# Contents

**Introduction**  
Anirudh Burman  

ESSAY 1  
**How does Globalization Impact Cities? A Review**  
Anirudh Burman  

ESSAY 2  
**State-Led City Building in India**  
Anirudh Burman  

ESSAY 3  
**Understanding Institutional Change and the use of Policy Instruments for Infrastructure Development in Cities**  
Anirudh Burman  

ESSAY 4  
**Fixing Urban Governance Institutions**  
Anirudh Burman  

ESSAY 5  
**Freeing Up Defense Land for Urban Growth**  
Anirudh Burman  

ESSAY 6  
**Rent, Modernity, and the Transformation of Delhi’s Villages**  
Anirudh Burman
ESSAY 7
A City and the Spirit of Progress: A Review of London 1870-1914, A City at its Zenith by Andrew Saint
Suyash Rai

About the Authors

Notes

Carnegie India
Introduction

Anirudh Burman

Urbanization is both a consequence of economic growth and a process that requires careful governance for enabling economic growth. Cities and towns are labour markets that grow as the demand for skills increase, but they also constrain growth if not governed well. This collection of essays delves deep into the phenomenon of urban development in India, with an emphasis on the role of the state. The Indian urbanization process, as explored in these essays, is characterized by state-led projects.

These essays also review how individuals and communities have responded to these state-led efforts, either as facilitators and beneficiaries, or as losers in process of high-modernist state building. Some of these essays offer a broader perspective to understanding urbanization by looking at Victorian London, and discuss the process of institutional transition in London, New York and Copenhagen. As a collective body of work, this compendium reviews and analyses the processes of economic forces, institutional design and change, and the processes of adaptation that accompany urbanization.

The impact of globalization on Indian cities is discussed at length in these essays. They highlight the increasing integrated nature of India's economy to the world economy (“How does Globalization Impact Cities? A Review”). Indian cities like Mumbai, Delhi NCR, and Bengaluru, are major players in the global economy, and demonstrate a strong correlation between their urban real estate dynamics and global market trends. This highlights the need to pay more attention to Indian cities as sites of global economic geographies. It also leads one to recognize the futility and problems of conventional ideas of urban planning.

The essay titled “State-Led City Building in India” highlights state-led city development as a defining facet of Indian urbanisation. Urban development has been shaped by the implementation of state planning and market dynamics to state planning. Another theme discussed in this compendium is the design and evolving nature of urban governance
Urbanization institutions ("Understanding Institutional Change and the use of Policy Instruments for Infrastructure Development in Cities"). Cities like London, New York, and Copenhagen embraced value capture mechanisms to fund infrastructure projects, showing innovation and adaptability in the pursuit of building infrastructure. These examples present the possibilities of organic institutional adaptation, as opposed to normative approaches to institutional design.

India too has seen multiple institutional innovations like smart city governance agencies and metro development agencies.Along with understanding the possibilities of institutional change, the essay titled “Fixing Urban Governance Institutions” highlights the importance of getting accountability mechanisms right in Indian institutions. Institutions that oversee urban governance arguably suffer from misaligned accountability mechanisms. There is often a disconnect between the accountability of municipal commissioners and the specific needs of a city’s residents.

Institutional adaptation in India might even call for a disruption of spaces and lifestyles. In some cases, like the freeing up of cantonment land, now often situated in the heart of growing cities, decision making is required at the central level and coordination and implementation at the local. Different imperatives can inform different measures. Freeing up land held by military cantonments is governed by the importance of making optimal economic use of valuable land ("Freeing Up Defense Land for Urban Growth").

On the other hand, the acquisition of village land in the heart of Delhi is governed by high-minded state action in an attempt to create orderly living spaces out of the chaos of informality. This has led to profound social and cultural shifts among the affected communities ("Rent, Modernity, and the Transformation of Delhi’s Villages").

The process of socio-economic and cultural transformation is not unique to India. A review of the literature on London’s urban development in the late 1800s shows that London’s urban transformation was also marked by an adaptive and responsive interplay between individuals and institutions ("A City and the Spirit of Progress: A Review of London 1870–1914, A City at its Zenith by Andrew Saint"). Not only did these interactions shape the city’s landscape and architecture, it also influenced its social norms and civic life in the process.

In sum, this compendium of essays provides a multifaceted view of urban development. Largely a collection of reviews of literature on urbanization, it invites readers to take a historical and evolutionary view of city development in India. One is prompted to consider Indian cities as an amalgamation of state-led initiatives and citizen engagement, grappling with the dynamics of globalization and economic growth.
Knight Frank’s report on India’s real estate market for July–December 2022 states that demand for residential property is at a nine-year high and that demand for office real estate is also strong. Given that India’s major real estate markets are cities like Mumbai, Delhi NCR, and Bengaluru that service the global economy, it is worth examining the degree to which cities and urban land markets in India are influenced by global economic forces. While the Knight Frank report points out some domestic drivers for the resurgence in demand for real estate, it points to some facts that can also be understood as the influences of globalization:

1. Leading Indian metros, which have been understood to be some of the main beneficiaries of globalization, continue to account for a significant percentage of real estate transactions in 2022 as well.

2. Bengaluru, an IT services hub, accounted for more than one-fourth of the total area transacted, and overall, the IT sector accounted for more than one-fifth of the total office space area transacted in the second half of 2022.

These facts indicate that, in addition to domestic sources of demand, the demand for land in major Indian cities is also product of India’s participation in the global economy. However, we do not yet have good answers on the degree to which globalization affects demand for land and urbanization in general. In this review, I examine some literature on the effects of globalization on urbanization, the demand for land, and the spatial arrangement of cities.
Broadly defined, globalization is the free movement of capital, goods, and services facilitated by lower capital controls, lower tariffs, and harmonized trade procedures. It also encompasses a regime allowing for the free dissemination of technology and easier human mobility. Gill-Chin Lim states that global economic forces will have all-encompassing spatial impacts on cities—on industrial activities, population, densities, housing, transportation, natural resources, public facilities, and patterns of clustering.\(^2\)

However, globalization also has disparate and unequal impacts on cities. Some cities benefit disproportionately, while many others see marginal benefits. Many cities also see a decline. In other words, cities that already have, or can quickly develop, skills and infrastructure to benefit from the current patterns of globalization succeed, while others fail. Some research is indicating that for the most successful cities, there may be a greater convergence in real estate price movements among them than between their domestic competitor cities.

Global trends have an impact on real estate values because they affect the locational value of a piece of property relative to the value of property in another city that competes in the same kinds of industries—finance, technology, logistics, and so on. This has made real estate, a sector that was traditionally considered local, much more global (Bardhan and Kroll 2007).\(^3\)

As a 2015 review of the relevant literature notes, a growing body of research is confirming that “increasing international economic links resulting from flows of goods, services and money lead to some degree of alignment in the behaviour of international real estate markets.”\(^4\) As per this review, researchers have found the following: (a) a “long-run relationship… [in] office market returns” in London, New York, and Tokyo; and (b) “international [real estate] markets are integrated in the long term despite seemingly low short-term return correlations.”

There is some evidence to show that this group of “superstar cities”\(^5\) may be “decoupling”—certain cities are becoming significantly more expensive than others and show a much higher variation in office rents than other cities. However, this research is not yet conclusive, and other research has failed to find clear evidence for strong correlations between major global cities.\(^7\)

Another aspect of the impact of globalization on the spatial dimensions of cities is with respect to population density. At one point, conventional theory posited that advancements in communications and the rapid dissemination of technology would make the need for dense agglomerations less relevant for conducting businesses. Cities would therefore de-densify. The opposite seems to have happened—cities have in fact become more dense in the last three decades.\(^8\)
In her book, *Cities in a World Economy* (2019), Saskia Sassen points out that “when telecommunications were introduced on a large scale in all advanced industries in the 1980s, we saw the central business districts of the leading cities and international business centers of the world—New York, Los Angeles, London, Tokyo, Paris, Frankfurt, Sao Paulo, Hong Kong, and Sydney, among others—reach their highest density of firms ever.”

Why is densification coexisting with globalization? Sassen was one of the first to point out that globalization has in fact increased the need for human interaction, for clustering together, and for higher-density cities. She argued that the abstract representation of a global city misses out on the everyday processes needed to keep the globalized economy ticking:

*Missing from this abstract model are the actual material processes, activities, and infrastructures crucial to the implementation of globalization… Increased capital mobility not only brings about changes in the geographic organization of manufacturing production and in the network of financial markets, but it also generates a demand for types of production needed to ensure the management, control, and servicing of this new organization of manufacturing and finance… These types of production have their own locational patterns; they tend toward high levels of agglomeration.*

According to her, in a globalized economy, cities become sites where entirely new kinds of business practices get created. This makes cities centers from where global businesses are managed. They are command centers for global and regional businesses. This actually requires a lot more centralization in some respects. Due to this increasing sophistication, cities also require highly specialized services. Cities then also become key places for the production of services catering to businesses.

These features of globalization therefore make certain cities tend toward higher densities. A new industry providing services in major cities is replacing the manufacturing-related office. Sassen also notes that these phenomena are more true of major or “world” cities rather than all cities. She and many others find that globalization has in fact led to the increasing decline of cities that are unable to take advantage of the current patterns of globalization.

There is inadequate research linking the densification of Indian metropolitan cities to globalization, though research indicates the outsized benefits of globalization in their favor. Early research on the impact of globalization, however, indicates the disparate and unequal benefits of globalization on Indian cities. For example, O. P. Mathur (2005) found that “the direct impacts were geographically concentrated in six larger cities” and that “globalization has not accelerated urban growth.”

His paper found that the effects of globalization focused largely on trade, capital, and technology but did not lead to any changes in sectors such as land and water. He also found unequal impacts of globalization, which predominantly benefitted six large cities (in terms of Foreign Direct Investment or FDI) at the cost of others. He found that while there is an increasing demand for residential and commercial space, globalization has not
led to any overall urban growth. Narayana (2010) also finds higher population growth and concentration in select urban areas as a result of globalization.11

This literature is largely focused on studying the effects of globalization on large cities and metropolitan areas. While it may be true that these cities may be the biggest beneficiaries of globalization, there is also new knowledge about its effects on small-city India. Small-town urbanization is often ignored as a subject of study, even though a significant percentage of India's urban population lives in small towns. Partha Mukhopadhyay and other scholars studying small-town urbanization in India provide interesting instances of how entrepreneurs in small towns and cities are able to take advantage of the globalized economy.12 One example is of Tiruchengode in Tamil Nadu:

*The Tiruchengode of today excels in the drilling rig industry. Companies from the city are able to export their low-cost borewell drilling trucks to Africa where their adaptation to local needs is appreciated, especially the ease of repair and maintenance. These manufacturers developed the ability to satisfy markets neglected by large European and American truck makers who produce sophisticated vehicles that are too expensive for certain countries and cannot be customized to local needs.*

Yet another example is of Udupi in Karnataka:

*[In Udupi], …an assemblage of towns and villages is known as far away as Japan for supplying fishnets, as well as for the quality of their fish products (Benjamin, 2017). These traditional activities have been able to cope with the advent of globalized trading, not least because local private actors have been engaged in development initiatives to grow this strong and open regional economy since the beginning of the twentieth century.*

Another scholar notes that “Many small towns in Tamil Nadu that have experienced a rapid and important growth such as Tiruppur, Bhavani, Arani, Tiruchengode….13 Their productive units are involved in multi-regional links and eventually they concentrate capabilities to directly trade internationally.”

We therefore have evidence that at least some part of the small-town urbanization in India is based on residents capitalizing on transnational economic opportunities. However, while the dynamics of urbanization in small-town India are now relatively better understood, the different ways in which these dynamics are linked to globalization have to be explored further.

Finance also enables easy remittances, and the Indian diaspora is one of the largest remitters in the world. It would seem that in smaller towns and villages that are centers of out-migration, the remittance economy would be an important causal factor leading to urbanization.
One paper reviewing studies on India’s small-town dynamics (2015) notes that “remittances of international migrants are an important source of finance for small enterprises in small urban settlements. They also affect the spatial morphology and quality of life in towns through increased construction activity and change in consumption practices.”

This impact of remittances on urbanization has been studied in Kerala and Goa, but research on this issue seems scanty.

While this is a preliminary review and therefore not exhaustive, it appears that there are many understudied aspects of globalization in India, from the continuing effects on large metropolises to the remittance economy and the broader urban processes prevalent in small-town India. However, after three decades of globalization in India, it is evident that the study of urbanization in an open economy is to also study the impact of global economic forces on India’s towns and cities.
City building in India has often been approximated to nation building. Towns in newly independent India were planned and built not just to provide housing and administrative capitals but also to reflect India’s capability to modernize and develop. The new cities of Bhubaneswar, Chandigarh, and others exemplify this attitude. More than seven decades after India’s independence, the Indian state, at various levels, continues to plan and build new towns and cities. Major fiscal initiatives focus on greenfield urban or city-building projects outside the existing jurisdictions of key cities.

According to one review of urban studies literature in India, scholarship on this phenomenon has been “statist” on the one hand. On the other hand, such literature has focused attention on the “unregulated, deregulated, unplanned and unintended city” created by these processes. Ashima Sood and Loraine Kennedy’s recent book, India’s Greenfield Urban Future: The Politics of Land, Planning and Infrastructure (2022), continues this trend. According to its authors, this edited volume focuses on the renewed interest in “new” or “greenfield” city building in the states’ effort to “instrumentalise the urban in pursuit of economic growth.” In doing so, this edited collection of case studies on new city-building projects continues an older theme of examining the states’ interest in building new towns after independence.

The book investigates new city-building projects across India. Examples include urbanization along highways in Karnataka and Maharashtra, town building along the Delhi-Mumbai Industrial Corridor (DMIC), peri-urban developments in West Bengal and Telangana, and a private township in Bengaluru. Through these series of case studies, the volume provides a cartographical exploration of the contextual yet similar impulses that have driven these projects. It also provides insights into the political and economic contestations that enable or frustrate them.
Kennedy and Sood’s opening chapter introduces the renewed interest in city building for economic growth.\textsuperscript{17} It explains the ideas that ground this motivation for city building across both the central government and the level of the states. One central idea is that of treating new cities as growth engines. Another common idea is to bypass restrictive regulations and establish more governance regimes believed to be more efficient. New city projects are developed under a provision of the Indian Constitution that exempts the development of “industrial townships” from municipal governance institutions. In turn, and by implication, this points to the third common idea that views constitutionally mandated governance institutions as hindrances to state-led city building.

Next, Sai Balakrishnan’s chapter on highway urbanization reports the results of a field study on city building across the Bengaluru-Mysuru highway and the Pune-Nashik highway.\textsuperscript{18} In doing so, the chapter highlights institutional innovation in planning for urbanization. The focus of the study is to highlight the issues local governance institutions face in responding to the pressures of urbanization on a regional scale. Balakrishnan finds that even though the respective state governments of Karnataka and Maharashtra have the requisite legal powers, effective coordination for development in both cases has required the presence of a local politician who intermediates between the interests of urbanization and the incumbent landholders and villagers. These local leaders have been critical in innovating new arrangements to ensure consensus for development, such as returning 40 percent of the land to affected villagers rather than outright acquisition.

Shriya Anand and Neha Sami’s chapter studies city building in Dholera, which lies along the DMIC.\textsuperscript{19} Their study reports another distinct institutional arrangement, where the new urban city of Dholera will be planned by regional development authorities, and no provisions exist for conventional representative local governance institutions. In addition, the chapter highlights the similar yet contrasting ideational and developmental roles of the central government and the affected states, Gujarat and Rajasthan. In doing so, the chapter highlights the degree to which the DMIC project is a top-down process. It also highlights the lack of coordination in planning between local authorities and the DMIC’s process.

Sudeshna Mitra’s chapter on the peri-urban development projects in Kolkata and Hyderabad\textsuperscript{20} and the chapter by Preeti Sampat, again on Dholera,\textsuperscript{21} analyze their respective subjects from the perspective of the reordering of social and economic relations against the backdrop of new town building. Both chapters emphasize common themes of the commodification of land into real estate, and both question the degree of optimism and the degree of local consensus in the planning and developmental process.

Gopa Samanta and Akash Banerjee’s chapter on the proposed Aerotropolis in Andal, West Bengal, highlights how the expectations of the project’s success and the consequent economic boom were flawed from inception.\textsuperscript{22} The lack of a viable catchment area has made the airport a nonstarter, and flights have had to be subsidized, leading to the opposite of the expected outcome. Mathew Idiculla’s chapter on the Electronics City in Bengaluru provides a history of how it came into being, the unique private governance institutions that
govern the area, and the reasons for its success. Idiculla, however, also problematizes the disconnect between the governance regime within Electronics City and its periphery.

Each of these chapters, as well as others in the book, is an informative exploration of the theme of state-led city building in India. As the editor’s note, in contrast to many developed countries where urban rescaling is often reactive and defensive, this process is proactive and top-down. It is worth observing, however, that not all chapters point to a story of discontent and dispossession. In many of the cases, local actors are able to negotiate favorably for a share of the pie of the benefits likely to accrue. Some cases, like that of Andal in West Bengal, are also stories of infrastructure investments gone wrong, though the local residents see the benefit of the project.

Another contribution of the book is to portray the degree of institutional innovation and ingenuity involved in planning, developing, and negotiating these projects. While a large part of the urban literature focuses on the problems of urban governance in conventional institutions like municipalities, this volume sheds light on the institutional variations across these new urban areas. For these reasons, this book is a useful contribution to the literature on urbanization in India.

At the same time, the chapters in the book arguably do not adequately represent the economic logic and imperative of city building. For the most part, this form of city building is seen as problematic and contested. Contestations over development, however, are routine. More data and discussion on the stated objectives of city building in each of these cases, the degree to which those objectives have been met against project costs and timelines, and the benefits of the commodification of land would have made the discussions in this volume more insightful. In all, this book is a useful and informative exploration of the phenomenon of state-led city building.
How do cities meet serious infrastructural challenges, and how do institutions adapt to meet these challenges? In India, this has been a regular issue of deliberation and research. Even as India urbanizes, the quality of urbanization remains problematic. Basic infrastructural issues pertaining to roads, transport, sewage, and water supply constrain the capacity of our cities to function more productively.

One persuasive argument that attacks these problems is that the use of better policy instruments in planning and infrastructure development can help overcome existing difficulties. However, existing institutions, ideas, and interests, it is argued, often come in the way of using these instruments. This line of argument presupposes institutional change before better policy instruments are put into practice.

Simon van Zoest and Tom A Daamen examine the dynamics of institutional change and the use of novel policy instruments in urban infrastructure policy across three different cities. They study the use of value capture mechanisms for financing metro infrastructure in London, New York, and Copenhagen. Their paper titled “Explaining Value Capture Implementation in New York, London, and Copenhagen: Negotiating Distributional Effects” (2024) studies how institutions, broadly defined, changed in response to the need to develop this infrastructure.24

One of the main claims the authors make is that the shift to a value capture mechanism or instrument is not just about the novelty of the mechanism. It also reflects a process of
institutional change. Studying value capture from this perspective, the authors argue, is useful in understanding the politics of implementing a novel mechanism in local contexts. In order to do so, the authors deploy Elinor Ostrom and Douglas North’s conceptions of institutions “as the rules and prescriptions shaping and influencing the behavior of individuals and their decisions. These institutions can be both formal and informal.”

The authors argue that in understanding the adoption of value capture mechanisms, there was a process of gradual institutional change observed in each of the cases they studied, with respect to both the formal instruments and rules as well as the informal institutions. Through their case studies, the authors also challenge the winner-loser perspective on institutional change, according to which the losers of existing institutions support change, while the winners oppose it. They argue that “short-term behaviors do not always match long-term strategies, and institutional change does not necessarily emerge from actors with transformational motives.”

To flesh this argument out, they detail three cases of metro rail development where value capture instruments were used. These are summarised below.

**London’s Business Rate Supplement**

The Crossrail 1 project is, according to the authors, a pivotal shift in infrastructure financing in London. This new subway line spans 119 kilometres and increases the city’s rail capacity by 10 percent. About 28 percent of its funding, approximately 4.1 billion GBP, comes from existing commercial property owners through the Business Rate Supplement (BRS).

UK’s infrastructure projects traditionally relied heavily on national government funding. However, the enormous investment required for Crossrail 1 necessitated a different approach. Given the project’s significant financial demand and political resistance, especially from outside London, the government sought to engage local beneficiaries in its funding.

Implementing the BRS required companies to contribute directly to a specific infrastructure project. This method, though politically and financially impactful, garnered support due to the anticipated economic growth and improved connectivity. Businesses, particularly those near the proposed line, perceived the project as crucial for maintaining London’s competitiveness in the global market. The route’s extension to include Canary Wharf and Heathrow Airport further solidified this support.

However, securing these funds involved more than goodwill. Local authorities actively engaged with the business community, conducted workshops, and developed transportation models to showcase the project’s benefits. This strategy reframed the funding narrative, indicating that the project’s realization depended on local contributions. A significant development in this process was the active lobbying for VC legislation by some of the major beneficiaries, recognizing that it would ensure a broader financial contribution base, including their competitors.
The collaboration of local business leaders, the Mayor of London, and the national government was crucial in advocating for and implementing the BRS. This collective effort underscored the project’s significance for London’s economic and transport development and the national economy.

**New York’s Subway Extension**

The authors describe New York City’s approach to funding the 2.4 km extension of the No. 7 subway line as very different from that to London’s Crossrail project. This smaller-scale infrastructure project was crucial for developing Manhattan’s West Side and was entirely funded through future property tax income.

In New York, public transportation projects are usually funded by the Metropolitan Transportation Authority (MTA) or the federal government. The No. 7 line extension was not prioritized by either. This left the city to shoulder the financial responsibility for the extension. This development was facilitated by a zoning change allowing for high-density construction, leading to the creation of the Hudson Yards, a significant high-rise area.

The authors state that the city’s innovative financing involved creating a designated financial district around Hudson Yards. For a period of twenty to sixty-four years, all property taxes collected in this area would be specifically allocated to fund the subway extension and related public works.

The implementation process in New York differed significantly from London’s Crossrail project. In New York, the city administration itself was the main beneficiary of the funding strategy. The decision to earmark its own property taxes deviated from the norm of state-funded infrastructure projects. This shift was driven by the city’s broader strategy to foster economic growth and maintain Manhattan’s status as an economic center. The subway access to Hudson Yards was seen as a critical condition for the area’s development.

The authors, however, point out that despite the success of this venture, the city administration is cautious about broadly applying such strategies, preferring only to consider them on a case-by-case basis.

The authors argue that the institutional change represented by the No. 7 subway line’s funding approach was primarily a means to an end for the city administration. While the New York State supports such institutional changes, NYC’s veto power in using such schemes indicates that this approach remains a one-off strategy rather than a systemic shift in funding infrastructure projects.
Land Transfer in Copenhagen

Copenhagen’s approach to financing its first two metro lines is a third variant of using value capture for infrastructure funding. Beginning in 1996, these lines, extending 20.4 km and costing 1.64 billion euros, were entirely funded through land development, a significant deviation from Denmark’s traditional reliance on national government funding for such projects.

The authors argue that the financial and political context in Denmark at the time made traditional funding methods untenable. This situation necessitated an alternative funding approach, for which a 310-hectare site west of Copenhagen’s city centre was identified. The site was owned jointly by the state and the municipality. This underused land presented an opportunity for large-scale area development, with the potential revenue earmarked for funding the metro lines.

To capitalize on this opportunity, the state and the municipality established By & Havn, a public development company. They transferred their land to this entity at no cost, and By & Havn commenced the construction of the subway lines using government loans. The subsequent rise in land value due to the construction of the metro lines and a change in zoning regulations enabled By & Havn to repay these loans through the sale of the developed land.

This innovative funding approach required a significant departure from existing arrangements. It demanded close collaboration between the state and the municipality, despite their strained relations, and an entrepreneurial, risk-embracing mindset. This shift was driven by Copenhagen’s economic decline in the 1980s, the municipality’s near bankruptcy, and the pressing need to revitalize the city’s infrastructure to foster economic growth.

Satisfied with this model, subsequent infrastructure projects in Copenhagen also deployed land development for funding—the inner-city metro ring and its branch lines were also funded through similar arrangements. The authors also suggest that this value capture strategy involving land transfers to a separate legal entity has become a preferred method for funding new subway lines in Copenhagen.

The authors present a few interesting insights based on these case studies. First, they find that the new value capture mechanisms actually required “displacement” or a significant shift from existing practices or rules. Each of the instruments adopted was a significant departure from existing practice and, in the cases of London and New York, required new legislation. Second, they find that contrary to intuition, beneficiaries of existing institutional frameworks supported and advocated for the value capture instruments, sometimes in collaboration with other stakeholders. Third, the stakeholders viewed the changes in financing mechanisms as a means to pursue strategic goals, rather than seeking institutional change for its own sake.
Higher levels of government in each of these cases also considered the success of value capture mechanisms instrumentally. They considered the benefits of value capture as a strategy for freeing up funds for other expenditures. These instrumental considerations drove institutional change, rather than the other way round. Fourth, the authors find that the support of beneficiaries is critical to the adoption of value capture mechanisms.

In conclusion, each of these cases speaks to the issue of the relative prioritization of institutional change over the adoption of better policy instruments. Sometimes, as the paper discussed here argues, the adoption of novel policy instruments is achieved organically through a process of institutional change, which in turn drives institutional change in favour of the novel policy instruments.
How much does institutional design matter in urban governance? This question became a political one in the recently concluded municipal elections for India’s capital city of New Delhi. In the months leading up to the election, the central government merged three of Delhi’s municipalities into one—the Municipal Corporation of Delhi. The move was widely panned as a political one, with critics claiming this would benefit the incumbent councillors of the three municipalities and hence the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP). While the BJP ended up losing the elections to the Aam Aadmi Party (AAP), for students of urban governance, the move deserves to be studied on its own terms—will the redesign of urban governance institutions lead to better urban governance?

A World Bank report “Institutional Models for Governance of Urban Services” (2021) authored by Matthew Glasser addresses this and other questions in a comparative context. The report is based on a study of municipal bodies in four cities in India, and two each in South Africa and India. The study analyzes whether, and which facets of, the design of municipal services institutions impact outcomes the most. In the U.S., the report studies the water, sewerage, and road transport bodies in Chicago, Illinois, and Dayton, Ohio. In South Africa, the study covers the cities of Johannesburg and Mbombela. In India, the study covers the cities of Ahmedabad and Nadiad in Gujarat, and Amritsar and Patiala in Punjab.

For each city, the report details the institutional design of the relevant service delivery institutions—municipal corporations, departments, spin-off municipal enterprises, and special districts—and provides stylized information and analysis about their place in the larger urban governance ecosystem, autonomy, and their accountability mechanisms and financial performance.
The report raises and answers important questions, starting with the one posed at the beginning of this review. It asks whether institutional design has any bearing on outcomes. As per the report, institutional “coherence” itself does not seem to have much of an impact: “Institutional coherence is no guarantee of success. . . . South African cities are significantly more integrated than Indian cities, both horizontally and vertically, and yet the range of outcomes is similar.” The report instead speculates that differences in outcomes could also have other explanatory factors, like differences in GDP and per capita income - “Given the dramatic differences in terms of GDP per capita, one obvious hypothesis is that cities in a rich country can afford to provide better services than cities in poor countries. Although the Indian cities may be burdened with fragmented institutions, it is wise to remember that the per capita GDP in the US is thirty times that in India.”

Does this mean that governance improvements will happen automatically as India grows? Following this line of thinking would imply that institutional fixes are unnecessary and that growth will solve all problems. The report points to institutional differences and their consequences that deserve remedial attention—fixing accountability mechanisms. It notes that accountability chains in India are both long and often disrupted because of the way our urban governance institutions are structured.

By way of comparison, the report states that in Chicago, “the long-route of accountability for Chicago’s water service is direct, relatively short, and effective. The citizens of Chicago elect a Mayor, who acts as the Chief Executive of the city – all department heads report directly to the Mayor.”

In India, the Municipal Commissioner’s accountability is often misaligned with city residents: “The Commissioner’s accountability leads back to state citizens, rather than ULB citizens specifically. In Ahmedabad, for example, the Commissioner is accountable to Gujarat’s Principal Secretary for Urban Housing and Urban Development. . . . Ahmedabad’s particular needs do not determine state priorities.”

There are contrasting examples that highlight better accountability mechanisms within Ahmedabad itself. The governing board of the bus rapid transit system (AJL) includes “… Mayor, the Chair of the Standing Committee of the AMC (Ahmedabad Municipal Corporation), the opposition party leader of the AMC…”, all of whom are responsible to local residents. Given that the same cities contain institutions with better local accountability mechanisms, it is curious why these practices are not replicated within other institutions in the same city. This is a question the report does not address.

The report concludes that institutional coherence is necessary but not sufficient for improving outcomes, but improvements in accountability and participatory mechanisms do tend to lead to better governance outcomes. This finding is relevant to the ongoing Indian discussions on the institutional designs of urban governance bodies, and whether a particular institutional form is appropriate for certain kinds of urban service delivery bodies.
It also provides food for thought for the other important question relating to urban governance—if state governments are unwilling to devolve power to municipal governance bodies, how are the improvements proposed in the report supposed to take place? All the changes proposed in the report, from fundamental changes to incremental ones, depend on the willingness of the central and state governments to devolve power. However, city governments seem more reliant on them than ever before.

For example, a recent RBI report on municipal governance highlights how Indian municipal bodies, on average, are more fiscally dependent on external sources (rather than their own revenues) than they were in the 1960s.\textsuperscript{26} While the World Bank report underscores the importance of city governments being financially autonomous and accountable to local residents, it is unclear how this will take place given the increasing financial dependence of these bodies on external financing. The report therefore lays out a pragmatic approach to improvements in urban governance, but even modest reforms will require the other tiers of government to act in enlightened self-interest, or for cities to somehow negotiate powers away from states.

The answer to Delhi’s local governance problems does not necessarily lie in the number of municipal bodies but in whether these bodies derive their resources and their legitimacy from local sources. At their core, as the report implies repeatedly, institutional problems are necessary but not sufficient for solving political problems.
Last month, the Indian government took a significant step toward potentially opening up more land for urban development within Indian cities. In April, the Ministry of Defence (MoD) initiated a plan to transfer the civilian sections of military cantonments in Indian cities to the respective municipal bodies. The MoD holds around 17 lakh acres of land in the country and is one of the country’s largest landholders. Of these 17 lakh acres, approximately 1.6 lakh acres of land are within sixty-two cantonments that are often located within or adjacent to cities. In some cities, this can account for a significant portion of the city’s total area. In Ahmedabad, for example, it is estimated that the cantonment area occupies 7 percent of the city’s area.

While cantonments were initially established at the peripheries of cities, city expansion has led to many of them now being located in key areas within these cities. This has been the case in cities such as Pune, Lucknow, and Delhi. As such, these cantonments often occupy prime real estate. In addition, the restrictions on development within cantonments have often hampered the city-wide deployment of infrastructure and services. Cantonment areas have extremely stringent floor space index requirements and building bylaws that impose significant constraints on growth. Additionally, cantonments prioritize lower population densities, making them anomalous within populous Indian cities.

For example, as per the 2001 census, Hyderabad’s overall population density was approximately 21,048 persons per square kilometer, but the density in the Secunderabad Cantonment Board in Hyderabad was just 5,131 persons per square kilometer. Similarly, as per the 2011 census, Delhi-NCR had an overall population density of 29,259 persons per square kilometer, whereas the Delhi Cantonment area’s population density was just 4,235 persons per square kilometer. This is a highly suboptimal use of scarce urban land in cities marked by very high population densities.
In addition, this land is also often underutilized. A 2010–11 report of the Comptroller and Auditor General (C&AG) found that “58,529 acres of acquired land were lying vacant. Out of this, 49,831 acres of land acquired between 1905 and 1990 were lying vacant since its acquisition.”\(^31\) With the phasing out of cantonment areas, this underutilization of prime land is likely to abate gradually.

The location of cantonments within cities has sometimes created tensions between the civilian population and the armed forces owing to the restrictions imposed in cantonment areas. Until 2018, for example, cantonment boards in many cities had closed down roads within cantonment areas that connected different parts of the city to one another.\(^32\) For example, the following has been observed in Hyderabad:\(^33\)

*While the rest of the twin cities have seen construction of flyovers, Metro connectivity and other infrastructure developments, the residents of the areas under the Secunderabad Cantonment Board were caught in a time warp… since the local military authority have kept 21 key roads closed in the cantonment.*

Cantonment boards have also been dismal at monetizing land resources on their own. In the 2010–11 report on defense estates, the C&AG found that “as of March 2010, 2500 acres of land valuing Rs. 11,033 crore was on lease for an annual rent of Rs. 2.13 crore.”\(^34\)

In addition to using land suboptimally, cantonment areas also fragment urban governance. Cantonment areas are governed by cantonment boards, not municipalities. This makes city planning arduous, as any planning involving cantonment areas requires coordination with cantonment boards that are not accountable to the city’s population. The civilian population that lives within cantonment areas also suffers from this fragmentation of governance. For example, mortgages are difficult since all land within the cantonment either belongs to the armed forces or is leased out. Recent amendments to the relevant rules, allowing people to convert from leasehold to freehold properties, are expected to make this easier.\(^35\)

Until recently, if a state or municipal government required any land from a cantonment board, it had to provide land of equal value to the cantonment. This made the provision of infrastructure difficult. In 2020, the union government modified these requirements to allow cantonments to receive “equal value infrastructure” development in return for land.\(^36\) This is one of the many moves, including new rules for cantonment land administration, that the government has initiated to make better use of high-value land resources available within cantonments located amid cities.\(^37\)

This decision to absorb cantonments into municipalities has been arrived at after several efforts to encourage or force better land use within cantonment areas. For example, last year, the government eased construction norms for building close to cantonments, which stipulated that there could be no buildings within 500 meters of a cantonment area.\(^38\)
While there are no clear indications or statements explaining why it is now that the government is moving to resolve these issues, there could be three possible reasons:

1. The poor utilization of cantonment land, its misuse, and the inability of the cantonment administrations to use prime urban land properly. The government had proposed a new regulatory framework for cantonments under a draft Cantonment Act, 2020, to overhaul the regulatory framework for managing these areas, but seems to have gone in a different direction altogether now.

2. The escalating demand for well-situated cantonment land from cities, municipalities, private builders, and real estate developers would have been significant. Most Indian cities have been expanding outward to cope with the demand for urban space. Cantonment lands present a great opportunity to provide land for urban development well within the core of the city. Demand for this land, combined with the poor utilization of cantonment land by the respective cantonment boards, may have led to these changes.

3. The increasing fiscal constraints on the MoD, especially in light of its acquisition program and the implementation of the One Rank One Pension scheme, may have increased the incentives to take decisive measures with regard to cantonment land. It is worth noting here that the Fifteenth Finance Commission had been asked to examine the issue of capital outlay for defense modernization and had recommended, among other things, the monetization of land as one of the sources for meeting this expenditure. While handing over cantonment land to municipal authorities does not lead to monetization, it does signify a willingness to take decisive steps driven by fiscal considerations that may not have been taken otherwise.

Irrespective of the reason, it will be interesting to study the manner in which this process unfolds. Larger and more populated cantonments will be more difficult to close, and their closure will face greater resistance. In addition, it will also be interesting to note how land and real estate markets respond to these changes and how they decide to pursue goals of profit maximization by making more efficient use of newly available land.
When land and real estate markets start getting disrupted due to state action, the character of the affected communities, their communal linkages, orientation towards land and property, and their outlook towards modernity change inexorably. In “Properties of Rent: Community, Capital and Politics in Globalizing Delhi” (2022), Sushmita Pati pens a multi-faceted sociological study of the contemporary changes in the real estate and housing market in the urban villages of Delhi.

Pati’s field of study is two of Delhi’s urban villages—Munirka and Shahpur Jat. Starting in 1959, land in these urban villages was acquired by the Delhi Development Authority. While the agricultural lands within the villages were acquired, the lal dora or residential areas were left in order to simplify and hasten the acquisition. One consequence of this was that these lal dora areas did not have to subscribe to the city’s master plans. Pati notes that over the years, these parts of the villages have come to resemble unauthorized colonies because of the chaotic, unplanned construction within them. In addition, the slow pace of development in the acquired areas led to encroachment and illegal construction.

Pati looks at these processes from a sociological lens, using the idea of “rent” to understand the different dynamics related to land, built property, caste, and most importantly, how kinship relationships have changed due to the unavoidable interactions of the local residents with the larger city of Delhi and their participation in the city’s economic growth.

Pati’s introductory chapters focus on the history of land acquisition and the negotiations, land grabbing, and encroachments within these two urban villages. She describes how land acquisition as a process was marked by unfairness, delays, and disparate outcomes for different families in both Munirka and Shahpur Jat. The compensation was not uniform,
the state assessed compensation by refusing to acknowledge the market value, and some common land like wastelands was acquired without any compensation. Pati persuasively argues that seen from this perspective, the difference between state acquisition and illegal encroachments begins to blur.

The book’s second chapter describes the consequences of these changes on the dominant Jat community in these villages. They were at once both victims coping with drastic changes to their way of life and making as well as entrepreneurial agents speculating on the newly commodified land markets within these villages. This seeming contradiction is a consistent theme within the book. Many villagers became landlords and used rental income for subsistence and growth. As is true for all risk-taking, while some benefitted, others lost.

The two villages also developed unevenly. Their spatial location in the city and developments in the surrounding areas had a significant impact on how these two villages developed. Pati notes that Munirka has developed as a lower-income settlement and is home to a large population of migrant workers. In contrast, Shahpur Jat, which is located close to the upscale neighborhood of Hauz Khas, has emerged as a hub for boutiques and restaurants on the one hand and garment manufacturing on the other.

Pati highlights that these neighborhoods represent two different trajectories of urban development in Delhi. According to her, Munirka has been subject to neglect by the state. Shahpur Jat, on the other hand, has been the focus of urban regeneration efforts, and its transformation has been driven by global capital. In addition, Shahpur Jat received significant attention because the Asian Games Village of 1982 was constructed right next to it. This was followed by economic liberalization in 1990s, which provided a flip to land prices and private business. While in Munirka, this resulted in an increased demand for low-income housing for migrants, it took the shape of demand for affordable commercial real estate in Shahpur Jat.

Pati emphasizes the role of caste and kinship linkages in the development trajectories of these two villages. Her description is a nuanced portrayal of how these linkages have, on the one hand, transformed and weakened in their confrontation with modernity and markets, and on the other, been mechanisms through which dominant groups in these villages (mostly Jats) have gained and retained control over the local property markets. In her telling, traditional decision-making bodies like khap panchayats have now slowly transformed into entities more legible to the state, like RWAs. These bodies, now with official recognition, can “sometimes work as a village development committee, or an organisation of landlords, [or] as an organisation of struggling entrepreneurs. . .”

Through these mechanisms, dominant groups within these villages are able to maintain control over the rental market and also resist pressures from tenants to demand better housing and services. This has consequences for tenants, who are unable to complain about high electricity charges or sudden increases in rent. In addition, while these villages cater to the housing needs of immigrants, the relationships of the property-owning groups with
their tenants are complex. On the one hand, landlords are forced to reconcile with different cultural ethos of tenants from the North-Eastern states of India, from African countries, and those with LGBTQI± identities. On the other hand, this reconciliation is superficial and prone to acts of overt and covert discrimination and harassment.

Pati’s comparison of Munirka and Shahpur Jat provides a nuanced perspective on the complex processes of urbanization in Delhi’s urban villages and highlights the social and political implications of these transformations. However, it is debatable how far the use of “rent” as a sociological perspective is relevant for studying these transformations.

Others analyses of Delhi’s urban villages (examples here and here) have described similar transformations but without using the idea of “rent” as a prism. It is true that control over rent in these villages is emblematic of social and economic control. But at the same time, as Pati herself demonstrates, this control is heavily contested, often superficial, and prone to subversion by individual and group entrepreneurialism.

In addition, Pati’s analysis argues that it is the role of neoliberal policies that have shaped this dynamic of dispossession, contestation, and transformation, which can be uniquely understood through the perspective of rent. This is disputable. Pati’s analysis equally highlights the high-handed and arbitrary injustice of land acquisition policies. One may argue, just as strongly, that the sociological changes in Pati’s study are a product of high-modernist statism. As Anthony de Jasay has argued in his frighteningly persuasive work “The State” (1998), the state can be simultaneously representative and autonomous. From this perspective, the state is not only an instrument of ideological agendas such as neoliberalism but also an autonomous agent that uses coercion to dispossess. Pati’s account of the capture of some common land resources in these villages by government bodies illustrates this perfectly.

From this perspective, one may also seek to understand the effect of coercive developmental mechanisms on the social changes that Pati studies. Socialism or neoliberalism and the instruments used by the state to further these ideas have remained the same. The properties of such statism have as much explanatory power in understanding transformations in these urban villages as the properties of rent.
The great portrayer of Victorian London, Charles Dickens, died in 1870. At the time, London, the center of a sprawling empire and the commercial capital of a rapidly globalizing world, was growing fast, both economically and demographically. While the city was plucking the many fruits of empire and modern global capitalism, there was significant poverty and deprivation. The city was not yet institutionally equipped to deal with these challenges, even though there were many volunteer efforts to alleviate the suffering. The challenges persisted, but many of the problems, such as abysmal living and working conditions, weak social security systems, a lack of widely accessible educational institutions, and an overwhelmed city infrastructure, were substantially addressed in the following decades.

Andrew Saint’s book, *London 1870-1914, a City at its Zenith* (2021), recounts what progress was achieved and how. Saint is a longtime chronicler of London, having previously served as the general editor of the Survey of London. He has authored many books on the city, and on architecture and urban planning. An excellent work of urban history, Saint’s book is an absorbing study that balances architectural history, biographical accounts, institutional history, literary references, the analysis of political economy, and descriptions of quotidian life across classes. Including more than two hundred well-chosen illustrations, the book is also beautiful to look at. Moreover, Saint presents a description that is neither too high-level nor too detailed. He is aware of the structural changes but does not take away the agency of the individuals and groups doing the work. Saint also does not get lost in the minutiae—a temptation not easily overcome while writing about an interesting place at an interesting time.
Everything happens in a city—fortunes rise and fall, buildings are raised and razed, people fall in and out of love, artists create great and mediocre art, people make and trade, people migrate to and from the city, people make a home, and people work and have fun. Hustlers and flaneurs abound. A profound restlessness is present in the nature of any great city. Even by such standards, the London of that era was unusually restless. However, many improvements were happening even though things appeared chaotic. A new civic life supported by a modern civic infrastructure was emerging.

Saint captures this restlessness in his writing style. The book does not linger on any topic for too long, a quality that makes it immensely readable. It gives just an essential sense of a phenomenon and moves on. At the same time, he establishes key milestones of progress by nearly dividing the book into four chapters. Each chapter describes certain key changes that took place during a decade, except the last chapter, which covers the period between 1900 and 1914.

The chapter on the 1870s starts with a description of a large, ostentatious mansion that was never lived in and was pulled down soon after it was built. Commissioned by Albert Grant, a confidence trickster on whom Trollope based the character of Melmotte in The Way We Live Now, the house could not survive the financial ruin of its owner. While figures like Grant represent the dark side of a vibrant economy, there was much more to London than hustlers and their follies. Saint also describes changing social norms—marriage between men and women from different classes, women founding businesses, and women partaking in recreational activities in public, such as skating. Additionally, a new establishment, the Grosvenor Gallery, emerges in the world of art and kicks off the Aesthetic Movement.

The Metropolitan Board of Works was the main local government, which implemented improvements in embankments, road improvements, and drainage and sewage systems, but could do little to address the problem of housing for the poor. Its hands were tied. The only buildings it was allowed to construct were fire stations. Another important body was the Metropolitan Asylums Board, which was founded in 1867 to focus on health issues. This was fortuitous, as the Board was in place to deal with the smallpox epidemics of the 1870s. Perhaps the most important public body of the time was the School Board of London, which was founded in 1870, and quickly went about building several impressive schools that soon eclipsed the private schools. The large investments in schools suggest that they were seen as important institutions. Housing was mostly undertaken by private developers, and many housing estates came up for the middle classes. This was also a decade of much experimentation with architectural styles, with architects like Norman Shaw mixing the old with the new, giving rise to possibilities that would be further explored in the following decades. Professional architects and urban planners came to play a central role in shaping the built environment. From schools to fire stations to large estates, they were leaving their mark everywhere.
The chapter on the 1880s starts with the death of Karl Marx in London in 1883. Although his ideas had not yet spread in London (Das Kapital was not available in English until the late 1880s), through a small number of strong-willed organizers like Henry Hyndman, who founded the Social Democratic Federation, an ideological language was beginning to be found to mobilize around the struggles of workers. The Fabian Society was founded in 1884. George Bernard Shaw emerged as a literary voice for socialism. Saint is at pains to explain the limited role of these middle-class ideologues, as he also does justice to the role of working-class leaders and trade unionists as well as collective action by workers. There were protests and some violence as well. While the government did regulate the protests, for the most part it seems to have allowed mobilization and the expression of discontent.

Saint also shows that there was a genuine interest in addressing the concerns of the working classes among sections of the city elite, partly because Dickens and many others had shed light on these problems. The large-scale casualization of labor was creating conditions in which some kinds of safety nets were required. Many voluntary initiatives—religious and secular—were undertaken to address the problems of workers and the city’s poor. Charitable institutions like Toynbee Hall brought together people from different classes “not to eliminate class differences, but so that workers and gentlefolk could develop a wiser form of interdependence.” Overall, the decade saw an emerging consensus regarding the need to systematically address the problems of poverty and working-class uncertainties. While voluntary efforts were often scoffed at by the more ideological socialists, they served as the beginnings of more well-organized and large-scale efforts later on.

Saint also describes how the supply to meet the demand for technical education was scaled up during the decade. Two major technologies—the telephone and electricity—spread in the city and changed life and work in a variety of ways. However, the spread of electricity was slow due to regulatory restrictions and because the gas companies fought to keep their hold over street lighting. Since telephony faced neither of these challenges, it spread quite rapidly.

In the chapter on the 1890s, Saint devotes much attention to the changes in arts and literature as well as recreational activities. This was the decade of the rise and decline of the Decadent Movement, characterized by “its risk-taking, its excess, its fragility, its aestheticism, its will to fail and therefore its failure.” Oscar Wilde emerged as the central figure of this movement. However, there was room for others, such as Rudyard Kipling, who wrote perceptively about the city and its life. Boisterous and beautiful pubs and theaters and quaint restaurants, cafeterias, and tea rooms came up all over the city, and pushed the boundaries of what was socially acceptable to do in public. There were backlashes and corrections, but on the whole, there were many more opportunities to have fun (and to indulge one’s vices). The decade saw great improvements in opportunities for outdoor sports, with many recreation grounds coming up to supplement the parks that already existed. People were also behaving better in public. Saint attributes this to better education, better policing, better government, and the campaigns of the temperance movement.
London’s first representative city government, the London County Council, was established in 1889. In the 1890s, it tried to find a footing but was financially constrained. Much civic infrastructure—especially baths, libraries, and schools—was built during the 1890s, but the Council had little to do with this. Much of this work was done by the vestries (the local government of a parish) and the School Board. The Council got entry into education in 1892, when it received some powers over vocational education. A number of vocational schools, including the London School of Economics, were established, and by the end of the decade, a coherent system of higher education for London had emerged. The 1890s also saw continued experimentation with architecture and urban design. For instance, the Arts and Crafts movement emerged during this decade.

The last chapter begins with three excerpts from contemporary writing. They convey a sense of disturbance and uneasiness as the writers—Charles Masterman, Ford Madox Ford, and John Galsworthy—look at London and seem unable to find peace. We should not be surprised, as the city was literally on the move. Vast changes were afoot in the city’s transport system, both above and below the ground. The transport technologies and the ideology of dispersal and suburbanization necessitated the emergence of urban planning as a key concept in thinking about city development. Between 1881 and 1921, the inner London population increased by a quarter, while the outer London population more than tripled. London had resisted high-rises and seemed keener on sending people to the suburbs and providing transportation for them. The outer suburbs became the focus of the city’s energy and resources.

London at the time was still the largest industrial center of the country, as there were many supply chain-related advantages to being in London. A large services sector, along with a vast class of white-collar workers, also rose. The City of London also remained the leading financial hub of the world. Additionally, during this time, classicism emerged as the common idiom for London’s public architecture. Some of the impressive public buildings constructed at this time still mark the cityscape to this day. The city was keen to show off after decades of holding back while Paris, New York, Chicago, and others had for long been going for grandeur. But the women still did not have a vote. The suffragette movement started gathering strength after a slow start in 1903. Only in 1918 were women (property owners older than thirty) allowed to vote.

To some, all these developments may seem to be “a bit of this and a bit of that.” However, all this added up to a veritable transformation of the city, much of it for the better. This progress was mostly driven by bottom-up processes, which are usually messy and seem illegible even when they are working well. Saint shows how the lives of the poor improved during this time, with indicators such as mortality rates and incomes improving considerably. There was much debate about whether this had happened by “self-help or by root-and-branch intervention”—the conservatives suggested these improvements were a result of the former and the socialists attributed them to the latter causes. This debate notwithstanding, certain systematic interventions of that time—the Pensions Act started in 1908 and the Insurance Act in 1911—were paving the way for a welfare state.
The book brings out how institutional adaptation and individual initiative interact to produce progress. Many institutions—both public and private—emerged in response to specific problems and demands. Private institutions—for-profit or non-profit, religious or secular—were established to address problems, often creating models that could be replicated by others. The public institutions took over responsibilities in areas where it became clear that a more systematic, citywide effort would be more efficient. Many institutions were closed, and new institutions were established.

The Prime Ministers, the Queen, and the Kings find only passing mentions in this book. The civil servants, local politicians, businesspeople, professionals (mainly architects and urban planners), artists, and activists for myriad causes comprise the main cast of characters. A city is made up of people, but the people need certain freedoms and a good civic sense and commitment to make a good city. In the London of that time, there was much civic initiative, and in spite of the resistance from the national government, which did not want to yield much power to the local governments, much progress was achieved.

The writing of this book itself demonstrates this interplay between institutions and individuals. Saint has been associated with the Survey of London for three decades. In the preface to the book, he mentions that his association with the Survey has been his main source of learning about the city. The Survey is a unique institution that has been around for nearly 130 years. In this time, it has produced fifty-three volumes on different areas of London and eighteen monographs on individual buildings. Perhaps a book like this could not have been written had the institution of the Survey of London not existed. No other city has a similar institution. Great urban histories require an infrastructure to be in place for scholars like Saint to work with. However, the infrastructure itself cannot produce such a masterpiece. That requires individual initiative.
About the Authors

Anirudh Burman is an associate research director and fellow at Carnegie India. He works on key issues relating to public institutions, public administration, the administrative and regulatory state, and state capacity. He has also worked extensively on financial regulation and regulatory governance.

Suyash Rai is a deputy director and fellow at Carnegie India. His research focuses on the political economy of economic reforms, and the performance of public institutions in India. His current research looks at the financial sector, the fiscal system, and the infrastructure sector.


6. “Global Trends and Their Impact on Real Estate,” (see note 4).


13. Bhuvaneswari Raman, Mythri Prasad-Aleyamma, R’emi De Bercegol, Eric Denis,
and Marie-Hélène Zerah, “Selected Readings on Small Town Dynamics in India” (2015), https://hal.science/hal-01139006.

14. Ibid.


*For complete source notes, please read this compendium at CarnegieIndia.org.*
Carnegie India

Carnegie India, founded in 2016 and based in New Delhi, is part of a robust global network that includes over 200 scholars. The center focuses primarily on three interrelated topics: technology and society, political economy, and security studies. Led by Indian experts with decades of policy experience, Carnegie India engages with governments, policymakers, academics, students, industries, practitioners, and civil society to provide insightful and fresh analysis on India’s pressing challenges and its rising global role.

Political Economy Program

This program studies contemporary developments in India’s political economy, with a view towards understanding and informing India’s developmental choices. Scholars in the program analyze economic and regulatory policies, design and working of public institutions, interfaces between politics and the economy, and performance of key sectors of the economy such as finance and land.

Carnegie Endowment for International Peace

The Carnegie Endowment for International Peace is a unique global network of policy research centers around the world. Our mission, dating back more than a century, is to advance peace through analysis and development of fresh policy ideas and direct engagement and collaboration with decisionmakers in government, business, and civil society. Working together, our centers bring the inestimable benefit of multiple national viewpoints to bilateral, regional, and global issues.