institutional reforms. Thus, the JNNURM's enormous scope and flagship status, in terms of not only its implementation dimensions but also its reform proclivities, have exerted powerful influences on the governance architecture in Indian cities. In addition, the JNNURM has emerged as a template for national-level urban initiatives post 2014, such as the Atal Mission for Rejuvenation and Urban Transformation (AMRUT) and the Smart Cities Mission (SCM).

For all these reasons, the JNNURM serves as an excellent window through which to understand the changing nature of urban governance and statecraft in India, particularly from an institutional perspective. Although three years have passed since the programme formally ended, it is still very useful to

conduct a retrospective analysis of the JNNURM because, as we argue in this article, its legacies are still very evident in contemporary programmes of urban reshaping.

Rather than analysing how infrastructure funded through the JNNURM has physically touched down in India's cities, we are concerned with understanding the programme as a vehicle for the changing role of the state in (re)making India's urban institutional infrastructure.[4] How do large-scale national programmes of urban renewal—such as the JNNURM—contribute to urban change? Given their aspiration to transform the urban scenario in India, what are the consequences of the new channels of decision-making represented by the JNNURM? This article sets out to examine these questions in tracing the unfolding of the JNNURM. In particular, we seek to analyse the JNNURM's institutional footprint, and the key institutional antecedents of the JNNURM's programming and its reform agenda. Our effort seeks to contribute to understanding emergent urban trends and provide insights into future modes of urban governance in India.

Our analysis of the JNNURM unfolds over three sections. In Section 3, we scrutinise its operationalisation as a national programme of urban transformation, and critically evaluate its outcomes in institutional terms, against its stated objectives. In Section 4, we propose that three signatures powerfully characterised the JNNURM, and shaped its conceptualisation, operationalisation, and institutional footprint, namely flexible networks of key policy actors and advisors; mobile policy ideas, and best practices and norms, which got translated into the JNNURM's operational mechanics and its "reform-oriented" funding conditionalities; and the role of consultancies at all levels of the JNNURM's unfolding. We trace the genesis and evolution of these signatures. In the final section, we present our concluding thoughts, based on our analysis, on the JNNURM's continuing policy legacy, and its implications for critical urban scholarship in India.

2 Methodology

Our analysis draws upon key policy documents, commentaries and critiques drawn from recent scholarship in urban politics and governance in India, and on 21 semi-structured interviews with key informants, particularly for our discussion of the JNNURM's signatures. These key informants, whose roles and affiliations are listed in Table 1, were based in policy research institutions, non-governmental organisations (NGOs), and academia, and had diverse but informed perspectives on the JNNURM and Indian governance.

Our interviews were conducted in New Delhi during March–April 2013, by one of the authors of this article, while he was a visiting scholar at the National Institute of Urban Affairs (NIUA). Importantly, this position enabled crucial access to several informants, along the lines of "snowball sampling"— where one informant suggests other prospective informants. Furthermore, it also helped us become more aware of important policy antecedents to the JNNURM, which we discuss later.

The interviews were digitally recorded[5] and then transcribed and coded using a "grounded theory" approach (Bryant and Charmaz 2007). We focused on coding emergent narrative themes (conceptual clusters) both within and across our informant interviews (Czarniawska 1998). Our "narrative" approach was also inspired by Healey's (2011: 201) suggestion that studying "travelling" planning concepts and practices "can be usefully undertaken through the construction of narratives of origin, of travelling and of landing in particular sites."

3 Scrutinising the JNNURM

As noted, the JNNURM's enormous scope, in terms of its financial outlays and reform agenda, powerfully influenced urban governance and the provision of urban infrastructure and services in India. In this section, we discuss the operationalisation—and critiques—of the JNNURM, with regard to (re)making India's urban institutional infrastructure.

The JNNURM's objectives were nothing if not ambitious

> to create economically productive, efficient, equitable, and responsive cities [by] … 1. Integrated development of infrastructure services; 2. Securing linkages between asset creation and maintenance for long-run project sustainability; 3. Accelerating the flow of investment into urban infrastructure services; 4. Planned development of cities …; and 5. Universalisation of urban services so as to ensure availability for the urban poor. (MoUEPA and MoUD 2005a)

It proposed an elaborate programme architecture to address these objectives.

In order to reconcile the conflicting objectives of developing marketable and financially sustainable urban infrastructure "assets," and facilitating an urban entrepreneurial orientation to make India's cities "investor friendly" (Sivaramakrishnan 2011a: 29), while also "universalis[ing] urban services to ensure their availability to the urban poor," and making cities equitable, the JNNURM established two channels for intervention— Urban Infrastructure and Governance (UIG), which funded city-wide infrastructure such as water supply, sewerage, urban transport, and solid waste management, and Basic Services for the Urban Poor (BSUP), which targeted housing, water supply, and sanitation for the poor. Other vital sectors, such as health, education, and social services, fell outside its scope (Sivaramakrishnan 2011a).[6]

Table 1: Roles, Affiliations, and Pseudonym Codes of Key Informants

Informant's Role and Affiliation	Code
Academic researcher, public research institute	A1
Academic and retired senior bureaucrat, policy think tank	A2
Academic and policy researcher, public research institute	A3
Academic and policy researcher, policy think tank	A4
University academic	A5
Academic researcher, public research institute	A6
University academic	A7
Policy researcher, public research institute	PR1
Policy researcher, NGO	PR2
Policy researcher, policy think tank	PR3
Policy researcher, policy think tank	PR4
Urban researcher, public research institute	UR1
Urban researcher, public research institute	UR2
Urban researcher, public research institute	UR3
Independent urban researcher	UR4
Urban researcher, public research institute	UR5
Urban researcher, public research institute	UR6

The JNNURM's invasiveness in urban decision-making was heightened by its multilevel architecture that tied together city, state, and national governments for the approval, funding, and monitoring of project development and implementation. Municipal entities are effectively creatures of state governments within the Indian federal system. Although the Constitution (74th Amendment) Act, 1992 sought to rectify this situation by granting municipal authorities a more independent standing in terms of executive authority in some areas, most state governments have circumvented the spirit of the amendment (Sivaramakrishnan 2011b; Sood 2013). The JNNURM intervened in this politically charged inter-jurisdictional landscape, by requiring state governments to comply with the provisions of the 74th Amendment Act, and by making the full involvement of city authorities in operational decisions a key organising principle of the programme (Sivaramakrishnan 2011a: 52).

The question of how the central government might circumvent state governments to reorder cities nevertheless being a vexatious one, and to get around their inability to "force the states to change the terms of engagement with the city" (Personal interview with A3), the decentralisation of urban governance was sought to be effected by enticing states to "buy into" the JNNURM. This was done by linking central funding assistance for urban infrastructure under the programme to a 23-part, centrally imposed package that specified reforms in the spheres of: governance; land and property; fiscal sustainability; taxation; citizen inclusion; and public transparency (Sivaramakrishan 2011a: 28, 38; Personal interview with A3). By tying access to infrastructure funding to reform "conditionalities," essentially a "bribe" proffered by the central government (Personal interview with A3), the JNNURM established an important precedent for multilevel but centrally coordinated urban governance programming. The JNNURM also introduced an elaborate institutional apparatus in the form of toolkits, funding timelines, monitoring and approval processes, and support or handholding protocols to achieve these objectives (Personal interviews with PR3, UR5, and UR6). This apparatus also included a planning mechanism, by way of detailed guidelines for urban development by state and local governments (and contractors or consultants) via city development plans (CDPs), and a mechanism for the approval of urban infrastructure projects, via detailed project reports (DPRs) (Gopakumar 2015).

Finally, the reform and project execution agendas were exercised through steering and monitoring units at the national, state, and city levels. A central Sanctioning and Monitoring Committee appraised and approved funds, while also exercising oversight over all the JNNURM infrastructure projects. The JNNURM also featured an advisory arm—led by the National Technical Advisory Group (NTAG)—which was designed as a two-way conduit to exchange information about programme execution with sections in civil society, technical experts, and NGOs.

While a key stated purpose of the reforms was to catalyse decentralisation and make cities "investor friendly," the JNNURM unwittingly spawned unwieldy approval, funding, reporting, and accountability procedures. PR3 notes that a "one size fits all" approach was taken to project financing, and that up to four rounds of approval, per tranche, were required from sanctioning and technical committees at the local, state, and central levels. These serious problems—highlighted in the Thirteenth Finance Commission and the Comptroller and Auditor General's report—may be part of the continuous "policy learning" that some observers suggest is to be expected with a sprawling, polycentric public policy initiative that had never before been launched in India (*Times of India* 2012; Personal interview with UR5), but the net result was that funding and the projects themselves were often considerably delayed.

Relations between Centre and States

Another important and related critique has been that the JNNURM upturned the relations between national and state governments, and urban authorities. Unsurprisingly, given our earlier discussion, state governments saw the JNNURM as a backdoor means to alter the federal power structure and sought to tamp down any policy measures that might weaken their control over municipalities. One implication of this was with regard to local capacity-building. As it is, in specifying in great detail procedures ranging from project design to implementation, the JNNURM seemed to embody a "centre knows best" attitude (Mukhopadhyay 2006: 882). The sheer volume and complexity of these procedures, together with the lack of local capacity to deal with them, meant a burgeoning reliance on technical consultants, with which the states, concerned about the loss of control over municipalities, seem to have gone along. After all, consultants, given their limited stakes and temporary involvement, did not threaten the status quo on municipal control, something that empowered, permanent professional staff could potentially alter. For all of these reasons, despite the stated objective of promoting decentralised planning and governance, and the devolution of operational and fiscal powers to cities, the JNNURM effectively—and ironically—weakened the thrust towards decentralisation initiated by the 74th constitutional amendment (Jha and Jha 2010) and local capacity (Mehta and Mehta 2010), and likely furthered centralised decision-making.

Lastly, scholars and urban observers have argued that the JNNURM's implementation has resolutely promoted uneven development both across and within (project) cities. For example, because major cities possessed the required managerial capacity and financial clout to put together the plans and proposals needed to access funds, it was these cities as well as economically advanced states that captured a major share of the funding (Kundu and Samanta 2011). Meanwhile, the lack of local capacity, particularly in the more financially constrained cities, and the reliance on consultants, exacerbated intercity and inter-state inequalities (Kundu 2014; Kundu and Samanta 2011). Smaller towns received only about 20% of the funds got by the larger and more "global" mission cities (Mahadevia 2011).

But it is within particular cities that the JNNURM's effects were more invidious. The JNNURM's underlying paradigm of

"converting select cities into 'world class' ones" (Mahadevia 2006: 3399), coupled with the segregationist logic implicit in JNNURM's architecture that separated services for the urban poor from those for "regular" citizens (Coelho and Maringanti 2012),[7] and, at a more practical level, the bias in favour of investments in massive infrastructure projects caused the programme to be particularly susceptible to "elite capture" (Mahadevia 2011: 63) and exclusionary for the urban poor.

Despite the stated objective of poverty alleviation (Personal interview with UR4), the JNNURM arguably prioritised market-oriented policies focused on efficient land markets and cost recovery in the provision of public services (Personal interview with UR2). Goldman (2011: 560) suggests that the JNNURM pushed cities into debt financing and caused local bureaucracies to expend their limited energies on forging partnerships with domestic and international markets rather than on providing infrastructure that addressed people's needs.[8] The push for cost recovery underlying the JNNURM further accentuated the inequities in the provision of, and access to infrastructure, because projects were sited where the probability of returns was higher (Kundu 2014). Further, according to Mahadevia (2006), the repeal of urban land ceiling regulations and the displacement of the urban poor due to infrastructure projects could make their lives and livelihoods more precarious. Lastly, domestic funding conditionalities—with obvious parallels with externally imposed "infrastructural adjustment" measures (Dayley 1996) or with tied forms of international aid—have been linked to concerns that the JNNURM also deepened urban inequalities through the process of "dispossession" and "land grabs" (Banerjee-Guha 2010b; Mahadevia 2006), with its gains accruing primarily to private real estate and infrastructure developers, and political interests enmeshed in India's nascent "urban growth machine" (Logan and Molotch 1987).

Thus, there appear to have been some profound incongruities in the constitution of the JNNURM as a national programme of urban change. Its aspirations for decentralisation, capacity-building, and equitable infrastructure services clashed with its operational realities of progressive centralisation, degraded local capacity, a greater commercial orientation of infrastructure development, and deeper intercity and intra-city inequalities. The next section inquires into the particular signatures that buttressed the JNNURM's impacts along these dimensions.

4 JNNURM's Three Signatures

In this section, we trace the genesis and evolution of three distinct, but interrelated signatures that powerfully characterised the JNNURM's institutional footprint on Indian cities. They shaped its conceptualisation, operationalisation, and outcomes, which, critical commentators have argued, were inequitable and ran counter to its stated objectives. These signatures were: the strategic role played by flexible networks of key policy actors and advisors; mobile policy ideas, best practices, and norms related to urban governance and financing, sourced from international financial institutions (IFIs) and elite-driven urban coalitions, which got translated into the JNNURM's operational mechanics and its basket of "reform-oriented"

funding conditionalities; and the insertion of consultancies, both foreign and domestic, at all levels of the JNNURM's unfolding.

4.1 Flexible Networks

The conceptualisation and operationalisation of the JNNURM was characterised by the traversing of actors between government, international organisations, academia, the private sector, and civil society. Such inter-organisational movement has become relatively common in Anglo–American policymaking (Wedel 2012), but is still a novel phenomenon in the Indian context, where there has been a rigid adherence to the separation of state and society, a colonial and postcolonial legacy (Corbridge et al 2005). Thus, while individuals from outside government may on occasion bring their expertise to bear on policymaking, they have rarely been at the forefront of policy formulation and implementation. The JNNURM is unique in that, as other observers (Ravichandar 2007; Sivaramakrishnan 2011a) have commented, key politicians and bureaucrats within the government, but also, importantly, a range of actors occupying diverse institutional spaces outside government, played a key role in shaping the programme prior to its launch in 2005–06. Indeed, what is striking about the JNNURM is the pervasiveness of flexible inter-organisational networks, comprising all manner of linkages spanning trans-local boundaries in its assembling. We explore these networks in our discussion below. Wedel's (2012) work informs our analysis of this dynamic process.

First, and crucially, it should be noted that the government initiated the formulation and launch of JNNURM in 2005–06 just after the Congress party came to power following the general elections in 2004 (Sivaramakrishnan 2011a). The JNNURM was conceived of as a response to concerns, on the part of key individuals in the Prime Minister's Office (PMO), the erstwhile Planning Commission, Central Finance Commission, and in the central Ministry of Urban Development (MoUD) and Ministry of Housing and Urban Poverty Alleviation (MoHUPA) (Sivaramakrishnan 2011a; Personal interviews with A2, PR3, and A7) regarding the economic viability of Indian cities, and that of foreign investments in them, particularly given their state of infrastructure and governance (Personal interview with A5). Further, it was felt that it was important to try something novel *and* systemic to transform how cities function and are managed, in a way that responded to the "unfulfilled agendas of urban reform" (Personal interview with UR2), starting with the 74th Amendment Act, discussed earlier. Issues related to urban infrastructure financing were also raised. Further, the then chief bureaucrat in the MoUD wanted the JNNURM to be a "Big Bang" rather than a small-scale activity (Personal interview with A2), an aspiration also expressed by another principal architect of the JNNURM: "We used the word 'Mission' very consciously. It [the JNNURM] has to be seen as a mission and not a programme" (Personal interview with A3).

While the initial impetus for the JNNURM came from the government, a larger network comprising individual and

organisational actors outside government were also actively involved in shaping the programme. Some of them were affiliated with international financial institution (IFI)-led reform initiatives, including the World Bank (especially its Water and Sanitation Program), the Asian Development Bank (ADB), and the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) (Personal interview with A3). Also importantly, individuals from the Indo–US Financial Institutions Reform and Expansion Program—Debt & Infrastructure (FIRE-D) project of USAID (discussed in the next subsection) worked closely with the JNNURM's key domestic policy architects (Personal interview with UR5). Given the work done by the World Bank on urban governance reform in some Indian states (Andhra Pradesh, Karnataka, and Gujarat), the JNNURM became an opportunity to consolidate these efforts nationwide (Personal interview with PR3).

Importantly, the network also drew actors from academia, think tanks, and civil society and business groups. Prominent among the last group were organisations such as the Bangalore Agenda Task Force (BATF) and Bombay First (modelled on London First and New York First). These organisations were organised by business elites to advocate a greater role for cities in national policy, given their contributions to the economy and tax base (Personal interview with UR3), and espoused a reform agenda aligned with corporate visions of urban transformation.

BATF—whose members included the former chief executive of Infosys and a former Citibank executive who also was a founder of Janaagraha, a non-profit organisation focused on civic governance (Janaagraha 2017)—played an important role in lobbying for a national urban mission, and thereafter in shaping the JNNURM, through intensive interactions with key personnel in the PMO, the Planning Commission, the ministries of finance and urban development, and the World Bank (Personal interview with PR3). The latter individual's experience with urban governance reforms in Bengaluru had imprints on the JNNURM's institutional design; notably, he was asked to chair the NTAG, the vehicle through which the civil society network underpinning the JNNURM was institutionalised within its programme architecture.

These examples illustrate the flexible and translocal interorganisational networks that shaped the JNNURM. These networks have not been without criticism—the mingling of involvement in urban NGOs, and governmental and special committee appointments, exemplified by BATF and Janaagraha, have been identified as "neo-liberal Trojan horses," which, under the guise of good urban governance, better city infrastructure, and civic empowerment, have advanced commercial interests in land use, infrastructure, and real estate sectors in ways that override electoral representatives and democratic processes (Benjamin 2010: 103–04). Similar concerns about the serious limitations on public participation and access to information about infrastructure decision-making posed by the actions of unelected, elite actors, and parastatal bodies have been raised by Baindur and Kamath (2009: 35; Personal interview with UR3).

4.2 Policy Mobility and JNNURM's Basket of Reforms

In the previous section, we discussed the role of flexible—and intertwined—networks in assembling the JNNURM. Here, we focus on how mobile policy ideas, best practices, and norms sourced from IFIs and elite-driven urban coalitions shaped JNNURM programming, and, indeed, the very nature of post-millenial urban governance praxis. Such policy imports and insertions involve what McCann and Ward (2012: 45) describe as "globally-mobile resources, ideas, and knowledge."[9]

Although prior investments in public infrastructure existed through mega-projects such as the National Highway Development Project, the Mumbai–Delhi Industrial Corridor programme, the Pradhan Mantri Gram Sadak Yojana, or even publicly-financed mega-events like the Delhi Commonwealth Games, what made the JNNURM unique was how multiple ideas were deliberately brought together into a basket of reforms and reform conditionalities related to process, performance, and accounting, among other issues (Personal interview with A2).

IFIs did not finance the JNNURM directly, but their footprint was evident in both programme design and execution; indeed, learning from the IFI experience was crucial in this regard, according to key policy architects of the JNNURM (Personal interviews with A2 and A3). An important aspect, as noted, was the development of city development plans as a condition for receiving funds. This key feature was inspired by World Bank investments during 1975–95 in urban development in Mumbai, Chennai, and Kolkata (for example, the Madras Urban Development Programmes 1, 2, and 3), which abandoned Master Plan approaches in favour of strategic investment plans (Personal interview with A7).

The stamp of the IFIs on programme design was also evident in the strategies for infrastructure financing that incorporated measures such as local resource mobilisation, fund pooling, and user charges. A key antecedent was the work of FIRE-D (Personal interview with UR5), a 16-year-long joint initiative of USAID and the Government of India, launched in 1994. It aimed to assist municipal authorities and state governments in India develop and ensure equitable access to water, sewerage, and solid waste infrastructure and services, by involving municipalities, the private sector, and community organisations, by improving local capacity, and supporting cities to mobilise market-based financial resources (USAID 2004). FIRE-D's two central propositions, financing infrastructure through capital markets, and cost recovery through user charges, found their way into JNNURM: "The main contribution of FIRE-D [to the JNNURM] … was that services should not be given for free … cost recovery and user pay… [and that infrastructure] services can also be financed by capital markets" (Personal interview with A3).

Yet another key antecedent was in relation to the modalities of fund transfers. The central government had explored pooled lending schemes for urban infrastructure development since the mid-1990s, via, for example, the Mega Cities Initiative, the World Bank-supported City Challenge Fund, for financing the costs of reforms, and the Urban Reforms Incentive Fund, to help cities address land reforms and related issues (Personal

interview with PR3). Although the funding provided was small and quite narrowly targeted, these programmes were significant because, while state governments were previously free to use fund transfers from the central government to formulate and implement policies as they saw fit, these programmes envisaged a novel reform-oriented, interventionist role for the central government in urban affairs, by making funding available for cities only if they satisfied certain preconditions.

Apart from promoting "best practices" to enable "market ready" cities, particularly in Tamil Nadu and Karnataka, the IFIs co-managed urban pilot projects (such as Ahmedabad's municipal bond offering of 1996) that were considered worthy of emulation. Beyond these interventions (and influences discussed earlier), market-oriented policies and financing models, and public–private partnerships—long advocated by the World Bank, USAID, and ADB—were significantly transplanted into the JNNURM's programme, as Baindur and Kamath (2009: 23–32) clearly show (Table 2). The IFI-recommended measures incorporated into the JNNURM included those that A3 (Personal interview with A3) underlined as the most crucial for overcoming obstacles to efficient land markets and market readiness, such as the reform or repeal of the rent control, land control, and stamp duty legislations.

The World Bank and the ADB also played a crucial role in capacity-building and technical assistance in operationalising the programme (Personal interview with A3). Both institutions guided the process of approving and assessing city plans and project proposals, via the development of toolkits, strategies, and evaluation standards. The NIUA's Peer Experience and Learning initiative (PEARL), to promote mutual learning regarding urban governance, and to help create peer-to-peer evaluation networks amongst cities, was supported by the World Bank (NIUA 2014). Meanwhile, the JNNURM's key technical advisory team within the MoUD was provided $2 million by the ADB (ADB 2006), and operated through the programme's lifetime. This team provided assistance in legal and regulatory reforms, city planning, project development, financial planning, and capacity-building, besides helping develop guidelines for preparing and appraising CDPs and DPRs, as discussed above. All these initiatives crucially shaped the process of decision-making in the JNNURM programme. Interestingly, the NIUA, a national, arms-length, non-profit policy research institution, was closely linked to the USAID's FIRE-D project. This linkage, and the ADB's pivotal role at the centre of programme implementation by the government, provides an illustration of how very intertwined domestic organisations and IFIs were in the assembling of the JNNURM.

Yet another key factor that forged the assembling of the JNNURM as a reforms basket was the urban change discourse projected by civil society business groups such as Bombay First and BATF. Corporate success stories (such as the Housing Development Finance Corporation in the development of housing finance, or Infosys in the area of information technology) were held up as role models for city managers to participate more effectively within the globally interconnected economy, and for urban governance, more broadly. A variety of measures such as reports, task forces, "citizen platforms," and demonstration models allowed these groups to facilitate interactions between corporate representatives and city managers. BATF, in the early 2000s, embraced an interventionist approach that included working closely with city agencies (Ghosh 2005) to fashion a range of urban infrastructure exemplars, which could then be more widely emulated. These city-specific interventions would later become the basis for fashioning the policy thrusts of the JNNURM.

While the narrative of urban revisioning and renewal in a period of globalisation has roots in domestic corporate groups such as Mumbai First and BATF, external IFIs, as seen above, also clearly shaped JNNURM's programme design and operationalisation, and sowed the seeds for new modes of urban governance. One could argue that the imprint of external IFIs that one finds in the JNNURM is merely a reflection of the current practice of urban governance in an increasingly market-driven economy. But what is significant here, as we have seen in subsection 4.1, is the presence of flexible social networks spanning public, private, and international entities that allowed for isolated reform ideas and practices from across the country to come together and be articulated in a coherent, programmatic fashion. This mode of "socialisation" greatly enhanced the reach of the JNNURM's basket of reforms.

Table 2: Role of IFIs in Shaping JNNURM's Urban Governance Reforms

IFI-recommended State and Local Reform Measures	JNNURM's Reform Agenda
Repeal of the Urban Land (Ceiling and Regulation) Act, 1976 (World Bank 2004)	Repeal of the Urban Land (Ceiling and Regulation) Act, 1976
Rationalisation of stamp duties and reduction of rates in a phased manner (World Bank 2004)	Rationalisation of stamp duty to bring it down to no more than 5%
Phasing out of rent control laws; indexing rents of municipal properties to market rents	Reform of rent control laws; introduction of computerised processes of land registration
Unbundling municipal services to create user-charge revenue streams for each service	Different departments handling different services, separate accounts maintained for each
Enabling a shift to a capital value-based system of property tax; improvement of collection efficiency; linking property taxes with market prices (World Bank 2004)	Reform of property tax, and arrangements for its effective implementation to raise collection efficiency to 85%
Improving cost recovery of local utilities; linking taxes and charges with services provided (World Bank 2004; ADB 1999)	Levy of reasonable user charges, with the objective of full recovery of operation and maintenance costs
Introduction of double entry, accrual basis of accounting (World Bank 2004)	Adoption of double entry, accrual basis of accounting in urban local bodies and parastatals
Community support fund and community infrastructure guarantee facility (World Bank 2002)	Enactment of community participation law, and community participation fund
City development strategy and city-level investment planning	Preparation of City Development Plan

Sources: Baindur and Kamath (2009: 27); MoUEPA and MoUD (2005a, 2005b).

4.3 Rise of 'Consultancy Urbanism'

The third signature is the inextricable intertwining of what Amin (2013: 489) refers to as "business consultancy urbanism" within the JNNURM's fabric. Amin's critique prompts our examination of consultancies in retooling India's urban governance. Large, international consultancies, as well as smaller domestic ones, played a crucial role by inserting the provision of private human resources at all levels of the JNNURM's unfolding.

Amin (2013) suggests that global and local alliances and "business urbanism" consultancies have valorised urban regions as key nodes of economic development embedded in the current global order. Within the JNNURM, this enterprise has been carried out through urban championing and policy formulation at the national scale, and programme execution at the local level. Urban championing is initiated by portraying cities as a neglected (or little understood) national constituency. International consultancies, such as McKinsey and PricewaterhouseCoopers (PwC) (whose 2008 report titled "Cities of the Future" Amin cites), then propose policy actions to rectify this situation. For example, McKinsey Global Institute (MGI)—McKinsey's economic and business research division—released "India's Urban Awakening: Building Inclusive Cities, Sustaining Economic Growth" in 2010. This report purported to influence the path of Indian urbanisation by recommending how to "mitigate the strains of urban life in India and maximise the opportunities offered by cities" (McKinsey & Company 2010: 4). Indeed, the language in the report, which has become a cornerstone in the discourse on urban governance reforms in the country, closely mirrored the key justifications of the JNNURM, which were that the "development and expansion of physical infrastructure" is needed for "sustaining social and economic progress," and for strengthening cities as "engines of economic growth" (MoUEPA and MoUD 2005b).

Also, the timing of the MGI report was not accidental. It predated (and paralleled) the report of the government-appointed High Power Expert Committee to review the JNNURM, and the Twelfth Five Year Plan; indeed, there were discussions with McKinsey at the time of developing the plan, and also Phase 2 of the JNNURM (2012–14) in the context of the plan (Personal interview with A3). The MGI report's role as a distinct marker of urban reform in India is a product of the enormous amount of information, including data on Indian cities and detailed budget estimates, that it marshalled, a task that central and state governments in India had themselves not attempted before (Personal interview with UR1). Apart from illustrating the deep reach and influence of consultancies, this highlights the dependence of the central government on these ostensibly independent sources of expertise.

The rise, in India, of consultancies focused on urban areas is at least partially linked to the actors discussed earlier, who may have worked for or been connected to consultancies and the IFIs. These organisations frequently place advisory consultants in government agencies, who shape norms such as public–private models (Personal interview with A6)

and generate tendering procedures that in turn induce the services of third party consultancies. Indeed, the consultant reports of the sort discussed serve as a kind of echo chamber for governments, civil society organisations, businesses, and IFIs, providing lucrative benefits for consultancies.

Another striking example of this phenomenon is the case of McKinsey working with Bombay First (whose role we discussed previously), IFIs, and government officials to produce the *Vision Mumbai* report (Bombay First and McKinsey & Company 2003). This effort continued with a $4 million proposal, "Transforming Mumbai into a World Class City" by the Mumbai Task Force (2004), comprising government and UNDP officials, World Bank and USAID specialists, and "civil society groups," including McKinsey and Bombay First. The proposal highlighted McKinsey's (pro bono) and Bombay First's contributions to justify their request for funds (Mumbai Task Force 2004: 10). They suggested that their proposal would be transferable and scalable, and that industry bodies would "help create the demand for similar assignments in other states" (Mumbai Task Force 2004: 11).

At the level of policy formulation, the numerous procedures associated with executing the JNNURM also became fertile ground for consultancy work. The introduction of policies, guidelines, or evaluations—driven by consultants—created important entry points for them to insert themselves again into managerial or other influential roles. For instance, PwC staffing the mission secretariat in the MoUD with consultants, in part to "prepare/revise guidelines and toolkits" for implementing the JNNURM at the local level (Baindur and Kamath 2009: 29), and calling for tenders in neighbourhood-level DPRs. Similarly, policymaking documents were authored by private consultancies at all levels of government—for instance, MoUD-commissioned reports and mid-term appraisals of the JNNURM conducted by Grant Thornton India (2011), the formulation of state-level policies, and city-level infrastructure project proposals.

However, the defining act of consulting in the JNNURM was in relation to programme execution. The plethora of criteria, guidelines, and measures that state and city governments had to satisfy over short time frames for infrastructure projects to be accepted and funded, and the pervasive absence of the requisite local capacity, compelled states and cities to rely on consultants to produce CDPs and DPRs (Personal interviews with PR4 and UR6). Employing consultancy firms (for as many as five years in some cases [Personal interview with PR3]) was viewed by cities and states as a low-friction pathway to meet programme criteria in order to receive funds. Indeed, as our research in Karnataka in 2013 showed, the JNNURM's state-level nodal agency consisted almost entirely of consultant employees or contractors.

The crucial role played by consultancies in policymaking and implementation related to the JNNURM has had wide-ranging effects. Many consultant-authored CDPs were practically identical, despite the wide variation in the socio-economic, cultural, and geographical attributes of Indian cities; and often, their technology recommendations

were similarly unsuited to the context (Personal interview with PR4). According to one informant, the consultants "should at least be congratulated that they didn't mix up the names of the cities on the different CDPs" (Personal interview with A2).

The privatisation of decision-making effectively degraded—rather than created—civil service capacity in urban local bodies where it is most lacking (Personal interview with UR2); emasculated consultative and participatory impulses incorporated within the JNNURM programme (Personal interview with A7; Coelho et al 2013); reduced public accountability (or scrutiny), and invited undue influence from external agencies and actors (Baindur and Kamath 2009: 25–26); and closed off avenues for poor urban citizens to express their voice in decision-making (Benjamin and Bhuvaneshwari 2006).

Finally, because the CDPs were consultant-driven and rapidly crafted, they were "not owned by the urban local body or the people," and the vision articulated in them was not attuned to ground realities. "Very few CDPs talked about who are the poor, where do they live, what do they do and how, in terms of planning the city, their desires and aspirations could be woven in" (Personal interview with UR6). These points mirror Ash Amin's critique of the "Cities of the Future" report, for selectively envisioning the city for "elites, consumers and creative classes," and focusing on exclusive urban spaces while being "largely numb to the interests of the increasingly disenfranchised and poor majority" (Amin 2013: 479).[10]

5 Conclusions: An Enduring Legacy

The JNNURM's objectives were to improve the country's urban infrastructure, provide basic services for its urban poor, and reform urban governance. It was also intended as a means of catalysing a significant overhaul of urban policymaking while directing massive public investments into the sector. But these laudable objectives were framed within an overarching imperative for cities to stoke India's economic growth in a world structured by global capitalism. This orientation significantly skewed the JNNURM's outcomes, with several commentators and our informants arguing that it exacerbated inter- and intra-city inequalities, while also contributing to the growing centralisation of municipal governance.

Thus, although an important stated objective of the JNNURM was citizen inclusion and transparency, unelected and unaccountable actors representing urban NGOs, international funding agencies, and consultancies drove policymaking, in the process severely limiting public participation, sidestepping elected representatives, and subverting democratic processes. Despite the stated objective of greater decentralisation, the JNNURM imposed one-size-fits-all reform conditionalities and approval and monitoring processes involving many agencies with overlapping responsibilities at multiple levels. This overwhelmed ill-equipped, under-resourced, and overburdened local governments. In turn, these processes paved the way for the proliferation of consultants, which undermined local capacity-building and reinforced tendencies towards centralisation. Finally, despite the stated objective of poverty alleviation, the

JNNURM prioritised infrastructure development to promote economic growth, and market-oriented policies and cost recovery, over meeting the basic needs of the urban poor in the provision of public services.

We have identified and discussed the signatures that powerfully shaped the conceptualisation and operationalisation of the JNNURM, and accounted for its problematic stamp on Indian urban governance—flexible networks of key policy actors and advisors; mobile policy ideas, best practices and norms, which got translated into the JNNURM's operational mechanics and its "reform-oriented" funding conditionalities; and the pervasive role of consultancies in all aspects of the programme. Indeed, the JNNURM's agenda of urban change, conceived nationally, and implemented through an elaborate architecture, assembled a vehicle for a confluence of interests comprising national-level urban reformers, transnational organisations, and local actors working for corporate and civil society organisations, all of whom aspired to insert reform practices deep within India's emergent urban governance.

In the case of the new central urban programmes such as AMRUT and the Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojana (PMAY), which were launched in 2015, there appears to be greater scope for decision-making, and for variations in programme design and implementation, at the state and local levels, as opposed to a centralised "one-size-fits-all" approach. In the case of AMRUT,[11] the government has established criteria for the selection of cities and allocation of funding, and conditionalities related to issues such as the adequacy of land and financing for the implementation of projects, including, importantly, for operation and maintenance; and also for reforms (regarding professionalisation of municipal cadres, the development of city-level plans, the devolution of functions to ULBs, cost recovery through taxes and user charges, etc). However, the states, and not the MoUD, unlike in the JNNURM, are responsible for the evaluation and approval of specific projects, which are proposed by municipalities in the form of Service Level Improvement Plans (SLIP), which in turn are combined into State Annual Action Plans (SAAP) for approval by the MoUD (2015).

At the same time, the guidelines for AMRUT (MoUD 2015) call for an all-encompassing role for external consultants; indeed, "end-to-end support" is to be provided by external Project Development and Management Consultants (PDMCs) for planning, project design, procurement of contracting firms, implementation, and project management and monitoring. More specifically, the PDMCs will prepare citywide concept plans, SLIP, SAAP, and the DPRs for projects approved under the SAAP, including public consultations at the draft DPR stage (MoUD 2015: 74–76).[12] The "end-to-end" involvement of consultants in all aspects of AMRUT raises serious concerns regarding civil service capacity-building in relation to urban affairs and public accountability.

Also worrisome is the stated prescription that PPPs "should be the preferred execution model" for projects (MoUD 2015: 15, 75). The feasibility and desirability of PPPs for delivering

water supply, creating sewerage and waste water infrastructure, and providing services in particular is highly questionable, especially given the overwhelming evidence that there is little or no interest on the part of private actors to invest in this sector, particularly in regions such as South Asia (Castro 2008). Also, that private sector participation has performed poorly in this sector, including in terms of significant and regressive tariff hikes, resulting in the termination or non-renewal of contracts, and the remunicipalisation of water and sanitation services, not only in middle- and low-income, but also high-income countries (Lobina et al 2014).

Even in the case of the SCM, Taraporevala (2017a, 2017b) notes that while the process of the selection of smart cities is centralised, there is a similar degree of latitude and flexibility in the formulation, approval, and implementation of projects, leading to differences across smart city plans in various cities. Nonetheless, there are serious critiques of the SCM with regard to its operationalisation and its likely outcomes (Burte 2014; Reddy 2016; Nair 2017a, 2017b).

First of all, Reddy (2016) highlights the role of consultants in smart city plan selection and development—cities had to seek advice from Bloomberg Philanthropies, and employ consultants from an identified list, including McKinsey and Deloitte, to participate in the centralised selection process—and of multinational companies in their implementation. Incidentally, the concept of the "smart city" has its origins in Cisco's Connected Urban Development and Smart+Connected Communities programmes, and IBM's Smarter Planet and Smarter Cities initiatives, of the early 2000s (*Information Age* 2012). Second, the lion's share (around 80%) of the proposed central investment in the SCM will flow to Area-Based Development (ABD) projects (primarily commercial development and business districts) in already well-endowed zones, that account for a mere 3% of the cumulative area of cities. Not only that, the remaining 20% of the SCM investment concerning the "pan-city" component is not allowed to be spent on capital expenditure for infrastructure (Nair 2017a).[13]

The net result of the SCM will likely be exclusionary, and very expensive[14]—enclave development for the already privileged few, with little for the vast majority who have massive unfulfilled needs in terms of basic infrastructure and services. Further, as Nair (2017b) notes, the balance over and above the combined central and state investment in the SCM will come from private sources that will need to be recovered via user charges, which, while important for municipal finances—especially since octroi has been abolished—will likely be regressive in its impact.

Lastly, because smart cities will be implemented through Special Purpose Vehicles (SPVs), which will have the rights and responsibilities of municipalities but will not be accountable to them, and up to 40% representation for private entities, with minimal participation by municipal bureaucrats and elected representatives, on their boards (Nair 2017b; Taraporevala 2017d), there are serious concerns that decision-making related to smart cities will likely be far from transparent, participatory, inclusive, and democratic, and

will likely further disempower the municipalities.[15] Besides, because of the ability of the SPVs to incorporate funding for other government schemes such as the Swacch Bharat Abhiyan and affordable housing into the SCM budget (Reddy 2016; Taraporevala 2017c), the smart cities—which already have the potential to produce exclusionary enclave development for the privileged few—will likely further drain funding away from basic infrastructure and services for the majority of urban residents.[16]

So, the signatures of the JNNURM appear to endure to varying degrees in the new central urban programmes, with potentially far-reaching ramifications for urban governance in the coming decades.

Finally, what are the implications of the JNNURM for critical scholarship on emerging patterns of urbanisation in India? The roll-out of neo-liberalism, critical urban theorists have proposed, has a marked urban locus that manifests through the "interiorisation [of neo-liberal programmes] in urban policy regimes" (Brenner and Theodore 2002: 368). Such programmes of "actually-existing neo-liberalisms" (Brenner and Theodore 2002: 353) are not just inextricably embedded within specific political–institutional contexts but possess an emerging agency to reorient cities (Peck et al 2009) towards a regime of inter-urban awareness, referencing, and competition. The JNNURM clearly embodies such an emergent agency.

The rise of inter-urban consciousness, while certainly present in urban scholarship (Bunnell 2015), has all too often been presented as a construct put in place by local urban actors, or is related to the antecedence effect of a single city. The role of national urban programmes—like the JNNURM—in achieving a pervasive inter-urban consciousness remains largely under-investigated. This is especially so within multi-scalar contexts such as India, where, although research has considered the antecedence effects of Singapore, Shanghai or London on individual cities, it has failed to appreciate the rise of a pan-Indian urban consciousness.

Another important area for critical investigation is the increasingly pervasive role of consultancies, and their interests, aspirations, motivations, and projects, which will provide insights into the role of private versus public interests in shaping India's future urban governance.

This article has focused on the institutional footprint of the JNNURM as a vehicle for urban change. It is just as important to critically examine the political economy of infrastructure and services funded through the JNNURM (and its successor programmes), in terms of how projects are evaluated, selected, and justified; and their outcomes, in terms of who wins, who loses, who pays, and who benefits. Will massive new investments under future programmes merely reinforce the economic growth paradigm, much like the JNNURM did? Will a small, already privileged, urban elite benefit, and at whose expense? What will they take away from the provision of basic services, which remain sorely lacking for tens of millions of India's urban poor? These are questions that need serious consideration.

NOTES

1 One rare post-independence antecedent for integrating urban infrastructure and governance is the large-scale planning and development of the new capital city of Chandigarh during the 1950s and 1960s.

2 For example, a study by IIHS (2011: 10–11) estimated that while the hundred largest cities in India produced around 43% of its total gross domestic product, the 53 cities with a million-plus population (with 13.3% of the country's population) produced as much as 32%.

3 A4 is the pseudonym code for one of our informants. Table 1 lists our informants, the nature of their roles and affiliations, and pseudonym codes. All the interviews were conducted over March–April 2013.

4 A similar approach for analysing policy as a window into the Indian state can be found in Deepta Chopra's (2011) work. She suggests that statecraft involves both "the act of governing (through the making of policies)" and "dynamic practices through which the state itself is reconstituted and shaped" (Chopra 2011: 93).

5 Approval for this research was received from Concordia University's research ethics committee. In accordance with this approval, informants were anonymised and their names replaced by codes indicating their roles, as in Table 1. Identifying details have been removed from quotations.

6 Despite the JNNURM's stated objective of earmarking 40% of funds for BSUP, less than 33% of the JNNURM funds were reserved for BSUP with the remaining 66% going to UIG (Mahadevia 2011: 60).

7 The framing of urban poverty and "inclusive" policy interventions such as the JNNURM, according to Coelho and Maringanti (2012), operate within an overarching market-oriented paradigm that not only reinforces the production of the middle class consumer but also propagates a class-based distinction in urban governance.

8 Goldman (2011: 560) suggests that the JNNURM's reforms "encourage[d] corporate partnerships between foreign service providers and public goods managers in state agencies, borrowing capital from international markets and financing debt through municipal bonds, and other steps that convert these small bureaucracies into competitive and 'responsibilised' agents … of new urban financial and governance norms."

9 McCann and Ward (2012: 45) suggest that policy mobilities involve "'[s]olutions-starved' actors, often under pressure to 'deliver' successfully, quickly, and at low cost, [who] 'scan' globally looking for pre-tested policy models that have been anointed as 'best' in one way or another, with the idea of 'importing' them."

10 Amin (2013: 479) identifies a symmetry between the logic of planners and consultants—in global cities, whether in the North or the South—in their calls for "coalitions between the municipal authorities, businesses, and the middle classes, to define and police the boundary between the clean and safe city with productive potential, and the dirty, illegal and threatening city hindering progress."

11 The thrust areas of AMRUT, which replaced the JNNURM, are water supply, sewerage, storm water drainage, non-motorised and public transport, development of green spaces and parks, and administrative and technical capacity-building of urban local bodies for urban governance. The total outlay planned is ₹50,000 crore, to cover 500 cities and towns during the period 2015–16 to 2019–20. The allocation of funds is based on an equal weighting of the urban population and the number of statutory cities and towns in each state or union territory (MoUD 2015).

12 See in particular Annexure 8 of this document, in which the roles of the PDMCs are detailed.

13 In Pune, ₹2,196 crore, out of a total outlay of ₹2,870 crore, will be spent on the ABD component, for street redesign, bicycle lanes, a hundred electric buses, an express airport service, and a 3.5-km waterfront development, to serve a population of merely 40,000 (1% of the city's population), in Aundh–Baner–Balewadi, which covers just 3.6 sq km (1.3% of the urban area). The remaining ₹674 crore for the pan-city component will be spent almost entirely on information and communication technology (ICT) projects—a command-and-control centre, WiFi hotspots, sensors for environmental monitoring, and PA systems—to be produced by L&T, Google, IBM, and Rail Tel (Nair 2017a).

14 Flyvbjerg (2009) notes that the cost overruns over initial estimates are as high as 100%–500% in the case of ICT projects, vastly higher than even for rail projects.

15 See, in this regard, Baindur and Kamath (2009).

16 There is, of course, the more fundamental question of the appropriateness of "smart cities"—involving as they do the use of ICT to control and optimise water, sewage, traffic, and other urban systems, and in urban governance more broadly—in the Indian context, characterised as it is by the massive lack of access to basic infrastructure and services on the part of a significant proportion of urban residents; and serious institutional and technological deficits. What is needed in India are not "smart cities" but rather, as Reddy (2016) points out, liveable, inclusive, and equitable cities that ensure access to all those things that make a decent life possible, for all of their citizens.

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