'Slum' and the City

Exploring relations of informal settlements comparatively in Chennai, India and Durban, South Africa

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Chapter 7 | Comparing informal settlements in Chennai and Durban: Approaches, settlement dynamics and household livelihoods[35]

Abstract Although historical developments have differently shaped urban growth trajectories of Indian and South African cities, informal settlements continue to present urgent concerns for city governments in both countries. This research takes up the question of how governance relations of informal settlements across different geographical and institutional scales influence household processes of building livelihoods, comparing the contexts of Chennai, India and Durban, South Africa. By exploring the interconnections between households, settlement and city scales for building livelihoods over time within a comparative urbanism perspective, the article analyses two relations between the three scale levels. First, the relations between city and informal settlements are explored through spatial patterns and institutional frameworks, indicating diversity in governance actors and processes in the two contexts. Second, the settlement and households' relations are construed by analysing livelihoods building processes in the two informal settlements over time using an asset-based approach. Finally, the article discusses strategies of informal housing through the dominant planning discourses, as illustrated in the policy-related documents produced by the two city governments. These set the background for the political bargaining at different scales that influences the governance and transformation of informal settlements. The multi-scalar analysis of households and their context in the article reveals how their distinct trajectories of development are closely associated with the urban and settlement histories of which they are a part. The different mandates within which the settlements exist are influential in allowing households to build up their livelihoods over one or two generations.

7.1. Introduction

Although historical developments have differently shaped urban growth trajectories in Indian and South African cities, informal settlements continue to present urgent concerns for city governments in both countries. Both Indian and South African governments have been ambivalent towards urbanisation over different periods and had varying levels of influence over these processes

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(McGranahan & Martine, 2012, p.4). South Africa exemplifies restricted urban development processes until 1994, followed by increasingly high levels of urbanization with the majority of its population residing in segregated city structures (ibid). The ideology of keeping Black Africans in Bantustans was not sustainable and Black townships had to be accepted. In contrast, India has a 'top-heavy pattern of urbanisation' characterised by burgeoning megacities coupled with a slow pace of urbanisation nationally (Kundu, 2014b). The divergent patterns of urbanisation in the two countries are combined with rising growth of informal settlements in their urban centres at present. In addition, the rapid pace of urbanisation often renders formal planning insufficient to provide housing for the millions of people who then turn to live in informal settlements (Dupont et al., 2016). The urban crisis in developing countries like India is rooted in the informality of its planning regime that is characterised by 'deregulation, ambiguity and exception' (Roy, 2009). Official planning systems do not fit the ground realities as they have been either inherited from colonial governments or adopted from developed countries (Watson, 2009).

Though the planning apparatus does not adequately align itself to the ground realities of the cities in the global South, there has been renewed interest in the field. The third session of the World Urban Forum held at Vancouver in 2006 laid out ten principles of new urban planning. Since then, planning for cities is seen 'to play new roles in managing the growth of cities in ways that promote their sustainability, inclusiveness and liveability' (Todes, 2011: 116). This vision forming the New Urban Agenda was also reflected as 'bold, forward looking, and tightly focused on problem-solving with clear means of implementation' in UN-Habitat's recent World Cities Report Series (UN-Habitat, 2016: 177). This discussion repositions housing at the centre of the New Urban Agenda by critiquing the policies that have contributed to fragmented, unequal and dysfunctional urban areas (ibid). In an attempt to answer the challenges faced by millions of households living in informal settlements across the globe, many local governments are increasingly adopting problem-solving approaches to planning for informal settlements. This article explores the links between livelihoods building and the governance relations of informal settlements through urban imaginaries in planning documents vis-à-vis livelihoods practices, comparing the contexts of Chennai[36], India and Durban[37], South Africa.

Comparative urbanism as a mode of understanding deals with a systematic analysis of similarities and differences among cities or urban processes (Nijman,

[36] The city of Madras was renamed Chennai in 1996. Because of the historical nature of this article, the names are used interchangeably and refer to the capital city of Tamil Nadu.

[37] The city of Durban and its surrounding municipalities were renamed as eThekwini Metropolitan Municipality in the post-apartheid transition of South Africa. Though administratively altered, the former name 'Durban' is often used, also in the official webpage of the municipality. In this article eThekwini Metropolitan Municipality will be interchangeably used with Durban, signifying the same spatial area.

2007). The theory of comparative urbanism not only looks at the similarities and differences between the cases under study but also tries to understand 'why' different places share similarities (ibid). This implies that a more interpretative approach is taken towards the comparison rather than an empirical statistical analysis. Though the last decade in urban studies has marked renewed interest in comparative research, much of the debate has taken place at an abstract level with little reference to specific 'urban places or their residents' (Gough, 2012). Spatially, this discussion has mainly drawn on cities in the global North (Parnell et al., 2009; Robinson, 2011; Roy, 2009). Moreover, there is a fresh call to build theory from under-researched empirical cases in comparative perspectives of cities that differ from each other (Ren & Luger, 2015). Building on this, the article analyses informal settlements in Chennai, India and eThekwini Municipality, South Africa in relation to the diverse governance contexts in which they are located. The comparison includes both the livelihoods building of households in informal settlements embedded in the two different urban governance contexts, as well as the development processes in the settlements, beyond their identities as 'territorial entities' from a relational perspective, linking them to the rest of the city, and how such relations have changed over time.

The article is organised as follows. The first section presents debates related to comparative urban research linking them to the theme of informal settlements in the global South. This is followed by a discussion of the methodology, including data collection and analysis and a section on the research contexts at the national, urban and settlement scales. Following this, the empirical research deals with the relational aspects of informal settlements in Chennai and eThekwini Municipality. The discussion section of the article examines the differences and similarities in relations across scale and territories of informal settlements. The final section discusses the theoretical contributions with regards to comparative urbanism and informal settlements.

7.2. Informal Settlements in a Comparative Perspective

The relational comparative approach argues for conceptualizing cities beyond the territories they enclose and focusing on the networks that define them (Jacobs, 2012; Ward, 2010). In contrast to exploring similarities and differences in comparative methodologies, 'transnational examinations can use one site to interrogate another' (Roy, 2003: 293). Likewise, the concept of relational comparison at the city scale differs by arguing for adopting a specific city or cities to pose questions to the other cases under consideration (Nijman, 2007; Roy, 2003). This constitutes conceptualizing urban comparison in a distinct fashion that takes into account the interconnected development trajectories happening within cities. Relational analysis in urban comparative research has triggered debates on studies focusing on urban policy mobility that reveal how in a mobile world, expertise, knowledge, techniques move from one city to the other (Cook & Ward, 2012). By unravelling policy mobilities of urban environments, the theory

of relational comparison has shown how city governments draw on policy ideas from elsewhere to frame the discourses in their own context. Moreover, the theory of urban relationality not only highlights the relatedness of urban centres across the world, but also considers the 'specificity and articulation of relations' between the comparative sites under study (Söderström, 2014: 177). There is a call to move beyond the policy relations between the researched sites and 'investigate how other types of relations are established and effect urban development' (Söderström, 2014). For the research presented here, the focus is not merely on the external urban networks that define cities but also on the connections by which the informal settlements are woven within the urban agglomeration. Focusing on state practices and household strategies, the two main relations explored in this article concern the relatedness between city governments and informal settlements, as well as that of the local context of informal settlements and its effect on livelihoods building of households.

Regarding the first relation, Rao (2006) presents the 'politics of location' within the project of modernity for South Asia in which the local is shaped by global flows in exploring 'slum' as a theoretical construct. In similar investigations of citywide infrastructural provisions, Amin (2013) discusses the stigmatisation related to 'slums' in the aspirational cities of the global South where the possibilities based on urban competitiveness are overtaking more equitable entitlements based on human rights. This process of urban competitiveness driven by globalization has substantial effects, transforming the internal geography of world's largest cities (Sassen, 1999). The 'world-class city' rhetoric within the competitive cities discourse has exacerbated socio-spatial inequalities by increasing marginalization of the urban poor and polarization of city spaces (Banerjee-Guha, 2002; Huchzermeyer, 2011). In making 'world class' cities in India, redevelopment and beautification through slum demolitions has provided the local authorities an opportunity to 'clean up' urban spaces (Dupont, 2008). This logic of beautification and aesthetic governmentality also superseded statistical calculations of slums by the government in Delhi (Ghertner, 2010; Shatkin 2014). Similarly, the developmental policy agenda of post-apartheid municipalities has not succeeded in integrating poor and rich areas as the legacy of spatial segregation is still evident across South African cities (Haferburg & Huchzermeyer, 2015). Critiquing urban neoliberalism as the dominant theme of urban theory, there is a new call to build 'locally legible accounts that give due weight to the diversity of drivers of urban change relevant to specific urban contexts' (Parnell & Robinson, 2012: 597). Taking up this point, this article compares institutional and macro-economic relations that the two cities have with informal settlements.

The second relation deals with the context of the informal settlement in the livelihoods building processes of the households. The main relational issues discussed in the literature for building livelihoods focuses on asset prioritisation, social networks and political negotiation. There is no consensus concerning which assets should be given priority nor for whom, as transformation is required along various dimensions (Rakodi, 1999). In her longitudinal study of low-income

settlements in Guayaquil, Moser (2009) stated that physical assets were a pre-requisite for building up others. In contrast, Meikle (2002) argued that human assets (labour power) were the most important capital that the urban poor have. In another study, ill health was a significant cause of deteriorating financial status among Dhaka slum households, which impacted economic mobility (Pryer et al., 2005). Asset sequencing is also linked to intergenerational changes among residents of informal settlements. Building physical assets (mainly housing) is a priority for recent migrants who form first generation households and is less important for second or third generation migrants who seek improvements in human assets (Krishna et al., 2014; Moser, 2009). The process of building livelihoods is closely associated with the community level trust mainly in the initial years, when the nature of social capital is dynamic and can shift with changing circumstances that might contribute to either consolidation or erosion of household assets (Moser, 1998; 2009). Though social capital is a crucial component for building livelihoods in informal settlements, bonding social networks based on ethnic and caste links can reduce upward mobility through an asymmetrical access to information and excess supply of labour in sectors common among community residents (Krishna et al., 2014; Mitra, 2012b).

The residents of the often institutionally segregated spaces of informal settlements opt for a distinct 'politics of informality' that includes not only 'quiet' encroachment (Bayat, 2010) but also using elections as a negotiation tool (Benjamin, 2004; 2008) along with protest and mobilizations as a mechanism for negotiating services (Dupont et al., 2016; Mottiar & Bond, 2012). In addition, the perceptions of temporality in informal settlements offer an alternative to 'dominant marginalising discourses through the construction of identity over time, and time-bound tactics of resistance' (Lombard, 2013: 813). Drawing on assets, networks and political relations, the article explores how households living in informal settlements build their livelihoods in the settlements of Anna Nagar and River Side Settlement.

Within the field of urban studies, there is a large volume of literature that focuses particularly on informal settlements. However, a relatively small proportion has applied the comparative perspective for theorizing informal settlements. First, much of the comparative analysis of informal settlements has focussed on policy analysis in the different contexts under study. For instance, Sutherland, Jordhus-Lier, Braathen, & Dupont (2016) argue that progressive policies are often overshadowed by the politics surrounding the implementation of state housing practices through their study on informal settlements across six cities in four countries. They argue that this discrepancy between policy and practice is associated with 1) 'loss in translation' from the public sphere of policy making to privately dominated implementation processes; 2) lack of participation in the policy making process; and 3) contestation between the housing and economic policies of the state (ibid). In a similar quest for understanding the processes and relationships of city governance and the poor; and how far those in poverty are able to influence the policy outcomes, Devas (2004) calls for analysing urban

political and institutional processes by stressing the aspects of particularity and commonness of their contexts. Tracing the evolution of urban tenure programs in Brazil, South Africa and India, Krueckeberg and Paulsen (2002) argue that spatial patterns of informal settlements are diverse and complex, though security of tenure must be integrated into broader programmes of urban development strategies.

Second, a comparative lens has been used to explore the spatial perspective towards informal settlements. Moving beyond the urban context and concerned with the questions of slums and how the global forces shape the dominant approaches for housing the poor, Huchzermeyer (2011) argues that in the present age of urban competitiveness, the onus is on the middle classes to challenge the dominant discourses that undermines urban poor's rights to the city. In questioning spatial and social exclusion, Landy and Saglio-Yatzimirsky (2014a) discuss the notions of spatial justice and urban rights in the urban slums of Indian and Brazilian megacities by exploring differences and similarities between the two contexts. Drawing on the preceding relational debates with due focus on informal settlements, this paper asks how relations compare between informal settlements in the two cities located in different countries and regions of the world across varied institutional and geographic scales. This is particularly explored through the interaction of institutions of the two cities in relation to the informal settlements and the livelihoods building processes of the households living in the informal settlements.

7.3. Methodology

In comparative research, there is no single method, but a spectrum of approaches depending on contextual factors of the cases being compared (Nijman, 2007; 2015; Ren & Luger, 2015). What should be compared and how should it be done has also evolved over time. For instance, the idea of comparing 'relatively similar' cities is no longer the norm in comparative methodology. Rather than considering similar or dissimilar cities for comparison as a unit of analysis, comparing the specific elements or processes that shape the cities in question across a wider range of contexts to generate urban theory is gaining momentum (Robinson, 2014; Ward, 2010). By studying the processes in and connecting informal settlements to the city in Durban, South Africa and Chennai, India, this research contributes to this call for including a wider range of contexts in urban comparative research.

Data collection for the research was done at the scale of city, settlement and households in two periods – for nine months in 2013 and 2014 in India and for five months in 2012 and 2015 in South Africa. First, for exploring the relation between the city and informal settlements, semi-structured interviews were conducted with a range of relevant actors such as government officials, NGO staff, activists, and researchers in Chennai and Durban. To construct approaches

towards informal settlements, the research primarily draws on these interviews[38] and planning or enumeration documents on informal settlements in the two cities. Second, for mapping households' livelihood building processes, the assets built up are discussed in the context of two inner-city settlement's history[39] in each city. There are 1131 slum settlements with a population of 1,2 million in Chennai (Darashaw, 2014) and about 520 informal settlements clustered in peripheral areas and inner-city marginal lands in eThekwini Municipality (Sutherland, Robbins, Scott, & Sim, 2013). Since the peripheral settlements have a distinctly rural character in eThekwini Municipality, the focus of this thesis was limited to inner-city informal settlements in both the cities.

For understanding the process of building livelihoods, a survey of 100 households[40] in both settlements per city was also done and this data was mainly collected in Tamil and isiZulu by research assistants[41] Data analysis for the qualitative and quantitative part was done simultaneously. Qualitative analysis of interview notes, transcripts and observations was done for Chennai and Durban. The settlement history was mapped through focus group discussions and semi-structured interviews with key informants such as settlement leaders, residents, local councillor and neighbours. This was complemented with historic visual image interpretation of Google Earth images (after 2001). Each of the two settlements were spatially divided according to local landmarks into spatial sections and equal numbers of households were surveyed from each section respectively in the settlements[42]. Descriptive statistical techniques were used for analysing the quantitative survey data according to physical, social, human and financial assets (cf. Moser, 1998) (Figure 7.1).

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[38] 23 semi-structured interviews were conducted in eThekwini and 17 in Chennai with the institutional actors.

[39] The names of the settlements used in the paper are pseudonyms and have been altered to ensure confidentiality to all research participants.

[40] Participants for survey in Chennai were Tamil speaking and in eThekwini they spoke isiZulu; therefore the fieldwork was carried out together with research assistants.

[41] Please see please see acknowledgement for further details.

[42] Because of the complex layout of slum areas and the lack of register information of slum households, applying a probability sampling strategy was not feasible, but a stratified approach was employed.
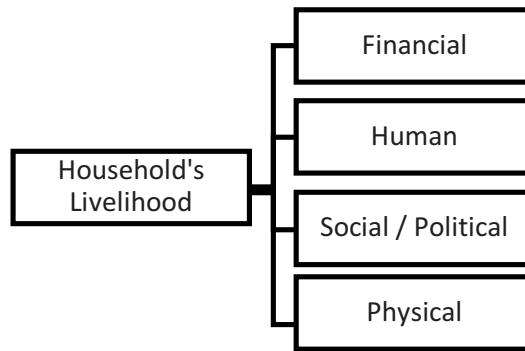
Figure 7.1 Household's Livelihood with Assets
Source: Author

7.4. Research Contexts

Prior to analysing the relations between different scale levels, a brief account of research contexts is given at national, city and settlement scales.

National and Urban Contexts

Located in different continents, India and South Africa have several distinct features as well commonalities underlining their past and present. Demographical features at national and urban scales of India and South Africa are very different[43]. Historically, both countries were former colonies of leading European powers[44],

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[43] India's population of 1210 million is twenty times more than the South Africa's population of about 51.8 million. However, the 63% of urban population in South Africa is much higher compared to India where nearly one-third lives in urban areas (Table 1). Administratively, the two urbanisation ratios cannot be compared since the definitions of "urban" are different. The census of India (2011b: 1) defines urban as all areas with – '1) A minimum population of 5,000; ii) At least 75 per cent of the male main working population engaged in non-agricultural pursuits; and iii) A density of population of at least 400 persons per sq. km', whereas Census of South Africa (2011:20) defines urban as – 'A continuously built-up area with characteristics such as type of economic activity and land use. Cities, towns, townships, suburbs, etc. are typical urban areas. An urban area is one which was proclaimed as such (i.e. in an urban municipality under the old demarcation) or classified as such during census demarcation by the Geography department of Stats SA, based on their observation of the aerial photographs or on other information.' However, the concertation of urban population in the metros of both countries has resulted in great strain on public services and considerable demands for jobs and livelihoods (Kundu, 2014b; Turok, 2014).

[44] During the sixteenth century, the Portuguese established fortified bases at Goa on the west coast of India and in the seventeenth century the Dutch colonized parts of the Cape region in South Africa. Apart from Portuguese, British and French also colonized parts of India. The same was true for South Africa where the Dutch were followed by the British to colonise parts of the country.

though the apartheid era in South Africa and post independent period of India were markedly distinct. Moreover, the economies of both the countries opened up to the world in the nineties. Apartheid formally ended in 1994 opening the economy of South Africa to the world and the protected Indian market was liberalised in 1991. Both India and South Africa are now part of the BRICS[45]. Lastly, they both classify as countries with medium development in the human development index 2015 of UNDP[46].

Empirically, this research is based on Chennai and Durban. Chennai is the provincial capital and largest city in the Indian State of Tamil Nadu. Similarly, Durban is the largest city in KwaZulu-Natal province of South Africa and is located on the east coast of the country. The initial growth of Durban can be associated with the development of food processing and petro-chemical industries coupled with proximity to a port that facilitated import and export functions of the city (Marx & Charlton, 2003). The economic base of Chennai has shifted from trade and commerce to manufacturing in the post-independent period and more recently towards the tertiary sector with the rise of Information Technology and related industries.

Settlement Contexts

In each of the two cities, one informal settlement was selected for understanding its relations with the situated contexts. The settlement contexts of Anna Nagar in Chennai and River Side Settlement in Durban are detailed in this section. It was difficult to ascertain the date of origin for both the settlements. The official records date Anna Nagar's origin back to the 1960s (Indian Resources Information & Management Technologies, 2005). However, many inhabitants associate the area with the British colonial era, claiming a century old existence. Similarly, the exact origin of River Side Settlement could not be established, though many argued that the settlement was founded in the late seventies.

Historically, Anna Nagar area served as shipping docks for transporting wood, coal and salt from the neighbouring state of Andhra Pradesh. At present, only the street names of Gate 1, 2, 3 and 4 recall its earlier function (Figure 7.2). Back then, the wood industry flourished in the area. At present, large parcels of land in Anna Nagar are occupied by small industries, such as steel polishing, plastic, painting and recycling units, resulting in a labyrinth of housing and small-scale factories. In contrast, River Side Settlement is predominantly residential with a handful of petty shops and Sheebens. The initial settlers rented land from the private owner at very low prices as the land was devoid of basic services. The four physically isolated yet socially connected clusters forming the settlement are named after the

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[45] Initiating economic cooperation in 2006, with membership of South Africa in 2011, BRICS countries are taking a common stance in some areas to counter western hegemony in the global trade and geopolitics.

[46] India: HDI is 0.609, rank – 130 and South Africa: HDI - 0.666, rank – 116 out of 188 countries.

first settlers of each – kwaMamsuthu, Monpondweni, Mcondo I and Mcondo II (Figure 7.3). The settlement grew incrementally with kwaMamsuthu as the first cluster, followed by Monpondweni and Mcondo I and II.
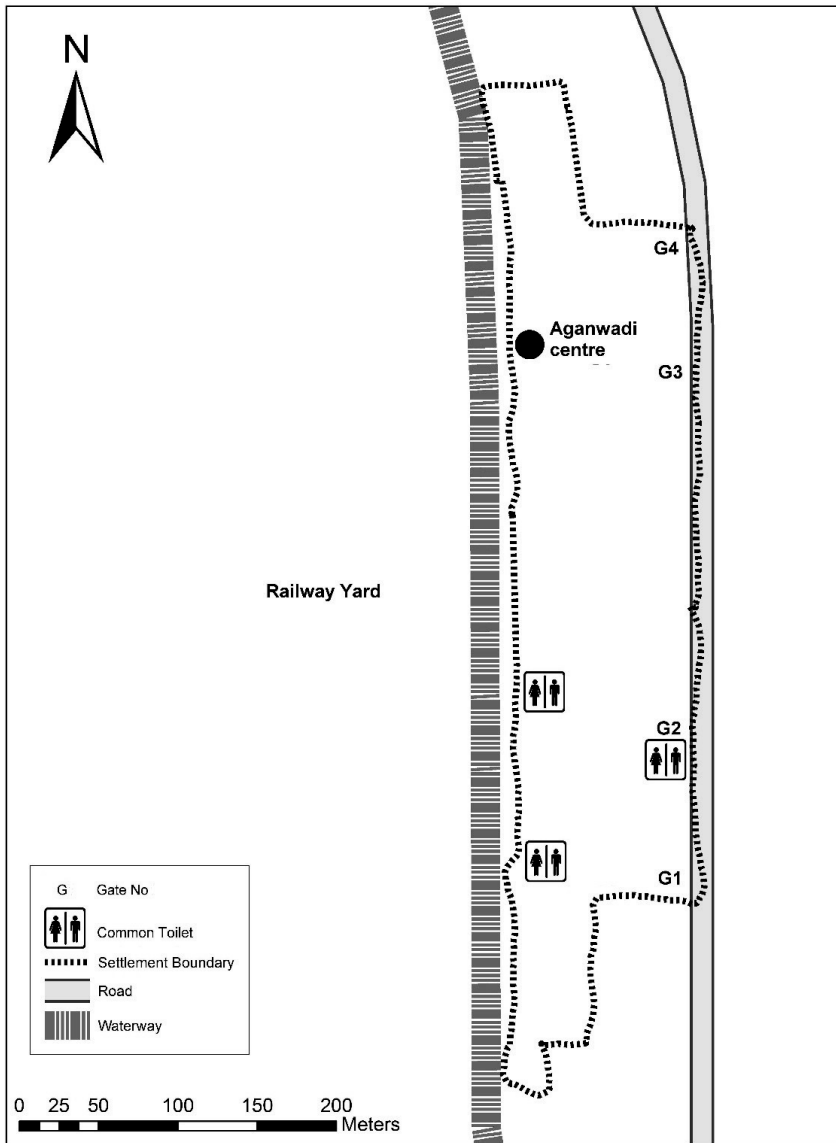

Figure 7.2 Settlement Map of Anna Nagar
Source: Fieldwork data collected by author

More than three-fourths of the surveyed households migrated to River Side Settlement after 1994 as post-apartheid South Africa provided increased possibilities for free movement of people across regions in contrast to the

restrictions posed in apartheid era. In comparison, the majority of the households have been living in Anna Nagar since the seventies. Like many other informal settlements, both Anna Nagar and River Side Settlement are located on environmentally sensitive flood prone areas. The waterway that ran parallel to Anna Nagar defined the extent of its growth. In contrast, the river bifurcates River Side Settlement into two sections and a sewage pipe that connects the clusters is used as walking bridge by residents. These two parcels of River-Side Settlement were privately and publicly owned, while Anna Nagar was located on public land. In terms of service provision, common services such as shared water taps and streetlights were installed after the nineties in Anna Nagar, while only in 2013, community ablution blocks were installed as part of Interim Services program in River Side Settlement.
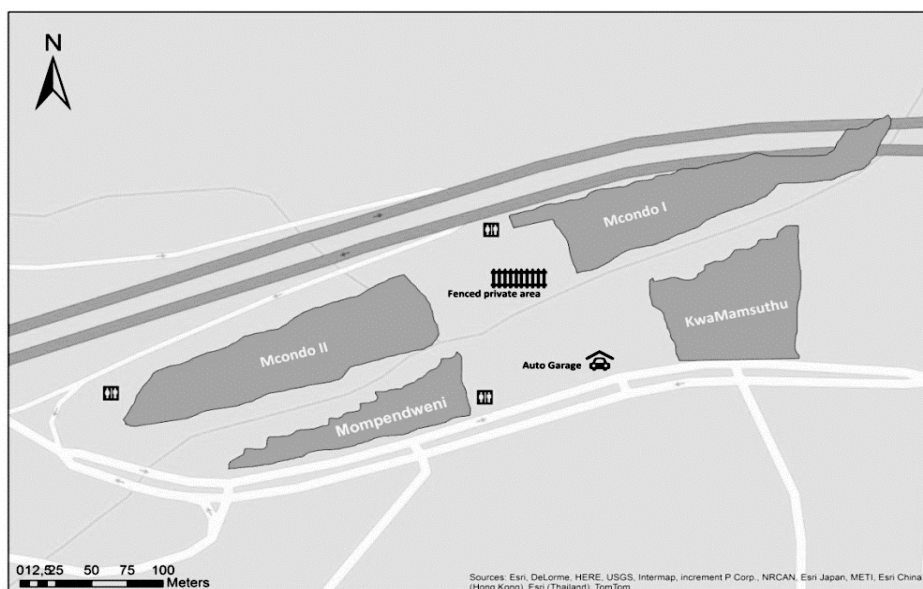

Figure 7.3 Settlement Map of RSS
Source: Fieldwork data collected by author; based on Basemap:
ArcGIS online

7.5. Comparing Anna Nagar in Chennai and River Side Settlement in Durban

In both India and South Africa, the nature and scale of informal settlements demand urgent action from their respective governments. This section discusses the relations between different scales of the city, settlements and households. Through a comparative framework these relations are analysed in a historical perspective. The relations between the city government and informal settlements are seen through the institutions, policies and practices, which reveal the

dominant policy discourses for reducing inequalities, urban politics and negotiating strategies of informal settlements. Socio-spatial relations that define the settlement and households' possibilities for building assets are outlined. This is further elaborated through households' reasons for migration, the state subsidies that they rely upon, and different household structures.

City Patterns and Institutional Arrangements in Chennai and Durban (Relation 1)

The socio-spatial patterns of both cities have influenced the growth of informal settlements. Historically, Chennai's growth has been outwards resulting in a congested city core with burgeoning development on its southern periphery. Geographically, both Anna Nagar and River Side Settlement are located in the core of the urban area in Chennai and Durban respectively. However, the locational benefits of both settlements have transformed over time. Like other British colonies, Chennai was divided into separate territories marked for the natives and the British settlers. Anna Nagar is located in close proximity to the Central Railway Station and spatially linked to North Chennai. The northern part of Chennai has remained a hub of manufacturing industries, while the growth corridor has been towards the southern edge of the city because the British settlers considered the northern part congested and preferred South Madras as an attractive option for their 'garden estates' (Arabindoo, 2009). The recent development of the information technology corridor in South Chennai is emblematic of this trend, compared to the concentration of many large and small manufacturing industrial units in North Chennai (Kennedy et al., 2014).

In contrast, the spatial growth of Durban was a result of the apartheid design of cities with well-connected and central areas occupied by the wealthy white population in contrast to the peripheral poorer black population who were far from economic opportunities as well as social amenities (Marx & Charlton, 2003). In the post-apartheid period, the city centre of Durban reoriented itself towards low-income consumer markets which resulted in spaces of economic depression while the northern periphery of the city has developed (Todes, 2014) particularly in the coastal corridor. The residents living in River Side Settlement heavily relied on the affordable transport for accessing employment and educational opportunities; therefore the spatial location of the settlements near the city-core influenced their possibilities for growth (Focus Group Discussion, February 2015).

To understand how city institutions structure their relations with slum settlements, the actors and processes governing informal settlements in Chennai and eThekwini Municipality are discussed below. State level nodal agency - Tamil Nadu Slum Clearance Board (hereafter referred as TNSCB) is the primary governing body for slum settlements in Chennai, while the Human Settlements Department of eThekwini Municipality earlier known as 'Metro Housing' is the main agency catering to the development of informal settlements in Durban. Though TNSCB is the dominant governance actor, the Municipal Corporation

deals with the provision of basic services related to roads, drainage, education, health, etc. for the entire population of the city. Since its inception in the seventies, TNSCB has commissioned four enumeration reports for mapping and policy recommendations regarding 'slum' settlements in Chennai (See Table 3.3).

Contrary to the Indian case, in eThekwini Municipality informal settlements were not documented through enumeration reports. The process of enumeration includes notification to the Human Settlements Unit, the informal settlement is documented through photographs and discussions with the residents followed up with update on the Geographic Information System data base of the municipality (Interview: Government officials, February, 2015). However, the policy recommendation for informal settlements is included in the spatial planning with the goal of integrating the urban spaces of South African cities. The use of planning as a tool to implement urban visions of the state dated back to the apartheid period in South Africa. In line with modernism and dominated by a spatial agenda to further social and economic policies, the planning discourse has evolved in its goal from 'segregation to integration' of urban areas. In eThekwini Municipality, two housing plans were published (see Table 7.1).

Table 7.1 Housing Plans in eThekwini Municipality since the Nineties

Name of the report	Year of publication
Integrated Housing Development Plan eThekwini Municipality	2006
eThekwini Housing Sector Plan – The Housing chapter of IDP	2011

Source: eThekwini Municipality

Taking the discussion of the most recent documents published in Chennai and eThekwini Municipality, it is important to compare the 'Slum Free City Plan of Action – Chennai City Corporation' and 'eThekwini Housing Sector Plan – The Housing chapter of IDP'. Unlike Chennai, the housing plan for eThekwini Municipality was a part of the planning exercise and therefore the focus was not limited to informal settlements but a city based planning strategy for housing (eThekwini Municipality, 2012). Both documents were compiled by private consultants and heavily relied on advanced technologies of GIS for mapping. Another common feature of the plans were the development models as a strategic solution to housing needs of their respective population. The plan for eThekwini Municipality had a spatial focus in determining the 'prioritisation model for future upgrading and greenfield housing projects' by adopting criteria such as within Urban Development Line, close to public transport, in existing urban settlements whose current densities promote sustainability, located near bulk infrastructure and essential social facilities (eThekwini Municipality, 2012: 54). The latest slum enumeration in Chennai uses the strategy of 'deficiency matrix', based on

parameters related to infrastructure and vulnerability (Darashaw, 2014). Normative dimensions of 'best' and 'worst' slums are extracted from the deficiency matrix from the categories of 'tenable and untenable slum' aligned to planning guidelines with tenable slums situated on areas earmarked for residential use, following environmental standards, and untenable slums as settlements located in 'unhealthy and environmental risk areas' areas' (Darashaw, 2014: 73). According to this report, Anna Nagar is categorized as 'untenable slum'. The two documents highlight the use of planning discourses for the development of informal settlements.

Anna Nagar and River Side Settlement both were recognised settlements in Chennai and eThekwini Municipality. Though Anna Nagar in Chennai featured in the slum list of TNSCB, the settlement did not benefit from any program of the Board (Local Politician, August 2013). The common services in the settlements were negotiated through the local politician who then approached the municipal corporation of Chennai (ibid). Election periods served an ideal opportunity for the residents to negotiate infrastructure service for the settlement. Local politicians belonging to both the regional Dravidian parties had their base in the settlement. In a similar stance, expansion and reoccupation of land in River Side Settlement was closely related to vote-bank politics in the area. In eThekwini Municipality, as a part of RDP[47] interventions, a section of River Side Settlement was relocated to a green-field project twenty-five kilometres away in Verulum in 2004 (Focus Group Discussion, February 2015). Within two years, the vacated part was sprawling again with a mix of new arrivals and returnees from the green-field project (ibid). The expansion of River Side Settlement in 2006 and 2012 ran parallel with the councillor elections.

Political bargaining at the local level between the residents and their representatives differs from the broader political rhetoric and mandates in India and South Africa with respect to informal settlements. In the last decade, the broader political rhetoric globally was based on the United Nation's Millennium Development Goal 7 Target 11 that was used to legitimize slum eradication (Huchzermeyer, 2010). Both the South African and the Indian state have committed themselves to the Millenium Development Goals adopted by the United Nations. The slogan 'Cities Without Slums' was officially attached to Goal 7 Target 11 and it stated to achieve 'a significant improvement in the lives of at least 100 million slum dwellers' (UN- Habitat, 2003: p. 2). The MDG target had an inherent conflict; 'on the one hand, the target of significantly improving living conditions of 100 million slum dwellers, on the other hand, it was driven by the slogan of slum-free cities' (Huchzermeyer, 2008: 95). The 'slum free' discourse was reflected in the vision of national Department of Human Settlements, Government of South Africa in creating 'shack free cities' (Huchzermeyer, 2004)

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[47]Since 1994, the main strategies of eThekwini municipality have been provision of RDP (redevelopment project) housing through basic services and top-structures in the green-field sites located in the periphery of the city (Sutherland, 2016).

which is similar to the rhetoric of 'slum free India' adopted by the Ministry of Housing and Urban Poverty Alleviation, Government of India in 2010. There is ambiguity in the 'slum free' visions of the two contexts highlighting the disparities in the practices of the city governments who could either choose to evict and relocate the residents or could develop the settlements in situ with tenure options, so that the areas eventually turn into 'non-slum' spaces. Both the city government have argued towards an integrated policy towards informal settlements. While there is a mix of practices towards informal settlements in Chennai and eThekwini Municipality, institutionally, relocation dominates the agenda of the state (Sutherland, Braathen, Dupont, & Jordhus-Lier, 2016).

Building Livelihoods in Anna Nagar and River Side Settlement (Relation 2)

This section discusses the assets households combine to build livelihoods, and analyses how households residing in two settlements prioritise assets for building livelihoods over time.

Building physical assets (mainly housing) is a priority for recent migrants who form first generation households and becomes less important for second or third generation migrants who seek improvements in human assets (Krishna et al., 2014; Moser, 2009). The process of building assets is not only associated to how long households have resided in the settlement but also to the city and settlement histories and their local topography. Anna Nagar and River Side Settlement both are characterised by winding narrow lanes leading to high-density housing with a range of precarity based on varied building materials. The majority of the households in both settlements own their structures (based on household survey - 84% in River Side Settlement and 85% in Anna Nagar). The precarious nature of housing is closely associated with the settlement histories and urban contexts. Most households in Anna Nagar have lived in Chennai for a considerably longer period compared to their counterparts in Durban who mainly migrated since the nineties. The perception of tenure security contributed to differential housing typologies in Anna Nagar. This was reflected in the varied building materials that made up the temporary and permanent structures. While the residents in consolidated houses felt that they had high levels of tenure security, the houses along the waterway were mostly built with temporary materials, because of the tenure uncertainty and the threat of eviction. The consolidated housing was mostly located in better-serviced areas. As the settlement expanded over time, the perception of tenure security was limited to the initial boundaries of the settlement where the 'original' settlers lived. Although the households lived for many more years in Anna Nagar, not all housing structures in the settlements were less precarious than their recently arrived counterparts in River Side Settlement.

Within the four clusters of River Side Settlement, the houses were either built with corrugated iron or wooden planks for walls and plastic sheets for roofs, with handful exceptions of brick and mortar structures. This distinction can be best

explained by earlier shack fires, after which the households received corrugated iron sheets from the Municipality to reconstruct their structures. Therefore, though the institutional support was the dominant reason behind the variety of housing in River Side Settlement, disparities were also linked to the settlement's growth and tenure perception. Sanitation facilities in both Anna Nagar and River Side were public with barely a handful of households having access to private toilets. Despite the access to public toilet blocks, many residents in Anna Nagar defecated in the adjoining water body because three out of the four public toilet blocks in Anna Nagar were almost dysfunctional because of lack of reliable water supply, excessive use (due to high population density) and little or no maintenance.

Households in Anna Nagar and River Side Settlement differently prioritised human assets. Almost one-third of the households surveyed in River Side Settlement reported unemployment problems, which is strikingly high when compared to Anna Nagar where all households had employed members generating income for the family. The unemployment rate of eThekwini Municipality at 16.5% was considerably low when seen in light to the 29% surveyed households without employment in River Side Settlement. In Anna Nagar, only one person who relied on family support reported unemployment with old age as the main reason for not working. While, the settlements differentiated on unemployment data, majority members of the surveyed households in both Anna Nagar and River Side were employed in the low skilled sector of economy mainly working as domestic workers, retail vendors, cleaners, helpers, etc. Many residents worked as daily labourers in the industrial units of Anna Nagar and the nearby locations, whereas several members of RSS would travel to the city centre of eThekwini Municipality to seek employment. Therefore, spatial location of the settlement in both the contexts was crucial for the residents to access employment opportunities. Though geography played a larger role for RSS because of little local economic activity locally in comparison to the industrial units of Anna Nagar that provided daily work for many of its residents. The presence of industries in Anna Nagar is also a cause of poor health condition for many of the residents (Resident, August 2013). Health problems are some of the most significant reasons for being poor as it is often combined with loss of income (Krishna, 2010). While air pollution from the industrial units in combination with the exposure to unattended waste along the water way contributed to poor health levels in Anna Nagar, nearly half the surveyed population in River Side Settlement reported at least one member affected by communicable diseases such as tuberculosis and diarrhoea (cf. Cunnan & Maharaj, 2000). Majority of the surveyed households in both settlements visited medical practitioners once or more per month indicating poor health levels. Location of both the settlements aided the households in accessing health care mostly free of cost in public health agencies. However, proximity to a water body in both the cases had undesired outcomes for the households in the form of natural calamities as well as human neglect. Floods in the river in addition to the runoff from the adjoining roads deplete assets for households living in River Side

Settlement (Focus Group Discussion, February 2015). Exposed solid waste was a cause of concern in both the settlements neglected by the city governments of both cities.

Most households belonging to Scheduled Caste communities migrated from the district of Viluppuram in Tamil Nadu; their common origins and linguistic ties resulted in relatively high levels of solidarity in Anna Nagar (Resident, July 2013). Likewise, residents in River Side Settlement were predominantly black Africans who mainly moved from the Eastern Cape province of South Africa, along with a few other residents from Malawi, Mozambique, and Zimbabwe (Focus Group Discussion, January 2015). Socially, the settlements were enclaves of low-caste and black-African population groups respectively. While the majority of households in Anna Nagar were third or fourth generation settlement residents, only a handful of the households in River Side Settlement claimed more than two decades of history in the settlement. However, the number of years in the settlement did not influence the relations the households had with the city's institutions as less than one-fifth of the surveyed households ever contacted the municipality in either settlements. Rather, the residents of Anna Nagar and River Side Settlement relied heavily on local politicians for negotiating services with their municipalities. Like other settlements in eThekwini Municipality, residents of RSS have resorted to protest by stalling traffic and marching to councillor's office in their pursuit of access to services in the past (Focus Group Discussion, February 2015). Unlike Anna Nagar, River Side Settlement has a well-organised Area Committee[48] that is formed by elected members of the settlement.

The main identifiable reasons for moving into the two settlements were: 1) to seek employment opportunities and 2) to join family or partner living in urban areas. However, a large number of respondents in Anna Nagar could not state the reason of migration as they had been living in the settlement over three generations. More than half the households surveyed in River Side Settlement were female-headed households with two or more people living together and among the male-headed households, the majority were one-person households. In contrast, in Anna Nagar almost all households reported a male member as household head. In RSS, there was a high threat of rape among the female-headed households which was quite different from the domestic violence suffered by many of the women residing in Anna Nagar. Because of the sensitivity related to both these issues, it was difficult to acquire reliable data on the same through household survey. Nevertheless, violence against women had a negative effect on building livelihoods. Data pertaining to alcohol consumption in both the settlements and child labour in the case of Anna Nagar was also difficult to obtain, though both these issues influenced livelihoods building processes of households in the two contexts.

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[48] Area Committee theoretically serves as a civic association but in practice was a derivative of ANC and represented power structures at local levels.

7.6. Discussion and Conclusions

The aim of this article was to explore the relationships between cities and informal settlements in discourses and practice, and the relation between households and household settlement locations for building households' livelihoods, set within a comparative urbanism perspective, conceptualizing informal settlements as nodes. Analysing the relationships in two different geographic contexts revealed varied levels of development and distinct historical growth for both Anna Nagar and River Side Settlement. The article highlights that though strategies for housing have a solution based approach and follow the logic of planning in the two cities, both settlements have increasingly relied on local politicians for their survival and development over the years. However, the residents of River Side Settlement also use a combination of accessing civic association and protest to negotiate their rights with the city. Discussion on the approaches in the two cities also reveals common cleavages between policy and practices towards informal settlements (Dupont et al., 2016) while the logic driving representation of informal settlements is administrative in Chennai and spatial in the case of Durban.

The historical discussion of both the settlements and the cities reveal not only what the difference and similarities in the two contexts are but also why these diverse conditions exist (Nijman, 2007). Moreover, using the comparative lens aids in highlighting issues that might be otherwise more or less acceptable. Common features in the two settlements include inadequate infrastructure services, winding lanes leading to congested dwellings located in flood prone and low-lying land with a range of tenure arrangements with a high levels of solidarity among the residents and heavy reliance on local politicians for negotiating urban services and their right to stay as well as develop in the area. Unlike Anna Nagar, high rates of unemployment and incidences of violence against women are pressing challenges of River Side Settlement, which reflect the urban economy and racial history of Durban and more generally, of South Africa. Differentiated infrastructure and housing exacerbated inequality among the different households living in Anna Nagar with sanitation and open defecation as a serious concern, as is the case of many households in India.

Comparing the institutional and spatial relations that the two cities have with informal settlements, this article shows that under the influence of 'slum free cities' discourse, both cities have witnessed a turn towards eviction related practices. The discourse of integrated policy is dominant while the development of housing in peripheral areas is the main practice in both contexts. The article demonstrates how the national and international political coalitions influence – and to some extent directly shape – the interventions that take place at the city scale (Dupont et al., 2016). The cities share the tendency to use planning matrices and models driven by the latest technologies in mapping and analysis with the goal of depoliticizing interventions. However, this shared approach of city governments operates in different governance structures and distinct planning histories of the two cities. Both city governments adhere to the 'problem solving'

approach of the new urban agenda defined by the UN- Habitat (UN-Habitat, 2016: 177). Both the settlements are located in close proximity to the city centres, however the growth centres in both the contexts have moved elsewhere. While the households are able to access income generating opportunities, polarisation of city spaces and concentration of development processes in particular location adversely influences employment possibilities for households living in informal settlements (Banerjee-Guha, 2002; Huchzermeyer, 2011).

The trajectories of the households living in the settlements are closely associated to settlement histories, which are further shaped by the institutional practices that govern city spaces. The research also revealed that even though the city interventions are top-down, households living in informal settlements cannot be viewed as 'passive' recipients of policy interventions (Gilbert, 2009; Moser, 1998; Moser, 2009; Rakodi & Lloyd-Jones, 2002). They align their livelihood-building processes with the approaches of city governments as well as resist practices that affect them negatively by negotiating through various political channels (Dupont et al., 2016). While this article has focused on informal settlements located in regional hubs of India and South Africa, relatively little is known about informal settlements in smaller urban regions of the world. Moving beyond the hierarchical understanding of urban centres and taking a comprehensive approach, by including informal settlements in cities of all sizes, will deepen our understanding of a range of relations that the households living in diverse range of cities have with their urban spaces.