

Chapter 8

Polycentric Urbanism and the Growth of New Economic Hubs in Mumbai, India



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Abstract Polycentric urban growth has become a common feature of most urban spaces in post-Fordist times. Cities that were originally monocentric have adopted polycentric patterns of urban growth, which have been largely fuelled by economic decentralisation and globalisation of centres of production and consumption, with far looser connections to the central business districts (CBDs). Especially since the 1990s, as the developing economies have gradually integrated into the globalised free market, several developing-world cities have also transitioned into polycentric functionalities. Mumbai, the financial capital of India, was fast to transition due to its economic functionality along with the central business districts becoming enormously unaffordable for the middle class. Nariman Point, Mumbai's once-hyped CBD, has now been eclipsed by the newly emerging economic hubs in the suburbia—transitioning the metropolis into a world-class polycentric entity. This has changed the concentration of economic and commercial activities across Mumbai, thereby influencing its housing patterns and commute behaviour. This study explores Mumbai's history of transition from a monocentric to a polycentric existence and compares the declining functionality of its original CBD with the newly emerging economic growth centres. Our data comprises secondary sources, along with personal reconnaissance and lived-in histories and observations during field surveys that were employed to acquire better insights into the nature of economic and business operations in Mumbai. Through the employment of descriptive qualitative and textual analysis, we find the increasing role of newly developing polycentric-urban centres and their influence on the changing residential and urban communities of Mumbai.

Keywords Post-Fordist · Monocentric · Polycentric · Globalisation · Economic decentralisation · Central business district · Mumbai

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Introduction

Polycentricity is a crucial aspect of urban-spatial structure (Wu et al. 2021). Since spatial configurations exert a significant influence on the nature of development that takes place in an area (Zhuo and Liu 2020), studies on polycentricity have gained considerable significance in recent times. Metropolitan regions appear to be transitioning to polycentric systems, in which urban operations are dispersed among a number of (sub)centres (Van Criekingen et al. 2007). Cities today are transitioning towards polycentricity either as an outcome of planned initiative or because of the unprecedented urban growth, largely driven by the post-Fordist economy, that has stretched cities far and wide.

Polycentric urban growth is not only reconfiguring cities around the world; instead, its transformation of the intra-metropolitan geographies of economic activities is no less dramatic' (Van Criekingen et al. 2007). Polycentric urban forms have come to be viewed as a means of addressing growing urban problems such as traffic, congestion, pollution and shortage of affordable housing, as well as contributing to the environmental and social sustainability of urban development (Liu and Liu 2018). In the organisation of urban systems, the notion of polycentricity addresses the existence of numerous functional centres and widespread links between them (Khiali-Miab et al. 2019). Meijers (2007) attributes the benefits of polycentricity to the synergistic linkages that exist between the urban centres of a metropolitan area. Several monocentric cities of the developing world have been noted to have transitioned towards polycentricity (Salvati et al. 2016; Burger et al. 2013). Van Criekingen et al. (2007) note that the economies of agglomeration earlier concentrated in the central business districts (CBDs) of the monocentric cities have expanded and diversified beyond the city cores to areas further beyond in suburbia and exurbia. This is evident in the case of Mumbai, where polycentric growth has given rise to many economic hubs far away from the original CBD. This chapter delves into the transition of Mumbai from a monocentric character to a polycentric existence and the emergence of new economic hubs. The polycentric characteristics acquired by Mumbai in recent times are evaluated through the lens of urban theory to make empirical observations on the emerging urban-spatial patterns.

Literature Review

Polycentricity is a dynamic concept used for defining and describing spatial extent from diverse perspectives (Kwon and Seo 2018; Liu and Liu 2018; Liu et al. 2017; Taylor 2008). The notion of polycentric growth is preceded by the idea of monocentric growth from which cities move towards polycentricity. Sat (2018) notes that the monocentric city, first proposed by Alonso in 1964, is based mostly on the principles of Burgess and Park's 'concentric zone theory'. The morphology of a city, as per the

concentric zone theory of Burgess forwarded in 1925, is characterised by certain functionally distinct zones, which together form some concentric rings, namely the CBD, the zone of transition, the working-class zone, the residential zone and the commuter zone (Sat 2018). This theory positively correlated the socio-economic status of households with the distance from the CBD, eventually the better off being settled in farther zones intermixing with the host society. Extending Burgess's theory further, Hoyt propounded the sectoral theory in 1939, which classified the structure of cities into five basic sections—Sector 1: a CBD, Sector 2: high-income housing, Sector 3: middle-income housing, Sector 4: low-income housing and Sector 5: a wholesale sector (Bruyns 2018). The concentric zone theory stresses on the demand-side mechanisms while the sectoral theory emphasises on the supply-side mechanisms (Pacione 2009). Both the theories were over-simplistic in their conceptualisation of urban structure. This problem was addressed by Harris and Ullman's multiple nuclei theory in 1945, where they emphasised that most major cities developed through the gradual merger of a number of independent nuclei, rather than growing around a single CBD (Pacione 2009). It states that when a city expands and grows, its CBD may not be able to meet the needs of the new areas, resulting in the creation of new nuclei as Secondary Business Districts (SBDs) to meet the needs of these new areas (Ross et al. 2000). Thus, the multiple nuclei theory basically emphasises the polycentric growth of urban centres that are dispersed across a typical metropolitan area with different functions and features.

By the mid-twentieth century, however, as information and communication technology advanced, employment opportunities in CBDs began to dwindle and disperse to newly emergent growth centres beyond the CBD (Borsdorf et al. 2016; Sat 2018). Thus, the monocentric existence of cities with a single employment centre was challenged by the emergence of multiple employment subcentres as a part of the transformation to a polycentric urban form (Mcmillen and McDonald 1998; Glaeser 2001; Liu and Liu 2018). This is often explained from the view of new urban economic theory, which contends that the struggle between 'agglomeration economies' and 'agglomeration diseconomies' drives the emergence of employment subcentres (Richardson 1995; White 1990; Liu and Liu 2018). Abozeid and AboElatta (2021) note that polycentricity in the literature encompasses two major sets of explanations—morphological and functional. Morphological polycentricity takes into account the aspects of population and employment for describing the spatial distribution of cities (Beckmann 1958; Parr 2004; Liu and Liu 2018; Wu et al. 2021), whereas functional polycentricity takes into account the interaction between places in terms of people, goods and information flows based on knowledge (van der Laan 1998; Limtanakool et al. 2007; Liu and Liu 2018; Wu et al. 2021).

Based on these theoretical underpinnings, various studies on polycentricity have been carried out in different parts of the world. The earlier studies on polycentricity mostly focused on the urban areas of the developed world (Kunzmann and Wegener 1991; Bovaird 1993; Hall 1993; McDonald and Prather 1994; Song 1994; Suarez-Villa and Walrod 1997). Along similar lines, Kloosterman and Musterd (2001) termed polycentricity as a defining feature of urban scapes in the developed economies. However, with the fast urbanisation in the global south, the academic attention on

polycentric urbanism in the developing world has gained attention. Recent urban literature focused on polycentric urbanism in the developing world have discussed it from varying perspectives (Rocco 2006; Wang 2020; Suárez and Delgado 2009; Sinclair-Smith 2014; Liu and Liu 2018; Yang et al. 2019). Some attempts at studying polycentric urban growth in India have been (van Duijne and Nijman 2019; Kumar et al. 2021), however, limited in number and their scope and coverage, making it necessary to add more work through deeper exploration on the emerging aspects of polycentricity in the urban areas of a developing economy as that of India.

Materials and Methods

The Study Area

The study area is the metropolis of Mumbai, located in the state of Maharashtra in India. Until 1500, Mumbai (earlier known as Bombay) existed as a small fishing hamlet, but its fate began to change after the East India Company received its procession in 1668 (Census of India 2011a, b, c). Bombay grew as a trade centre under the British rule. Ashcroft (2011) terms Bombay as an ‘invention of colonialism’. Although Mumbai today stands mostly as a continuous landmass, it originally existed as an archipelago of seven islands, namely the isles of Bombay, Colaba, Old Woman’s Island, Worli, Parel, Mahim and Mazagaon. Prior to their reclamation, these islands existed as inconspicuous rocky outcrops disconnected from one another by shallow, swampy creeks during low tide (Lentin 2021). The present configuration of Mumbai is an outcome of a series of reclamation schemes. Initially, an island city, Mumbai’s growth and expansion led to its northward (suburban) growth. Today the island city area, also known as South Mumbai, exists as the core of the metropolis, but the city has spread far and wide encompassing the southern half of the Salsette Island. Administratively, present Mumbai (city and suburbs) comprises of two districts, namely the Mumbai City District and the Mumbai Suburban District, which fall under the jurisdiction of the Municipal Corporation of Greater Mumbai (MCGM). Mumbai lies at the heart of the Mumbai Metropolitan Region (MMR).

Data and Research Instruments

Data for this study is collected from secondary sources such as books, journals, news articles, government documents and property web portals. Along with this, personal reconnaissance, and lived-in histories, as well as observations made during field surveys were used to gain a deeper understanding of the nature of Mumbai’s economic and business operations. We employ a mix of textual analysis along with other secondary sources, coupled with personal reconnaissance to make sense of the

place and its economic integration through the transitioning of Mumbai. Thus, our research design in this study is primarily descriptive qualitative research—a well-known research paradigm that has been regarded as vital and suitable for research endeavours that are aimed at determining *who*, *what* and *where* of events or experiences, as well as gathering insights about a poorly understood phenomenon (Kim et al. 2017) (Fig. 8.1).

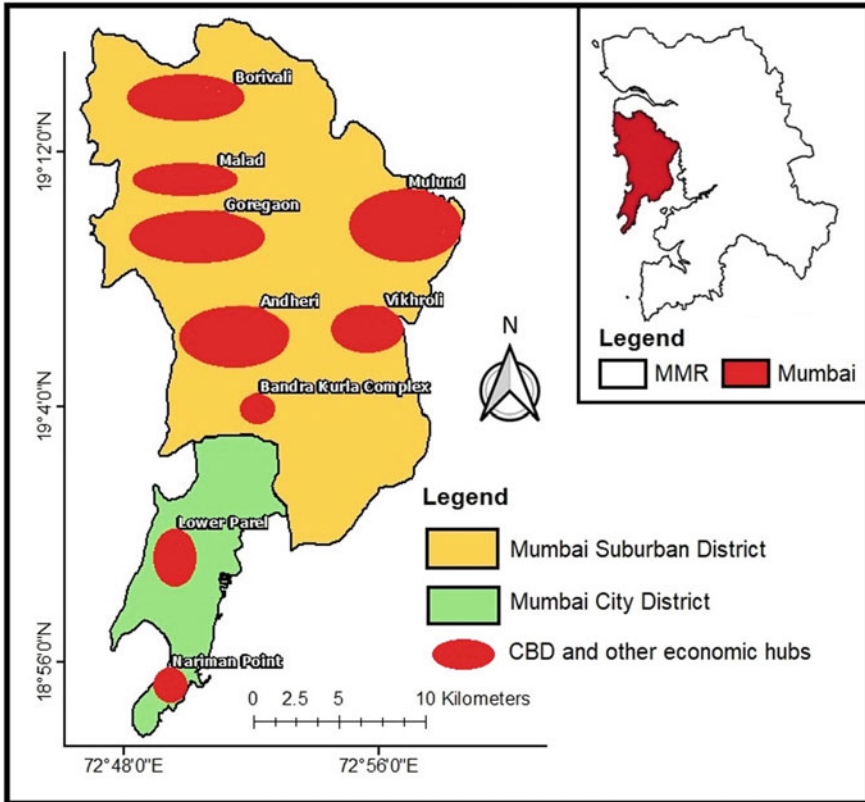


Fig. 8.1 Study area (Source Prepared using QGIS 3.22 software)

Results and Discussion

Mumbai's Transition from a Monocentric to a Polycentric Paradigm

Over the last century, the internal geographies of cities all over the globe have changed drastically, with classic monocentric concentrations being replaced by a range of decentralised configurations (Goswami and Lall 2019). Mumbai, the financial capital of India, too has witnessed its fair share of changes, which led to its establishment as a polycentric metropolis, both in terms of urbanisation and economic functions and business practices. One of the most significant changes in this regard was the restructuring of Mumbai's economy at the dawn of the neoliberal era. Following liberalisation, the original central business district (CBD) of Mumbai began to relinquish its grip on its business and commercial operations, allowing various other business hubs to emerge. Pradhan (2009) notes that the CBD is the economic core of a city. It acts as the nucleus or downtown of an urban area containing the main concentration of commercial land, with the highest percentage of retail shops, offices and services such as banking and finance (McColl 2014).

Nariman Point, located in South Mumbai on a plot of land reclaimed from the sea Back Bay, emerged as the CBD of Mumbai prior to the economic liberalisation in the 1990s. Pendleton (2014) terms it as India's first CBD and the financial heart of Mumbai. However, Nariman Point was not the first business hub of Mumbai. The earliest business centre of Mumbai was Ballard Estate (during late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries), followed by the rise of the Fort area as a business hub (in the mid-nineteenth century), and as the city kept growing, Nariman point was developed (in the 1970s) to accommodate small businesses and establishments (Padmanabhan 2012). Nariman Point continued to function as the main centre of business and commerce in Mumbai until this monocentric pattern started getting challenged by its declining functionality. Although Nariman Point suffered from an inherent drawback of being surrounded by water bodies on its three sides, which strictly undermined its expansion, this issue didn't pose much concern until forces of globalisation started making impact.

When the policy of economic liberalisation was implemented in 1991, India became subject to global economic influences. According to Nijman (2011), things have begun to change since the early 1990s, when exceptional liberalisation measures aided the globalisation of the Indian economy. Mumbai, being a major economic centre, started witnessing an inflow of multinational corporations. Almost every major bank or corporation that entered India set up a liaison office at Nariman Point (Mumbai Mirror 2012). Massive employment opportunities arose in finance, ICT and services, among other fields, with spillover impacts in industries such as film, music and tourism (Clark and Moonen 2014). An ever-increasing struggle for space and higher rental values resulted from growing population and expanding businesses. Within half a decade from 1991, prices in the Nariman Point area increased four to six times of the previous levels (Nijman 2000, 2002). According to Deshpande and

Deshpande (2017), in 1990, the property price in Nariman Point was Rs. 3500/sq. ft, which rose to Rs. 29,500/sq. ft by 1995. Although this trend did not continue for too long, by June 1996, office rents had risen to more than twice the ongoing rate in Paris or Frankfurt and were far above the cost of office space in established high-cost centres such as New York, London, Tokyo or Hong Kong (Nijman 2000, 2002). Also, the prevalence of multiple ownership patterns in Nariman point complicated the functioning of the businesses (Padmanabhan 2012). Upon occupying even a single floor of a building in Nariman Point, companies were required to deal with multiple landlords, where one landlord would insist them on paying higher rent, while the other would ask them to vacate the building (Mumbai Mirror 2012). The replacement of the Bombay Rent Control Act of 1947 by the Maharashtra Rent Control Act of 2000 further complicated matters for Nariman Point. This meant the landlords were now required to pay taxes based on the value of their building leading to a 112% increase in property tax over the rent of these properties, and this made the landlords pass on this burden to the tenants (Mumbai Mirror 2012). Also, most of the buildings located in Nariman point were at least three decades old, with no new supply in the market, making these structures obsolete, especially for the newer economy corporates and multinational companies (Chadha 2012). Thus, Nariman Point started losing its value and significance as a business district. Consequently, most of the businesses and corporations that used to operate in Nariman Point started relocating to these emerging commercial hubs in mid-town Mumbai and the suburbs (Tandon 2015).

The Emergence of New Economic Hubs

Several economic centres have emerged in Mumbai. Some important ones among these centres include Bandra Kurla Complex (BKC), Lower Parel, Goregaon, Malad, Andheri, Vikhroli and Mulund. However, the growth of these economic hubs didn't happen only within Mumbai, but, also far beyond in other areas of the MMR, which have not been covered here, given the focus of this chapter on Mumbai. The emergence of the new economic hubs is associated with the suburban expansion of Mumbai and the growth of transport. The congestion of the island city led to suburban expansion. In 1951, the first Census India county after its independence, the total population of Mumbai District was 2,329,020, whereas this statistic for the Mumbai Suburban district was merely 665,424 people (Census of India 2011a, b, c). However, with the saturation of the population of the former and the accelerated growth of population in the latter, by 2011, the population in the Mumbai District stood at 3,085,411, whereas in the Mumbai Suburban District, population rose to 9,356,962 (Census of India 2011a, b, c) (Table 8.1).

The urban sprawl of Mumbai began profoundly in the 1970s, following the government's declaration of the policies of decongestion and deindustrialisation (Nallathiga 2007). Further, the formulation of the Development Control Regulation of 1991 set the development density on a parcel of land at an extremely low level, resulting

Table 8.1 Population growth in Mumbai city district and Mumbai Suburban District from 1951 to 2011

Census year	Mumbai City District			Mumbai Suburban District		
	Population	Decadal variation	Percentage decadal variation	Population	Decadal variation	Percentage decadal variation
1951	2,329,020	—	—	665,424	—	—
1961	2,771,933	442,913	19	1,380,123	714,699	107.4
1971	3,070,378	298,445	10.8	2,900,197	1,520,074	110.1
1981	3,285,040	214,662	7	4,958,365	2,058,168	71
1991	3,174,889	−110,151	−3.4	6,751,002	1,792,637	36.2
2001	3,338,031	163,142	5.1	8,640,419	1,889,417	28
2011	3,085,411	−252,620	−7.6	9,356,962	716,543	8.3

Source Census of India, District Census Handbook—Mumbai District and Mumbai Suburban District (2011)

in population dispersal, shifting of economic activities and urban sprawl along the transport corridors (Nallathiga 2007). In addition to this, The Mumbai Development Plan of 1991 was crucial in implementing key infrastructure projects aimed at decongesting the core and encouraging a transit-oriented development pattern (Bhatia 2014). With this, the road and rail network of Mumbai and its surrounding areas, that together comprise the MMR, has developed and strengthened much better in the recent times. Greater Mumbai's population share in MMR has decreased from 77% in 1971 to 63% in 2001, thus reducing its congestion, whereas MMR's total population share in Maharashtra has climbed from 15% in 1971–20% in 2001 (MMRDA 2003). Everyday commute to Mumbai from different areas of the MMR for work is a common trend, given the significantly improved transport connectivity in the region. All of these factors have collectively made Mumbai the choicest place to live and work for multi-generations.

Mumbai Suburban Railway serves as the lifeline of the city connecting Mumbai to many far-flung areas. More than 80% of the vehicular travels in the MMR are carried out on public buses and railway services, of which more than 50% of the public transport travels take place on railways (Varshney 2018). More than 7.34 million people across the MMR commute daily on the Mumbai Suburban Railways, from Church Gate to Virar (served by the western railway) and Chhatrapati Shivaji Terminus to Kasara, Khopoli and Panvel (served by the central railway) (MMRDA 2021). In addition, the construction of the arterial roads connecting Mumbai with its suburbs such as the Eastern Express Highway (connecting Mumbai and Thane), the Western Express Highway (connecting Mira Road to Bandra) and the Sion-Panvel Expressway (Connecting Panvel to Sion) have led to greater connectivity. Thus, railways and roadways have connected many distant areas of the MMR with the economic hubs of Mumbai (Fig. 8.2). Besides roads and railway network, the monorail and metro connectivity has also boosted mobility within Mumbai as well as with the MMR. A brief account on these new economic hubs of Mumbai is given below.

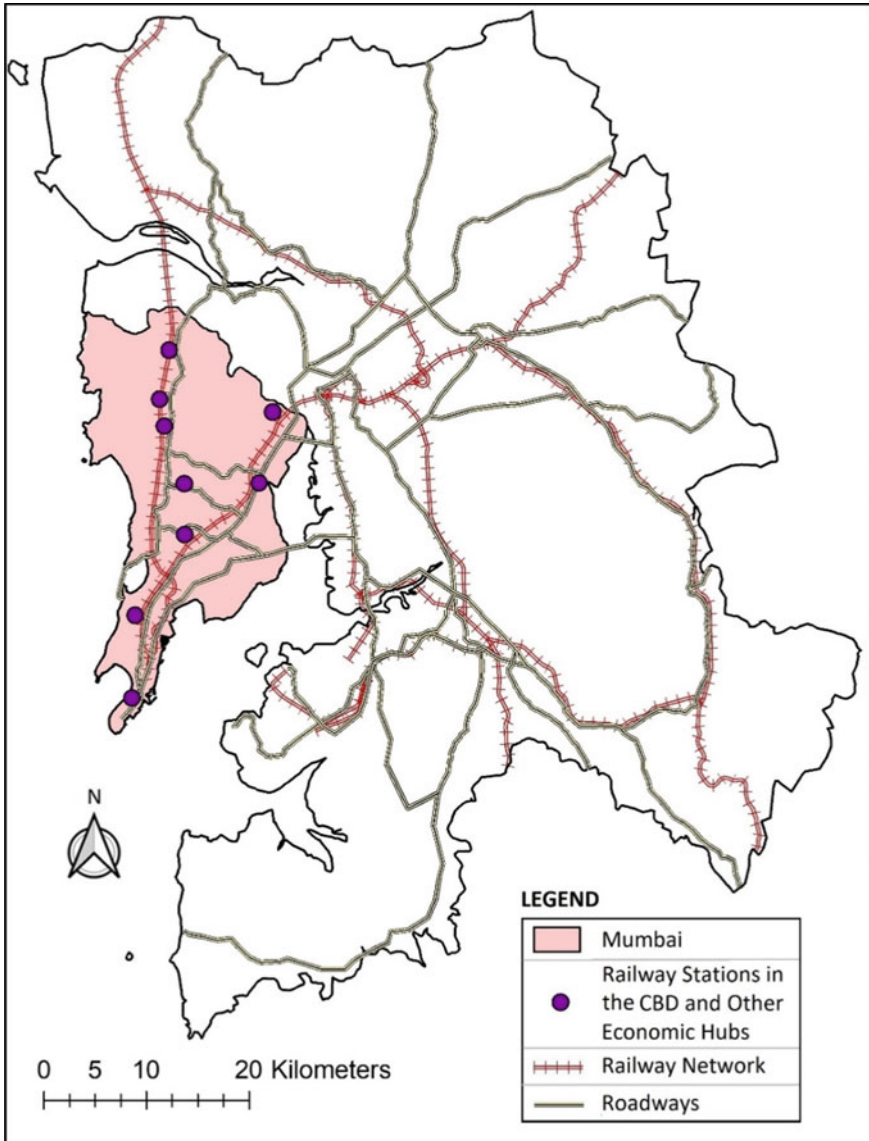


Fig. 8.2 Major roads and railway connectivity in MMR—connecting far-flung areas to the CBD and other economic hubs of Mumbai (*Source* Prepared using QGIS 3.22 software)

Bandra Kurla Complex (BKC) came to be planned as an alternative to the original CBD. For its planning and development, the Mumbai Metropolitan Region Development Authority (MMRDA) was charged with the Special Planning Authority in 1977 (MMRDA n.d.). BKC came to be developed on a strip of swamp land along the Mithi River between Bandra and Kurla. Prior to the economic liberalisation, not many companies were willing to locate to this area. However, by the dawn of the 1990s, the price of land in BKC progressively increased, with liberalisation changing its fortunes dramatically (Lewis 2018). As liberalisation and globalisation made the declining functionality value of Nariman Point apparent, companies gradually started moving out to other areas, especially the BKC. Thus, by the year 2009, BKC had established itself as the *de-facto* CBD of Mumbai (Mumbai Mirror 2012). BKC at present houses several Indian and International companies including Amazon, Reliance, Netflix, National Stock Exchange, SEBI, ICICI, GIA, Bank of America, Google, Edelweiss, Novartis, Kotak Bank and ONGC. Though BKC proved to be a viable alternative to Nariman Point, it was far from the only one. BKC is also not free from problems. It is known for the longer commuting hours, high real-estate prices and severe traffic issues in its vicinity. These have further contributed to the emergence of new economic hubs in Mumbai (Fig. 8.2).

Lower Parel used to be a prominent textile mill centre of Mumbai during the industrial phase. After deindustrialisation and liberalisation, it underwent a wave of transformation. The mill lands have been transformed into a plethora of high-end residential and commercial properties, including stylish hotels, great restaurants, entertainment and retail outlets (Lower Parel–Worli belt, an upmarket residential neighbourhood in South Central Mumbai 2020). The prime location of Lower Parel along with the availability of the vacant mill parcels served as a pull factor attracting real-estate developers to the area (Babar 2012). Its proximity to Nariman Point was another factor that contributed to its transformation. Tulsi Pipe Road and NM Joshi Marg, as well as the Mumbai Monorail and the Suburban Railway Line, connect Lower Parel with the rest of Mumbai. Currently, Lower Parel stands as a corporate hub, housing various domestic and international corporations. Peninsula Business Park, Peninsula Tower, the Empire Business Centre and One Indiabulls Centre are some of the office and business zones that have sprung up here. Also, several commercial spaces have emerged in the erstwhile mills located in the area. Such transformed mills include Raghuvanshi Mills Compound, Kamala Mills Compound Sun Mill Compound and Empire Mills.

Goregaon has seen a lot of commercialisation in the last several years (Goregaon—The Right Place to Invest In 2018). Goregaon's economic boom, combined with infrastructure improvement, has made it a sought-after Mumbai neighbourhood (Goregaon—The Right Place to Invest In 2018). It is connected to the residential and commercial areas of Mumbai through road and rail. The western express highway connects Goregaon to Andheri and BKC, while the Jogeshwari-Vikhroli Link Road connects it to upmarket areas of Powai and Vikhroli (Achary 2021). The improved connectivity of Goregaon has boosted the growth of its commercial real estate. Several office and business areas such as the Synergy Business Park, Vakratunda Corporate Park, IRIS Business Park, ACME Business Park, Orchard

Corporate Park, Mungekar Industrial Estate, Nigos Industrial Estate and Sainath Industrial Estate have emerged as the centres of economic activity in Goregaon.

Malad is located adjacent to Goregaon. It has witnessed immense growth in business and commerce in recent times. Its main office and business hubs are Lotus Business Park, DLH Park, Parth Business Plaza, Niman Industrial Estate, Sterling Industrial Estate, Orbit Industrial estate, Mehta Industrial Estate, Synergy Business Park, Paras Industrial Estate and Infinity IT Park. The western express highway and the suburban railway service provide it with ample connectivity, which has contributed to its economic growth.

Andheri has grown into a thriving commercial hub of Mumbai. Its proximity to the Eastern and Western Express Highways renders it great connectivity, as well as it also benefits immensely from its closeness to commercial hubs such as BKC and Lower Parel (Andheri: Rapidly Expanding Business District of Mumbai 2022). Also, through metro and train connections, it is well-connected to various areas of the Mumbai Metropolitan Region. The eastern half of Andheri has emerged as a prominent area for business and commerce with several MNCs functioning in Saki Naka, Mumbai Industrial Development Corporation (MIDC), and Santacruz Electronic and Export Promotion Zone (SEEPZ) (Sharma 2018). The western hub of Andheri, which began as a residential area, has steadily climbed the commercial real-estate ladder, aided by a combination of a favourable business climate, the mushrooming boom of the IT sector and a slew of infrastructural developments that have bode well for commercial real-estate growth in this well-functioning market (Why Andheri West is being preferred by commercial real-estate developers—Media Bulletins 2021). Andheri West has emerged as a centre for creative industries. Various film and TV studios, editing studios and production centres can be found here (Sharma 2018). Corporate preferences for large-sized office spaces and a constant increase in the number of companies opting for Andheri to centralise their activities have increased the area's potential for future commercial expansion (Why Andheri West is being preferred by commercial real-estate developers—Media Bulletins 2021). Several office and business hubs have come up across Andheri to accommodate the emerging office spaces and other commercial spaces in them. The major business parks of Andheri include Pinnacle Business Park, Dynasty Business Park, Prime Corporate Park, ATL Corporate Park, Elegant Business Park, Peninsula Business Park, IRIS Business Park and Neelkanth Corporate Park.

Vikhroli is another economic hub of Mumbai. The Eastern Express Highway, the Lal Bahadur Shastri Road and the suburban railway line connect it with the rest of the country. It has eased commuting to and from Vikhroli. Many organisations such as Accenture, WNS, TCS and others have flocked to the Godrej Business District, which offers over a million square feet of office space (Mumbai's emerging business hubs 2014). Multinationals and Indian companies with diverse requirements from sectors such as Information Technology and Consulting, Information Hospitality, Pharmaceutical, Consulting, Technology Enabled Services, Retail, Chemical, BFSI, Energy and Power, Engineering and others are among the clients at Godrej Business District (Godrej Real Estate | Godrej-Business-District n.d.). Nearby lies the HCC Real Estate-developed 247 Park, which has notable tenants such as Future Group,

Tata Consulting Engineers, DHL and others (Mumbai's emerging business hubs 2014).

Mulund, with its business areas, office complexes and new-age retail stores, is effectively competing with the other economic hubs of Mumbai. Ecstasy Business Park, O2 Business Commercial Park, Nirmal Corporate Centre, 360 Degree Business Park and Avior Corporate Park are some of its important office and business areas. Mulund's ascent as a business hub began only in the late 1990s, and it has grown rapidly since then. Old factories were replaced by modern malls, multiplexes and towers as it expanded into a retail centre. Eventually, the service centre too found its way to Mulund, turning it into an economic hub. Its central location with the city of Thane in the north, Navi-Mumbai in the east and South Mumbai in the south made it suitable for the growth of business and commerce. Mulund has also witnessed improvement in rail and road connectivity in the recent times. The construction of the Lal Bahadur Shastri Road, Mulund-Airoli Link Road and Eastern Express Highway has rendered immense connectivity to Mulund (Kashyap 2014). Mulund has emerged as a favourable location for new businesses seeking to establish themselves. Mulund's commercial office space is popular among start-ups because of its lower rents.

Implications of the Polycentric Growth of Economic Hubs

The polycentric growth of economic hubs across Mumbai brought about several changes bearing both positive and negative connotations. These implications are as follows:

1. The growth of the new economic hubs has lowered the burden of the CBD. Advantages offered by the new economic hubs such as the availability of larger office premises at lower rent/price, lower travel time for employees, modern infrastructure with improved facilities and so on have given the companies enough reasons to look beyond the CBD while deciding from where to operate their business. For example, (a) as per a report published in the Deccan Chronicle (2017), the average floor plate size in the new economic hubs of Mumbai is around 22,000 sq. ft as compared to 12,000 sq. ft in the CBD; (b) the average price of commercial office space in Nariman Point stood at Rs. 35,180/sq. ft from October to December 2021, whereas, during the same period the average price of commercial office space in Mulund and Goregaon stood at Rs. 17,805/sq. ft and Rs. 16,894/sq. ft, respectively (Commercial Property Rates in Mumbai n.d.).
2. It has created the opportunity for organisations to select from multiple locations for operating their business. Start-ups venturing into the world of business are especially choosing from among the new economic hubs to set up their business due to their comparatively low property rates. Also, in recent years, several large corporations have relocated from the CBD to other economic hubs of Mumbai (Sinha 2017). For example, Bank of America recently relocated from Nariman Point to BKC (Sinha 2017).

3. As the growth of new economic hubs has contributed not only to the growth of commercial property in these localities, it has also led to continued growth in property prices. For instance, in Lower Parel, the average price of commercial office space was Rs. 14,409/sq. ft from October to December 2009, whereas, between October to December 2021, it increased to Rs. 25,243/sq. ft (Commercial Property Rates in Mumbai n.d.).
4. These new economic hubs with employment opportunities and improved connectivity are also attracting home buyers to these localities. This has given impetus to the growth of residential real estate in these areas as well as moving-in of people from different areas. For instance, in Goregaon, the average price of multi-storey apartments was Rs. 16,491/sq. ft from October to December 2017, whereas, by October to December 2021, it increased to Rs. 18,013/sq. ft (Residential Property Rates in Mumbai n.d.).
5. With the growth in business and commercial activities along with the moving-in of people, these economic hubs have witnessed a rise in the number of people residing there as well as people commuting to work on a daily basis. This has added to the traffic woes in most of these areas.
6. Sharma and Abhay (2022) have observed that the large urban centres in developing countries are overburdened because of unplanned and unsustainable rural–urban migration fuelled by urban economic hubs. Mumbai is no exception to this. The growth of the new economic hubs has opened up new opportunities for employment and has been playing a crucial role in attracting migrants to Mumbai from across India. This has contributed to the growing pressure of population in the area.
7. Mitra and Murayama (2009) and Sharma (2017) in their prior analysis of the National Capital of Delhi have discussed elaborately the pro-urban biases and how that impacts the quality of life of the rural–urban migrants, trying to make a living from various types of informal activities. The opportunities to engage in one or the other type of informal economy, while not enough to push the migrants out of poverty, is still a lifestyle that many such migrants have learned to live with. Mumbai is no exception as many people from all over the country simply want to live and make a life for themselves in Mumbai.

Conclusions and Recommendations

The discussion made so far reveals that the growing pace of economic activities under the impact of neoliberal forces preceded by the process of deindustrialisation marked the post-Fordist economic turn of Mumbai. It was the phase when MNCs started pouring into Mumbai and the space constraint in the existing CBD paved way for the polycentric growth of new economic hubs in Mumbai. There has been a noted increase in the prices of property, both commercial and residential in the suburban and polycentric locations over recent years. This has served well for those who already own a piece of land or property as this has ultimately added to their accumulation

of wealth. This has also created a motivation for suburban and decentralised living wherein people can maintain better quality of lives with better quality of air and reduced burdens to land and natural resources.

Finally, we conclude that polycentric urban growth and development has been the most feasible way to accommodate the ever-expanding desires of humans, especially in the context of developing economies such as India, where the total urbanisation is still below 35%. At the same time, the pro-urban biases and the urban-centric economic investment and growth—a widely practiced policy by the Indian government (Mitra and Murayama 2009; Sharma 2017), is a natural booster to rural–urban migration, and the results so far from our textual analysis suggest that polycentric urbanisation is an ideal way to cope up with both—work and life balance—by providing decent life to all. In terms of our academic approaches to doing this analysis, while we have attempted to conduct a descriptive and textual analysis to complete this work, we are aware of its limitations. Given the fact that the Census 2021 has not yet been completed in India due to the unforeseen circumstances of the COVID-19 pandemic, we could not delve into time series or in-depth census-based analysis. The lack of availability of intra-ward data from other secondary sources is another limitation. Also, an empirical approach to studying the causes of urban expansion and economic growth would be an ideal way to add nuanced insights into these processes, and we hope to accomplish some of these in the recent future.

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