

**World Bank Urban Research Symposium  
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**Urban Governance,  
Partnerships and Poverty:  
Study of 10 Cities in the South  
DFID-ESCOR: 1998-2001**

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# Cities

- Ahmedabad
- Bangalore
- Vizakhapatnam
- Colombo
- Mombasa
- Bangalore
- Johannesburg
- Kumasi
- Cebu
- Recife
- UK research team (B'ham, LSE, IIED)
- Local researchers in each city

# Urban Governance, Partnerships and Poverty

## Core research questions:

- How can / do the poor bring influence to bear on institutions of city governance?
- What political & institutional systems, processes & mechanisms (formal & informal) result in inclusive / pro-poor decisions (and outcomes)?

# Key Findings

## 1. Position of the Poor

- Inadequate data on urban poverty
- Lack of understanding by city govts. about livelihoods of the poor
- Interventions (even well-intended) can upset fragile position of poor
- 'Bad governance' ('mega-projects', repressive regulations) destroys livelihoods of poor

Key Findings (cont.)

## 2. City Governance

- **Complex pattern of institutions and relationships**
- **Issues of voice, responsiveness and accountability**
- **Informal processes often more important than formal in determining outcomes**

## Key Findings (cont.)

### 3. Voice

- **Democratisation at local level has widened scope for poor to make claims**
- **So has the rise of civil society**
- **Incremental gains by poor often come through persistence and patronage**
- **Possibility of moving beyond clientelism to open more political bargaining**

## Key Findings (cont.)

### **4. Urban Political Processes**

**Particular political arrangements offer opportunities for voice of the poor:**

- **Directly elected mayors**
- **Ward-based councillors**
- **Reserved seats for women / minorities**
- **But externally appointed mayors are not locally accountable**

## Key Findings (cont.)

### 4. Urban Political Processes (cont.)

- Detailed arrangements matter:
  - electoral representation
  - balance between legislature & executive
- Civic leadership qualities make a difference
- Sub-city levels of govt. can bring decisions closer to poor

## Key Findings (cont.)

### 5. Civil Society

- Poor can and do exert influence by organising (Cebu, Jo'burg, Recife)
- Grass-roots organisations: widespread
- Moving from confrontation to constructive engagement
- Post-struggle situations tend to produce active / pro-poor civil society
- NGOs can play a role, but limitations (capacity, representativeness, accountability, co-option)

## Key Findings (cont.)

### 6. Institutional Responsiveness / Accountability

- Formal participation mechanisms (eg PB) – but implementation?
- Requires sustained political support
- Weak local accountability
- Lack of public information
- Participation demands accountability
- Media can play a role

## Key Findings (cont.)

### **7. Constraints on City Government**

- **Poor live outside city boundaries**
- **Fragmented responsibilities for basic services / unaccountable agencies**
- **Critical importance of bulk infrastructure**
- **Inadequate local resource base**
- **Weak management skills / systems**
- **Out-dated regulations**
- **Conflicts with other levels of govt.**

# Outputs

- **Summary: Policy Briefing Paper**
- **Theme papers / city case studies**
  - ✍ <http://www.idd.bham.ac.uk/research/urban-governance/urbgov.htm>
  - ✍ hard copies from School of Public Policy, U.of Birmingham
- **City-based dissemination events**
- **ID21 Insights: Urban Poverty**
  - ✍ [www.id21.org](http://www.id21.org)
- **Journals: special editions (E&U, IPS)**
- **Forthcoming Book (Earthscan: 2003)**

# Future Research Agenda

- **How urban econ. growth benefits poor**
- **Urban political processes**
- **Successful strategies by urban poor to influence city governance and improve their situation**
- **How to make city government more effective / responsive / accountable**