

Urban Governance in India and China: A Comparative View

Anil Kumar Vaddiraju*#

Abstract

The pace of urbanisation in India and China has, of late, been rapid. This raises concerns over urban governance in both countries. While urban governance in India is supposed to take place according to the 74th Amendment to the Constitution, in China, it is largely led, guided, and experimented upon by the Chinese Communist Party. With these aspects in view, this article looks at the extent to which urban governments in these countries have been moving from traditional government to network governance. What are the roles of state, civil society, and markets in the emerging scenario of urban governance so defined? The task of moving towards 'governance' is incomplete in both countries. While urban governance and urban civil societies are weak in India, markets are strong; whereas, in China, the urban government is strong while markets and civil society are weak. There is still a long way for both countries to go towards networked governance in urban areas.

Keywords: Urban governance, India, China, civil society, market reforms, governance, Karnataka, Telangana, Wuhan, Guangzhou

Publication Date: 18 March 2022

* The author is an Associate Professor in Political Science at the Institute for Social and Economic Change, Bangalore

I Introduction

India and China differ radically in their approaches to urban development and governance. Urban governance in China is *planned, incremental, and experimental*, primarily keeping in view economic growth. Urban growth and governance in India is *unplanned and left to the free-market, i.e. spontaneous and ad hoc*.

Social capital in governance does not appear, *prima facie*, to have much importance in China, since it is a Communist-party-led system of government, as it is in the governance of India's cities, which are governed by multiple political parties and afflicted by a diverse range of issues. A comparison of urban governance in these two giants makes for an interesting case study.

There are multiple paradigms of studying urban governance (da Cruz, Rode and Mc Quarrie 2018). This study focuses on social capital, civil society, and the transition from 'government to governance'.

Social capital theory envisages trust, cooperation, and social cohesion. It also envisages civic associations and civic engagement making governance more effective. However, in complex societies, social capital can operate in complex and even contradictory ways. That is, social capital can be used normatively for civic engagement and effective governance, as also for challenging the system and governance. In addition, there can be normatively 'bad' social capital and 'good' social capital. For example, extra-legal groups or mafia groups in urban agglomerations can exhibit considerable social capital — and that is bad social capital.

In studying urban governance, social capital theory has received mixed attention (Sullivan: 2009; Woolcock: 2011). In this paper, I am essentially interested in social capital contributing to effective and well-functioning governance. Further, in extremely divided and heterogeneous societies, ensuring social capital can lead to civic peace and social harmony. The article, however, does note that social capital challenging governments and social cohesiveness too can be critically important in certain circumstances.

Civil society, and the related concept of social capital, is essentially related to market societies. These concepts, however, are derived from the historical experience of Western societies (Metzger 2001), whereas the societies in question here are both Asian.

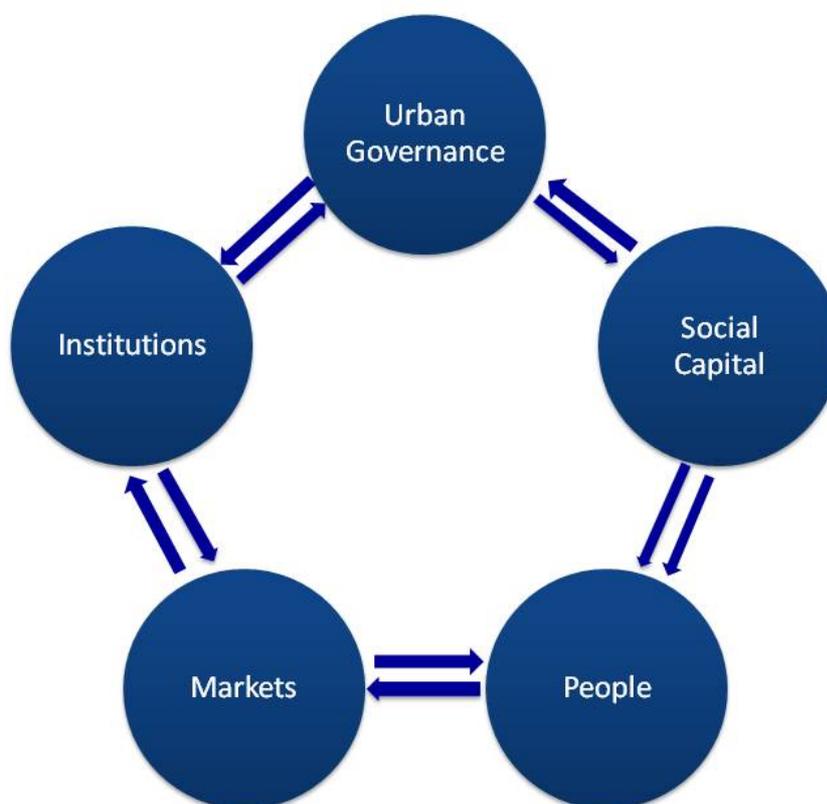
According to social and political theory, civil society is the space between the state and family (Vaddiraju 2014). In market or capitalist societies, this space is pervaded by market forces. However, in socialist, state-dominated societies, this space is problematic. In fact, the concept of civil society came to prominence globally, when the erstwhile state socialist societies collapsed in the Soviet Union. Therefore, in state-dominated societies, the space of civil society too is occupied by state and party organisations.

To what extent the space for market and civil society is available in socialist societies depends on how far the reform of state and markets has been carried out. In China, where the reform of socialism toward market society started in 1978 under Deng Xiaoping, limited space for market and market-related social organisations has emerged. On the other hand, in India, there are markets in urban areas, but not strong civil society to represent citizens. China represents a case of a strong state and weak

civil society and markets. India, on the other hand, has strong markets but a weak state and weak civil society, failing to regulate its fast-emerging urban scenario.

Civil society and markets are also supposed to play a major role in the shift from traditional government to 'governance', wherein the vertical organisation of governing as a function of government shifts to horizontal partnerships between governmental institutions, civil society, and markets. This is sometimes known as network governance (Mathur 2008). The diagram below elucidates the conceptual framework employed in the paper.

Figure 1: The Conceptual Framework: The relationship between governance, institutions, markets, people, and social capital.



This paper deals with urban governance in India and China. Social diversity, social heterogeneity, and social hierarchy characterise India, whereas China seems to have a more homogeneous society. A comparison between India and China will also have to take note of the fact that India is a democratic polity characterised by a multi-party system, whereas China is a communist polity dominated by a single party, which largely takes all decisions. Thus, the social and political systems of these two countries are different, even though economic systems currently seem to allow for some comparison—particularly after opening up of China's markets. Keeping in view these differences, it is important to understand urbanisation and urban governance in both these countries.

Urbanisation in India is an actively debated topic, with two viewpoints being prominent. One is that it has been 'sluggish' (Kundu 2014); the opposite view is that the urbanisation process is more or

less rapid. The first views posit urbanisation of the country at around 30%, proponents of the latter argue that nearly 50% of India is urban (Hashim 2020). However, both groups agree that of late the pace of urbanisation has increased. Another important fact, again accepted by both proponents, is that Indian urbanisation is ‘top heavy’ and ‘exclusionary’ (Kundu 2014), and that larger metros have been growing at a faster pace than smaller cities and towns¹.

The Chinese story appears to be different. China started its economic reforms in the 1980s, much before India; ever since the reforms, economic and urban growth have been rapid. Today, urbanisation in China is close to 50 per cent. The process of urbanisation in China is characterised by two precepts of Deng Xiaoping: ‘Crossing the river by feeling for stepping stones’ and ‘Getting some regions and people richer first’. Economic and governance liberalisation has been carried out systematically, enabling some cities and urban social sections to get rich first. These regions have been largely those belonging to the Special Economic Zones situated in coastal regions (Mc Granahan *et al*/2014).

The Chinese system of registration, called the *hukou* system, has kept migration to urban areas restricted for rural workers. This system has been reformed over the years, and migration has been liberalised. However, older natives of urban areas, holding permanent residence in urban areas, continue to have an edge over those who work under the *hukou* system (Cai and Wang: 2010). That is, even after liberalising the *hukou* system, the *hukou* workers from rural areas who migrated to urban areas continue to be neglected and form the excluded population of Chinese cities. Even if less stringent, the *hukou* system continues, and we do not as yet know to what extent this creates problems for social capital in cities.

Urban local governments in China today have much more freedom to choose their policies of promotion of capital and labour, though the *hukou* system does make the urbanisation process in China exclusionary to some extent. The overall policy is guided according to the principles laid out by the central government. Such ‘bringing capital and labour together’ happens in a very unequal way: the system still gives priority to attracting capital to cities, whereas, in the ensuing process, the same priority does not seem to be given to migrant workers who form part of the *hukou* system.

Financially the ownership of township enterprises and greater devolution of finances and powers to cities make Chinese local governments stronger than their Indian counterparts. The Indian cities, particularly at the district level are deprived of the three ‘F’s – Finances, Functions, and Functionaries—that are constitutionally promised to them. Urban local bodies (ULBs) in India do not have ownership over any economic enterprises to make their finances viable. This results often in poor infrastructure and poorer service delivery in India cities. (Vishal, Singh, and Sridhar 2021) Therefore, the Chinese cities are better placed in terms of finances and powers than their Indian counterparts. In India the proposed reform of the property tax system to generate own resources by ULBs is yet to be done systematically and therefore, even though the cities have the potential for own resources, this potential is as yet unrealized.

Studies on civil society in China demonstrate (Howell 2011) that China being ruled by a single communist party, civil society and social capital have a chequered history. The state has generally dominated society till the 1980s. Reforms have led to an increase in civil society organisations in the 1980s. However, the Tiananmen Square incidents of 1989 saw the state tightening controls over civil society. Nevertheless, after the 1990s, civil society organisations have increased, and the fortunes of civil society are said to be fluctuating from time to time. The state itself has realised the importance

of civil society organisations in Chinese society, which they envision as a path to greater state-society synergy and cooperation (Howell 2011).

In the following sections, I discuss the situation of urban governance in India, drawing on earlier published work (Vaddiraju 2013; Vaddiraju 2019). I then discuss the urban governance scenario in China, which draws from the published work of some Chinese and Western scholars (Sun and Lisaia 2018; Wu, Wan, and Jiang 2018; Mc Granahan *et al*/2014). The final section draws the strands of discussion together and concludes the paper.

II. India

Urban governance in India, despite the many national and sub-national programmes of the Indian state, is a relatively neglected subject both in policy making and in academia (Ahluwalia 2019). India being a democracy, the preponderance of votes being in the rural areas shifts the balance of political discourse to the rural sector.

This fundamental fact apart, there have been many national policies towards the development of urban areas in India. Presently, the national policy for urban governance in India is provided by the 74th Constitutional Amendment. According to the Twelfth Schedule of the Constitution, i.e., Article 243W, 18 aspects of governance are to be devolved to ULBs (Jha and Mathur 1996). Therefore, the macro-policy towards district urban planning and governance is clear.

The Constitution is also clear on the devolution of powers and functions based on which powers are to be devolved to urban local governments. However, while the Constitution is promulgated by the central government and legislature, it is State governments in India that are to devolve powers to ULBs. In this, as far as this article is concerned, both the States compared here (Karnataka and Telangana) fare equally poorly.

Though the constitution provides a national policy, the situation in Karnataka appears to be different. Karnataka has a document called 'Urban Development Policy for Karnataka', (GOK 2009), which deals with all aspects of urban development in the state. Taking only two aspects from its recommendations, I observe that the policy document makes a strong case for 'democratic local governance' and 'integrating spatial planning with economic development planning'. The document also suggests repealing certain Acts, and recommends giving more powers to local legislators. It is clear from the report that the state of 'democratic urban local governance' has not yet been fully implemented in Karnataka.

However, it is to the credit of the State of Karnataka that there is at least a draft policy document. Whichever government is in power can modify the document and implement it after such changes. Not many states in India have such draft urban policy documents. Since the draft policy document has not been implemented, we cannot make any comments on the same.

For the sake of examination, I take from Karnataka two districts: Dharwad and Udupi. From the State of Telangana, I take the case of the district city of Mahbubnagar. There is sufficient qualitative diversity in our sample. Dharwad is a city with a rich cultural and literary heritage. Udupi is a coastal, Hindu-dominated temple-city; Mahbubnagar is a city where around 40% of the population are Muslims.

The state of urban governance in the two cases of Dharwad and Udupi reflect partially the observations of the policy document (GOK 2009) mentioned above. But governance is not just about policy documents, it is about people -- citizens and the dwellers of these cities. Accordingly, I have relied on interviews with key persons in these three cities, including political figures, local bureaucracy, academics, journalists, and prominent citizens and observers of these cities.

Though the macro-policy of urban governance is to be guided by the 74th Constitutional Amendment, implementation of the policy is highly neglected. This is particularly so at district-level cities. Here, bureaucracy determines all the decisions. In Karnataka, it is the District Collector (DC) office that determines all governance (Vaddiraju 2013; Vaddiraju 2019). In Telangana, it is the Municipal administration that determines the decisions (Vaddiraju 2019). The attention paid to city governance is minimal because the responsibilities on these officials are far too many. For instance, the Ahluwalia Committee (2011) noted the following regarding ULBs in India:

‘Urban local governments in India are among the weakest in the world both in terms of capacity to raise resources and financial autonomy. While transfers from state governments and the Government of India have increased in recent years, the tax bases of ULBs are narrow and inflexible and lack buoyancy, and they have also not been able to levy rational user charges for the services they deliver (pp. XXVI)’

Local government bodies are often weak and powers devolved to them and the resources they have are also limited (Swain 2013). This is at a time when economic growth is rapid and the private sector is expanding into these cities at a rapid pace (Shaw 2013). There is hardly sufficient local governance at district-level cities to be commensurate with the economic growth.

As a result, the cities are becoming chaotic. Basic civic services such as sanitation, drinking water, and solid waste management are often neglected. I have examined these aspects in Dharwad, Udupi, and Mahbubnagar in detail in previous work (Vaddiraju 2019). The questions I asked in that research were a) how is city planning taking place; b) how is the delivery of basic services such as drinking water and sanitation done; c) to what extent is the governance of the city effective; and d) are there any issues of social capital?

District-level towns are often neglected in terms of governance, and this is reflected throughout the country. The main reason for this is the policy bias of the successive governments towards mega-urban centres and agglomerations. The entire attention in urban governance so far has largely been towards the mega-cities (Gill 2013). The Ahluwalia committee (2011) notes the following regarding the smaller cities and towns in India:

‘Smaller cities and towns should be treated differently from larger cities and metros – for funding, capacity building and reform content and timelines

◦ Funds for smaller ULBs should be channelled through intermediary institutions, and they should be encouraged to go in for pooled financing

◦ For Municipal Corporations and Municipalities, in addition to a regular window, a special window should be created specifically for projects that could be financed and executed via PPP route, or by leveraging private sources of funding(pp XXVIII).’

And the committee further notes:

The Government of India will have to take a leadership role in financing a major part of the programme and, at the same time, facilitate and encourage the involvement of state governments and ULBs. State governments will have to contribute by way of a constitutionally mandated revenue-sharing arrangement with the ULBs. On their part, the ULBs will carry out reforms in governance and financing to deliver public services of specified norms to all including the poor. This should be done within a framework of accountability. Rising aspirations of the increasing numbers of people in urban India will make further demands on ULBs, and community participation will be an important factor in ensuring accountability. (ppXXVI).

Often the metropolitan and district planning committees are not constituted, and if constituted their functioning is minimal vis-à-vis urban governance. In such circumstances, the governance of ULBs shifts from constitutionally-elected functionaries to State government and its bureaucracy, as many of the functions and responsibilities are controlled by the State government and its line departments.

Besides the above, this article also argues that there are questions of social capital in governance in these district-level cities. By social capital, I mean the cooperation among political parties and among citizens, and the same reflecting in inter-ethnic relations. Social capital is important for these cities owing to inter-ethnic relations between religious communities, and secondly, in terms of the civil society and citizen group-oriented pressure on the city governance to deliver. I argue that while the question of inter-ethnic relations is a more complex issue, the same question of social capital is also relevant in making the cities deliver essential minimum services, such as drinking water, sanitation, and solid waste management.

To summarise, urban governance in India is supposed to take place according to the 74th Amendment to the Constitution. This Amendment stipulates elected urban local governments, at all levels of cities in general and at district levels in particular. In practice, however, State governments dilute the law at all levels. Although periodic elections take place, bureaucracy still calls all the shots in urban governance rather than the elected representatives.

To examine the implementation of the law, I have taken two States: Karnataka and Telangana. I have examined the implementation of the law at the district level in both States. I have discovered that instead of elected representatives, Deputy Commissioners take all the decisions regarding district-level urban governance in Karnataka. And instead of elected representatives, Municipal Commissioners take all the decisions in Telangana. To illustrate this argument, I have examined urban governance in Udipi and Dharwad districts of Karnataka and Mahbubnagar district in Telangana.

In addition to the above, I have also examined social capital — in making local urban governments work — in these cities. I have found social capital, at the time of the research, to be better in Udupi rather than Dharwad in Karnataka. And social capital is near absent in Mahbubnagar. I have also observed that urban civil society organisations are near absent in Dharwad, whereas they are active in Udupi. In the case of Mahbubnagar of Telangana, I have found that urban civil society organisations are near absent. And I have also noticed that Dharwad in Karnataka, with all its cultural heritage, and Mahbubnagar in Telangana, with all its religious syncretism, are also plagued with inter-ethnic tensions between different religious communities, reflecting the absence of social capital. Surprisingly, the city of Udupi has also, of late, developed similar tensions.

III. China

Much like in any other country, urbanisation in China is entwined with its broader history. Recently, Sun and Lisaia (2018) have periodised the history of urbanisation in China into three phases: the first phase from 1911 to 1949 i.e., during the pre-revolutionary China; the second phase from 1949 to 1978, wherein the influence of the Soviet Union and later processes of ‘Great Leap Forward’ and ‘Cultural Revolution’ have had their impact; and the third phase from 1978 till 2014. The period after 2014 is termed by the authors ‘National New Type Urbanisation’.

According to these authors, these are historical transformations of China that have been synonymous with the modernisation of the Chinese state. To put it in their words: *‘Between 1840 and 2017, China underwent three historical transformations in the quest to modernize the state’*. And,

‘The first transformation saw the fragmented development of cities, mainly those that received foreign concessions. This became a significant step towards gaining national independence and re-organizing the structure of the state, but many problems remained’.

Sun and Lisaia point out that the second historical transformation began after the Chinese revolution in 1949 and had a decisive impact on the history of urbanisation:

‘The impact of the second historical transformation on the development of Chinese cities, therefore, began with the first decade of New China which witnessed a powerful industrial base being laid with the support of USSR and the reconstruction of Chinese cities. Together with Soviet specialists, eight master plans for industrial cities were developed, based on Soviet urban planning theory, and a master plan for Beijing, the socialist capital of PRC [People’s Republic of China], was proposed. In the late 1950s, under the influence of government campaigns such as the “Great Leap Forward”, “Cultural Revolution” and the “Third Front Movement” urbanisation ceased. For the first 30 years of the PRC’s existence, urbanisation was regarded as a phenomenon typical of capitalist countries and therefore received little attention from the government and scholars in this phase

The third historical transformation, beginning with reforms towards ‘socialist market society’, was equally decisive for urbanisation in China:

‘In 1978 with the rise of Deng Xiaoping, the implementation of economic reform - ‘the reform and opening-up’ or ‘internal reforms and external openness’ policy - was initiated. The country altered its political course towards building ‘socialism with Chinese characteristics’, moving from class struggle to economic development. The foundation of reform was the principle of ‘four modernisations’ — defence industry, agriculture, science and industrial production.

‘The most important changes in China’s economy were ushered in with Deng Xiaoping’s decision to establish five export zones — Special Economic Zones (SEZs) - located in favourable coastal areas near the Taiwan island, Hong Kong and Macau. These led to the rise of the cities of Shenzhen, Zhuhai Shantou, Xiamen and Hainan. Foreign direct investment opened up new opportunities for the development of coastal cities. These zones had a concentration of enterprises focusing on products for export. The creation of SEZs became one of the key factors affecting the economic recovery of China.’

Sun and Lisaia’s article presents a highly-official version of Chinese urbanisation. For example, regarding migration they observe:

‘At present, the country’s largest economic centres attract millions of migrant workers every year who move from rural areas to work and live in the cities. China’s internal migration has become the world’s largest demographic shift: between 1978 and 2017, more than 500 million people became urban dwellers’

The above-discussed work by Sun and Lisaia helps put an official historical perspective on urbanisation in China. It is interesting to observe, however, that these authors do not discuss the *hukou* system at any length.

However, the economic reforms of 1978 is supposed to have resulted in 25 million private enterprises in China, with urban employment accounting for 80% by 2017 (Wu, Yan, and Jiang 2018). This change has diluted the earlier political culture of organising society through work committees. And the socialist state’s unity of society and state is supposed to be disintegrating since the 1980s. However, what replaced the party-state-society relationship in China? In attempting to answer this problem Wu, Yan, and Jiang ask two questions regarding the governance structures in urban China. These two questions go into the very heart of the transformations taking place in urban governance in contemporary China.

The first question that they ask is: ‘why did Chinese local governments introduce new governance actors in communities?’ They say that “*the history of community reforms in recent years in mainland China is marked by efforts to rebuild local integrating networks to ease the burden of the state by*

decentralising its power and delegating responsibility to other institutions” (Wu, Yan, and Jiang 2018).

The second question that they ask is, ‘how did the logic of government behaviour lead to different models of community governance?’ To answer these questions, they take -- similar to the approach I have taken above regarding India -- a comparative view of two states and one district from each state. Their qualitative study covers two major provinces of China — Wuhan and Guangzhou; from Wuhan, they take Jiangnan district to study, while from Guangzhou they take Yuexiu district.

In Wuhan, the state followed its own older pattern of strengthening the government to meet the growing needs of the people. The state did not carry out major governance reforms towards including the non-state actors in governance. This involved expanding its personnel and organizational strength for service delivery. The authors say:

‘The ambition and dedication of the Jiangnan District government were revealed in the strengthening of its institutions of power. The government and the party increased the number of government-employed community workers and improved the leading position of the party in the community, which demonstrated a kind of government-centric reform. (Wu, Yan, and Jiang 2018)

Whereas, ‘in contrast, the professional SWOs (Social Worker Organisations) outside the traditional governance structure were introduced as new governance actors in Yuexiu District’ of Guangzhou. And they go on to say that “*The former was [using] more governmental means and is, therefore, more conservative. The latter uses more social forces and is therefore more liberal.*”

However, after discussing the entire changes and experiments in local urban governance in detail, they hold the following: ‘The situation is similar in both the districts. Although the traditional governance actors changed slightly in the reforms, the newly-designated actors’ function and governance space are limited because of the limited autonomy of the CRCs [Community Resource Centres —the organisations created apart from the party to address the needs of local communities] in both the districts.

The reforms, though intended to create space for local community organisations, ‘in Jiangnan (i.e., in Wuhan) they mainly rely on administrative actors within the system. The delegation was accomplished through recombination and adjustment of the traditional governance structure.’ On the other hand in Guangzhou, the ‘Yuexiu District government established a parallel market system to replace the insufficient administrative system. In terms of governance, some of the functions of the local governments were outsourced in Guangzhou to private market players, who in China were called Social Worker Organisations (SWOs). Whereas in Wuhan, the government relied on expanding its organisation and personnel owing to the growing urban needs. After elaborating this in detail, Wu, Yan, and Jiang (2018) observe:

‘Although there is a slight difference between the reforms of Yuexiu, [i.e., wherein markets were brought in to serve governance] and Jiangnan district [where the traditional party-government was strengthened and expanded to meet needs], there is no essential difference between the two areas in the

leading force of the government. This finding verifies that there is no powerful civil society apart from the traditional government structure.’

They finally conclude by saying that the government, in reforming governance, is only looking for ‘controllable helpers’ and the reform is essentially ‘temporary’. They conclude by saying:

‘The so-called [governance] reform may be more of an amendment and supplement to existing governing measures. The impacts of the changes are therefore likely to be temporary.’

The above paragraphs clearly illustrate the ongoing experimentation in the field of urban governance in China. Wu, Yan, and Jiang greatly illuminate this process and hold a mirror to the fact that the party-state is alive and intact in urban governance in China. However, it must be noted that while these authors too have noted that China has 25 million private enterprises today, and the ratio of urban employment to the total employment is 80%, they still do not make clear to us whether the *hukou* system has been totally dismantled, or it is still existing.

IV. Discussion & Conclusion

The Indian case of three district-level cities from two States clearly shows that these cities suffer from severe neglect in terms of governance. This is particularly the case in Dharwad and Mahabubnagar; whereas, in Udupi, I find the situation somewhat better. And, also that this situation of governance deficit, is partly compensated when there is citizen action to make the government work at the city level.

I take Udupi city to be an example of better governance and better social capital between citizens as the reason for the same. However, of late fissures have appeared in the social capital of Udupi citizenry too. This Brahmin caste and Hindu religion-dominated city now faces challenges from the Dalit groups of the city and from outside. Not only that, recently there were Hindu-Muslim communal tensions too in Udupi. The fissures of Indian society are reflected here too.

These conflicts are a testimony to the complexity of Indian society. Also, I have argued that in the cities of Dharwad and Mahabubnagar, social capital appears to be lacking a) in terms of making government work, and b) in terms of inter-ethnic relations.

In the case of China, the governance reforms do not provide much basis to call the emerging SWOs in Guangzhou ‘civil society’. As I noted earlier, what seems to be happening in Guangzhou is essentially outsourcing some of the social care functions to market actors. The latter can be called ‘civil society’ only with great caution. In the context of Chinese urban governance, applying the related concept of ‘social capital’ appears to be far-fetched.

What we have now in China, as is illustrated by Wu, Yan, and Jiang, is some room for manoeuvre for markets in governance, by way of outsourcing some of the functions of the state. This in no way reduces or dilutes the grip of the party-state over local society or government. As I mentioned in the beginning, the process of urbanisation in China indicates that there is a substantial amount of experimentation with different forms of local urban governance, the predominant being that of the state-dominated one. The Chinese state, even when involving SWOs, outsources only those functions

that either it cannot perform or does not want to. From the above discussion of urban governance in India and China, I propose the following description:

Table-1: Urban Governance in India and China: A Comparative View

Country/Aspect	Urban local self-governments	Markets, independently/ in partnership with governments	Civil Society and Urban civic action Independently/ Partnership with government
India	Weak	Strong	Weak
China	Strong	Weak	Weak

Comparisons between China and India, in terms of whichever aspects, have to come to grips with the fact that both are two different political, economic and social systems. In terms of urbanisation, there are some similarities between the two. As some noted experts on Indian urbanisation write (Kundu:2014), “if Indian urbanisation is exclusionary, the Chinese counterpart is no less exclusionary.” Similarly, civil society and social capital can be effective for governance in India and China. At the same time, we should keep in mind that civil society and social capital are contested and can be intrinsically contradictory tools.

Governments in both India and China have found civil society useful at times, and at other times problematic. Therefore, they have imposed curbs on civil society, social capital, and citizen action. In India for example, at the national level, the United Progressive Alliance (UPA) regime at the union has found civil society progressive and, to some extent, reliable support, whereas the current National Democratic Alliance (NDA) regime at the union is decidedly not in favour of civil society. Likewise — and this is with many caveats — the Chinese state too has found civil society and social capital as useful tools to promote government and ‘governance’ at some times, and a problem at other times.

I tend to believe that given the market orientation of both the polities in the recent past, and given the inter-city and intra-city inequalities, social capital can be a useful tool for the promotion of effective governance. If the polity is open, and not just the economy, it has more space for these organisations; and if the polity is closed, there will be less space for civil society. However, the same polity can sometimes provide more space to civil society than before. These vary from time to time with the same structure of the state being in place.

We can conclude that, as Table 1 illustrates, as far as urban governance is concerned, party-state is all that there is in China, all experiments notwithstanding. The party-state’s relationship with markets and civil society in governance is rather instrumental and pragmatic. The party-state takes all the decisions of governance and markets and civil society dances to that tune.

The Indian case reflects that, though the laws for local representative governments exist, urban governance and urban civil society are still weak, compared to the strength and growth of urban markets. Indian cities are bursting at the seams with markets. Local government and ‘governance’ with equal, commensurate strength to regulate these markets, and rein in the markets, and an urbane civil society to stand up to the injustices of markets, at the same dealing with the challenges of multiple

dimensions of urbanisation, and a state that can champion the rights of all urban communities successfully, are all still a far cry in India. And therefore, the challenges of urbanisation in both countries are only half-addressed as of now.

References

- Ahluwalia, Isher Judge *et al*(2011) *Report on Indian Urban Infrastructure and Services*, New Delhi: Government of India.
- Ahluwalia, Isher Judge (2019) 'Urban Governance in India' in *Journal of Urban Affairs*, Vol.41, No.1, pp83-102.
- da Cruz, Nuno F, Philipp Rode & Michael McQuarrie (2018) 'New Urban Governance: A Review of Current Themes and Future Priorities' in *Journal of Urban Affairs*, Vol. 41 No.1 pp1-19.
- Feng, Cai and Meiyang Wang (2010) 'Urbanisation with Chinese Characteristics' in Garnaut, Ross, Jane Golley and Ligang Song (Eds) *China: The Next Twenty Years of Reform and Development*, Sydney: ANU Press, (accessed from JSTOR).
- Gill, Rajesh (2013) 'The Academic Bias against Towns: A Cultural Audit', R.N. Sharma and R.S. Sandhu (Eds) *Small Cities and Towns in Global Era: Emerging Changes and Perspectives*, Jaipur: Rawat Publications, pp 84-98.
- Government of Karnataka (2009) *Urban Development Policy for Karnataka* (2009) Bangalore: Government of Karnataka.
- Hashim, S.R (2020) 'Inclusive Urbanisation' Key Note Paper, presented at the 20th Annual Conference of the Indian Association of Social Science Institutions, at the Institute for Social and Economic Change, Bengaluru, on 27th February, 2020.(mimeo, ISEC).
- Howell, Jude (2011) 'Civil Society in China' in Edwards, Michael (Ed) *The Oxford Handbook of Civil Society*, Oxford and New York: OUP, pp.159-171.
- Jha,S.N. and P.C.Mathur (1999) *Decentralization and Local Politics*, New Delhi: Sage.
- Kundu, Amitabh (2014) 'India's Sluggish Urbanisation and its Exclusionary Development' in Mc Granahan, Gordon and George Martine (Eds) *Urban Growth in Emerging Economies: Lessons from BRICS*, London and New York: Routledge, pp191-232.
- Mathur, Kuldeep (2008) *From Government to Governance: A Brief Survey of the Indian Experience*, New Delhi: National Book Trust.
- Mc Granahan, Gordon *et al*(2014) 'China's Radical Urbanisation and Bringing Capital and Labour Together Step by Step' in Mc Granahan, Gordon and George Martine (Eds) *Urban*

- Growth in Emerging Economies: Lessons from BRICS*, London and New York: Routledge, pp 55-98.
- Metzger, Thomas A (2001) 'The Western Concept of Civil Society in the Context of Chinese History' in Sudipta Kaviraj and Sunil Khilnani (Eds) *Civil Society: History and Possibilities*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, pp. 204-232.
- Shaw, Annapurna (2013) 'Emerging Perspectives on Small Cities and Towns' in R.N. Sharma and R.S. Sandhu (Eds) *Small Cities and Towns in Global Era: Emerging Changes and Perspectives*, Jaipur: Rawat Publications, pp36-54.
- Sullivan, Helen (2009) 'Social Capital' in Davies and Imbroscio (eds) *Theories of Urban Politics*, Los Angeles, London and New Delhi: Sage, pp 221-238.
- Sun, Yimin and Daria Lisaia (2018) 'History Matters: Chinese Urbanisation as an Emergent Space', *Urbanisation*, Vol.3. No.1, pp 1-16.
- Swain, Biraj (2013) 'Small Towns, their Limited Resourcing Options and Equity Deficits' in R.N. Sharma and R.S. Sandhu (Eds) *Small Cities and Towns in Global Era: Emerging Changes and Perspectives*, Jaipur: Rawat Publications, pp 98-111.
- Vaddiraju, Anil Kumar (2013) 'A Tale of Many Cities: Governance and Planning in Karnataka' *Economic & Political Weekly*, Vol. XLVIII, No.2 .pp 66-69.
- Vaddiraju, Anil Kumar (2014) 'On Civil Society Again: Civil Society, State and Public Policy in South India', *Studies in Indian Politics*, Vol. 2. No.1, pp 55-66.
- Vaddiraju, Anil Kumar (2019) 'District-Level Urban Governance Policies in India: Cities of Neglect?' *Urban India*, Vol.39, No.1 Jan-June, pp.134-142.
- Vishal, R, Shalini Singh and Kala S. Sridhar(2021) 'Municipal Finances and Decentralized Government : Lessons from India and China' in Kala S. Sridhar and Li Jingfeng (Eds) *The Rise of India and China*, Oxon and New York: Routledge, pp 231-54.
- Woolcock, Michael (2011) 'Civil Society and Social Capital' in Edwards, Michael (Ed) *The Oxford Handbook of Civil Society*, Oxford and New York: OUP, pp.197-208.
- Wu, Xiaolin, Huiqi Yan and Yongxi Jiang (2018) 'How are New Community Structures Formed in Urban China? A Case Study of Two Cities, Wuhan and Guangzhou', *Asian Survey*, Vol. 58. No. 5. pp 942-965.

Notes

Acknowledgements: Immense thanks to the anonymous referee for enormously helpful comments. I am also immensely thankful to Professor Kala Seetharam Sridhar for providing some documents cited in the paper, and for Professor Sunil Nautiyal for reading the paper and providing comments. Help is gratefully acknowledged

¹ Kundu(2014) discusses both the positions and argues his case for sluggish growth of urbanisation in India. He also demonstrates how the nature of Indian urbanisation is ‘top heavy’ and how smaller district and lower tier cities are neglected in growth and governance. He also discusses how increasingly the urbanisation process in India is market driven.