Envisioning the Future of Mumbai/Bombay.
Strategic Planning as a Tool for Inclusion or for further Centralisation?

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The paper aims at exploring recent changes in the urban planning domain in the Indian megalopolis of Mumbai/Bombay, with a focus on an emerging form of document, the 'Vision'. The paper highlights the active role of private investors in promoting visions and in selecting the projects to be financed, especially through 'ad hoc' created bodies. Such governance structure has been defined by some scholars as 'governance-beyond-the-state', usually led by economic, political and socio-cultural coalitions. While acknowledging its capacity of restructuring a clearly fragmented and often ineffective institutional context, the paper questions if such form of governance is actually aiming at a larger inclusiveness or rather at strengthening the government in such a complex context. Concluding remarks also question the role of international agencies in the definition of the governance structure and in the promotion of (standardised) visions and strategies as innovative forms of planning.

Keywords: Mumbai, Vision, Strategic planning, Private Think Tanks, 'Governance-beyond-the-state'

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Mumbai/Bombay: a contested Mega-City Region

Mumbai/Bombay is the capital of the State of Maharashtra, the second largest city of India after Delhi and one of the largest metropolitan areas in the world. The double naming of the city could confuse a non-Indian reader, but it actually contributes to show the complexity of the city. While 'Bombay'[3] refers to the nature of the city as a port and as a melting pot of different cultures, languages and religions, 'Mumbai'[4] is used mainly by some right wing parties to reject the colonial past, the current globalisation process and the immigration (Hoskote, 2007). Even though both terms can still be heard, since 1996 the city was officially renamed as Mumbai after an initiative promoted by the ruling right wing coalition (Shiv-Sena and BJP). In the following paper the city will be called with its current official name, without forgetting that even the denomination is a matter of conflict in such complex context. Not only the name is contested, but also the area it is referred to is an object of debate.
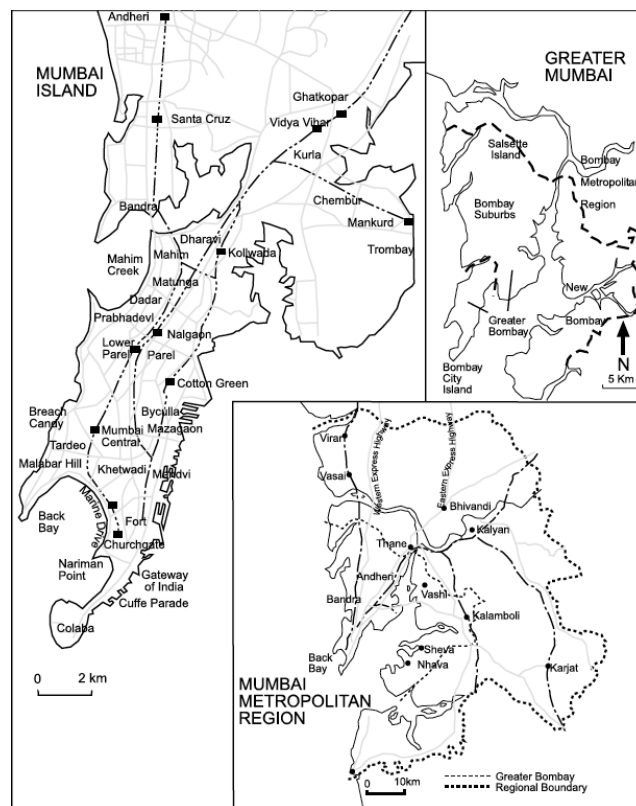

Figure 1. Mumbai island, Greater Mumbai and the Mumbai Metropolitan Region (Pacione, 2006).

The same name is actually used to define at least three different territorial units (Patel, 2007; Zérah, 2008):
- the original colonial city - also called the 'island city' - that covers an area of sixty-eight sq km with a population of around three million inhabitants (Census 2001);

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[3] Bombay stems from the name given by the Portuguese colonisers in XVI century (*Bom Bahia*); it was afterwards adapted by the British and is commonly used by large part of the Indian population.
[4] Mumbai is rooted in the name of the mother goddess in the Hindi religion (*Mumba-Aai).

- the area created through the extension of the boundaries of the *island city* in 1950 and again in 1957, officially called 'Greater Mumbai'. It covers an area of 437.71 sq km and is populated by almost fourteen million inhabitants (Census 2011);
- the 'Mumbai Metropolitan Region', an area of 4355 sq km populated by more than twenty-one million inhabitants (Census 2011).

In addition to this, since the end of the XX century the name of Mumbai refers also to a strong BPO (Business Process Outsourcing) hub[5] (Dossani, Kenney, 2007) and to a 'Global City-Region'[6] (Scott, 2001; Zérah, 2009), rather than a Global City. According to some scholars, such concept focuses too much on economic dimensions (Taylor et al., 2002) and on the changing role of the core city (Sassen, 1994), thus 'eclipsing the phenomenon of the de-concentration of activities and jobs towards the periphery and the cities of Thane and Raigad' and overlooks 'the strong metropolitan socio-spatial inequalities' (Zérah, 2009).

As a matter of fact, the crisis of the manufacturing in the core city in the Seventies caused both the decentralisation of industries to other parts of the Mumbai region and the rise of the informal economy, through which low-cost services and goods started to be produced both for internal consumption and for the formal national and global economy (Sassen, 2000). While the employment in formal manufacturing in Mumbai has decreased from 41% in 1961 to 12.5% in 1991 (Mahadevia, 2008), it is currently estimated that 'more than 60 per cent of the national income of India is generated in the unorganized segment and it is the unorganized sector that grows much faster than the organized sector' (Gruber et al., 2005). Slums, now covering 12% of the territory of the city but hosting more than half of its population (Nijman, 2008), were considered as a social problem targeted by specific policies from their first appearance. They also started to represent also a spatial problem after the liberalisation of India and the shift towards an economy mainly based on services at the beginning of the Nineties.

Basing on economic data on Mumbai[7], nowadays some scholars define it as 'the financial and commercial capital of India' (Pacione, 2008), while others stress the fact that Mumbai is the 'Mega-City of a poor country' and a 'city of the new economies and of large chunks of poverty' (Patel, 2007). According to Patel, 'Mumbai is becoming like most cities in the developing world, one based on services and the flow of information with dispersed manufacturing located in specialized areas' (ibidem). 'The inability to integrate its disparate interests groups', 'the marginalization of groups such as Dalits[8], Muslims and migrant labourer' and the 'competitive populism' promoted by the different parties also characterise Mumbai (Hoskote, 2007). These elements altogether make it harder for the city-region to become competitive at the global level, as well as equal for its inhabitants. While both the Central and State Government strongly hope for its climb up the ladder to become an International Financial Centre (IFC)[9], a simultaneous functioning of several governing bodies to cope with the disparate issues of the city-region seems to be still far (Dossani, Kenney, 2007).

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[5] A BPO refers to an offshore area offering cheaper labour forces to global technical and financial platforms.
[6] Further studies on the Mega-City Region define it as "a series of anything between twenty and fifty cities and towns, physically separated but functionally networked, clustered around one or more larger central cities and drawing economic strength from a new functional division of labour" (Hall, 2009).
[7] Mumbai generates 6.16% of the total GDP and serves as an economic hub of India, contributing 10% of factory employment, 25% of industrial output, 33% of income tax collections, 40% of India's foreign trade (MMRDA, 2008).
[8] Also known in Western countries as "untouchables" or "scheduled castes".
[9] The convenient location of Mumbai in terms of world timing (four hours of time overlap with UK and European business centers) and its competency in sophisticated financial and engineering services make the city-region a High Connectivity Gateway (Taylor et all, 2002).

The fragmented governance structure of Mumbai/Bombay

Looking at the governance structure that is present on the territory of Mumbai it is possible to recognise three main institutional actors involved in planning activities:

- the 'Central Government of India', which is directly involved in the planning of areas of national interests (rail yards, docklands, military areas etc.) and is currently promoting a national city modernisation scheme, the Jawaharlal Nehru National Urban Renewal Mission (JNNURM) through the investment of around $ 20 billion dollars for a period of seven years started in 2005;
- the 'Government of Maharashtra (GoM)', which is in charge of regional urban planning through a governmental agency, the 'Mumbai Metropolitan Region Development Authority' (MMRDA). The MMRDA is not only in charge of the regional plan, but also of the development of the main infrastructures and of large scale projects;
- the 'Greater Mumbai Municipal Corporation' (GMMC) is formally governed by the mayor that is elected by the councillors of the Corporation, but in reality it is lead by the Municipal Commissioner, directly appointed by the Government of Maharashtra (Zérah, 2009). The Corporation is mainly in charge of water supply, sewage and waste management, education, public street lighting etc. Given the fact that the GMMC is dependent on the decision of the State for the approval of its Development Plans for the area of Greater Mumbai it is usually not considered an autonomous planning authority, but mainly a provider and maintainer of public services.
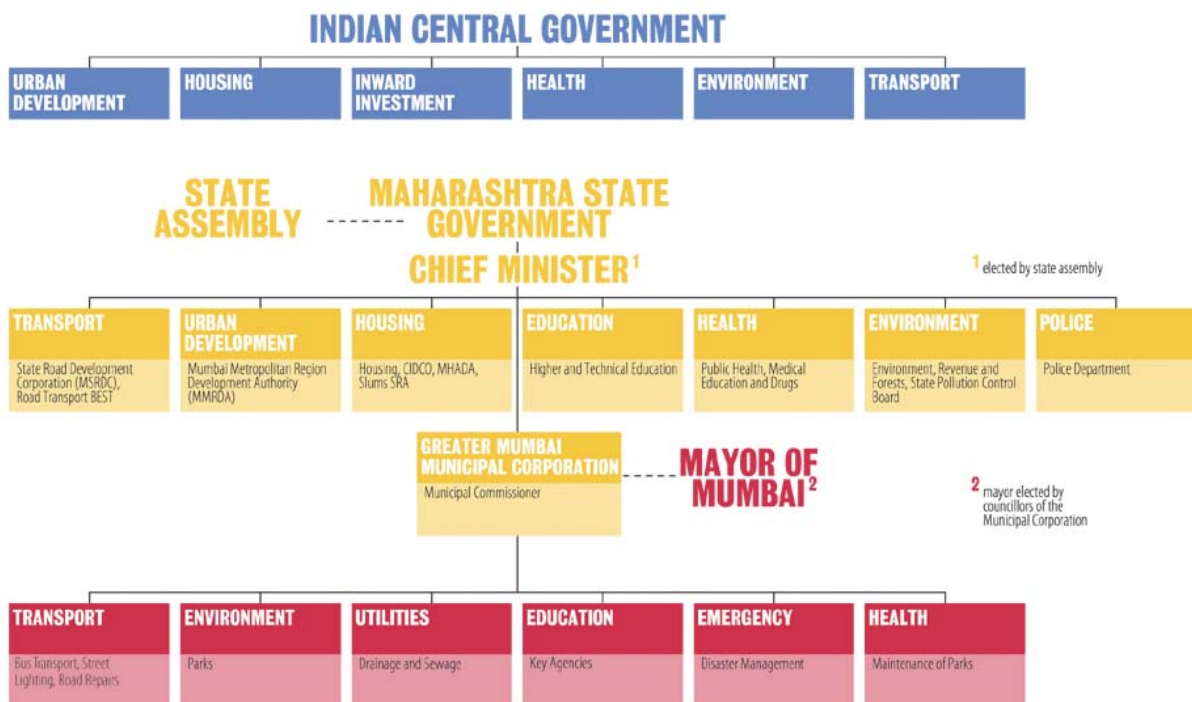

Figure 2. Governance structure in Mumbai (www.urbanage.com)

The governing local bodies, the GoM and the GMMC are traditionally led by two different (and often conflicting) political parties and further agencies contribute to the complexity of planning in Mumbai: the MSRDC (Maharashtra State Road Development Corporation), the MHADA (Maharashtra Housing and Development Authority) mainly responsible for the planning and construction of public housing and the SRA (Slum Redevelopment Authority) involved in the rehabilitation and relocation of slum settlements. Such 'proliferation of institutions' can be seen on one hand as an answer to various specific problems of the city, but on the other hand as a strong element of fragmentation of the real capacity to govern the city (Zérah, 2009).

Along with this, the economic liberalisation of 1991 has added a second parallel process of decentralisation and involvement of private actors – making the structure yet more complex. The decentralisation promoted in 1992 through an amendment of the Constitution should have brought to the creation of a Metropolitan Planning Committee, but actually has not been realised so far (Phatak, 2007; Zérah, 2009). On the other hand, after an amendment of the Maharashtra Regional and Town Planning Act (1996), also registered private companies could be considered Special Planning Authorities (SPA) and could promote plans for large areas of the territory. According to Patel, "this legislative step opened the way for private-sector and international finance to participate more actively in the governance of the region and the shaping of global market" (Patel, 2007).

Raiser and Volkmann underline that: 'the power to implement any political agenda is split among rivalling institutions and political parties [...]. Rather than resembling the City Inc. model of Shanghai, Mumbai/Bombay could be classified as a "patchwork city". If there is any integrating image, it is most likely the dream world created by the world's largest film industry, Bollywood' (Raiser, Volkmann, 2007).

Urban planning in Mumbai/Bombay: from land use planning to the visions

This complex governance structure has also portrayed a diverse array of planning efforts – the traditional land use planning through the Development Plans (also called Master Plans), the regional plans drafted by MMRDA, and the more recent plans of the Special Planning Authorities or the Vision plans drafted by private investor groups. The first two town planning acts of 1945 and 1915 stated the production of Development plans every twenty to twenty-five years. The replacing Maharashtra Regional and Town Planning Act of 1966 also included the need to coordinate Development Plans and Regional Plans.

 The first Development Plan for Greater Mumbai (1964-1981) focused mainly on the provision of amenities and on the decongestion of the island city through the promotion of development in the suburbs and the shift of industries outside of the city core. Critics to such plan state that the planning was done 'at a slow pace' and without 'budget or strategy to acquire land for the development of amenities' (Nallathiga, 2009). In 1970 the first Regional Plan for 1970 – 1991 was published and was sharing similar concerns with the Development Plan (Pacione, 2006). It envisioned the creation of Navi Mumbai, a new city on a 344 km area opposite to the island city. Though the development had already started in 1971, the Development Plan was sanctioned in 1979. The city was planned to host 2 million inhabitants, but had only reached 200,000 units in the Nineties and ad scarce public service (Pacione, 2006).

A new Development Plan was promoted at the level of Greater Mumbai for the period 1981-2001. Initially approved in parts, complete approval was gained only in 1993 and hence extended until 2013. Such delay in the approval strongly affected the effectiveness of the plan: actual population overshot estimates of the plan, leaving a backlog of two million inhabitants in 2001 to be accommodated (Nallathiga, 2009). It also introduced restrictive development control regulations (ibidem).

The next Regional Plan (1996-2011), created after the liberalisation, reflects a different approach: it amended rent control act to promote urban renewal, land use zoning was relaxed to develop new offices at Nariman Point and business centre at Bandra Kurla (Pacione, 2006). The new orientation is clearly explained also in the document of the Regional Plan: 'for decades, Mumbai's spatial development followed a mono-centric, linear pattern of growth [...]. The [former] Regional Plan sought to alter this pattern by developing Navi Mumbai on the main land across the harbour, and by creating other growth centres, like Bandra-Kurla Complex and Kalyan Complex. These efforts, together with large population growth in Thane, Kalyan, Bhiwandi, Vasai - Virar area, and massive industrial investment taken place outside Greater Mumbai have set in motion an irreversible process of spatial decentralisation [...]. New growth centres and new transport linkages are likely to give rise to a new spatial structure, new pattern [...]. This structure, which may form an "Open Pentagon", will emerge as MMR's core of economic activity and population' (MMRDA, 1996).
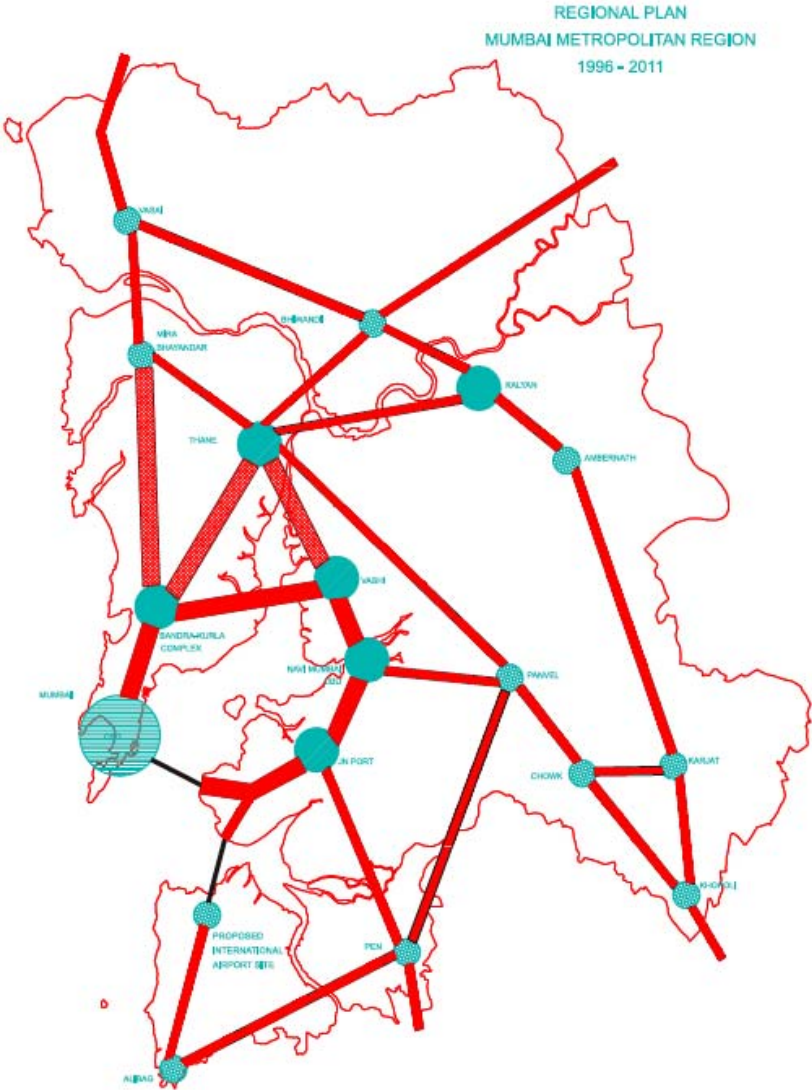

Figure 3. The Open Pentagon in the Mumbai Metropolitan Region (MMRDA, 1996).

The traditional planning system in Mumbai has undergone severe critiques since the beginning of the XXI century. Both the development and regional plans are considered too detailed to be flexible, to have a too long perspective without considering also short and mid-term actions, to pay scarce attention to the socio-economic dimensions of the city, to be often approved too late to be useful, to leave little space to private investors and to care too little about the implementation: 'the root-cause of the urban maladies has been the divorcing of the plan preparation from plan implementation' (Nallathiga, 2009). Hence, the rise of new planning forms such as the 'visions' - mainly promoted by private actors and endorsed by few local and international bodies – after the liberalisation should therefore not surprise.

It is interesting to notice that the 'visions', defined as a form of strategic planning by their promoters, are substantially overlapping with the traditional forms of planning both in terms of scale and of duration. The first vision was presented in 2003 for the area of Greater Mumbai and was intended to last until 2013, that is to say exactly the same moment in which the Development Plan for Greater Mumbai would have expired. The most recent vision is targeting the whole region and has been presented in 2011, that is to say when the Regional Plan has expired. It is intended to be valid until 2052, more than any other traditional plan.

Vision Mumbai 2013 and its implementation

In contrary to its ruling economic strength, by 2003, the scale and complexity of Mumbai's numerous problems had grown to an alarming level. Overflow of immigrant workforce with respect to the jobs, infrastructure failures, conflicting interests of ruling parties of the State Government and Mumbai Corporation, floods, religious and ethnic divides, high cost of land and rental values - each a complex problem on its own and the simultaneous occurrence of all, pressed the Government of Maharashtra (GoM) to look for a new approach to deal with Mumbai's future. Henceforward, a set of Vision documents has been produced to tackle with the city's problem. This process of forging a 'vision' for Mumbai highlights a specific model of restructuring the city based on a coalition of industrial and government circles, in a configuration similar to an entrepreneurial urban regime (Kennedy, Zérah, 2008). In September 2003, the Government of Maharashtra appointed Bombay First[10] – a think tank initiative founded by a group of corporate - and the global consultancy firm Mc Kinsey to produce a study with the objective of transforming Mumbai into a world-class city, which formulated into the Vision Mumbai 2013 document. Though initiated by a group of private interests, the plan later on was endorsed by the GoM, Prime Minister of India and the World Bank. Following the strategic outline of the document, the Chief Minister of Maharashtra created a Task Force, which studied the initial proposals and made final recommendations through its own report. Based on these recommendations, the Mumbai Transformation Programme was established in 2005 by the Government of Maharashtra with the support of international organisations such as the Cities Alliance, USAID and the World Bank, which was also financing a regional business plan (Zérah, 2009). According to its promoters, such programme 'consist of over 40 projects to spur economic growth in Mumbai, reduce poverty and enhance the overall quality of life of its residents, especially slum dwellers' (Cities Alliance, 2006).

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[10] *Bombay (Mumbai) First* was founded with the objective to involve both private business houses and the public sector in the development of Mumbai. The idea of Bombay (Mumbai) First was derived from the London First in a conference held by Bombay Chamber of Commerce and Industry in 1994. Funded by its founding members and corporate houses, the aim of the body was to act as an intermediary between various levels of governing bodies, private enterprises, individuals and NGOs. The motive behind founding of this organisation was to develop agendas for the city without the time consuming bureaucracy and meddling of political motives of public sector bodies.

In 2005 the Mumbai Transformation Support Unit (MTSU) was formed to act as an umbrella initiative within which all projects selected inside the shortlisted focus areas have been integrated.

In this framework the document 'Vision Mumbai 2013' is worthy to be critically analysed in its parts, being the initiator of the new trend of strategic planning in Mumbai that has been outlined above. The document in its form and objectives clearly portrays the corporate planning roots of an American consultancy firm, in this case Mc Kinsey being the co-author. The document is a public one and is in the form of a written report[11], which can be downloaded from the Internet (www.visionmumbai.org). Both in the selection and description of case studies and in the implementation strategies for the enlisted initiatives, there is utmost importance given to the involvement of stakeholders and private investments as key drivers to a city's development. The plan follows GoM's policy of polycentric growth. The study has been framed as an assessment of the strengths and opportunities of the city. The document exhibited that Mumbai was lagging behind in both aspects of economic growth and quality of life – the two main indicators for a world-class city.

The preface of the document states that: 'the report attempts to provide a comprehensive vision for Mumbai for 2013, with the clear aim of helping it achieve the status of a world class city. It also provides a blueprint for Mumbai's overall development over the next ten years: what needs to get done to ensure that Mumbai does indeed convert its vision into reality' (Bombay First/Mc Kinsey, 2003).

The document identifies eight priority initiatives, focusing both on areas of development (economic growth, transportation, housing, other infrastructures, financing) and on implementation strategies (governance, 'generate momentum through quick wins', 'enable implementation through public private resources'). Mumbai is governed by a multiple set of bodies and there is no governing body accountable for any of these actors. The integration of functions under one head though ideally favourable is not realistic goal for the present given the conflicting political parties at the city and state level governance structure.

Hence, for immediate implementation, a steering committee headed by the Chief Minister (CM) and consisting of other key ministers and the Mayor should be formed. For ensuring an efficient implementation mechanism an Empowered Committee consisting of key state and city govt. officials, selected private sector participants should meet fortnightly to review progress and coordinate with Steering Committee. Key agencies like MMRDA, MSRDC, SRA, MHADA etc. should be made accountable by signing of Memorandum of Understandings (MoUs) and CM should review performance on a monthly basis. It is fostered an active participation of Mumbai's corporates and NGOs especially in advocacy, funding, infrastructure creation, management resources and independent projects.

Following the Vision Mumbai 2013 document by Mc Kinsey and Bombay First, a task force appointed by the Chief Minister in 2004 produced a report named 'Transforming Mumbai into a World-Class City'. In addition to what is already stated in the Vision Mumbai 2013, the document proposes the creation of a Citizen Action Group (CAG) described as a 'citizen body' in order to monitor the implementation of projects. McKinsey's recommendation for the creation of a ring-fenced Mumbai Infrastructure Fund (MIF) has been modified in the second document to be called Mumbai Development Fund (MDF). The MIF suggestion stops at describing the protective policy for the money. The MDF (also ring-fenced) goes on to indicate that it will mainly consist of central-government's contribution and taxes generated through reforms suggested in the conversion of leaseholds to freeholds.

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[11] In the document is contains several charts and schemes alongside with the text, but does not include any map.
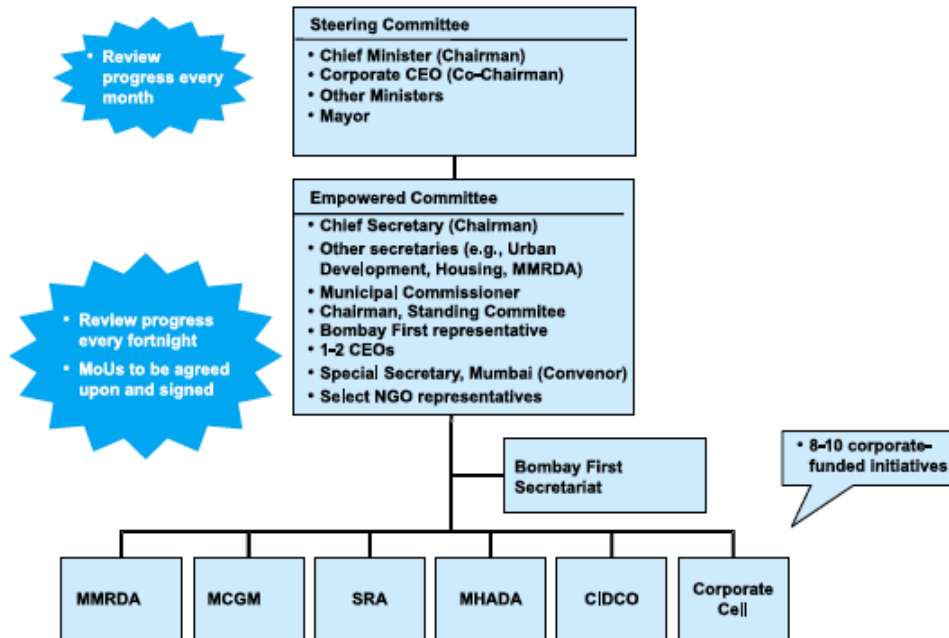
Exhibit 17

MUMBAI IS CURRENTLY RUN BY MULTIPLE AGENCIES

Source: TIFR website; interviews

Exhibit 18

STEERING COMMITTEE TO BE HEADED BY THE CHIEF MINISTER

Source: Team analysis; interviews

Figure 4. Multiple Agencies governing Mumbai vs. new governance structure (Vision Mumbai, 2003).

Controversial aspects of the Vision Mumbai 2013

Even though the McKinsey document is supposed to give a visionary and strategic outline for future developments its size and scope is quite unrealistic. The Vision Mumbai document clearly follows the corporate strategic planning applied to cities. In the global context of strategic planning and vision for cities, corporate planning is a practice of the past in the Western context especially the American cities of 1980s. The question then is what is the need of a Vision documents for a city's development in the Twenty-First Century following outdated practices framed by an American firm, while concurrent Western cities have moved onto other alternatives of strategic planning which are more spatial in character (Healey, 2004).

The vision met with heavy criticism from NGOs, activists and various urban planners, as they believe that it is just an initiative to free up more land for the builder community (Mehta, 2007; Mahadevia, Narayanan, 2008; Zérah, 2009). In general some scholars are questioning the choice of Shanghai as a reference model for politicians[12] and for the authors of the Vision Mumbai 2013 document: 'Both Prime Minister Manmohan Singh and Maharashtra Chief Minister Vilasrao Deshmuk have said, in public fora, that they hope to turn Mumbai into Shanghai - never mentioning that Shanghai's current new-economy successes have been built on decades of agricultural change and rapid industrialisation in the city's hinterland on one hand and high levels of human development, as in the case with the whole of China' (Mahadevia, Narayanan, 2008).

Moreover, some parts of the Vision Mumbai 2013 are particularly controversial such as what is stated at page fifteen, point three of the Economic Growth section: 'the Govt. should zone areas for supermarkets and hypermarkets in large land parcels such as the Mill Lands' (Bombay First/Mc Kinsey, 2003). In the past two decades following the closure of the Mumbai Mills, the Mills lands have been contested upon by private real estate developments for a long time. The Development Control Regulation (DCR) of 1991 reserved a third area each for parks, affordable housing and private development owners. In 2001, however the GoM amended the DCR to re-state that a three-way share applied only to the open lands and not all lands. The Municipal Corporation of Greater Mumbai, entitled to develop a third for public spaces, and MHADA, responsible for affordable housing, maintained silence on the act reversal. This led to a wide array of protests from citizen groups. The quoted sentence of the report is supportive of political parties and private interests to go forward with this scheme of maximising profit earning from a central city neighbourhood revitalisation scheme. Given Mumbai's housing problems, revitalisation of this area shouldn't be dominated only by pure capitalist gains, which benefit mostly the elite and have almost no consideration for social consequences. Proposals of simply creating super markets and malls in a central city location is lacking any sort of creative and comprehensive approach to the city's problems. As the architect Charles Correa noted, 'there's very little vision. They're more like hallucinations' (Mehta, 2007).

Vision Mumbai's intention about making Mumbai a liveable city is clear, but the questionable aspect is if this agenda of large-scale development is deemed successful over the debris of thousands of slums, which are the homes of the voiceless poor making up of major part of the city's population and work force.

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[12] The Chief Minister of Maharashtra in one of his speeches has declared: 'Today, Shanghai has become a symbol for Mumbai - that city started from zero and see where it is today. Citizens here will start having confidence in the government when they see Mumbai's transformation in the next five years. This is not mere talk. We want citizens' groups to support us. Their advice and suggestions for improving the city will be considered' (Mahadevia, Narayanan, 2008).

Though the document makes proposals of redesigning the Slum Redevelopment Authority's schemes for effective rehabilitation, the social welfare objectives in consideration are questionable. For example the fact that 'the creation of Special Housing Zones […], tax breaks for developers who construct low income housing [..], e.g. salt pan lands at Kanjpur and provide right package of incentives to developers for low-income housing' (Bombay First/Mc Kinsey, 2003). The salt pans of Mumbai, which have till now been earmarked as NDZs (No Development Zones) not only because they are eco-sensitive, but also because the 1991 Development Plan states that these areas are not suitable for construction. Given the fact that the construction suggested by the document is for low-cost housing and moreover an incentive attractor for private builders, there is no doubt that the quality of construction of these houses would be low and people who will suffer would be the poor rehabilitated slum dwellers. The policy of providing incentives in the form of tax breaks to private developers for building low cost housing is a direct import of planning policies from the USA (Healey, Upton 2010). However the crux of the matter being import of policies from a developed economy into a developing one leaves wide gaps in effective implementation. Though the import of this policy has been suggested, what the document forgets to mention is who is really going to be responsible or hold accountable for the quality of construction as the Government has clearly shifted its responsibility of providing housing for the poor on to the shoulders of the private sector. Another critical element regarding the slums, is the critique by the Vision to the existing Slum Redevelopment Authority and to its scheme (SRS): according to the Vision the existing SRS is 'commercially unviable' because it provides housing for free. Instead, the new policy foresees that the rehoused slum dwellers should pay for their new property, for maintenance and facilities. Some sceptical scholars on the other hand underline that 'unless vacant land is closely guarded, studies have suggested that a policy of making the poor pay for housing only induces them to sell the new homes and move back to somewhere that it is possible to live at a cheaper level' (Mahadevia, Narayanan, 2008).

Moreover, the Chief Minister's following report proposes the formation of the Citizen Action Group (CAG) in order to increase transparency and accountability of the whole Mumbai Transformation Programme initiative. The MTSU project website clearly describes the activities of the CAG as to 'generate energies, ideas, linkages, resources and citizen participation', as well as to 'promote effective, responsive and proactive Governance in Mumbai'.

In reality the almost twenty eminent members composing the CAG are actually either members of public bodies or owner of private business[13]. Therefore the Vision in considered by some scholars both as 'an instrument for the coalition [...] at power [in the Government of Maharashtra], in order to produce a strong discourse on Mumbai and eclipse the municipality' and 'as a tool for the Government of Maharashtra to mobilise the funds of the JNNURM for large infrastructural projects' (Zérah, 2009). Other scholars underline the value of such vision as a 'lobbying tool' in the hands or the corporate sector: 'the elites also want to lay claim to public finance, to the extent they can extract, from the state government and central government to build the infrastructure that would ease their living and give them a quality of life of global standards [...]. Our suspicion is that such Vision Plans are a ploy to force the state and municipal government to push out as many slum dwellers as possible into the nooks and corners of the city where they cannot be seen' (Mahadevia, Narayanan, 2008).

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[13] For example the vice – chairman of the Citizen's Action Group is also a member of the Empowered Committee which is monitoring the ongoing projects, President of Indo-Italian Chamber of Commerce and also the Managing director of Concast Ltd.- a private manufacturer of casting machines used in concrete construction. This is just one example of the conflicting realities of what has been written and what is being actually done.

Conclusion: 'travelling urban paradigms' in a context of 'governance beyond-the-state'

The case of the current planning innovations in Mumbai raises several reflections on strategic planning, especially in contexts that are different from the Western countries.

First of all, it shows that the shortcomings of the traditional planning and the critiques that are formulated against it are similar both in Western Countries and in such a different context such as the one of an Asian Mega-City Region. The form of the vision in the case of Mumbai seems also to achieve the goal of 'mobilizing attention [...], which builds from and contributes to shaping conceptions of identity' (Healey, 2004).

Moreover in the case of Vision Mumbai 2013 the active role of private investors is clear both in promoting plans and in selecting the projects to be financed, especially through the Empowered Committee and of the Citizen Action Group. Such ad hoc created bodies, nevertheless have on one hand proved to be hardly inclusive and on the other hand reflect an old perspective of strategic planning: 'it was traditionally assumed that the primary function of strategic spatial frames and plans was to direct the state's investment and regulatory power. This reflected an authoritarian conception of power, the ability of a government agency to command certain actions and control their implementation" (ibidem)'.

Such governance structure that widely includes private investors has been defined by some scholars as 'governance-beyond-the-state': 'while such absence of codification potentially permits [...] socially innovative forms of organisation and of governing, it also opens up a vast terrain of contestation and potential conflict that revolves around the exercise of (or the capacity to exercise) entitlements and institutional power [...]. While the democratic lacunae of pluralist liberal democracy are well known, the procedures of democratic governing are formally codified, transparent and easily legible. The "modus operandi" of networked associations is much less clear. Moreover, the internal power choreography of systems of governance-beyond-the-state is customarily led by coalitions of economic, socio-cultural or political élites' (Swyngedouw, 2005).

As a matter of fact, also in the case of Mumbai large contestations have risen from the side of NGOs, academics, several practitioners and groups of citizens. Nowadays, while the Government of Maharashtra has entrusted a Singapore-based consultancy (Surbana Ldt.) to develop a further vision (Vision Mumbai 2032 and 2052), a group of academics from the Rachna Sansad's Academy of Architecture, researchers from UDRI (Urban Design Research Institute) and NGOs are preparing a brief based on the perceptions and needs of a large number of citizens that should work as a base for the next Development Plan of the Greater Mumbai area (promoted by the Greater Mumbai Municipal Corporation). Once again traditional and 'innovative' planning are running parallel, but in this case it is not clear where the real innovation lies.

Moreover, the Vision has the merit of promoting a restructuring of the institutional context that is clearly fragmented and often ineffective. It is questionable if the opening privates, on one hand, and the evident strengthening of only one governing body (the Government of Maharashtra), on the other, represents the best solution for such a complex Mega-City Region. Nevertheless, it should not surprise: 'in fact, it is the state that plays a pivotal and often autocratic role in transferring competencies (and consequently in instantiating the resulting changing power geometries) and in arranging these new networked forms of governance' (Swyngedouw, 2005).

In conclusion it is also relevant the role and the presence of international agencies such as Cities Alliance, USAID and the World Bank, both in promoting innovation in planning and in co-financing some of the programmes.

As it is noticed by Healey, even in Western countries 'funding bodies such as the EU, the international aid agencies, and many higher tier government funding programmes, have also encouraged the production of strategies and visions [...]. However, only some of these actually produce significant effects other than ensuring formal compliance in order to attract funds or meet regulatory requirements. Some strategy statements may serve political purposes though a rhetorical flourish which displays the promises of a mayor or local regime. Other so-called strategies may merely record already well-established directions' (Healey, 2009).

The latter seems to be the case of Mumbai.

The current changes both the city and the planning system are undergoing in Mumbai may be difficult to be described and understood by non-Indian readers, but it is mainly to them that this paper is addressing. As a matter of fact, 'new vocabularies of spatiality and place' (Healey, 2004) are developed in the new strategic planning approach, often referring to the relational geography; such apparently distant and extreme case of Mumbai seems actually to mirror the emerging conditions of complexity and fragmentation that are described in the new strategic planning theories. Therefore the case seems to be useful mainly as a learning and reflection opportunity.

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